

EDITED BY CLIVE BLOOM

Gothic

HORROR

A READER'S GUIDE FROM
POE TO KING AND BEYOND

Gothic Horror

A Reader's Guide
from Poe to King and Beyond

Edited by

Clive Bloom



St. Martin's Press
New York



GOTHIC HORROR

Editorial matter and selection copyright © 1998 by Clive Bloom
All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced
in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in the
case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles or reviews.
For information, address:

St. Martin's Press, Scholarly and Reference Division,
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010

First published in the United States of America in 1998

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and
made from fully managed and sustained forest sources.

Printed in Hong Kong

ISBN 0-312-21238-0 clothbound

ISBN 0-312-21239-9 paperback

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Gothic horror : a reader's guide from Poe to King and beyond / edited
by Clive Bloom.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-312-21238-0. — ISBN 0-312-21239-9 (pbk.)

1. Gothic revival (Literature)—United States. 2. Horror tales,
American—History and criticism. 3. Horror tales—History and
criticism—Theory, etc. 4. Horror tales, English—History and
criticism. 5. Gothic revival (Literature)—Great Britain.

6. Gothic revival (Literature)—Bibliography. 7. Horror tales—
Bibliography. I. Bloom, Clive.

PS374.G68G68 1997

813'.087209—dc21

97-32057

CIP

For Natasha and Kirsty

Acknowledgements

Thanks go to Margaret Bartley for her support and encouragement, Peter Vitale and Margee Husemann for research, Lesley Bloom for all her efforts, and Matthew Finn who provided the title for the Introduction.

The editor and publishers wish to thank the following for permission to use copyright material:

Manuel Aguirre, for the extract from *The Closed Space: Horror Fiction and Western Symbolism* (Manchester University Press, 1990), pp. 115–46; reproduced by permission of the author.

Julia Briggs, for the extract from *Night Visitors* (Faber and Faber, 1977), pp. 124–41; reproduced by permission of Faber and Faber Ltd.

Anny Cranny Francis, for the extract on *The Vampire Tapestry* from *American Horror Fiction*, edited by Brian Docherty (Macmillan, 1990); copyright © Brian Docherty, reproduced by permission of Macmillan Press Ltd and St Martin's Press, Inc.

Robert F. Geary, for the extract from *The Supernatural in Gothic Fiction* (Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), pp. 121–38; reproduced by permission of the Edwin Mellen Press.

Victor Gollancz Ltd, for the extract from H. P. Lovecraft, 'Supernatural Horror in Literature', in *Dagon and Other Macabre Tales*, vol. 2 (1985), pp. 141–5; reproduced by permission of Victor Gollancz.

Rosemary Jackson, for the extract from 'Afterword' in *Fantasy* (Methuen, 1981); reproduced by permission of Routledge.

J. Gerald Kennedy, for the extract from *Poe, Death and the Life of Writing* (Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 145–76; reproduced by permission of Yale University Press.

Playboy magazine, for the extract from ‘Stephen King: An Interview with Eric Norden’, *Playboy*, June 1983; reproduced by permission of *Playboy* magazine.

Judie Newman, for the extract from ‘Shirley Jackson and the Reproduction of Mothering: *The Haunting of Hill House*’ in *American Horror Fiction*, edited by Brian Docherty (1990); copyright © Brian Docherty, by permission of Macmillan Ltd and St Martin’s Press.

John Nicholson, for the extract from ‘Scared Shitless: the Sex of Horror’, in *Creepers*, edited by Clive Bloom (Pluto Press, 1993); reproduced by permission of Pluto Press.

David Punter, for the extract from *The Literature of Terror* (Longman, 1980), pp. 314–16, 329, 334–40; reproduced by permission of Addison Wesley Longman Ltd.

Montague Summers, for the extract from ‘Introduction’ to *The Vampire in Literature*, from *The Vampire* (1995); reproduced by permission of Studio Editions.

Gina Wisker, for the extract from ‘At Home All Was Blood and Feathers: the Werewolf in the Kitchen – Angela Carter and Horror’ in *Creepers*, edited by Clive Bloom (Pluto Press, 1993); reproduced by permission of Pluto Press.

Every effort has been made to trace the copyright holders but if any have been inadvertently overlooked, the publishers will be pleased to make the necessary arrangement at the first opportunity.

