



Victorian demons: Medicine, masculinity, and the Gothic at the fin-de-siècle

Andrew Smith

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Victorian demons provides the first extensive exploration of largely middle-class masculinities in crisis at the fin de siècle. It analyses how ostensibly controlling models of masculinity became demonised in a variety of literary and medical contexts, revealing the period to be much more ideologically complex than has hitherto been understood, and makes a significant contribution to Gothic scholarship.

Andrew Smith demonstrates how a Gothic language of monstrosity, drawn from narratives such as 'The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' and 'Dracula', increasingly influenced a range of medical and cultural contexts, destabilising these apparently dominant masculine scripts. He provides a coherent analysis of a range of examples relating to masculinity drawn from literary, medical, legal and sociological contexts, including Joseph Merrick ('The Elephant Man'), the Whitechapel murders of 1888, Sherlock Holmes's London, the writings and trials of Oscar Wilde, theories of degeneration and medical textbooks on syphilis.

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