



The Darkened Room: Women, Power, and Spiritualism in Late Victorian England

Alex Owen

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A highly original study that examines the central role played by women as mediums, healers, and believers during the golden age of spiritualism in the late Victorian era, *The Darkened Room* is more than a meditation on women mediums—it's an exploration of the era's gender relations.

The hugely popular spiritualist movement, which maintained that women were uniquely qualified to commune with spirits of the dead, offered female mediums a new independence, authority, and potential to undermine conventional class and gender relations in the home and in society.

Using previously unexamined sources and an innovative approach, Alex Owen invokes the Victorian world of darkened séance rooms, theatrical apparitions, and moving episodes of happiness lost and regained. She charts the struggles between spiritualists and the medical and legal establishments over the issue of female mediumship, and provides new insights into the gendered dynamics of Victorian society.

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