

# Spiritualism, Mesmerism and the Occult, 1800–1920

Editor: **Shane McCorristine**, University of Cambridge

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This edition provides an important insight into the dark areas between science, medicine and religion in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Scientific principles were commonly used during this period in an attempt to prove the existence of the supernatural. It was this emphasis on proof rather than faith that led to the emergence of psychical research as a discipline.

Investigation reflected the popular desire to account for events such as ghost-sightings, telepathy and second-sight, as well as seeking to provide a better understanding of human psychology and proof of the soul. Observation, credibility and accumulation of evidence were seen as key to legitimizing the supernatural as an area for scientific debate and for challenging its many sceptics. This created a lively public sphere for debates, reports, narratives and a rich documentary culture.

This five-volume collection is organized thematically and spans the period from initial mesmerism experiments to the decline of the Society for Psychical Research in the 1920s. It includes a wide range of rare source material which illustrates the variety of different debates and opposing viewpoints, while a full editorial apparatus allows a nuanced reading of the texts. The set is a significant addition to the growing research on spiritualism and will be of interest to scholars of the history of science and medicine, parapsychology and Victorian studies.



Frontispiece to William O'Connor, *The Ghost*  
(New York, 1867)

- All material is rare and most texts are not available in microfilm or digital collections
- Includes a selection of manuscript sources
- Contains over 75 texts reflecting the contemporary controversies and debates
- Full editorial apparatus: general introduction, volume introductions, headnotes and endnotes
- Index in final volume

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