FRENCH PSYCHIATRY AND THE SEARCH FOR A PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY: THE SOCIÉTÉ MÉDICO-PSYCHOLOGIQUE, 1840–1870*

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The 1840s were crucial years for French physicians, architects, schoolteachers, and civil servants.[1] During this decade professionals throughout France began to mobilize in the pursuit of social status and privileges on the basis of claims to expert knowledge of specific issues. One of the principal methods for advancing professional interests in the 1840s was "association."[2] French doctors, for example, organized a medical congress in 1845 in order to encourage the July Monarchy government to present legislation that would improve standards of training, eliminate competition from unlicensed healers, and raise public confidence in medicine.[3] In 1846 a medical journal, *L'Union médicale,* was founded which explicitly stated it would represent the professional interests of doctors, pharmacists, and veterinarians.

French psychiatrists in the 1840s were also engaged in the enterprise of upgrading professional status and privileges through the process of "association." The 1838 National Asylum Law had established the guidelines for admission to and release from mental hospitals, had authorized each department of France to provide special asylums for the insane, and had officially endorsed the involvement of the young specialty in the institutional treatment of the mentally ill. Yet, like other physicians, psychiatrists—or "alienists," as they were called—were dissatisfied with their occupational lot in the years before the 1848 Revolution. As a result, they planned the formation of a professional organization called the Société médico-psychologique which would lobby for their material interests. Their efforts

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[1] See David H. Pinkney, *Decisive Years in France, 1840–1847* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 70–91.

[2] For the importance of the idea of "association" in post-1815 France, see K. Steven Vincent, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and the Rise of French Republican Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 127–45.

[3] See George Weisz, "The politics of medical professionalization in France, 1845–1848," *J. Soc. Hist.,* 1978, *12*: 5–7. See also George D. Sussman, "The glut of doctors in mid-nineteenth-century France," *Comp. Stud. Soc. Hist.,* 1977, *19*: 288–89.

Bull. Hist. Med., 1989, *63*: 331–355

to redress professional grievances, however, were stymied by the succession of political events between 1848 and 1851. In order to preserve the project of "association," alienists after 1851 were compelled to adapt intellectually to the changed cultural and political environment of the Napoleonic Second Empire. Much like the members of the seventeenth-century London College of Physicians, the Société médico-psychologique's alienists had to pursue professional goals under shifting and sometimes threatening political and cultural conditions.[4] The strategy they employed to achieve these goals was neither carefully planned nor systematically applied. Yet, it felicitously enabled psychiatrists to cultivate the public image of neutral medical experts who were willing to compromise on crucial ideological issues and forsake interest-group politics. Thus, the Société médico-psychologique which emerged under the clericalist and counter-revolutionary Second Empire was very different from the society psychiatrists had hoped to found just before the 1848 Revolution. Its muted professional image after 1852 was not to every alienist's personal liking. Nonetheless, this image served a fundamental purpose for asylum psychiatry at a critical time in asylum psychiatry's early history: it testified to the intellectual orthodoxy of the Société médico-psychologique, the first alienist learned society in French history and psychiatry's first attempt at "association."

I

The alienist campaign to establish a professional identity through the organization of an association of psychiatrists began in 1843 with the founding of the journal entitled *Annales médico-psychologiques*. The editorial committee of the new journal consisted of the physician Laurent Cerise (1807–69), who was responsible for articles dealing with topics of general psychological and medical interest; the Salpêtrière alienist Jules Baillarger (1809–70), who was responsible for articles dealing with mental pathology; and the physiologist F. A. Longet (1811–71), who was responsible for articles dealing with the anatomy and physiology of the nervous system.

The main themes of the *Annales médico-psychologiques* surfaced in Cerise's introductory essay in the initial volume.[5] Cerise declared that the study of mental alienation had progressed since Philippe Pinel's day and constituted a legitimate science by the early 1840s. By the same token, Cerise maintained that the time had passed when a "specialist" journal intended exclusively for asylum physicians was warranted; laymen as well as

[4] See Theodore M. Brown, "The College of Physicians and the acceptance of iatromechanism in England, 1665–1695," *Bull. Hist. Med.*, 1970, *44*: 12–30; *idem*, "Physiology and the mechanical philosophy in mid-seventeenth-century England," *ibid.*, 1977, *51*: 25–54; *idem*, *The Mechanical Philosophy and the "Animal Oeconomy"* (New York: Arno Press, 1981). See also Harold J. Cook, *The Decline of the Old Medical Regime in Stuart London* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1986), esp. pp. 94–263.

[5] Laurent Cerise, "Introduction," *Annales médico-psychologiques*, 1843, *1*: i–xxvii.

physicians had much to contribute to an understanding of the treatment, diagnosis, and pathology of mental disease, he argued. Therefore, he announced, the *Annales* would be an interdisciplinary and eclectic journal, ready to accept contributions from a wide variety of perspectives and on a wide variety of subjects related to mental and nervous disease. The overall aim was to improve the understanding of the relationship of body to mind ("la science des rapports du physique et du moral").

Although Cerise expressed himself willing as an editor to publish papers on the mind/body relationship from authors of widely different viewpoints, he also expressed his dissatisfaction with the reigning schools of thought in medicine and psychology. He rejected the school of *idéologues* who, he claimed, reduced all the phenomena of mind to the mechanistic and atomistic functions of the senses. He also rejected "pure philosophy," the view embraced by French university professors who depicted the mind as if it were totally separate from the organism and only amenable to metaphysical interpretations. Similarly, he criticized pathological anatomy for its failure to discover the organic lesions of the brain responsible for the various forms of psychological derangement. But above all, he deplored the way in which medicine and lay philosophy had divided into two warring groups, "physiology" and "spiritualism," the former believing that all mental phenomena could be reduced to the laws governing the natural world, and the latter believing that the full range of experienced mental states could be explained adequately by recourse to metaphysical principles such as ontology and logic. Nonetheless, while recognizing the faults of each system, Cerise also argued that each system contained facts or a kernel of truth that adversaries often ignored. His aim as editor of the *Annales médico-psychologiques* was to provide a forum for different points of view while stressing the need for careful observation of clinical facts, the cautious use of hypotheses to aid observation, and the folly of formulating bold and sweeping theories. Although convinced that only a doctrine that acknowledged the integral existence of body and mind could lead to exact knowledge of mental pathology, Cerise refused to commit the *Annales* to one systematic doctrine.

Cerise's editorial policy stemmed from his own philosophical convictions, his status as a physician, and his position as editor of a fledgling medical journal dedicated to the elucidation of some of the thorniest and most delicate intellectual matters. Cerise was a follower of the Catholic socialist Philippe Buchez, an ex-Saint Simonian and a physician committed to constructing a theory of man's place within the natural and divine order.[6] Like

[6] Claude Etienne Bourdin, *Etudes médico-psychologiques: Cerise, sa vie et ses oeuvres* (Paris: G. Jousset, 1872). For Buchez, see Armand Cuvillier, *P. J. B. Buchez et les origines du socialisme chrétien* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1948); and F. A. Isambert, *De la charbonnerie au saint-simonisme: Etude sur la jeunesse de Buchez* (Paris: Editions de minuit, 1966). See also Philippe Joseph Benjamin Buchez, *Essai d'un traité complet de philosophie, du point de vue du catholicisme et du progrès*, 3 vols. (Paris: Eveillard, 1838–40).

Buchez, Cerise rejected pure spiritualism. He conceded that the brain was the special organ adapted for expressing intellectual and affective phenomena, but at the same time he and Buchez both denounced the "physiological" error, attributable supposedly to Cabanis, Broussais, and Gall, of reducing the functions of all the mental faculties to the operations of cerebral matter.[7] As physicians, Buchez and Cerise wished to retain the notion that in mental and nervous illness there was always a physical disorder, for without this principle, doctors could claim no exclusive right to the diagnosis and treatment of mental disease. Unless it was conceded that each form of insanity had a discernibly organic basis, there was no justification for employing medicine's physicalist remedies as a cure.[8] Yet while granting that a biophysical disorder always accompanied insanity, Cerise and Buchez were not willing to admit that somatic injury directly altered the voluntary and immaterial nature of the free soul.

