



# Investigating the Supernatural: From Spiritism and Occultism to Psychical Research and Metapsychics in France, 1853--1931

*Sofie Lachapelle*

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## **Investigating the Supernatural: From Spiritism and Occultism to Psychical Research and Metapsychics in France, 1853--1931** Sofie Lachapelle

Séances were wildly popular in France between 1850 and 1930, when members of the general public and scholars alike turned to the wondrous as a means of understanding and explaining the world. Sofie Lachapelle explores how five distinct groups attempted to use and legitimize séances: spiritists, who tried to create a new science; concerned with the spiritual realm and the afterlife; occultists, who hoped to connect ancient revelations with contemporary science; physicians, psychiatrists, and psychologists, who developed a pathology of supernatural experiences; psychical researchers, who drew on the unexplained experiences of the public to create a new field of research; and metapsychists, who attempted to develop a new science of yet-to-be understood natural forces.

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