



Stephen King's Gothic (Gothic Literary Studies)

John Sears

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Stephen King's Gothic reassesses the writing of this major contemporary Gothic writer through close and detailed readings of key works ranging from his earliest writings (Carrie, 'Salem's Lot, The Shining) to recent novels like Duma Key. Informed by and extensively applying concepts deriving from contemporary literary and cultural theory and engaging closely throughout with King's texts and with his comments in his own critical writings and interviews, the book argues that King's particular revisions of major Gothic themes, writings, and traditions, can best be understood as being closely related to his recurrent concerns with the act and products of writing itself. These concerns, Sears argues, are detectable across King's oeuvre and structural to his Gothic vision. Key themes addressed include Gothic traditions and their connections to related genres like science fiction, Gothic representations of time, space, and place, Gothic monstrosity, and the constitution (in King's versions of it) of Gothic writing itself. Stephen King's Gothic is the first critical analysis of King's work to focus fully on his redefinitions and extensions of the Gothic mode, and to deploy the critical tools of contemporary theory, from Derridean analysis to Deleuzian philosophy, to open King's texts up to new levels of critical scrutiny. Its readings of key works are original and innovative; its focus on canonical King texts enables it also to reread the critical canon of previously available work on King; and it concludes by indicating some directions in which future critical work on King might develop.

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