Cerise was also doubtlessly aware that his opinions as editor were critical to the success of a new medical journal in pre-1848 France. By 1840 the conflict between the spiritualist school and medical physiology had become acute. As L. S. Jacyna and Jan Goldstein have pointed out, the dispute between the two parties had long ceased to be limited to the world of ideas and had spilled over into the political domain: physiologists were normally perceived to be liberals and republicans, while spiritualists were generally associated with the social and political status quo under the Restoration and July Monarchy governments. Before the 1840s most physicians—and especially alienists—were conventionally included in the physiological camp.[9] For Cerise to have endorsed physiology would have been politically dangerous; he would have run the risk of invoking official displeasure and censorship. By criticizing pure philosophy, Cerise was also demonstrating his political canniness. In the 1840s the lay university system in France was under attack from orthodox Catholics who protested the state monopoly on post-primary education.[10] It would not have been politically judicious at that

[7] Laurent Cerise, "Que faut-il entendre, en physiologie et en pathologie, par ces mots: influence du moral sur le physique, influence du physique sur le moral?" *Annales médico-psychologiques,* 1843, *1:* 4–5.

[8] For an account of the influence of this factor on the development of French mental medicine in the nineteenth century, see my "The Professional, Political, and Cultural Dimensions of Psychiatric Theory in France, 1840–1900" (Ph.D. diss., University of Rochester, 1986). For similar accounts of this factor's relevance to Anglo-American medicine, see, for example, Andrew T. Scull, *Museums of Madness: The Social Organization of Insanity in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Allen Lane; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), p. 167; William F. Bynum, "Rationales for Therapy in British Psychiatry, 1780–1835," in *Madhouses, Mad-Doctors, and Madmen: The Social History of Psychiatry in the Victorian Era,* ed. Andrew Scull (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), pp. 35–57; Roger Cooter, "Phrenology and British Alienists, ca. 1825–1845," *ibid.,* pp. 58–104; L. S. Jacyna, "Somatic theories of mind and the interests of medicine in Britain, 1850–1879," *Med. Hist.,* 1982, *26:* 233–58.

[9] L. S. Jacyna, "Medical science and moral science: the cultural relations of physiology in Restoration France," *Hist. Sci.,* 1987, *25:* 111–47; Jan Goldstein, *Console and Classify: The French Psychiatric Profession in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 245.

[10] Philip A. Bertocci, *Jules Simon: Republican Anticlericalism and Cultural Politics in France, 1848–1886* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1978), pp. 48–54; see also Thomas Michael Telzrow, "The 'Watchdogs': French Academic Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century: The Case of Paul Janet" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1973), pp. 15–78.

time to be identified closely with the beleaguered lay *universitaires*. Cerise's attempt to stake out a middle position between spiritualist philosophy and the physiology of organized medicine demonstrated that those associated with the *Annales médico-psychologiques* wished to reassure the officials of the July Monarchy that asylum psychiatrists were more interested in reconciliation and compromise than in the advocacy of extreme positions.

However, the early issues of the *Annales médico-psychologiques* were not free of controversy. Beginning in the early 1840s and lasting until the 1848 Revolution, there was a lively debate in the pages of the *Annales* over whether or not venerable thinkers of the past such as Pascal and Socrates had actually been mentally ill. The dispute had been sparked by the writings of L. F. Lélut (1804–77), a Salpêtrière alienist and physician at La Roquette prison. Lélut had argued that Socrates and Pascal had both suffered from severe hallucinatory spells that were due to a similar neuropathic constitution. The debated broadened, however, to include the saints of the Catholic church who had experienced similar hallucinations during their ecstatic states. At issue was whether or not these saints had truly witnessed divine miracles and been infused with the Holy Spirit, and to what degree their visions and trances were due to a diseased nervous system. On the anticlerical side of the debate were Lélut, the layman Alfred Maury (1817–92), and the alienist Louis Calmeil (1798–1895).[11] Poised against them was the private asylum psychiatrist Alexandre Brierre de Boismont (1797–1881). Brierre de Boismont disagreed emphatically with Maury and Lélut, contending that hallucinations were in fact compatible with reason and were not always a symptom of insanity.[12]

The problem for psychiatry was that the debate broke out when the conflict between Catholics and anticlerics in France had reached a fever pitch. Anticlerical thinkers like Jules Michelet, professor of history at the Collège de France, accused Catholicism of being an obstacle to free thought, natural reason, and secular education. The anticlerical campaign of the 1840s prompted one distressed spiritualist philosopher to speak of a "renaissance of Voltairianism."[13] Lélut's and Calmeil's treatment of the question of hallucinations was quickly perceived to be anticlerical and reinforced the image of psychiatrists as a group of Voltairian secularists. The other result of the debate was that the *Annales médico-psychologiques*

[11] Louis Francisque Lélut, *Du démon de Socrate: specimen d'une application de la science psychologique à celle de l'histoire.* (Paris: Trinquart, 1836); *idem,* "De l'amulette de Pascal: Etude sur les rapports de la santé de ce grand homme à son génie," *Annales médico-psychologiques,* 1845, 5: 1–15, 157–80; *idem,* "Formule des rapports du cerveau à la pensée," *ibid.,* 1843, *1:* 185–207; *idem,* "Cadre de la philosophie de l'homme," *ibid.,* 1844, *3:* 157–64. Louis Ferdinand Alfred Maury, "L'Amulette de Pascal, pour servir à l'histoire des hallucinations," *ibid.,* 1846, *8:* 285–99; and Maury's reviews of Louis Florentin Calmeil's *De la folie considérée sous le point de vue pathologique, philosophique, historique, et judiciaire, depuis la renaissance des sciences en Europe jusqu'au dix-neuvième siècle, ibid.,* 1846, *7:* 110–33, and Alexandre Brierre de Boismont's *De l'hallucination, ibid.,* 1845, 5: 300–311.

[12] A. Brierre de Boismont, Review of L. F. Lélut's *L'Amulette de Pascal, Annales d'hygiène publique et de médecine légale,* 1847, *37:* 232.

[13] E. Saisset, "Renaissance du voltairianisme," *Revue des deux mondes,* 1845, *9:* 377–408.

received some bad publicity in 1845: much to Cerise's displeasure, the *Revue médicale* accused the journal of being "anti-Catholic" for publishing Lélut's and Maury's articles.[14]

In another development of the 1840s which jeopardized Cerise's endeavor to steer the *Annales médico-psychologiques* away from political and philosophical controversy, some alienists associated with the founding of the journal began to make plans to organize psychiatrists. Heading the enterprise were the alienists Baillarger, B. A. Morel (1809–73), Honoré Aubanel (1810–63), and Emile Renaudin (1808–65). Baillarger wanted the new psychiatric society to be devoted principally to the study and discussion of asylum administration, construction, and hygiene.[15] Morel agreed with Baillarger, urging the formation of "a medical society, whose goal would be the study of everything that relates to the pathology and physiology of the nervous system, as well as the improvement of insane asylums."[16] Aubanel and Renaudin wanted to go further. Their hope was that a new alienist association would also function as an interest group for the profession, helping to improve psychiatric salaries, pensions, working conditions, and operational budgets.[17] By the spring of 1848 it was decided that a Paris-centered "Société médico-psychologique" would be founded, incorporating the aims of Morel, Baillarger, Aubanel, and Renaudin.[18]

The alienist effort to "associate" in the 1840s reflected the restlessness among French physicians and throughout French society in general. As Cerise wrote, the dramatically changing and largely unregulated socioeconomic conditions of pre-1848 France left many groups and classes unprotected and at a disadvantage unless they organized.[19] In this respect physicians and the working class were alike. Socialists in France had publicly promoted "association" as a way of increasing labor's political power and safeguarding the interests of workers.[20] By seeking to associate, alienists were equally committed to defending their self-interests and forging a professional identity that would enable them to establish a medical monopoly in the treatment of insanity. However, the idea of "association" was politically controversial. The 1791 law on professional associations had forbidden physicians and the working class to organize as occupational groups in pur-

[14] Laurent Cerise, "Quelque mots sur la liberté de discussion dans les *Annales médico-psychologiques*," *Annales médico-psychologiques*, 1846, *7*: 157.

[15] Jules Baillarger, "Association des médecins des hospices d'aliénés en Angleterre: de l'utilité que pourrait avoir une association semblable parmi les médecins français," *ibid.*, 1843, *1*: 181–83; see also Baillarger's "De la statistique appliquée à l'étude des maladies mentales," *ibid.*, 1846, *7*: 165.

[16] René Charpentier, "La Naissance de la Société médico-psychologique," *ibid.*, 1952, *2*: 43. See also Antoine Ritti, *Histoire des travaux de la Société médico-psychologique et éloges de ses membres*, 2 vols. (Paris: Masson, 1913–14), *1*: 3–6.

[17] "Lettre de M. Renaudin . . . à M. Baillarger," *Annales médico-psychologiques*, 1846, *7*: 649; "Lettre de M. Aubanel . . . à M. Baillarger," *ibid.*, pp. 470–71.

