



A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares

Robert Mighall

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This is the first major full-length study of Victorian Gothic fiction. Combining original readings of familiar texts with a rich store of historical sources, *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction* is an historicist survey of nineteenth-century Gothic writing--from Dickens to Stoker, Wilkie Collins to Conan Doyle, through European travelogues, sexological textbooks, ecclesiastic histories and pamphlets on the perils of self-abuse. Critics have thus far tended to concentrate on specific angles of Gothic writing (gender or race), or the belief that the Gothic 'returned' at the so-called *fin de siècle*. Robert Mighall, by contrast, demonstrates how the Gothic mode was active throughout the Victorian period, and provides historical explanations for its development from late eighteenth century, through the 'Urban Gothic' fictions of the mid-Victorian period, the 'Suburban Gothic' of the Sensation vogue, through to the somatic horrors of Stevenson, Machen, Stoker, and Doyle at the century's close. Mighall challenges the psychological approach to Gothic fiction which currently prevails, demonstrating the importance of geographical, historical, and discursive factors that have been largely neglected by critics, and employing a variety of original sources to demonstrate the contexts of Gothic fiction and explain its development in the Victorian period.

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