



Gothic Realities: The Impact of Horror Fiction on Modern Culture

L. Andrew Cooper

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Eighteenth-century critics believed Gothic fiction would inspire deviant sexuality, instill heretical beliefs, and encourage antisocial violence--this book puts these beliefs to the test. After examining the assumptions behind critics' fears, it considers nineteenth-century concerns about sexual deviance, showing how Frankenstein, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Dorian Gray, and other works helped construct homosexuality as a pathological, dangerous phenomenon. It then turns to television and film, particularly Buffy the Vampire Slayer and David DeCoteau's direct-to-video movies, to trace Gothicized sexuality's lasting impact. Moving to heretical beliefs, Gothic Realities surveys ghost stories from Dickens's A Christmas Carol to Poltergeist, articulating the relationships between fiction and the "real" supernatural. Finally, it considers connections between Gothic horror and real-world violence, especially the tragedies at Columbine and Virginia Tech.

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