[18] Jules Baillarger, "Fondation de la Société médico-psychologique," *ibid.*, 1848, *11*: 1–2.

[19] Bourdin, *Etudes médico-psychologiques*, p. 11.

[20] Vincent, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*, pp. 127–45.

suit of common interests and had seriously curtailed their right to meet.[21] Therefore, the endeavor to associate was an extremely sensitive project, the more so for psychiatry, which had already been tarred with the brush of anticlerical and republican physiology.

Nonetheless, when the statute and by-laws of the new Société médico-psychologique were published in the first issue of the *Annales médico-psychologiques* in 1848, it was clear that the Société's alienists were intent on founding a largely psychiatric interest group. This decision reflected the evolution of the *Annales médico-psychologiques* since 1843: as its editors admitted in late 1848, it had increasingly published more articles on mental and nervous diseases than on the anatomy and physiology of the nervous system or on the relationship of body to mind, topics of a more eclectic interest.[22] Similarly, the subtitle of the *Annales* changed after 1848. Gone were references to the study of the mind/body problem and the anatomy, physiology, and pathology of the nervous system; in their place was a more specialized subtitle, indicating a journal narrowly focused on issues of purely alienist concern.[23]

The predominantly medical orientation of the 1848 Société médico-psychologique was evident in the by-laws governing membership. The Société was to be divided into five sections. The first two would include only physicians, amounting to forty-eight resident members (more than half of all members). The other three sections would each consist of eight members, of which at least two had to be doctors. As a result, there would always be more doctors than laymen in the resident Société médico-psychologique.

Yet, while the new Société was designed to be a specialist medical organization primarily dedicated to the study of matters related to alienist practice, the preamble to the statute affirmed boldly that "medical science" also held the key to elucidating questions of "a superior order, relative to religion, morality, jurisprudence, education, metaphysics, and administration." The social value of asylum medicine had been acknowledged throughout France, Germany, Italy, England, and the United States, the preamble continued, and this testified to the growing expertise of alienism. Thus, the founders of the new Société refused to evade sensitive and diffi-

[21] Goldstein, *Console and Classify*, p. 339. See also Adrien Dansette, *The Religious History of Modern France*, trans. John Dingle, 2 vols. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1961), 1: 314–15.

[22] "Changements apportés à la publication des *Annales médico-psychologiques* [editorial]," *Annales médico-psychologiques*, 1848, *12*: 437–38.

[23] The actual wording of the pre-1849 title was "Annales médico-psychologiques: Journal de l'anatomie, de la physiologie, et de la pathologie du système nerveux, destiné particulièrement à recueillir tous les documents relatifs à la science des rapports du physique et du moral, à la pathologie mentale, à la médecine légale des aliénés, et à la clinique des névroses." After 1848 the title and subtitle read "Annales médico-psychologiques: Journal destiné à recueillir tous les documents relatifs à l'aliénation mentale, aux névroses, et à la médecine légale des aliénés." It is also of note that after 1849 the sections of the *Annales médico-psychologiques* entitled "Généralités médico-psychologiques" and "Physiologie" disappeared.

cult issues like the relationship of body to mind or the mental health of Catholic saints from history, and proudly foresaw an expanded social role for psychiatry in the coming years.[24]

II

The January 1848 issue of the *Annales médico-psychologiques* included the announcement that the list of the Société's members would be published in the March issue after authorization by the Minister of Public Instruction. However, the Revolution broke out in February, disrupting administrative procedures and preventing the Minister from officially approving the new Société. When the March 1848 issue appeared belatedly, the readers of the *Annales* were informed that "great political events" had held up ministerial approval.[25]

It was not until 26 April 1852 that the members of the Société médico-psychologique met for the first time at the Faculty of Medicine in Paris. The new statute of the Société, published in the second issue of 1852, revealed that there were great differences between the Société of 1848 and that of 1852. The editorial committee entrusted with drawing up the new statute included the alienist Claude Michéa (1815–82), the physician Edouard Carrière (1808–83), and the journalist Amedée Dechambre (1812–86). Their report began by stressing how political instability and the progress of science were mutually exclusive. It also stated that there were two important changes to be made to the 1848 statute. One concerned the 1848 preamble. This document, the report maintained, was characterized by "views that were too narrow, too stamped with an *esprit de corps,*" an attitude of "exclusivism" which would have jeopardized the goal of the new Société: "the *rapprochement* between the natural and moral sciences." The preamble had pointed out the contributions of medical science to a wide variety of philosophical and practical issues, the report continued, yet it had overlooked the contributions "empirical psychology" could make to the elucidation of medical problems. The new Société would redress this grievance, claimed the three committee members; indeed, they declared that to clear up any doubt regarding the intentions of its founders, the Société of 1852 would be interdisciplinary in nature and welcome into its ranks lawyers, philosophers, magistrates, historians, poets, educators, and even "ministers of religion."

To reinforce the interdisciplinary and eclectic complexion of the Société médico-psychologique in 1852, the report scrapped the five sections into which the resident membership had been divided in 1848. The reasons given were that the membership of the Société was too small to warrant any

[24] "Société médico-psychologique: règlement," *Annales médico-psychologiques*, 1848, *11*: 3–8.
[25] Charpentier, "La Naissance de la Société médico-psychologique," pp. 45–46.

sections and that, in any case, the sections would have posed obstacles when the Société's executive wished to admit new members. The significance of this reform lay in the fact that the medical hegemony established for the Société in 1848 had been jettisoned, further weakening the medical ambitions of the earlier statute.

Finally, the new statute made a critical concession with regard to the relationship of body to mind. It reaffirmed that "medical science" unavoidably touched on delicate and thorny metaphysical, religious, and biological issues. However, acknowledging tacitly that the study of medicine had customarily been equated with materialism and physiology, the committee made a point of recognizing that there nonetheless existed "facts of a superior order" in the study of the human mind, including "an active or voluntary element," which the new Société promised never to reduce to "encephalic physiology." The 1852 Société médico-psychologique, the statute pledged, was committed to examining the "mysterious alliance" between free will and "cerebral organization" without at the same time supporting the "physiological" view that all mental phenomena derived from the operations of organized matter.[26]

What did the revised 1852 statute signify about the ambitions of asylum psychiatry? First of all, by declaring that the interests of medical science and revolution were inimical it indicated that those psychiatrists who had been identified with the republican forces under the July Monarchy were willing by the early 1850s to renounce their republican past, which included political activism during the short-lived revolutionary Second Republic (1848–51). The fact that the Société's founding was delayed until shortly after Louis Napoleon's coup d'état of December 1851 indicated that the new psychiatric association found the Bonapartist restoration of political order to be more congenial for psychological medicine than the revolutionary turmoil of the Second Republic. It suggested that alienists such as Ulysée Trélat (1795–1879), Louis Delasiauve (1804–93), Félix Voisin (1794–1872), and Prosper Lucas (1808–85)—all of whom were members of the earlier society and had republican political records in 1848—wished to declare their political orthodoxy by disavowing publicly their republican sympathies.

The philosophical orientation of the 1852 Société médico-psychologique was also highly congruent with the changed political and cultural atmosphere after Louis Napoleon's dictatorial seizure of power. By 1852 a clerical reaction had set in, one that would persist well into the 1860s. The first indication that clericalism would be an important force with which *savants* would have to contend during the Napoleonic Second Empire (1852–70) was the passing of the Falloux Law in 1850 which gave the religious orders the right to open schools without any further qualification and

[26] "Nouveau règlement de la Société médico-psychologique" and "Rapport sur les modifications à introduire dans le projet de règlement de la Société médico-psychologique," *Annales médico-psychologiques*, 1852, *4*: 226–34.

introduced councils with strong clerical elements to control the lay university. As a result, the Catholic church enjoyed a resurgence of power and authority, a development the imperial government unofficially sponsored because it viewed the clergy as a dependable weapon in its struggle against republican propaganda and as a powerful electoral force that would encourage voters to rally to the Bonapartist regime. Under these conditions, liberal and republican ideas were anathema unless tempered and qualified by elements consistent with religious teaching.[27] The efforts of psychiatrists to associate and organize were a particular cause for official suspicion because of medicine's previous identification with the allegedly republican and liberal doctrine of "physiology." Asylum psychiatry was also in a delicate position during the early years of the clericalist Second Empire because of its conflict with the religious orders of the Catholic church over control of France's hospitals for the mentally ill. This conflict, as Jan Goldstein has discussed, was especially fierce in the 1840s as clerical asylums flourished in competition with the mainly psychiatrically staffed public asylums.[28] A government that united throne and altar was not likely to tolerate the professionalizing endeavors of an interest group already stigmatized as secular and anticlerical.

