



# Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature

Julian Wolfreys

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Victorian Hauntings asks its reader to consider the following questions:

What does it mean to read or write with ghosts, or to suggest that acts of reading or writing are haunted? In what ways can authors in the nineteenth century be read so as to acknowledge the various phantom effects which return within their texts? In what ways do the traces of such "ghost writing "surface in the works of Dickens, Tennyson, Eliot and Hardy? How does the work of spectrality, revenance and the uncanny transform materially both the forms of the literary in the Victorian era and our reception of it today? Beginning with an expoloration of matters of haunting, the uncanny, the gothic and the spectral, Julian Wolfreys traces the ghostly resonances at work in Victorian writing and how such persistence addresses is uses of memory and responsibility which haunt the work of reading.

'Taking the familiar genre of the Gothic as a point of departure and revisiting it through Derridean theory, Wolfreys' book, the first application of "hauntology" to the domain of Victorian Studies is a remarkable achievement. Wolfreys never reduces reading to instrumentality but remains alert to all the potentialities of the texts he reads with a great attention to their idiosyncrasies. *Victorian Hauntings* should bring a new tone to Victorian Studies, this clever book is quite perfect. - Jean Michel Rabate, Professor of English, University of Pennsylvania

'You'd have to be dead to know more about ghosts than Julian Wolfreys.' Martin McQuillan, University of Leeds



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