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## **TAKING UP SPACE: TRACING THE REPRESENTATION OF FEMALE MEDIUM EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN IN THE SPIRITUALIST PERIODICALS, *THE SPIRITUALIST* (1869-70) AND *THE TWO WORLDS* (1887)**

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### **Abstract**

This article will consider the representation of the influential female medium Emma Hardinge Britten (1823-1899) within the context of the spiritualist periodical in Victorian Britain from 1869 to 1887. Much contemporary academic work has been conducted to examine the role of women in the spiritualist movement and to take the female medium out of the margins and into the centre (Basham, 1992; Oppenheim, 1985; Owen, 2004; Kontou, 2009). Therefore, considering women as fundamental to the movement, coupled with the fact that more women journalists and editors emerged in the nineteenth century, we would expect to find substantial evidence of women's voices within the spiritualist press. This article will examine if this is the case through the lens of Emma Hardinge Britten, whose career developed from female medium to founder and editor of a spiritualist periodical, *The Two Worlds* (published 1887-1892). Looking first at *The Spiritualist* (published 1869-1882) to establish the space allotted to early representations of Emma Hardinge Britten, then to *The Two Worlds* to see a more dominant and established voice through self-representation, the article will show how women were able to take up significant space in the spiritualist periodical.

### **Keywords**

Spiritualism; Female Medium; Editor; Spiritualist Periodical; Gender Representation

## Introduction

The focus of this article is to analyse how Emma Hardinge Britten represents the increasing influence of the female medium in the spiritualist press of the nineteenth century. It will concentrate on the early editions of *The Spiritualist* from 1869 to 1870 and the opening publication of *The Two Worlds* in 1887, in order to trace the career of Emma Hardinge Britten (1823-1899) and to highlight the position of women in the spiritualist periodical. It examines early editions of *The Spiritualist* to show how Emma Hardinge Britten, a prominent figure in the spiritualist movement, is represented by others. It then shows a point of change through Hardinge Britten's founding of *The Two Worlds*, where she represents herself as editor in her salutatory address. There is significant critical work on the spiritualist periodical (Ferguson, 2012; Youngkin, 2016) but there is a gap in scholarship that focuses specifically on the female medium. As Tatiana Kontou (2009, p. 6) observes, '[v]ery few mediums recorded their experiences of spiritualism on their own terms and their stories were predominantly told by others.' However, there are notable examples of autobiographies by female mediums, such as Elizabeth d'Esperance's *Shadow Land* (1897) and Emma Hardinge Britten's *Autobiography* (1900). With this in mind, the article argues that there are representations of the female medium in their own words in the spiritualist press, as evidenced by the developing career of Emma Hardinge Britten. Furthermore, from the career trajectory of Hardinge Britten, it is possible to suggest that the spiritualist periodical was a space open to women and that the opening of this space can also be mapped alongside changing opportunities for women in Victorian society, as encapsulated later in the century, by the figure of the New Woman. As well as challenging societal gender expectations through her presence in the spiritualist periodical, Hardinge Britten's publication *The Two Worlds* was influential in challenging class and regional boundaries, as it was produced in provincial Manchester, outside of the London-centric publication hub.

Born Emma Floyd in London 1823, Hardinge Britten notes in her autobiography that she had mediumistic gifts from a young age and it was often stated by her contemporaries that she was 'born a witch' (1900, p. 2). Sources differ on how she adopted the name Hardinge but some suggest it was a stage name (Youngkin, 2016, p. 71). It was when she went to America that her relationship with the spiritualism movement developed, and it was there that she attended her first séance. Her rise to fame was in part due to her involvement in Abraham Lincoln's election campaign, for which she gave political lectures. Mary Todd Lincoln was deeply engaged with the spiritual movement and Emma Hardinge Britten's involvement with the family likely added to her reputation as a prominent spiritualist medium. Furthermore, adding to her credentials as a historian of spiritualism, she published *The History of Modern Spiritualism* in 1870, the same year that she married fellow spiritualist William Godwin Britten. Together they published *The Western Star* in America in 1872. In 1875, whilst in New York, she co-founded The Theosophical Society alongside Helena Blavatsky, but this was to be an unsuccessful partnership that soon dissolved (Wehrstein, 2024, para.7).