Against this background, the philosophical and ideological statements of the Société médico-psychologique in 1852 take on added meaning. By eschewing the predominantly medical orientation of the 1848 Société, the reconstituted Société appeared to return to the original ethos of the *Annales médico-psychologiques* as expressed by Cerise in 1843. The Société's leadership in 1852—the alienist Guillaume Ferrus (1784–1861) as president, the physician Pierre-Nicholas Gerdy (1797–1856) as vice-president, the alienist Alexandre Brierre de Boismont (secretary), Dechambre (secretary-general), and Michéa (archivist-treasurer)—intended it to look interdisciplinary much in the same way Cerise had envisaged the *Annales* initially. This was reflected in the fact that of the eighteen presidents of the Société from 1852 to 1870, seven were neither public nor private asylum physicians at the time of their presidency, in contrast to only one of twenty nonalienist presidents from 1870 to 1890.

Above all, the new Société testified that its prime objective was the reconciliation between medicine and psychology, thereby acknowledging the spiritualist principle that each human being was endowed with a soul and free will that, in accordance with Catholic teaching, was far more powerful and enduring than the forces of organized matter. Living under a regime that was much more intolerant of "physiology" than the July Monarchy had been, and that openly curried favor with Catholicism, the members of the Société were compelled to pay lip service to religiously palatable ideas if

[27] Alain Plessis, *The Rise and Fall of the Second Empire, 1852–1871,* trans. Jonathan Mandelbaum (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 135.
[28] Goldstein, *Console and Classify,* p. 316.

they did not want to incur the displeasure of the Bonapartist state and its clerical allies.[29]

III

An indication that the new Société médico-psychologique was committed publicly to a highly qualified version of physiology as a way of placating clerical and imperial interests was the influence exerted within its ranks by the physician Philippe Buchez. Although Buchez's ties to the socialist movement during the July Monarchy had led to his brief imprisonment by the Bonapartists during Louis Napoleon's coup d'état of 2 December 1851, Buchez's interest in politics had waned considerably since his disgrace on 15 May 1848 when, as president of the Second Republic's Constituent Assembly, he had watched helplessly as the Paris mob invaded the Assembly. This episode seems to have undermined Buchez's faith in the capacity of politics to achieve progressive change.[30] By the Second Empire, therefore, Buchez's days as a political radical were far behind him.

Buchez enjoyed considerable stature in the early Société médico-psychologique. Alfred Maury, a lay member of the Société, noted that Buchez and his followers constituted a spiritualist and "Catholic church" of their own within the fledgling organization.[31] Indeed, it would be hard to exaggerate the role the devoutly Catholic Buchez played in the Société's early years, for on Buchez's death in 1865 his alienist colleague Félix Voisin remarked that Buchez had been the Société's "principal founding member."[32] He and his equally Catholic follower Cerise comprised two-thirds of the Société's editorial committee. Other founding members who could be considered Buchez's disciples included Carrière, Auguste Ott (1814–1903), C. E. Bourdin (1815–86), and Marcellin-Emile Hubert-Valleroux (1812–84). Trélat and Gerdy were also close friends of Buchez's, as was the alienist B. A. Morel, the founder of degeneracy theory,[33] for

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 355.

[30] For Buchez's retreat from politics after 1848, see the fourth volume of the unpublished memoirs of Louis Ferdinand Alfred Maury, "Souvenirs d'un homme de lettres," Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France, Paris, Ms. 2650, p. 21. [There are eight volumes in all, Mss. 2647–2653.] See also Auguste Ott, "Notice sur la vie et l'oeuvre de Buchez," preface to Buchez's *Traité de politique et de science sociale,* 2 vols. (Paris: Amyot, 1866), *1:* lvi.

[31] Maury, "Souvenirs d'un homme de lettres," Ms. 2650, vol. 4, p. 20.

[32] Voisin is quoted in Georges Collet, "Les Fondateurs de la Société médico-psychologique," *Annales médico-psychologiques,* 1952, *2:* 53.

[33] For Morel and degeneracy theory, see Peter Burgener, *Die Einflüsse des Zeitgenössischen Denkens in Morels Begriff der "Dégénérescence"* (Zurich: Juris-Verlag, 1964); Ruth Friedlander, "B. A. Morel and the Theory of Degenerescence: The Introduction of Anthropology into Psychiatry" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, San Francisco, 1973). For accounts of psychiatric hereditarianism in general and degeneracy theory in particular in the nineteenth century, see Milton Gold, "The early psychiatrists on degeneracy theory and genius," *Psychoanalysis and the Psychoanalytic Rev.,* 1960–61, *47:* 37–55; A. Zaloszyc, "Les Dégénérescences: une préhistoire?" suppl. to *Confrontations psychiatriques,* 1978, *16:* 1–11 (I wish to thank Toby Gelfand for this reference); François Bing, "La Théorie de la dégénérescence," in *Nouvelle histoire de la psychiatrie,* ed. Jacques Postel and Claude Quétel (Toulouse: Privat, 1983), pp. 351–56; Robert Castel, *L'Ordre psychiatrique: L'Âge d'or de l'aliénisme* (Paris: Editions de minuit, 1976), pp. 276–78; Ian Dowbiggin, "Degeneration and

whom Buchez had secured the post of chief physician at the Maréville asylum in 1848. Morel joined the Société in 1857 thanks to Buchez's sponsorship.

At one of the Société's first meetings Buchez outlined his philosophical position regarding the doctrine of "physiology." On 26 July 1852 he argued that spiritualism could be reconciled with the medical interpretation of madness. He conceded that in madness the lunatic was deprived of free will. The madman or woman was the "dupe" of hallucinations whose roots were in the disturbed physical conditions of the organism. During these intervals it was permissible to conclude that free will or "moral liberty" were absent, Buchez argued, because of the influence of the diseased organs. Yet that did not mean that the "force" of free will was identical to the "organic forces" that ruled involuntary life, he contended. Free will was a force that was tied indissolubly to the organism, yet it was not simply a product of organized matter. It was an ultimately independent and purely spiritual phenomenon that combined with the organism to constitute the "double nature of man." Thus, according to Buchez, there was no necessary contradiction between the spiritualist belief in metaphysical moral freedom and the medical view that mental illness was due to diseased organs.[34]

Buchez's characterization of the relationship between "spiritualism" and the organicist outlook of psychological medicine suggested that physicians who dealt with insanity were not necessarily engaged in an intellectually subversive activity. One French physician who made this plain was Léon Rostan, professor of clinical medicine at the Parisian Faculty and spokesman for the organicist position in medicine. Rostan acknowledged in 1864 that doctors had readily been accused for years of materialism and atheism because they were primarily concerned with the diseased organs and functions of the body. In a section of the 1864 edition of his book on the theory of organicism which had not appeared in the 1846 edition, Rostan denied the charge. He argued instead that by concentrating on the somatic conditions of illness doctors were tacitly recognizing that only the body could be sick, and never the mind or "soul." In the case of madness, this meant treating only the corporeal brain as diseased. The admission that the nature of the soul was uninfluenced by the physiological conditions of

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Hereditarianism in French Mental Medicine, 1840–1890: Psychiatric Theory as Ideological Adaptation," in *The Anatomy of Madness: Essays in the History of Psychiatry*, ed. William F. Bynum, Roy Porter, and Michael Shepherd (New York: Tavistock, 1985), pp. 188–232; *idem*, "French psychiatry, hereditarianism, and professional legitimacy, 1840–1900," *Research in Law, Deviance, and Social Control*, 1985, 7: 135–65. See also Jean Borie, *Mythologies de l'hérédité au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Editions galilées, 1981); S. E. D. Shortt, *Victorian Lunacy: Richard M. Bucke and the Practice of Late Nineteenth-Century Psychiatry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 100–109; and Charles Rosenberg, "The Bitter Fruit: Heredity, Disease, and Social Thought in Nineteenth-Century America," in his book *No Other Gods: On Science and American Social Thought* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp. 25–53.

[34] Philippe Joseph Benjamin Buchez, "Quelques mots de philosophie à propos d'aliénation mentale," *Annales médico-psychologiques*, 1852, 4: 509–19; see also Buchez's "Etudes sur les éléments pathogéniques de la folie," *ibid.*, 1854, 6: 157–96.

insanity was "a new proof" of its immortal and "immaterial" nature, Rostan claimed.[35] According to Rostan's formulation, the very practice of psychological medicine defended the inviolability of the soul from any efforts of physiologists to depict it as a by-product of the senses.

