



A COMPANION TO
A AMERICAN
GOTHIC

EDITED BY
CHARLES L. CROW

WILEY Blackwell

Table of Contents

[Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture](#)

[Title page](#)

[Copyright page](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Notes on Contributors](#)

[Preface](#)

[About the Book](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[Part I: Theorizing American Gothic](#)

[1: The Progress of Theory and the Study of the American Gothic](#)

[Cross-References](#)

[2: Gothic, Theory, Dream](#)

[Cross-References](#)

3: American Ruins and the Ghost Town Syndrome

Introduction: American Ruins as “Different Spaces”

The Play of Substitutions: Ghost Towns in Recent American Literature

The Quasi-Eternity of Violence: Anasazi Ruins as the Ghost Town

Cross-References

4: American Monsters

Monsters Are Other People: The American Monster as Cultural Other

The Numinous American Monster

Made in America: Monsters Made By Man

Natural Monsters

Cross-References

5: Creation Anxiety in Gothic Metafiction: *The Dark Half* and *Lunar Park*

Cross-References

Part II: Origins of American Gothic

6: The African American Slave Narrative and the Gothic

Cross-References

7: Indian Captivity Narratives and the Origins of American Frontier Gothic

Cross-References

8: Early American Gothic Drama

Some Notable Achievements

Cross-References

9: Charles Brockden Brown: Godfather of the American Gothic

Cross-References

10: George Lippard and the Rise of the Urban Gothic

Cross-References

Part III: Classic American Gothic and Its Legacies

11: New England Gothic

Puritan Paranoia and Necromancy: A (Mainly) Male Gothic Tradition

Something in the House: The Female Gothic Tradition in New England

Gothic Revivals in New England

Gothic New England Today and in the Future

Cross-References

12: Descendentalism and the Dark
Romantics: Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, and
the Subversion of American
Transcendentalism

Nature, Sacred and Profane

Self-Reliant Individualism and Morbid Subjectivity

Utopianism and Dystopianism

Cross-References

13: “Gigantic Paradox, Too ... Monstrous
for Solution”: Nightmarish Democracy and
the Schoolhouse Gothic from “William
Wilson” to *The Secret History*

Cross-References

14: The Fall of the House, from Poe to
Percy: The Evolution of an Enduring Gothic
Convention

Cross-References

15: Henry James's Ghosts

Cross-References

16: A Sisterhood of Sleuths: The Gothic
Heroine, the Girl Detective, and Their
Readers

Cross-References

[17: They Are Legend: The Popular American Gothic of Ambrose Bierce and Richard Matheson](#)

[Cross-References](#)

[Part IV: American Gothic and Race](#)

[18: Is There an Indigenous Gothic?](#)

[The Native American in American Gothic](#)

[Native American Gothic](#)

[Indigenous Gothic](#)

[Cross-References](#)

[19: Gothic Transgressions: Charles W. Chesnutt, Conjure, and the Law](#)

[Conjuring and the Law](#)

[“The Sheriff's Children”: Lynching, Law, Gothic](#)

[Cross-References](#)

[20: Undead Identities: Asian American Literature and the Gothic](#)

[Shared Terrains: Asian American Literature and the \(American\) Gothic Tradition](#)

[The Living Dead in Fae Myenne Ng's *Bone*](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[Cross-References](#)

Part V: Gothic Modern and Postmodern

21: I Am Providence: H.P. Lovecraft

In the New England Gothic Tradition

Cosmic Gothicism: A Haunted Universe

Providence in Literature and Life

Critical Assessment and Influence: Past, Present, Future

Conclusion

Cross-References

22: Awful Mystery: Flannery O'Connor as Gothic Artist

Gothic Godliness

Heuristic Horror and Sacramental Significance

Monsters and Mimesis - The Enemy is *Us*

Truth *in articulo mortis*

The World is Not Conclusion

Cross-References

23: Not a Refuge Yet: Shirley Jackson's Domestic Hauntings

"I Live in a Dank Old Place": Jackson's Retelling of the Domestic Myth

"Never Meant to be Lived In": *The Haunting of Hill House*

["No Trespassing": We Have Always Lived in the Castle](#)

[Cross-References](#)