In 1879 she moved to Manchester and remained there until her death in 1899. Living in the north of England, she founded *The Two Worlds* (1887). This was to become a significant publication in the landscape of the spiritualist press, as it challenged the domination of the London-based papers such as *The Spiritualist* (founded in 1869). Not only was it based in the north, it also challenged class privilege, as Janet Oppenheim (1985, p. 46) notes, instead

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of 'serv[ing] a largely middle-class, educated metropolitan audience, *Two Worlds* appealed to provincial readers with fewer social and intellectual pretensions'. For five years (1887-1892), during a time of great social change for women leading up to the rise of the New Woman figure of the fin de siècle, Emma Hardinge Britten edited *The Two Worlds*. Indeed, Danielle Drew (2017, p. 66) argues that in her role as a periodical editor, Hardinge Britten 'broke the medium mold.' Due to her successful career as both medium and editor, she can be seen as a subversive figure during a period which promoted the ideal woman inside the domestic sphere of the home. Therefore, Hardinge Britten conformed to Kontou's description of the typical Victorian medium as 'a figure who subverts femininity and instigates questions of class, sexuality, and the position of women in the private and the public sphere both in this world and the next' (Kontou, 2008, p. 275).

### **Victorian Spiritualism**

Victorian spiritualism, as we think of it today in terms of séances and mediums, originated in American 1848 with the Fox sisters in New York who began a popular craze of table rapping. Ruth Brandon (1983, p. 1) argues that for the sisters, Kate and Maggie Fox, the 'rappings must have marked a break in the monotony, welcome to the little girls, if not to their parents.' However, Catherine Crowe's collection *The Nightside of Nature* (1848), published in the same year in the UK, shows that the Victorians were already deeply fascinated by the supernatural. Crowe's best-selling compendium of spiritualist writing details some of the prior traditions that Victorian spiritualism is based on. Spiritualism begins its rise in popularity when the female medium, Mrs Hydan visits London in 1852. Consequently, as Roger Luckhurst notes, spiritualism soon developed into a religion, marked by a surge in spiritualist churches, beginning with the first in Keighley, Yorkshire, in 1853 (Luckhurst, 2018, para. 7). Luckhurst further observes that spiritualism 'found particular favour in the industrial north of England, where dissenting religion was already strong' (Luckhurst, 2018, para. 7).

In many ways, spiritualism offered a more democratic and non-hierarchical version of religion and this might account for its appeal to women, who could find an important role within the movement. Miriam Wallraven (2008, p. 390). highlights how '[i]n contrast to the subservient role of women in traditional religions, the spiritualist movement was inconceivable without women, who constituted most of the mediums.' Put another way, women were central to the spiritualist movement, which was in opposition to how they were marginalised in society. Within the spiritualist movement, they could find a role outside that of the idealised moral guardian of the home – either as a medium or part of the community represented in the growing spiritualist press. To a notable degree, spiritualism as a movement was inclusive, as it was made up of a 'rich diversity of people [who] patronized a spiritualist press that served to publicize the activities of spiritualist circles around the country' (Oppenheim, 1985, p. 28).

Reaching its height in popularity in the UK during the mid to late Victorian period, many séances were held in parlours across the region. The role of the spiritualist medium in the séance was to be the conduit between the living and the dead, channelling the spirits for a meeting of people who were often called sitters. In an edition of Charles Dickens' *Household Words*, Henry Morley offers a comprehensive definition of mediumship:

There are some persons in whose sphere the spirits have more power. The grossness of matter commonly repels them, but there are some people whose nervous systems appear to act [...] as conductors, as magnets, so to speak whose bodies are surrounded by an atmosphere in which the spirits freely move. In the neighbourhood of such a person, spirits manifest themselves. Such a person is a Medium (Morley, 1852, p. 220).

Furthermore, the famous medium Elizabeth d'Esperance describes the experience of mediumship in her autobiography *Shadow Land* (1897): '[M]y brain apparently becom[es] a sort of whispering gallery where the thoughts of other persons resolved themselves into an embodied form' (d'Esperance, 2012, p. 160).

It is worthy to note that these definitions do not gender the medium. This is perhaps surprising, as although there were mediums of both genders operating within the movement there was significant debate about the role of gender in the spiritualist movement as it coincided with the 'women's movement' (Basham, 1992; Oppenheim, 1985; Kontou, 2009; Owen, 2004). In fact, Diana Basham notes the link between the spiritualist movement and the Victorian women's movement as 'both startling and obvious' (Basham, 1992, p. 12). Indeed, debates about women's roles were prevalent during the period, and often in dialogue with the separate spheres ideology which promoted distinct spaces for men and women: women in the private sphere of the home and men in the public sphere of work. Mediumship destabilises this bifurcation as the medium brought the worlds of home and work together in the event of the séance.