The comments of Buchez and Rostan demonstrate that French physicians under the Second Empire were intent on establishing that organized medicine was not atheistic, that it conceded the existence of a metaphysical and rational soul that ruled supreme during intervals of mental health yet whose operations were suspended during the involuntarism of insanity. This medical view considered each human being to be endowed with a "double nature" of immaterial mind and physical body. Mind could not manifest itself without the body, but it still enjoyed an existence independent of cerebrosomatic organization. This theme of the "double nature" of human beings reassured theologians that the continued practice of medicine was not incompatible with the belief in a free will or soul.

B. A. Morel, arguably the most influential alienist during the Second Empire, agreed with Buchez that the soul, an immaterial entity, could not be diseased, and that therefore physicians did not undermine the belief in an unalterable and immaterial soul simply because they viewed the mental disturbances of insanity as symptoms of a diseased brain. In his *Treatise on Mental Diseases* of 1860, Morel conceded that the encephalon was the organ of the affective and intellectual faculties and that insanity found its "immediate seat" in the brain. To ignore the influence of physical diseases of the brain on the intellectual faculty was an error of pure "spiritualism," he maintained. Nonetheless, he contended that the cause of insanity was not necessarily a somatic injury of the brain. The loss of reason in madness could be caused by a variety of factors, he noted, not all of which could be identified as originating in the material substance of the brain, as the study of pathological anatomy up to mid-century had revealed. Therefore, it was wrong to conclude that thought was a product of cerebral tissue. It was unquestionable that the soul needed the brain in order to express itself in the phenomenal world, but that did not mean that thought was a material phenomenon, according to Morel. Thus, madness for Morel always accompanied either an anatomical injury or a purely functional disorder of the brain, but it was an illness that left the soul unscathed and yet incapable of manifesting itself in its healthy and normal state.[36]

The theory that the body and the mind were two wholly different phenomena that were linked in elementary ways was also a doctrine that alienists and the school of academic philosophy could agree upon. During the Restoration and July Monarchy, *universitaires* had habitually criticized alienists for claiming without good reason that they knew the precise boundaries

[35] Léon Rostan, *Exposition des principes de l'organicisme précédée de réflexions sur l'incredulité en matière de médecine,* 3d ed. (Paris: Asselin, 1864), pp. 160–70.

[36] Bénédict Auguste Morel, *Traité des maladies mentales* (Paris: Masson, 1860), pp. 68–75.

between madness and sanity, that they could tell, for example, whether or not hallucinations were always a symptom of mental disease.[37] By the 1850s, however, there were signs that a thaw in the relations between these two groups was occurring, due in part to the efforts of the Société médico-psychologique. The alienist Emile Renaudin wrote in 1854 that he could detect a "tendency" for medicine and academic psychology to move toward a common view that transcended the old antithesis between "materialism" and "spiritualism."[38] For two lay observers the Société was one agency that contributed to an amicable end to the "war" between medicine and university philosophy. Albert Lemoine, a follower of Victor Cousin's, congratulated the Société in 1862 for taking an important step toward an understanding of mental illness based on an alliance between medicine and academic philosophy.[39] Louis Peisse, a medical journalist and member of the Société, also claimed that the founding of the Société was a hopeful sign that opinions were changing and that physicians and laymen were now dedicated to joining what Descartes had severed: the body and mind. No longer, Peisse announced, would the mind and body be studied separately, because doctors and philosophers had agreed that the key to understanding each element lay in the study of their mutual relations.[40] These sentiments persisted at the Société médico-psychologique at least until the end of the Second Empire. For example, the alienist Eugène Billod reminded the members of the Société at a meeting on 27 December 1869 that its goal was to place a "hyphen" between philosophy and medicine and to enlist both disciplines in the study of common topics. Philosophers and doctors ought not to constitute two "distinct churches," he argued. There was not

> the least incompatibility between the branch of medicine we cultivate and the study of philosophy. Most of the doctors of this Society are versed in philosophic studies. It is even probable that it is the taste for these same studies that determined the choice for most of us of a specialty that is intimately tied to philosophy.

Billod underscored his comments by citing the valuable insights of the Société's lay members into the nature of insanity.[41]

The Société's references to a reconciliation between mental medicine and academic philosophy on the basis of an interpretation that stressed the

[37] Dowbiggin, "Professional, Political, and Cultural Dimensions of Psychiatric Theory in France," chaps. 1–4.

[38] Emile Renaudin, *Etudes médico-psychologiques sur l'aliénation mentale* (Paris: Ballière, 1854), pp. 2–3.

[39] Albert Lemoine, *L'Aliéné devant la philosophie, la morale, et la société* (Paris: Didier, 1862), pp. 26–27.

[40] Louis Peisse, *La Médecine et les médecins: philosophie, doctrines, institutions, critiques, moeurs, et biographies médicales,* 2 vols. (Paris: Baillière, 1857), *2:* 5.

[41] Meeting of the Société médico-psychologique, 27 December 1869, *Annales médico-psychologiques,* 1870, *3:* 305. For other examples of this sentiment, see the address to the Société by Robert-Hippolyte Brochin (1808–88) on 27 January 1868, *ibid.,* 1868, *11:* 275–81; Alexandre Brierre de Boismont, "A nos lecteurs," *ibid.,* 1854, *6:* 493.

mutual relations of body and mind were not simply rhetorical. Two of the more prominent figures in university philosophy, Adolphe Garnier and Paul Janet, were members of the early Société and served as its president in 1862 and 1867 respectively. With the demise of the Bourgeois Monarchy in 1848 and the passing of the Falloux Law in 1850, Victor Cousin, the head of university philosophy, had fallen from grace and power. His followers, such as Janet, Garnier, Emile Saisset, and Jules Simon, were politically suspicious in the eyes of the Catholic church, which had attacked them vigorously in the 1840s for their alleged secularization of post-secondary education. Nonetheless, the "spiritualism" of these university philosophers made them valuable allies for alienists vulnerable to the charge of atheistic physiology. For example, Janet and his university *confrères* essentially believed that human actions were based on a principle that did not correspond to the laws governing the physical world.[42] Indeed, as Cousin himself had maintained in 1844, his philosophy taught among other things "the spirituality of the soul, the freedom of man, the law of duty, . . . divine providence, and the immortal promises inscribed in our most intimate needs, in its justice, and its goodness."[43] Cousin believed that the sense organs were only the material instruments that the soul used as a medium for operating in the world.[44] In fact, Cousin had been very conscious during the July Monarchy of the expediency of fashioning a philosophy that, in the words of the literary critic Saint-Beuve, "would not give offense to religion."[45]

After 1852 liberal academics like Jules Simon, the future educational minister of the early Third Republic, continued to profess spiritualist ideas because it made them appear "irreproachable to Catholics," as Philip Bertocci has written.[46] At the same time they tried to dissociate themselves from the aspects of Cousin's philosophy which Catholics had attacked in the 1840s. For example, some Sorbonne professors (such as Janet) rejected Cousin's introspective method of self-observation in psychology, which Catholics had denounced as symptomatic of Protestant "egotism" and individualism.[47] During the Second Empire, university philosophers embraced a less subjective form of psychological observation which, Janet told the International Alienist Congress in Paris on 10 August 1867, stressed empirical observation and multifactorial explanations of mental phenomena and encouraged the detailed study of the interaction of psychological and physi-

[42] Paul Janet, Meeting of the Société médico-psychologique, 30 November 1863, *ibid.*, 1864, *3:* 134.

[43] Cited in George Boas, *French Philosophies of the Romantic Period* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), pp. 215–16.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 201.

[45] Cited in Emile Brehier, *The History of Philosophy,* vol. 1, *The Nineteenth Century: Period of Systems,* trans. Wade Baskin (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 91.

[46] Bertocci, *Jules Simon,* p. 117.

[47] For a Catholic criticism of Cousin's philosophy, see Buchez, *Essai d'un traité complet de philosophie,* 1: 147–59; see also Laurent Cerise's footnote to Antoine Athanase Royer-Collard's "Examen de la doctrine de Maine de Biran sur les rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme," *Annales médico-psychologiques,* 1843, *2:* 4.

ological elements.[48] They also advocated a more naturalist psychology than the old spiritualism, which had separated the soul from the body completely, while at the same time admitting that the soul was immaterial, that it constituted a principle of mind dependent on the organism for its operations yet existing prior to all psychological functioning. The presence, then, of chastened and spiritualist *universitaires* such as Janet and Garnier in the ranks of the Société médico-psychologique indicated that it too wished to appear "irreproachable to Catholics." At the same time, the *universitaires* benefited from closer ties with psychological medicine because these symbolized the eagerness they shared with French alienists to disavow the part of their past characterized by feuding with Catholics.

