



# **Science and Destabilization in the Modern American Gothic: Lovecraft, Matheson, and King (Contributions to the Study of Science Fiction and Fantasy)**

*David Oakes*

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The writers of Gothic literature reflect in their works the concerns and fears of the times in which they were created. These fears, in turn, destabilize the reader; that is, they create within the reader a sense of uneasiness characteristic of the Gothic genre, an uneasiness that comes from the challenging of social and cultural conventions or cherished beliefs. In doing so, these works are also cultural artifacts, for they reflect issues central to society at a given point in time. This book examines the process of destabilization in the modern American Gothic.

The volume focuses on the works of three popular 20th-century Gothic writers: H.P. Lovecraft, Richard Matheson, and Stephen King. It argues that science and technology are central to the destabilization process in works by these authors, and it demonstrates how, as cultural artifacts, their writings reflect the fears and concerns of contemporary society. Thus the volume demonstrates how the works of these authors remain within the Gothic literary tradition, while they simultaneously adapt that tradition for a modern audience.

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