

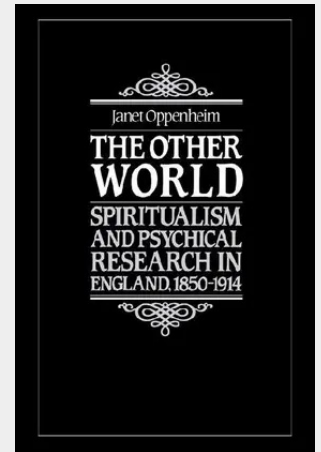
Oppenheim

The Other World

Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England, 1850-1914

The Other World examines the public fascination with spiritualism and psychical research in Britain from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century. It explores the variety of social background, education, and professional expertise that characterized the men and women who attended séances and investigated psychic phenomena, and it places them in the context of their times without ridiculing their beliefs. It is not concerned with the question of whether psychic phenomena are 'real', but rather attempts to understand the reasons why artisans, intellectuals, and aristocrats alike embraced spiritualism as a surrogate religion or endorsed psychical research as the science of the future. Whether self-educated workers, medical doctors, clergymen, housewives, university professors, journalists, comparative psychologists, or Nobel prize-winning physicists, they cannot be dismissed as cranks and eccentrics. Their efforts to mediate between the demands of science and the comforts of faith reflected anxieties central to the Victorian and Edwardian decades.

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