A far more direct attempt to look deferential to Catholicism was Louis Delasiauve's 1857 account of the Société's early years in the *Gazette hebdomadaire de médecine et chirurgie.* Delasiauve, a founding member of the Société, tried to depict it as consistent with the spirit of Christian values and charity. He acknowledged that "associations" had been a cause for official suspicion for many years. Yet, he contended, when "science" and "charity" combined—as he claimed they did in the Société—this fear was unwarranted. The Société's members were pledged to the humanitarian and progressive ideals of the 1838 Asylum Law, Delasiauve argued, and were inspired by the best of intentions and "productive zeal." To confirm the Société's conformity to religious principles he reminded his readers of Christ's own words: "When some are gathered in my name, I shall be among them." The commitment to truth of a scientific organization like the Société, Delasiauve alleged, was perfectly consistent with Christ's words.[49] By drawing attention to the Christian ethos of the Société médicopsychologique and the utilitarian role psychiatrists could play as functionaries of the state, he demonstrated the value of the Société to the existing regime.

Thus, it was clear that during the first decade of its existence the Société médico-psychologique was determined to convey the impression that it was a learned society committed to effecting a compromise between the spiritualism of university philosophy and the organicism of organized medicine. The presence of high-profile, non-alienist members such as Buchez, Cerise, Janet, and Garnier symbolized its willingness to avoid the charge of atheism and materialism as well as do penance for past political and philosophical mistakes. Yet, the Société médico-psychologique was still essentially a psychiatric organization during the Second Empire, as its membership rolls indicated. Thus, while it is evident that the alienists of the Société were willing to equate the public image of the Société with that of asylum psychiatry, the question remains: what was their attitude toward the "spiritualist

[48] *Annales médico-psychologiques,* 1867, *10:* 493.

[49] Louis Delasiauve, "Société médico-psychologique: ses phases, ses travaux," *Gazette hebdomadaire de médecine et de chirurgie,* 7 August 1857, *4:* 545–54.

physiology" which the Société officially embraced? Did all alienists undergo an abrupt sea change in philosophical outlook because of the new cultural environment of the Second Empire, or did some of them privately remain "physiologists?" In other words, was there a distinction between public image and private conviction? And, if so, why?

IV

These questions are difficult to answer definitively, yet some evidence suggests that the early Société included unrepentantly anticlerical and republican doctors who were nonetheless resolved to avoid any religious or political controversy that might jeopardize the association's legal existence. This evidence points to the conclusion that the alienists of the Société deliberately endorsed its public profile because they feared that the pursuit of anticlerical and republican agendas would only hamper psychiatry's attempt to construct a professional identity during the Bonapartist era, an identity that stressed collaboration with and dependence on the central state and its bureaucracy.

In addressing this question, an important source in the absence of archival records for the Société médico-psychologique is the unpublished autobiography of Alfred Maury, a founding lay member of the Société.[50] By profession a librarian at the Institut de France, Maury also wrote and published books on a wide range of topics, including law, anthropology, history, and psychology. Known as an urbane and learned man, Maury was welcome in a variety of Parisian cultural, scientific, and political circles. In 1857 he became a member of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences at the Institut. In the 1840s and 1850s he also enjoyed a close friendship with the alienists Jules Baillarger, L. F. Lélut, and Jacques Moreau (de Tours), based primarily on the keen interest he shared with these physicians in mental and nervous illnesses. It was thus understandable that Maury was a frequent contributor to the *Annales médico-psychologiques* and emerged as one of the most important lay members of the early Société.[51]

However, his close relations with asylum physicians did not mean that he had a high opinion of doctors. His autobiography abounds with critical and caustic comments about the therapeutic incompetence of organized medicine. In his observations of the Société he also remarked how its medical members were prone to acrimonious quarrels and unedifying factional-

[50] For the autobiography see n. 30; and for a biographical sketch, see Maurice Paz, "Alfred Maury, membre de l'Institut, chroniqueur de Napoléon III et du Second Empire," *Revue des travaux de l'Académie des sciences morales et politiques,* 1964, 117th year, 4th series, pp. 248–64. The Société médico-psychologique's records, most of which date from the twentieth century, are located at the Hôpital de jour pour épileptiques, Créteil, France.

[51] According to his own testimony, he was offered the presidency of the society on several occasions, yet refused on the grounds that he did not have the time. Maury, "Souvenirs d'un homme de lettres," Ms. 2650, vol. 4, p. 19.

ism. But above all, Maury was astonished at the political naiveté of the Société's doctors. Although obsessed with political matters, these physicians, Maury maintained, lacked common sense in their approaches to politics. Most of them, he claimed, harbored a deep "aversion" to what he called "the clerical party," a sentiment that "dominated" their minds and had propelled them into the republican party. Their dislike of clericalism, he added, was an important reason why alienists spent so much energy trying to convince French magistrates and juries that criminal defendants had acted involuntarily and with diminished responsibility due to mental illness. Alienists, Maury contended, pursued this medico-legal policy because of their antipathy toward the religious notion of free will.[52]

Maury did not mention any names, yet it is clear from his comments that some of the alienists of the Société médico-psychologique were fiercely anticlerical and republican and harbored a resilient sympathy for "physiological" doctrines, despite the Société's official statements and the opinions of other members. This conclusion is reinforced by a glimpse at the minutes of the meetings of the Société during the Second Empire. As Maury wrote, these discussions were often marked by strong disagreements as well as spirited endorsements of physiological views. Yet, even in these informal gatherings, the doctors of the Société médico-psychologique backed down when it appeared that their opinions were leading to overtly anticlerical conclusions.

Two examples of this phenomenon surfaced in the 1850s at the Société médico-psychologique. The first were the discussions in 1855–56 on the topic of hallucinations and their compatibility with the possession of reason. The question of the psychology of hallucinations was highly contentious, for it was this issue that had sparked so much controversy in the 1840s and led to allegations of anti-Catholicism being leveled at the editors of the *Annales médico-psychologiques*. It is not surprising, then, given the presence of both religiously orthodox and anticlerical members within the early Société, that its attention should have shifted toward this issue sooner or later. The debates quickly focused on the question of whether or not one could experience hallucinations and still retain one's sanity. The corollary to this question was whether or not a hallucination was a consistent symptom of madness; if it was, it meant that a hallucination was always a pathophysiological phenomenon, and hence that a physician was uniquely qualified to diagnose and treat it. The more controversial feature of the debate was the implication it held for the saints of the Catholic church whose virtue and piety rested on the legitimacy of their ecstatic visions and their claims to have been visited by the Holy Spirit. If a hallucination was always a pathological condition, then the implication was that these "saints" were unwit-

[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21; Ms. 2649, vol. 3, pp. 401–2.

ting lunatics and, had they been living in the nineteenth century, would have been prime candidates for institutionalization.

The tone of the debate had been set by Alexandre Brierre de Boismont, the second edition of whose book on hallucinations had appeared in 1851.[53] Brierre de Boismont's words warranted special attention because from 1849 to 1852 he was the sole editor of the *Annales médico-psychologiques* and served as the Société médico-psychologique's first secretary in 1852. He continued to act as an editor of the *Annales* until 1862. In his book Brierre de Boismont attacked Maury, Lélut, Calmeil, and Baillarger for endorsing "the introduction of physiology into history."[54] He objected that if their views were accepted it would mean that Socrates, Luther, Joan of Arc, and Ignatius Loyola had been nothing other than mentally diseased.[55] While he acknowledged that most cases of hallucination and alleged religious rapture were simply the products of diseased minds, he also argued that occasionally powers surfaced in hallucinatory or ecstatic states which could be traced to "an enlarged faculty of perception, a supernatural intuition."[56] It was these exceptions that proved Maury and Lélut wrong, he claimed.

Brierre de Boismont's characterization of the issue compelled his colleagues at the Société médico-psychologique who disagreed with him to consider the religious implications of their opinions. For example, Baillarger, who believed that there was a profound difference between a normal sensation and a hallucination, argued that a hallucination was the psychological result of a pathological state of the brain. Nonetheless, he added that "if a hallucination is always a pathological phenomenon, it is not always a symptom of madness: a Breton peasant would not be insane to believe that the Virgin had appeared to him and conversed with him."[57] Here Baillarger simply refused to take his argument to its logical conclusion.

