



## **Spirits and Spirituality in Victorian Fiction**

Jen Cadwallader

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Spirits and Spirituality in Victorian Fiction argues that supernatural encounters in nineteenth-century fiction show Victorians trying to achieve greater spiritual agency by adapting scientific theories to traditional Christianity. The increasing presence of ghosts across the nineteenth century – in fiction, newspaper accounts, séances, and magic shows - thus highlights a significant countercurrent to the general decline of faith during the period. Through examining ghost encounters in the fiction of Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, Charles Dickens, Margaret Oliphant, Rhoda Broughton, E. Nesbit, Rudyard Kipling, and others, this book demonstrates how the supernatural served as a site where a range of stances toward spirituality could be tested: from ambivalence toward both scientific and religious epistemologies to fascinating instances of spiritual evolution. Not only do fictional ghosts suggest that belief persisted despite an intellectual climate that often associated spirituality with credulity, but they also illustrate the way faith adapted to scientific innovation and evolved to encompass new theories regarding the mind.



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