Much academic work has been conducted to examine the context of the female medium in the nineteenth century and to take the female medium out of the margins of the spiritualist movement and into its centre. As Alex Owen in her feminist study *The Darkened Room* (first published in 1989) argues, a popular view in Victorian spiritualism was that women were natural mediums 'particularly gifted' in spirit communication. Furthermore, mediumship was 'the linchpin of spiritualist practice, [and] nineteenth-century spiritualist women were highly regarded' (Owen, 2004, p. 1). Therefore, accepting that women were a fundamental part of the movement, we can extend this work to examine the representation of the female medium in the spiritualist periodical, through the figure of Emma Hardinge Britten.

### **Women and The Victorian Periodical**

The Victorian period presented a surge of periodicals, in a way never seen before, and this expansion included texts aimed at women, such as *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* (published 1852-79). These unprecedented changes are captured in the work of Alexis Easley (2019, p. 2), who argues that '[w]omen could choose [...] to 'read just what gentlemen read,' but at the same time, the interests of women readers were also catered for in the dedicated women's press that mushroomed throughout the Victorian period.'

Easley's use of the word 'mushroomed' to describe the range of periodicals aimed at and available to women, suggests an interconnectedness within the periodical communication as well as growth; implying the importance of women readers, but also highlighting the scale in which women were being represented in the press. As Easley argues:

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[f]rom domestic magazines to religious magazines, and from feminist journals to papers aimed at girls and young women, the landscape for women's periodicals diversified rapidly in tandem with the general expansion of the press, as well as from the concomitant recognition by publishers of women readers as a significant market in terms of periodical reading materials (Easley, 2019, p. 2).

Easley's research confirms that women were considered an important part of the periodical readership, thus, we might then expect this to be reflected in the spiritualist press of the time. Therefore, it is pertinent to situate this surge of women's periodicals alongside the growth of the spiritualist periodical in order to examine the way the woman reader and contributor is positioned. However, Easley's positive view on the growth of texts aimed at women does not take into account the complexities within the gendered idea of 'woman' during this time of great debate around the position of women in society – termed the 'woman question'. Considering this we can complicate Easley's view by placing the gender debates of the period, chiefly, the woman question and the rise of the New Woman, alongside the rise in periodicals. As Basham (2019, p. 2) argues, '[t]he Spiritualist Movement was an integral part of that wider social change which was itself attempting to decipher the occult codes of the Woman Question via the public form of new journalism.

The New Woman term was first used in an 1894 article by writer Sarah Grand and challenges the Victorian notion of The Angel in the House, which positioned an ideal woman as the moral guardian of the home. The New Woman is then in conflict with her predecessor, as she is outside of the home, increasingly financially independent and more able to resist marriage, at least for a period. Although this term appears later than the publications under scrutiny in this article, it demonstrates the shifting gender tensions in the mid to late Victorian period and the increasing public awareness of women's rights. As Sally Ledger (2009, p. 24) observes, critics may differ in their categorisation of the New Woman, but they all agreed on the fact that she was seen as 'dangerous' and 'a threat to the *status quo*' that upheld a patriarchal society. In consequence, the late-Victorian periodical press had to appeal to this growing female readership 'who were perhaps more interested in work and education than household management and family life' (Liggins, 2007, p. 217). This seems a progressive move in periodicals which began to challenge, or at least question, the role of women outside of the domestic sphere. However, Emma Liggins (2007, p. 217) observes that the presentation of the single woman in these new periodicals 'remained contradictory and ambiguous, and that their appeal to what became a split readership may have meant that ultimately "bachelor girl" readers had to struggle to resist being repositioned as housewives.'