The alienist Jean-Baptiste Parchappe (1800–1866) tried another tactic. He agreed with Baillarger that a hallucination was an "abnormal phenomenon" and an "essentially pathological state," yet he too conceded the possibility that in some cases it might not be a symptom of madness. To prove that there were exceptions, he referred to the "incontestable examples borrowed from history."[58] However, one clever and candid participant in the Société's debates saw through this ploy. By acknowledging cases in the distant past in which hallucination and insanity had not necessarily been syn-

[53] Alexandre Brierre de Boismont, *Hallucinations: Or, the Rational History of Apparitions, Visions, Dreams, Ecstasy, Magnetism and Somnabulism,* 1st American ed. from 2d enlarged French ed. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Lindsay and Blackiston, 1853).

[54] *Ibid.,* pp. 352–53.

[55] *Ibid.,* p. 27.

[56] *Ibid.,* p. 259.

[57] Meeting of the Société médico-psychologique, 26 November 1855, *Annales médico-psychologiques,* 1856, *2:* 138.

[58] Meeting of the Société médico-psychologique, 28 April 1856, *ibid.,* p. 442.

onymous, Parchappe—like other physicians—had safely maneuvered the discussion onto a terrain where he could easily make concessions to the clerical party without sacrificing any real professional privileges. Those who held a view similar to Parchappe's were willing to concede historical exceptions because no alienist, regardless of his philosophical loyalties, would consider a contemporary sufferer of hallucinations who believed in the reality of his hallucinations to be sane. Confronted with someone who was hallucinating, a typical alienist—and this included even the devoutly Catholic and self-professed "spiritualist" Brierre de Boismont[59]—would endorse institutionalization in an asylum.[60]

This same propensity to dodge religiously offensive conclusions once controversial issues had surfaced at the Société's meetings was evident in the Société's 1857–58 discussions of the mental and nervous states that occupied the borderland between body and mind—phenomena such as dreams, hypnotism, somnambulism, hysteria, and catalepsy. The debates were prompted by Cerise's suggestion that the Société discuss the conditions of trance and rapture in the ecstatic state and their similarities with other abnormal physiological and psychological states. Yet the debates quickly turned into a lengthy and heated discussion of "animal magnetism," or mesmerism. There were essentially two positions on this issue among the Société's members. One group, led by Cerise and Louis Peisse, argued that some hypnotic phenomena observed during mesmerist sessions could not be explained in scientific terms. The other group, which included most of the Société's alienists, believed that all mesmerist phenomena were due either to charlatanism or to a diseased physiological condition that left certain people suggestible to the commands of charismatic figures.

The ensuing debate disclosed how the Société's psychiatrists could still promote professional prerogatives while tackling a sensitive issue. Mesmerism, the brainchild of the Viennese physician Franz Anton Mesmer, had enjoyed a sustained popularity throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, yet beginning in 1846 it entered a new stage of popularity that carried over into the 1850s.[61] This stage in mesmerism's history coincided with a revival of spiritism which swept continental Europe in the early 1850s, triggering a series of fads based on the alleged communication with the dead through celebrated mediums.[62] The popular taste for supernatural and occult phenomena during the 1850s did not escape the notice of alienists. The psychiatric consensus was that the public fascination with practices

[59] For Brierre de Boismont's profession of faith in spiritualism, see his *Hallucinations,* p. 364.

[60] Henri de Castelnau, Meeting of the Société médico-psychologique, 26 November 1855, *Annales médico-psychologiques,* 1856, *2:* 139–40.

[61] Robert Darnton, *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 147.

[62] Henri F. Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), p. 163; see also S. E. D. Shortt's "Physicians and psychics: the Anglo-American medical response to spiritualism, 1870–1890," *J. Hist. Med.,* 1984, *39:* 339–55.

such as mesmerism and table-turning was symptomatic of a collective hysteria that had developed out of the failure and frustration of the political dreams of the 1848 Revolution.[63] While many turned to the spiritual practices of religion as a form of substitute gratification, many others were attracted to more secular activities such as mesmerism to satisfy their appetite for supernaturalism. During the Société's debates, its alienists carefully avoided attacking religious variations of supernatural experience and instead condemned the public use of mesmerist or hypnotic techniques unless supervised and performed by a licensed doctor. Most of the Société's doctors agreed with their lay colleague Maury that enthusiasm for mesmerism or spiritism was virtually identical with mental disease, immorality, and antisocial instincts. Alienists like Parchappe, Guillaume Ferrus, and Ludger Lunier (1825–85), Baillarger's nephew and a future inspector general of the national Service des Aliénés, expressed their opinion that medically unregulated mesmerist and spiritist practices constituted a distinct threat to public morality and social peace.[64]

By attacking the epidemic of mesmerism in Second Empire France, alienists succeeded in denouncing a social phenomenon with suspicious moral, political, and religious overtones while depicting themselves as the most qualified experts to evaluate and monitor it. This strategy also enabled some of them to indulge their covert physiological tastes under the guise of protecting public standards of virtue, decorum, and order. For example, they explained both the belief in mesmerism and the involuntary behavior observed in hypnotic states as derivatives of a diseased neuropathic condition, thus rendering otherwise mysterious and sometimes sinister phenomena mundane and manageable. By dramatizing the danger to morals and decency of mesmerism, they made it appear exceptional and distinct from supernatural religious experiences, and by secularizing it they encouraged the imperial authorities to believe that mental medicine, far from being a threat, was in its medico-scientific capacity a guardian of public morality and decorum. Their treatment of the topic showed that alienists were more concerned with attacking those who threatened law, order, and morality than with attacking clericalism.

The crucial point is that the alienists of the Société médico-psychologique were extremely careful to avoid attacking directly what Parchappe in 1852 called "the spirituality and immortality of the soul," those "great and eternal principles consecrated both by religion and philoso-

[63] See, for example, Jules Baillarger and Alexandre Brierre de Boismont, "D'une tendance particulière de l'esprit au merveilleux à l'époque des grands commotions," *Annales médico-psychologiques,* 1853, *5:* 711–15. This was not a unique interpretation, as Ellenberger has shown; see his *Discovery of the Unconscious,* pp. 225–26.

[64] For Maury's attitude toward mesmerism and animal magnetism, see his *Le Sommeil et les rêves: études psychologiques sur ces phénomènes . . .,* 2d ed. (Paris: Didier, 1862). For the comments of Maury, Parchappe, Ferrus, and Lunier, see the 25 May 1857, 16 November 1857, 14 December 1857, 25 January 1858, and 22 February 1858 meetings of the Société médico-psychologique, *Annales médico-psychologiques,* 1857, *3:* 601–19, 630–35; *ibid.,* 1858, *4:* 231–35, 241–49, 259–65, 312–24.

phy."[65] This approach was easier for some alienists than others. For example, Brierre de Boismont, Baillarger, and Jean-Paul Falret (1794–1870) had announced their conversion to "spiritualism" before the Second Empire.[66] For others, like Calmeil, Ferrus, and Moreau (de Tours), who had been identified with the doctrine of "physiology" and the anticlerical movement during the July Monarchy, it was necessary to sublimate private tastes and align themselves with the Société médico-psychologique and its public authorization of religiously congruent ideas.

On the other hand, by limiting the scope of mental medicine to the consideration of the damaged organ of thought and the classification of its morbid affective and intellectual symptoms, they did not have to sacrifice important professional prerogatives. While they conceded the sovereignty of the voluntary mind during the state of mental health, and admitted that the dispositions of cerebral tissue never directly affected the nature of free will—even during intervals of psychological disease—they still defied the spiritualist principle that stated that insanity was a disorder of pure mind. In other words, the recognition of the existence of the soul did not necessarily violate the organicist conviction of organized medicine that in mental illness there was always either a functional or a structural injury to the cerebrospinal nervous system. This reconciliation between the doctrines of "spiritualism" and "physiology" meant that alienists could still rationalize the intervention of licensed physicians in the treatment of insanity, for the legitimacy of medicine's involvement in the management of insanity rested on the notion that it was a physical disease and could be treated by physicalist as well as "moral" means.[67]

Moreover, this brand of physiological psychology paradoxically enabled asylum physicians to depoliticize their discussions of mental pathology. Having vowed to leave aside all questions regarding either the material or the purely psychological nature of thought[68] and having relegated all philosophical matters dealing with the powers of the soul to the domain of metaphysics and theology, they dodged the charge of materialism and atheism and depicted their work as a value-free enterprise concerned simply with clinical facts. Consciously and voluntarily[69] they embraced Cerise's eclectic

[65] Meeting of the Société médico-psychologique, 27 December 1852, *ibid.*, 1853, 5: 338.

[66] Goldstein, *Console and Classify*, p. 262.

[67] For recognition of this crucial professional consideration, see Peisse, *La Médecine et les médecins*, 2: 17–18; Lemoine, *L'Aliéné*, p. 28.

