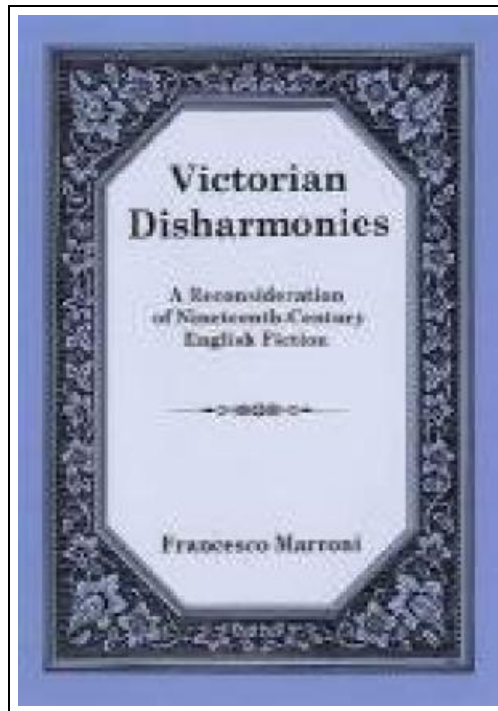


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Associated University Presses, United States, 2010. Hardback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. This study presents a new approach to the canon of nineteenth-century English fiction by defining the ideological framework within which some of the most controversial novelists of the Victorian period inscribed their imaginative responses to a changing society and its social unrest. The book posits a radical re-visioning of such authors as Dickens, Collins, Gaskell, Gissing, and Hardy by adopting the notion of disharmony as a common thematic thread of their fictional production. While the establishment invoked moral order and social harmony, their novels and short stories configured a world beset by conflicting drives and ethical aporias. What is represented in novels like *A Tale of Two Cities*, *The Whirlpool*, and *Jude the Obscure* is not only a society often on the verge of collapse, but also exemplary stories in which identities are disintegrated and individual destinies are caught up in the mechanism of deceptive fantasizing leading to psychological destructiveness and silence. In the attempt to avoid any form of hermeneutical simplification of the age and its cultural debates, the rich and stimulating introduction of *Victorian Disharmonies* aims at portraying the social and cultural contexts as well as the major topics that attracted artistic and literary imagination—urbanization and the phenomenon of the crowd, pollution and the changing countryside, *Deus Absconditus* and religious doubt, medievalism and the dream of a new order. Using a critical methodology combining semiotic investigation with profound awareness of the socio-behavioral codes and historical processes of the Victorian period, chapter 1 focuses on Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* that is interpreted as a novel dramatizing a private and Christian version of the French revolution. Subsequent chapters, one devoted to Wilkie Collins's *The Dead Secret* and two to Elizabeth Gaskell's...

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