



Gothic Readings: The First Wave, 1764-1840

Rictor Norton

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This is an anthology of Gothic literature, set within the context of contemporary criticism and readers' responses. It includes selections from the major practitioners - including Horace Walpole, William Beckford, Ann Radcliffe, Matthew Gregory Lewis, Coleridge, William Godwin, Mary Shelley, Charles Robert Maturin and Edgar Allan Poe -and many of their followers as well as contemporary reviews, private letters and diaries, chapbooks, and contemporary anecdotes about dramatic performances and the design of theatre sets. The selections provide representative samples of the major genres - historical gothic, the Radcliffe school of terror, the Lewis school of horror, tragic melodrama, comic parody, supernatural poetry and ballads, book reviews and literary criticism and anti-Gothic polemic. Also covered are the major Gothic issues such as the aesthetics of the sublime, religion and the supernatural and the influence of ancient romance, including vampires, spectres, orphans, the Inquisition, bandetti, nuns, storms and ruined castles, and social themes. A general introduction reviews the major approaches to Gothic literature, and short introductions place individual selections in context. All the texts are based on first editions.

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