Chronology of Significant Horror and Ghost Tales

including collections and related non-fictional works

- 1840 Edgar Allan Poe, *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*
- 1845–7 J. M. Rymer, *Varney the Vampire*
- 1848 Disturbances at the Fox Household, Hydesville, New York State: origins of spiritualism
- 1849 Edgar Allan Poe dies
- 1850 Edgar Allan Poe, *Collected Works*, ed. R. W. Griswold (3 vols)
- 1851 Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables*
- 1865 S. Baring-Gould, *The Book of Were Wolves*
- 1869 Sheridan Le Fanu, ‘Green Tea’
- 1872 Sheridan Le Fanu, *In a Glass Darkly* (3 vols)
- 1875 Founding of Theosophical Society
- 1876 Madame Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled* (non-fiction)
- 1879 Mary Baker Eddy founds Church of Christ, Scientist
- 1882 Society for Psychical Research founded (Great Britain)
- 1883 Villiers de L’Isle Adam, *Contes Cruels*
- 1886 Vernon Lee, *A Phantom Lover*; Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*
- 1887 Fitz-James O’Brien, *The Diamond Lens*
- 1888 Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Phantom Rickshaw and other Eerie Tales*; Madame Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* (non-fiction)
- 1890 Vernon Lee, *Hauntings*
- 1891 J.-K. Huysmans, *Là Bas*; Ambrose Bierce, *Tales of Soldiers and Civilians*

- 1892 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 'The Yellow Wallpaper'
- 1893 Edith Nesbit, *Grim Tales*; Ambrose Bierce, *Can Such Things Be?*
- 1894 Arthur Machen, *The Great God Pan*
- 1895 R. W. Chambers, *The King in Yellow*; Arthur Machen, *The Three Imposters*; John Meade Falkner, *The Lost Stradivarius*
- 1896 Mary Molesworth, *Uncanny Tales*
- 1897 Bram Stoker, *Dracula*; Arthur Machen, *The Hill of Dreams*; Richard Marsh, *The Beetle*
- 1898 Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*
- 1899 Bernard Capes, *At a Winter's Fire*
- 1900 Robert Hichens, 'How Love Came to Professor Gildea'; Lafcadio Hearn, *Shadowings*
- 1902 W. W. Jacobs, 'The Monkey's Paw'
- 1903 A. C. Benson, *The Hill of Trouble*; Bram Stoker, *The Jewel of Seven Stars*
- 1904 M. R. James, *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary*; Frank Frankfort Moore, *The Other World*; S. Baring-Gould, *A Book of Ghosts*; Lafcadio Hearn, *Kwaidan*
- 1906 Algernon Blackwood, *The Empty House and other Ghost Stories*; Arthur Machen, *The House of Souls*
- 1907 R. H. Benson, *A Mirror of Shalott*
- 1908 Morley Roberts, 'The Fog'; William Hope Hodgson, *The House on the Borderland*; Perceval Landon, 'Thurnley Abbey' (*Raw Edges*); Algernon Blackwood, *John Silence: Physician Extraordinary*; G. K. Chesterton, *The Man Who Was Thursday*
- 1910 W. F. Harvey, *Midnight House*
- 1911 Bram Stoker, *The Lair of the White Worm*; M. R. James, *More Ghost Stories*; [George] Oliver Onions, *Widdershins*; Gaston Leroux, *The Phantom of the Opera*; F. Marion Crawford, *Wandering Ghosts*
- 1912 E. G. Swain, *The Stoneground Ghost Tales*; William Hope Hodgson, *The Night Land*; Bram Stoker dies
- 1913 Mrs Belloc Lowndes, *The Lodger*
- 1914 Bram Stoker, 'Dracula's Guest' [posthumous]; Ambrose Bierce 'disappears' in Mexico
- 1915 Gustav Meyrink, *The Golem*
- 1919 Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny' (non-fiction)
- 1920 Maurice Level, *Crises*

