

*Historical Geography*, and specific institutional centres such as the Occasional Discussion Group at Cambridge University, historical geographers have registered a distinctive achievement of innovative inter-disciplinary discussion and research, which may not be widely known to sociologists and historians at large. Aside from the issues of the *Journal*, readers may wish to consult the volumes of the *Cambridge Studies in Historical Geography* and other pamphlets in the Research Series. Details of the latter may be obtained from Geo Books, Regency House, 34 Duke St., Norwich NR3 3AP, U.K. Information concerning the activities of the Historical Geography Study Group may be obtained from its Secretary, Dr. C. G. Pooley, Department of Geography, University of Lancaster, Bailrigg, Lancaster LA1 4YR, U.K.

—Geoff Eley

*The Other World: Spiritualism and psychical research in England, 1850–1914*, by Janet Oppenheimer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). This book resembles a British version of R. Laurence Moore's 1977 volume, *In Search of White Crows: Spiritualism, Parapsychology, and American Culture*. Chronologically more compressed, it compensates by finer detail. Intellectually less imaginative, it makes this up by greater thoroughness. Professor Oppenheim divides her book into three parts. The first and briefest describes, on impressionistic rather than systematic evidence, the characteristics of mediums and of their devotees. The second delineates the relationship of spiritualism to Victorian religious beliefs; the analysis here includes agnosticism and theosophy as well as Christianity. The third and longest section, almost half of the text, discusses spiritualism as an effort to find scientific legitimacy for religious beliefs. Chapters here cover mental sciences, evolution, and physics, detailing along the way the ambiguous relations between spiritualists and psychical researchers.

*The Other World* provides a wealth of fascinating and important information about tendencies and personalities within spiritualism and psychical research. The author's method leans toward reflective narrative rather than schematic analysis. Not, therefore, a quick read—and not likely, aside from the bizarre flashes inherent in the subject, to appeal to a very broad readership—the book is nevertheless important for scholars concerned with problems of belief and unbelief, concepts of science, and the relations of religion and science in nineteenth-century European and American cultures.

—James Turner

*Men of Business and Politics: The Rise and Fall of the Quaker Pease Dynasty of North-East England, 1700–1943* by M. W. Kirby (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984). It is almost a truism that religious non-conformists in