Indeed, this New Woman, 'bachelor girl' figure heavily referenced in the journalism of the period, is often seen as controversial and heavily satirised as a masculine figure. Therefore, it is possible to situate Emma Hardinge Britten's career in this landscape of the Victorian periodical. If we consider the complexities in the representation of women during the period, as indicated by Liggins, we see a desire for women to take up more space in equal terms to men. In a sense, the spiritualist movement created a progressive space for women in society, and as a consequence, the spiritualist periodical opened up a more equal space for women in print. Taking into account these rapid changes in society and the periodical,

we can locate the spiritualist press within this thriving mode of writing that appeals to women, but also as a text that appeals to both genders; one that interpellates the reader as a spiritualist (or spiritualist-curious), rather than as a gendered reader. It is this interpellated approach which constructs the space as one open to women on equal terms to men, as it is their belief in the movement and not their gender that defines them, thus creating space for a female medium to become the editor of a spiritualist newspaper, as Hardinge Britten does in *The Two Worlds* in 1887.

## **The Spiritualist**

It is with this context of the spiritualist periodical in mind that we can first turn to the prominent publication *The Spiritualist* which is digitised by the National Library of Scotland. A popular paper that ran from 1869 to 1882 under various titles, it initially began as *The Spiritualist* (1869-1874), later became *The Spiritualist Newspaper* (1874-1882), and finally had a brief run as *Psyche* (1882). Due to the popularity of the publication, this article will be looking exclusively at the first 12 issues to gain an idea of early content. In his opening address to the editor, William Henry Harrison, states that *The Spiritualist* is not in competition with the other periodicals on the market (namely, *The Spiritualist Magazine*, *Human Nature* and *Daybreak*). Harrison claims that the periodical aims to 'occupy new ground', and its defining feature will be 'its scientific character' (No.1, November 19th 1869, p. 4). This focus on defending the authenticity of spiritualism is reflected in the paper's subheading: 'A Record of the Progress of the Science and Ethics of Spiritualism'. Although, it is worth noting that many occultist journals of the period also shared this concern and endeavoured to prove the existence of a spiritual afterlife.

Looking closely at these first publications of *The Spiritualist*, a summary of findings shows a prominence of male voices with a focus on male mediumship. This is exemplified through the profile on 'Dr Newman's Healing Mediumship' (No.10, June 15th 1870, p. 1), which takes up the entirety of the first page in comparison to the much shorter and far less exploratory reference to the factual notice on female mediums which can be found in issue 12:

Last Friday's Athenaeum contains a long review of Mrs. Hardinge's History of American Spiritualism / Mr. and Mrs. Guppy have just arrived in London from Naples. Mrs Guppy is a noted medium for physical manifestations of an extraordinary character (No.12, August 15th 1870, p. 92).

Here, we can clearly see a discrepancy in the representations of gendered mediums, challenging the notion that mediums were predominantly women. Owen (2004, p. 1) asserts the prevalence of the natural female medium, while Kontou (2008, p. 27) argues that the medium subverts this femininity, making her a powerful figure. Furthermore, Molly Youngkin argues that '[s]piritualist periodicals, as niche publications, were attractive to women writers, in part because the spiritualist movement considered women as "natural" mediums for spirit communication who were justified in relaying these revelations in print' (Youngkin, 2016, p. 55).

Thus, in these early editions of *The Spiritualist* we can argue that there is an imbalance of gender representation concerning the figure of the spiritualist medium. In issue 10 the profile on the male medium 'Dr Newman' is taking up more space and therefore more



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prestige, reflecting the separate spheres doctrine which discouraged women from public life and scientific discourse. Indeed, it was not until 1878 that University College London (UCL) became the first university to award a degree to women on equal terms to men (UCL, 2024). Yet, the spiritualist publication does challenge the gendered spheres, as it questions established scientific discourse and aims to bring the spiritual medium into public life, regardless of gender. Barbara D. Ferguson argues that the mainstream Victorian periodical often placed science in opposition to spiritualism, noting that ‘spiritualism—a movement developing in parallel with science and predicated on myriad immaterial, supernatural, and unproveable elements—appears in much scholarship as science’s most compelling contemporary cultural rival’ (Ferguson, 2023, p. 485). There is a clear desire in the spiritualist press to prove its authenticity and bring science and the supernatural together – as detailed above in the aims of *The Spiritualist*. Therefore, although many in the mainstream press may have sought to dispel spiritualism as unscientific, the spiritualist press sought to promote the unification of science and spiritualism. This conflict between science and the supernatural was addressed by several well-respected scientists of the day, such as Alfred Russel Wallace who wrote *A Defence of Modern Spiritualism* (1874).