- 1921 Marjory Bowen, *The Haunted Village*
- 1922 Jessie Douglas Kerruish, *The Undying Monster*
- 1923 H. P. Lovecraft, 'The Rates in the Walls'; first issue of *Wierd Tales*; E. F. Benson, *Visible and Invisible*
- 1925 H. P. Lovecraft, 'The Horror at Red Hook'; M. R. James, 'A Warning to the Curious'
- 1926 H. P. Lovecraft, 'The Call of Cthulhu'; Cynthia Asquith, *The Ghost Book*
- 1927 H. P. Lovecraft, *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*; Edward Lucas White, 'Lukundoo'
- 1928 H. P. Lovecraft, 'The Dunwich Horror'; H. Russell Wakefield, *They Walk at Night*; A. J. Alan, *Good Evening Everyone*; W. F. Harvey, 'The Beast with Five Fingers'
- 1930 Walter de la Mare, 'Crewe' (*On the Edge*)
- 1931 F. Tennyson Jesse, 'The Railway Carriage'; Charles Williams, *The Place of the Lion*; M. R. James, *Collected Ghost Stories*
- 1933 W. F. Harvey, 'The Ankardyne Pew' (*Moods and Tenses*); Guy Endore, *Werewolf of Paris*; Marjory Bowen, *The Last Bouquet*; Aleister Crowley, *The Book of the Law* (non-fiction)
- 1934 Elizabeth Bowen, 'The Cat Jumps'; E. F. Benson, *More Spook Stories*
- 1935 Charles G. Finney, *The Curse of Dr Lao*; Oliver Onions, *Collected Ghost Stories*; Dennis Wheatley, *The Devil Rides Out*
- 1936 R. E. Howard dies; M. R. James dies; White Eagle Lodge founded (Great Britain); Arthur Machen, *The Children of the Pool and other Stories*
- 1937 H. P. Lovecraft dies
- 1938 'Nicholas Blake', 'The Beast Must Die'
- 1939 H. P. Lovecraft, *The Outsider and Others*, ed. August Derleth (first publication of Arkham House Press)
- 1940 Harry Price, *The Most Haunted House in England* (non-fiction)
- 1943 Fritz Lieber, *Conjure Wife*
- 1944 Harry Price, *The End of Borley Rectory* (non-fiction)
- 1945 Evangeline Walton, *Witch House*; Charles Williams, *All Hallows' Eve*
- 1947 French legislation regarding children's 'horror' comics; Aleister Crowley dies; Arthur Machen dies

- 1949 Horror comics banned in Canada
- 1950 William M. Gaines (pub.), *Tales from the Crypt*, etc.
- 1954 Richard Matheson, *I am Legend*; *Weird Tales* magazine closes
- 1955 Children and Young Persons (Harmful Publications) Act (Great Britain); Jack Finney, *The Body Snatchers*; Gerald Kersh, *Men without Bones*
- 1959 Robert Bloch, *Psycho*; Obscene Publications Act (Great Britain); Shirley Jackson, *The Haunting of Hill House*; Herbert Van Thal, *Pan Book of Horror Stories*
- 1962 Robert Bloch, *Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper*
- 1967 Ira Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*
- 1969 Kingsley Amis, *The Green Man*; Angela Carter, *Heroes and Villains*
- 1971 William Peter Blatty, *The Exorcist*
- 1972 Angela Carter, *The Infernal Desire Machine of Doctor Hoffman*
- 1973 Robert Marasco, *Burnt Offerings*
- 1974 Stephen King, *Carrie*; James Herbert, *The Rats*
- 1975 Stephen King, *Salem's Lot*; Harlan Ellison, *Deathbird Stories*
- 1976 Anne Rice, *Interview with the Vampire*
- 1977 Joyce Carol Oates, *Night-Side*; Hugh B. Cave, *Murgunstrumm and others*; Bernard Taylor, *Sweetheart, Sweetheart*; Stephen King, *The Shining*; Julia Briggs, *Night Visitors* (non-fiction)
- 1978 Whitley Streiber, *The Wolfen*; George Hay (ed.), *The Necronomicon*
- 1979 Angela Carter, *The Bloody Chamber*; Virginia Andrews, *Flowers in the Attic*; David Morrell, *The Totem*; Ramsey Campbell, *The Face that Must Die*; Peter Straub, *Ghost Story*
- 1980 Julia Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de L'Horreur* (non-fiction); Suzy Mckee Charnas, *The Vampire Tapestry*; David Punter, *The Literature of Terror* (non-fiction)
- 1981 Rosemary Jackson, *Fantasy* (non-fiction); Stephen King, *Danse Macabre* (non-fiction)
- 1982 Shaun Hutson, *Slugs*
- 1983 Susan Hill, *The Woman in Black*
- 1984 Clive Barker, *The Books of Blood*, vols 1-3; Robert Holdstock, *Mythago Wood*