[68] See, for example, Jacques Moreau (de Tours), *La Psychologie morbide dans ses rapports avec la philosophie de l'histoire; ou, De l'influence des névropathies sur le dynamisme intellectuel* (Paris: Masson, 1859), pp. 4–5. Despite his obvious affinity for "physiological" explanations of mental phenomena, Moreau revealed to what lengths French physicians during the Second Empire would go when addressing the relationship of body to mind. In his *Psychologie morbide* he explicitly refused to reduce the operations of the mind to the organization of cerebral matter and discouraged physicians from discussing the nature of the soul. Yet only a few pages later (p. 8) he expressed the religiously orthodox notion that the soul itself was not susceptible to growth or diminution, health or disease, thus distinguishing its characteristics from those of material bodies.

[69] An objection might be made that the antiphysiological nature of alienist writings during the Second Empire was due primarily to the censorship practiced by a nonalienist editorial board of the *Annales médico-psychologiques*. However, this overlooks that Baillarger shared editorial duties with Brierre de Boismont from

approach to mental illness which emphasized the rejection of all systems and sweeping medical theories and yet acknowledged that each system—no matter how dogmatic—had something of value to contribute to an understanding of insanity's pathology, diagnosis, and treatment. In the process, they began to fashion the positivist image of psychiatrists as neutral and disinterested practitioners modestly pursuing their narrow and carefully circumscribed science.[70]

V

There was an even more important professional reason why, despite private misgivings, many alienists under the Second Empire endorsed the Société médico-psychologique's public position on contentious philosophical issues. Mid-century alienists, whether "spiritualist" or "physiological," were united in the medical effort to usurp the functions of the priesthood and religious sisters in the informal treatment of nervous and mental disorders.[71] Yet, with the founding of the Second Empire, the prospects of success for this enterprise were far from promising. Clerical involvement in the institutional treatment of the mad actually thrived in the 1840s, according to Jan Goldstein, due to the failure of the 1838 law to resolve the fierce rivalry between the Church and alienism.[72] The initial alliance between the imperial regime and the Catholic church suggested the real possibility that at best a medical victory over clericalism would be indefinitely postponed. There were two choices for asylum psychiatrists: either continue the aggressively professional and anticlerical policies of the pre-1848 period—embodied in the 1848 Société médico-psychologique—risking official censure and reprimand while hoping for the political climate to change, or foster improved relations with the Bonapartist state by professing their faith in officially sanctioned cultural principles. Alienists chose the latter, sensing —perhaps correctly— that a confrontational attitude toward those in power and authority would have calamitous professional consequences.[73] They realized that continued enmity between asylum psychiatry and Catholicism in France might jeopardize state support for augmented medical control

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1853 to 1855, and that from 1855 to 1862 they were joined by Moreau (de Tours). There is little evidence, therefore, that nonalienist spiritualists like Buchez and Cerise imposed a "conspiracy of silence" on contributors to the *Annales*.

[70] For the relevance of degeneracy theory to this image of neutrality and disinterest after mid-century, see my "Professional, Political, and Cultural Dimensions of Psychiatric Theory in France," pp. 365–466.

[71] Goldstein, *Console and Classify*, pp. 197–239. See also Matthew Ramsey, "Medical power and popular medicine: illegal healers in nineteenth-century France," *J. Soc. Hist.*, 1977, *10*: 560–87; Jacques Léonard, "Les Guérisseurs en France au XIXe siècle," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 1980, *27*: 501–16; Jacques G. Petit, "Folie, langage, pouvoirs en Maine-et-Loire," *ibid.*, pp. 529–64.

[72] Goldstein, *Console and Classify*, p. 307.

[73] Alienists had reason to believe that the imperial government might not sympathize with their professional interests. A Bonapartist decree of 25 March 1852 had authorized the departmental prefects rather than the Minister of the Interior to appoint asylum physicians, a decentralizing step that displeased many psychiatrists because it allegedly left them at a disadvantage in their struggle for supremacy over the religious orders

over the conditions of asylum practice. If ill feelings between the Church and mental medicine persisted, then there was no telling how much damage to alienist interests a renewed Catholicsm might do with tacit imperial approval. Therefore, alienism during the Second Empire followed the behavioral pattern that a group of scholars have recently identified with other nineteenth-century liberal professions in France: they eschewed the process of interest-group "association"—the middle term between the individual doctor and the market economy[74]—and sought fiscal support, social legitimacy, and a qualified degree of professional independence from outside interference "through cooperation or even 'collaboration' with the central state and its bureaucracy."[75]

The psychiatric policy of conciliation seemed to pay off for mental medicine in the 1860s when, besides using alienists to quell an epidemic of hysteria in the Alpine village of Morzine, the imperial government began an expansion and administrative overhaul of Parisian asylums, thus improving state employment opportunities for psychiatrists.[76] The Société médicopsychologique also benefited; on 11 December 1867 the Minister of Public Instruction designated it an association of "public utility." This administrative gesture conferred legal status on the Société as an association of educational importance to society based on ministerial approval of its by-laws, objectives, membership lists, and the verbatim minutes of its meetings published in the *Annales médico-psychologiques.*[77] It crowned the endeavor of the Société to erase the stigma of association and psychological medicine's reputation as a republican and anticlerical profession by cultivating the image of a research center of disinterested medical scientists and civil servants dedicated to the humanitarian and benevolent goals of the burgeoning national asylum system.

This all meant that the Société médico-psychologique never became what its supporters in 1848 hoped it would evolve to be: an occupational group chiefly devoted to the pursuit of psychiatric interests. However, after

within mental hospitals. See Alexandre Brierre de Boismont, "Observations sur le nouveau mode de nomination des médecins d'asiles d'aliénés," *Union médicale,* 27 April 1852; see also Augustin Constans, Ludger Lunier, and Edouard Jean Baptiste Dumesnil, *Rapport général à M. le Ministre de l'Intérieur sur le Service des aliénés en 1874* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1878), pp. 51–52.

[74] Goldstein, *Console and Classify,* p. 39.

[75] Gerald L. Geison, "Introduction," in *Professions and the French State, 1700–1900,* ed. Gerald L. Geison (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984), pp. 3–4. See also Caroline C. Hannaway, "The Société royale de médecine and epidemics in the Ancien régime," *Bull. Hist. Med.,* 1972, *46:* 257–73.

[76] Jan Goldstein, " 'Moral Contagion': A Professional Ideology of Medicine and Psychiatry in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century France," in *Professions and the French State,* ed. Geison, pp. 211–14. For the expansion of the Parisian asylum system, see Gerard Bleandonu and Guy Le Gaufey, "The Creation of the Insane Asylums of Auxerre and Paris," in *Deviants and the Abandoned in French Society: Selections from the Annales, Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations,* ed. Robert Forster and Orest Ranum, trans. Elborg Forster and Patricia M. Ranum, 7 vols. (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 4: 180–212.

[77] For the official text of the document signed by Victor Duruy, the Minister of Public Instruction, see *Annales médico-psychologiques,* 1868, *11:* 92–106. See also Katherine Auspitz, *The Radical Bourgeoisie: The Ligue de l'enseignement and the Origins of the Third Republic, 1866–1885* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

1852 the significance of the Société médico-psychologique as a body representative of French psychiatry did not diminish substantially. Indeed, its value to the profession simply changed. Through its capacity as a learned and scientific debating society it continued to serve as a forum for the ideas and opinions of France's leading alienists. As such, it testified to the calculated strategy of French psychiatrists after 1848 to appear intellectually fashionable and flexible so as not to jeopardize the professional prerogatives they enjoyed by virtue of the 1838 law.

This image of political disinterest and loyalty to value-free science contrasts with the anticlerical and openly republican profile of French medicine recently drawn by Jan Goldstein in her portrait of the Charcot school during the Third Republic.[78] Phenomena such as the French psychiatric adherence to the theory of degeneracy in the late nineteenth century suggest, however, that the interest of psychological medicine in maintaining an apolitical image did not end with the fall of the Second Empire. French alienists remained anticlerical in the sense that they sought to eradicate the role of the religious orders in the asylum treatment of the mentally ill. However, this professional objective did not prompt alienists other than Désiré-Magloire Bourneville to enter the sphere of cultural politics to the same degree as during the July Monarchy. It may be that alienists embraced secular medical science more for its capacity to make them appear apolitical than for its capacity to depict them as anticlerical *idéologues*. While more research is needed on the political attitudes of French alienists under the early Third Republic, there is some evidence to indicate that the lessons learned by the psychiatrists of the Société médico-psychologique during the Second Empire were not soon forgotten.

[78] Goldstein, *Console and Classify*, pp. 322–77.