Thus, it is within this framework of spiritualism’s transgressive nature that we might expect the spiritualist publication to then disrupt Victorian gender binaries; like the way spiritualism challenges science as the established (masculine) discourse, the spiritualist periodical gives voice to both men and women in a typically masculinised genre. However, we must be mindful when drawing conclusions about gender in the periodical, as many journalists used pseudonyms, wrote anonymously and used initials. Indeed, scholars have noted that Emma Hardinge Britten often wrote under the pseudonym ‘Sirius’ (Youngkin, 2016, p. 71). Therefore, it may be this very obscurity and lack of emphasis on gendered voices that made the spiritualist periodical a more desirable and open space for women writers during a period of perceived masculine authority.

*The Spiritualist* periodical is diverse in both voices and content. The early editions feature poems, general news, events, and correspondence. Viewed through Margaret Beetham’s notion of ‘radical heterogeneity’ (Beetham, 2003, p. 12), *The Spiritualist* showcases a variety of content and a convergence of different voices. These early editions can be seen to be resisting one authorial (male) voice, and as Beetham argues, this diversity empowers readers; they can decide if they want to read another, or read out of sequence (Beetham, 2003, p. 12). In this sense, the reader can engage with the periodical in a non-linear way, choosing their own path through its content, while also being encouraged to engage in dialogue with the publication through correspondence. This method of reading, Beetham suggests, is itself feminine, as it is cyclical, fragmented and resists closure (Beetham, 2003, p. 13). These elements contribute to a strong discourse community, creating an open space for women readers and writers in a time of perceived masculine hierarchy.

In terms of the perceived gender divide in spiritualism, Christine Ferguson argues that her exploration into the spiritualist archive has revealed that binary approaches to gender during the movement have been somewhat overstated:

If men are such a relatively marginal presence in the movement, what are we to make of the ubiquity of male mediums [...] in the pages of the spiritualist press? What, for that matter, of the significant contributions to psychical research by female investigators [...]? To ignore the latter at the expense of more overtly flamboyant female mediums [...] is to risk reinscribing the gendered nature / culture dualism historically used to exclude women from the traditions and practices of rationalism (Ferguson, 2012, p. 437).

Here, Ferguson reminds us to stay vigilant when interpreting the spiritualist press and with this in mind, we can look to the advertisement section of *The Two Worlds* publicising working mediums, to see that there is a balanced gender divide. This can be evidenced through examining the 'Mediums and Speakers' segment, which shows an almost even gendered split between male and female mediums, as demarcated by their gendered honorifics: Mr., Mrs. and Miss (Demarest, 2009a, p. 14). However, Ferguson's point that it is assumed that men are a 'relatively marginal presence in the movement', must be challenged. It is important to note that much of the work to take the female medium out of the margins was because she had long been in the shadow of the male medium; it was an attempt to balance the books.

Looking back at *The Spiritualist*, with the assumption that the spiritualist periodical provided an open space for women in the spiritualist periodical, we indeed find evidence of female mediumship in the correspondence issue of the first edition. There is a reference to the 'eminent medium' Emma Hardinge, but this is not aligned with the representation of the male medium who takes up a large section of the main text; it is more of a humorous anecdote, told by someone other than the medium herself, rather than a detailed profile on Hardinge's skills. The anecdote tells of how she is invited to attend 'a new circle then sitting in a neighbouring street' via a messenger who claims that 'Soloman, King of Israel' wants to speak with her (No.1, November 19th 1869, p. 6). Sceptical, she attends and calls out the medium who is performing a table rapping 'very badly indeed' (No.1, November 19th 1869, p. 6). Her skills as 'a good seeing medium' are noted, and she calls out the fraudulent medium for 'deceiv[ing] these good people' (No.1, November 19th 1869, p. 6). The anonymous writer concludes the narrative with '[a] warning, this, to Spiritualist who have a weak reverence for great names; the supply is sure to meet the demand' (No.1, November 19th 1869, p. 6).

From this brief anecdote, we can see that Emma Hardinge is presented as a respected medium who is exposing frauds; she is represented as authentic and logical. But it is a marginal entry in terms of words on the page in comparison to those featuring male mediums, particularly those who have the honorific of 'Dr'. Therefore, we can tentatively suggest that there is an imbalance in the gendered representations of mediums within these early publications of *The Spiritualist*. However, looking forward to the debut of *The Two Worlds* we see more visible women within the periodical.