- 1985 Clive Leatherdale, *Dracula* (non-fiction); Anne Rice, *The Vampire Lestat*
- 1986 Lisa Tuttle, *A Nest of Nightmares*
- 1987 Whitley Strieber, *Communion* (non-fiction); Clive Barker, *Weaveworld*; Stephen King, *The Tommyknockers*, *Misery*; Ramsey Campbell, *Dark Feasts*; J. Gerald Kennedy, *Poe, Death and the Life of Writing* (non-fiction); James Herbert, *The Magic Cottage*
- 1990 Lisa Tuttle (ed.), *New Horror Stories by Women*; Richard Dalby (ed.), *The Virago Book of Ghost Stories*; Manuel Aguirre, *The Closed Space* (non-fiction); Brian Stableford, *The Werewolves of London*
- 1991 Peter James, *Sweet Heart*; Brian Docherty (ed.), *American Horror Fiction* (non-fiction)
- 1992 David Morris, *The Masks of Lucifer* (non-fiction)
- 1993 Clive Bloom (ed.), *Creepers* (non-fiction)
- 1994 Kenneth Grant, *Outer Gateways* (non-fiction)
- 1996 Clive Bloom, *Cult Fiction* (non-fiction)

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	x
<i>Chronology of Significant Horror and Ghost Tales</i>	xiii
Introduction: Death's Own Backyard by CLIVE BLOOM	1
1 Early Accounts	23
EDGAR ALLAN POE	
Extract from 'The Man of the Crowd'	23
Extract from 'The Imp of the Perverse'	23
'The Philosophy of Composition'	27
Extract from <i>Eureka</i>	36
Extract from <i>Marginalia</i>	36
NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE	
Preface to <i>The House of the Seven Gables</i>	37
WALTER PATER	
Extract from <i>The Renaissance</i>	39
LAFCADIO HEARN	
Extract from 'Nightmare-Touch'	43
2 Early Modern Accounts	50
SIGMUND FREUD	
Extract from 'The Uncanny'	50
HILAIRE BELLOC	
On Algernon Blackwood	51

M. R. JAMES	
Extract from the Preface to <i>The Collected Ghost Stories</i>	53
H. P. LOVECRAFT	
Extract from 'Supernatural Horror in Literature'	55
MONTAGUE SUMMERS	
Extract from <i>The Vampire in Literature</i>	58
DENNIS WHEATLEY	
Author's Note from <i>The Devil Rides Out</i>	75
3 Later Modern Accounts	77
ROBERT BLOCH	
On Horror Writers	77
LOS ANGELES SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY	
<i>Symposium on H. P. Lovecraft</i>	78
STEPHEN KING	
Extract from an Interview in <i>Playboy</i>	96
Extract from 'An Evening at Billerica Public Library'	97
WHITLEY STRIEBER	
On Stephen King	98
CLIVE BARKER	
On Horror and Subversion	99
4 Contemporary Critical Accounts	101
JULIA BRIGGS	
Extract from <i>Night Visitors</i>	101
DAVID PUNTER	
Extract from <i>The Literature of Terror</i>	118
TZVETAN TODOROV	
Extract from <i>The Fantastic</i>	124

ROSEMARY JACKSON	
Extract from <i>Fantasy</i>	125
ANNE CRANNY FRANCIS	
On <i>The Vampire Tapestry</i>	134
JUDIE NEWMAN	
On <i>The Haunting of Hill House</i>	154
J. GERALD KENNEDY	
On Edgar Allan Poe	169
MANUEL AGUIRRE	
On Victorian Horror	199
GINA WISKER	
On Angela Carter	233
JOHN NICHOLSON	
On Sex and Horror	249
STEVE HOLLAND	
On Horror and Censorship	277
ROBERT F. GEARY	
On Horror and Religion	287
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	302

Introduction: Death's Own Backyard

The Nature of Modern Gothic and Horror Fiction

CLIVE BLOOM

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* celebrated its centenary in 1997. One of the greatest horror tales ever told and, more importantly, one of the most significant pieces of literature ever written, the book has never been out of print since its first publication and it initiated a 'vampire' industry that spans film, radio, television, books, comics and merchandise – no fancy dress party would be complete without its 'Dracula'.

The genre within which Stoker wrote was already one hundred years old in 1897 and Stoker's literary style as well as much of his book's content represent a revisiting of the old gothic that had given way to a more contemporary attitude toward the fiction of the weird and supernatural by the middle nineteenth century. *Dracula* is both a synthesis and a nostalgic revival of gothic themes.

