FROM DICKENS TO DRACULA

Ranging from the panoramic novels of Dickens to the horror of Dracula, Gail Turley Houston examines the ways in which the language and imagery of economics, commerce, and particularly of banking are transformed in Victorian Gothic fiction, and traces literary and uncanny elements in economic writings of the period. Houston shows how banking crises were often linked with ghosts or inexplicable non-human forces and financial panic was figured through Gothic or supernatural means. In Little Dorrit and Villette characters are literally haunted by money, while the unnameable intimations of Dracula and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are represented alongside realist economic concerns. Houston pays particular attention to the term “panic” as it moved between its double uses as a banking term and a defining emotion in sensational and Gothic fiction. This stimulating interdisciplinary book reveals that the worlds of Victorian economics and Gothic fiction, seemingly separate, actually complemented and enriched each other.

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Nineteenth-century British literature and culture have been rich fields for interdisciplinary studies. Since the turn of the twentieth century, scholars and critics have tracked the intersections and tensions between Victorian literature and the visual arts, social organization, economic life, technical innovations, scientific thought – in short, culture in its broadest sense. In recent years, theoretical challenges and historiographical shifts have unsettled the assumptions of previous scholarly synthesis and called into question the terms of older debates. Whereas the tendency in much past literary critical interpretation was to use the metaphor of culture as “background,” feminist, Foucauldian, and other analyses have employed more dynamic models that raise questions of power and of circulation. Such developments have reanimated the field.

This series aims to accommodate and promote the most interesting work being undertaken on the frontiers of the field of nineteenth-century literary studies: work which intersects fruitfully with other fields of study such as history, or literary theory, or the history of science. Comparative as well as interdisciplinary approaches are welcomed.

A complete list of titles published will be found at the end of the book.
FROM DICKENS TO *DRACULA*:

*Gothic, Economics, and Victorian Fiction*

BY

GAIL TURLEY HOUSTON
Dedication

For Helen Turley
Epigraph

[Man] is even more spectral than the spectral. Man *makes himself fear*. He makes himself into the fear that he inspires.


Money, the great machine of trade and commerce, is, perhaps, the most valuable invention of man. But alas! like other great discoveries, it has been perverted by false laws into a horrid engine for grinding the labouring industrious classes to the dust.

(J. H. Macdonald, *The Errors and Evils of the Bank Charter Act of 1844* [London: Richardson Brothers, 1855])

[Money] contains its own lack as a nightmare always ready to surface.

(John Vernon, *Money and Fiction: Literary Realism in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984])
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Abbreviations

BL British Library
BPM Brontë Parsonage Museum
CB Charlotte Brontë
CD Charles Dickens
HM Huntington Museum
RLS Robert Louis Stevenson
UL University of London Library