## **The Two Worlds**

The publication of *The Two Worlds* was seen as having a 'progressive and crusading stance' (Owen, 2004, p. 24), as it broke away from the London monopoly and 'was conducted with a vigour and initiative lacking' in earlier spiritualist periodicals (Oppenheim, 1985, p. 46). As

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the Victorian era progressed, we see the rise of the New Woman and a challenge to prescribed gender roles. These developments can be mapped onto the progress of medium Emma Hardinge Britten, editor of the Manchester based spiritualist magazine *The Two Worlds* (1887) and documenter of spiritualism in America in her historical accounts *Modern American Spiritualism* (1870) and *Nineteenth Century Miracles* (1884). Marc Demarest's useful website *Emma Hardinge Britten Archive* offers researchers digitised copies of *The Two Worlds*, amongst her other publications and biographical information.

Moving on from her mentions in periodicals such as *The Spiritualist*, the publication of *The Two Worlds* shows Emma Hardinge Britten's shift from female medium to female editor; for the first time taking the voice of the female medium from the margins of the British periodical to the centre. Claiming space in the somewhat crowded market of spiritualist publications, in her editorial address in the first edition, Hardinge Britten states:

Let it be remembered [...] that spiritualism [...] is such a many-sided subject that not one, two, or three, but unnumbered thousands of representative sheets might aim at, yet fail to do justice to the mighty theme. Surely, there must be room for three, if not ten times that number of spiritual journals (Demarest, 2009a, p. 8).

In this address, Hardinge Britten is keen to point out that there is space for more publications on spiritualism, as it is a 'mighty theme' that deserves more attention. Additionally, her statement can be read as a coded reference to who exactly is taking up space, and an indication that there is space available for more women writers and contributors. Indeed, Hardinge Britten herself does take up significant space in the movement, which she also documents; thus adopting a typically masculine role as historian and editor.

In her article, 'A "duty" to "tabulate and record": Emma Hardinge Britten as Periodical Editor and Spiritualist Historian', Youngkin examines how Hardinge Britten was interested in 'enhancing her own reputation' through promoting her own work in spiritualist periodicals and that this 'self-promotion should be seen in the context of women's broader struggles to carve out spaces for themselves in a male-dominated journalistic tradition' (Youngkin, 2016, p. 55). Certainly, as a female medium, Hardinge Britten was well situated to write about spiritualism, as both a documenter and editor. Although, it is interesting to note that in her first salutatory address as editor of *The Two Worlds*, she does not explicitly reference her own experience as a female medium, or even mention the gender of mediums, instead focusing on emphasising their authenticity. She informs the reader that the publication aims to be a 'sphere of instruction [and] not the school in which unfledged and half-developed mediums seek to entertain their audiences' (Demarest, 2009a, p. 9). Hardinge Britten's assertion here speaks to the fact that *The Two Worlds*, like *The Spiritualist*, interpellates the reader/writer as a spiritualist rather than a specific gender, treating women as writers, readers, and indeed editors on equal terms to men. Moreover, it is this openness in spiritualist publications that helped propel Hardinge Britten's career, not only as a medium but also as a writer, editor, and historian. In other words, the inclusive space of the spiritualist periodical gave Emma Hardinge Britten a voice and a platform. By 1887, when

the first edition of *The Two Worlds* was published, the world had begun to look more progressive in terms of gender, and the public sphere was increasingly open to women.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, the early editions of *The Spiritualist* reveal how the authentic voice of the female medium, Emma Hardinge Britten, is not evidenced on a par with the male medium. However, almost two decades on, Emma Hardinge Britten founded and edited a key spiritualist publication. Although this is an exciting point of comparison, which might help to illuminate the cultural politics of gender surrounding the medium in the nineteenth century, we should remember Ferguson's warning about re-inscribing gender. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the spiritualist periodical provided significant space for women contributors by addressing its members as spiritualists, regardless of gender.

In conclusion, this article has shown there is more to be said about the female medium and her representation in the spiritualist publication generally, and the figure of Emma Hardinge Britten specifically. The article has challenged received ideas that women take up little space in the Victorian public sphere, as it evidences the substantial space available to women in the spiritualist periodical as readers, writers and indeed, in the case of Emma Hardinge Britten, as editors. Moreover, it suggests that there is still unmapped space in periodical scholarship for the female medium and spiritualist to occupy.

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