When this is considered it becomes clear that the term 'gothic' covers formal problems of style, and content, as well as a history of popular reading, all of which have evolved across two centuries. Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (the first gothic novel) bears as little or as much relationship to Edgar Allan Poe's tales as they do to Clive Barker's *Books of Blood*. Although the term 'gothic genre' may be singular its incarnations are diverse and often retain only the slightest genuflection toward an original 'core' or formal set of generic properties. Furthermore the nature of the gothic or fo

disparate that it can include (because of formal similarities) works of fiction that contain neither supernatural nor horror elements but which do contain similar attitudes to setting, atmosphere or style. Meanwhile, horror stories have moved away from the trappings of gothicism, and settings, atmosphere and style are dictated by contemporary events, psychology and social realism. Gothicism is, moreover, so versatile that it can be superadded to otherwise oppositional characteristics, hence, since the 1980s, Batman comics and films have invented a neo- or retro-gothic amongst the art deco of New York's skyscrapers, making these the equivalent of the crumbling castles and monastic ruins of old.

Other genres owe much to gothic concerns and neither detective fiction nor science fiction can be separated in their origins from such an association. Originating as one of the novel's major forms in the late eighteenth century and marking out much of popular fiction's imaginative territory, the gothic is *the* genre against which critics attempted to separate serious fiction from such popular entertainment and escapism. Gothicism may be viewed (without much exaggeration) as one pole of the fictional imagination the other of which (seen as its opposite, but actually on a continuum of effects) is the domestic or contemporary fiction of (often middle-class) sensibility. The continuum that links the gothic to the 'domestic novel' is marked by the fact that however arcane or historic the gothic setting it is always linked to the *desire* of contemporary readers. At once escapist and conformist, the gothic speaks to the dark side of domestic fiction: erotic, violent, perverse, bizarre and obsessively connected with contemporary fears. It could hardly be otherwise and the debate over gothic's power to be subversive or conservative by turns is testimony to its immediacy as well as to its archaic (or 'eternal') elements.

Horror is the usual but not necessarily the main ingredient of gothic fiction and most popular gothic fiction is determined in its plotting by the need for horror and sensation. It was gothicism, with its formality, codification, ritualistic elements and artifice (its very origins as an aesthetic outlook and *literary* condition first and foremost), that transformed the old folk tale of terror into the modern horror story. This link between horror and gothic was neither a necessary nor a permanent condition and by the time of Edgar Allan Poe the two were capable of separate existence. It is with Poe that the old 'German' gothic is finally brought into a contemporary setting and it is with his work that this anthology begins. Poe's 'The Fall of the House of Usher' first appeared in *Burton's Gentleman's*

Magazine in September 1839 and subsequently in 1840 and 1845. It marks a decisive break between the gothic of *Otranto* and the later psychological horror of the late nineteenth century but it also marks the appearance of a self-conscious aestheticism allied to, but different from, the popular tale of horror. For Poe it is *perversity* that marks horror just as *peculiarity* is the mark of *art* and both confront common sense, decency and normal moral codes. No longer does the external world threaten as much as the internal, and within that the ineffable demands of the will.

'The Fall of the House of Usher' is probably the most interpreted short story ever written, its ambiguities endlessly fascinating. Whatever might be said about the tale's significance it is clear that Poe combined physical horror (entombment and reincarnation; a collapsing house surrounded by a moat) with horror more closely associated with the mind (Usher's hypochondria and hysteria and Madeline's catatonia): horror has as its sources both traditional gothic *and* medical conditions garnered from a contemporary popular encyclopaedia. Moreover, the dual focus sustains an aesthetic battle between the old- and new-style 'gothic'. If Usher's delight is in the old gothic of lost religion and the dénouement is brought about through the echoing of the 'German' tale 'The Mad Trist', nowhere does either impinge on the *reasons* for the horror – both supply mere atmosphere. Indeed, it is clear that the events that parallel the reading of 'The Mad Trist' are correlated physically to its recitation – a mere coincidence or irony on Usher's part. As Madeline returns from the tomb, it is also clear she is not dead, nor the dragon told of in the old tale. The medieval and modern coalesce leaving the old-style gothic behind as mere pastiche. The new gothic is the horror of the mind isolated with itself.

Oppressed, as I certainly was, upon the occurrence of this second and most extraordinary coincidence, by a thousand conflicting sensations, in which wonder and extreme terror were predominant, I still retained sufficient presence of mind to avoid exciting, by any observation, the sensitive nervousness of my companion. I was by no means certain that he had noticed the sounds in question; although, assuredly, a strange alteration had, during the last few minutes, taken place in his demeanour. From a position fronting my own, he had gradually brought round his chair, so as to sit with his face to the door of the chamber; and this I could but partially perceive his features, although I saw that his lips trembled as if he were murmuring inaudibly. His head had