



# The Invention of Telepathy

*By Roger Luckhurst*

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The belief in telepathy is still widely held and yet it remains much disputed by scientists. Roger Luckhurst explores the origins of the term in the late nineteenth century. Telepathy mixed physical and mental sciences, new technologies and old superstitions, and it fascinated many famous people in the late Victorian era: Sigmund Freud, Thomas Huxley, Henry James, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Oscar Wilde. This is an exciting and accessible study, written for general readers as much as scholars and students.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"Luckhurst has created a nuanced, generous, and compelling argument which places telepathy at the heart of modernity."--Leigh Wilson, *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*

"*The Invention of Telepathy* comes at the disturbing story of modern psychic experiments through rich, overlapping layers of social and intellectual history and makes comprehensible what otherwise seem eccentricities and even folly on the part of scientists and thinkers."--Marina Warner, *Times Literary Supplement* (Books of the Year)

"This fine cultural history traces the rise of telepathy, from its emergence at the occult origins of psychology in 1882 to its adoption by the academy as a key paradigm of late-Victorian culture."--*Times Literary Supplement*

"Luckhurst's book is an extremely valuable cultural, literary and scientific history of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. His understanding of the periodical culture of the *fin de siècle* is impressive.... A fine, balanced account of the complexities surrounding telepathy and other psychical phenomena during the period."--*English Literature in Transition 1880-1920*

"Recent work on the period has seen a growing interest in the Victorians' fascination with psychical research and the occult. Roger Luckhurst's engrossing study both elucidates the reasons for that interest and puts it into a much wider context.... The book is a tour de force, charting the ways in which telepathy travels from being an arcane interest, a party game, or concern of a few fusty psychic investigators to being a key term for understanding late-Victorian science and literature.... *The Invention of Telepathy* manages simultaneously to be tremendously well-researched, startling, and fun.... It should set the standard for any future work on the nineteenth-century supernatural."--*Victorian Studies*

#### About the Author

Roger Luckhurst is Lecturer in English, Birkbeck College, University of London, and co-editor of *Victorian Studies* (OUP, 2000).

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