[24: The Strange Case of Joyce Carol Oates](#)

[Cross-References](#)

[25: "Identical Boxes Spreading like Gangrene": Defining the Suburban Gothic](#)

[Cross-References](#)

[26: The Cold War Gothic Poetry of Sylvia Plath](#)

[Defining Cold War Gothic](#)

[Posthuman Gothic Landscape Poems](#)

[Ghosts of the Holocaust and the Living Dead](#)

[Nuclear Power and the Vampire Death-Mother](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[Cross-References](#)

[27: Sexuality and the Twentieth-Century American Vampire](#)

[Cross-References](#)

[28: Why Stephen King Still Matters](#)

[Cross-References](#)

[29: The Ghost of the Counterfeit Child](#)

[A Tale of Two Semataries](#)
[A Child Is Being Buried](#)
[A Child Is Being Mourned](#)
[The American Way of Resurrection](#)
[Cross-References](#)

[30: Toni Morrison's Gothic: Headless Brides and Haunted Communes](#)

[The Terrible Family](#)
[The Beloved Community and its H\(a\)unted Women](#)
[Where to Now?](#)
[Cross-References](#)

[31: When the Blood Trail Comes Full Circle: Cormac McCarthy's Gothic of Guilt](#)

[Cross-References](#)

[32: Becoming-Girl/Becoming-Fly/Becoming-Imperceptible: Gothic Posthumanism in Lynda Barry's *Cruddy: An Illustrated Novel*](#)

[Becoming *Cruddy* in the Days of the Father](#)
[Becoming-Fly](#)
[Becoming-Imperceptible](#)
[Cross-References](#)

33: Gothic Self-Fashioning in Gibson's Novels: Nature, Culture, Identity, Improvisation, and Cyberspace

Monoculture and Hybridity

Nature, Space, Counterfeit Nature, and Cyberspace

Character, Self-Fashioning, Bio-Sculpture

Glossary

Cross-References

34: Contemporary Women's Gothic: From *Lost Souls* to *Twilight*

Introduction

Socially Radical Vampire Gothic

Lesbian Gothic

Dysfunctional Families: Vampires and Werewolves

Neighborhood Gothic

Vampire Romance

Conclusion

Cross-References

35: Apocalyptic Gothic

Apocalypse Now

Apocalypses Then

The End of America: Two Works of Apocalyptic Gothic

Cross-References

Part VI: Gothic in Other Media

36: The Darkest Nightmares Imaginable: Gothic Audio Drama from Radio to the Internet

Cross-References

37: Film Noir and the Gothic

Cross-References

38: The American Dream/The American Nightmare: American Gothic on the Small Screen

Cross-References

39: Digital Games and the American Gothic: Investigating Gothic Game Grammar

Digital Games as Medium: Why We Need to
Consider Form

Adapting the American Gothic for Digital Games

Conclusion

Cross-References

Part VII: American Gothic and World Gothic

[40: Self-Fragmentation, Diseased Landscapes, and other Enigmatic Engagements: American Gothic and the Literatures of East and Southeast Asia](#)

[Japanese Literature](#)

[Chinese Literature](#)

[Southeast Asian Literature](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[Cross-References](#)

[41: Fluid Bodies: Gothic Transmutations in Carlos Fuentes' Fiction](#)

[Transgression and Monsters](#)

[The Uncanny Irruption of the Other](#)

[Cross-References](#)

[42: Let a New Gender In? American Responses to Contemporary Scandinavian Gothicism](#)

[Cross-References](#)

[Index](#)

Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture

This series offers comprehensive, newly written surveys of key periods and movements and certain major authors, in English literary culture and history. Extensive volumes provide new perspectives and positions on contexts and on canonical and post-canonical texts, orientating the beginning student in new fields of study and providing the experienced undergraduate and new graduate with current and new directions, as pioneered and developed by leading scholars in the field.

Published Recently

- | | |
|---|--|
| 65. <i>A Companion to Tudor Literature</i> | Edited by Kent Cartwright |
| 66. <i>A Companion to Crime Fiction</i> | Edited by Charles Rzepka and Lee
Horsley |
| 67. <i>A Companion to Medieval Poetry</i> | Edited by Corinne Saunders |
| 68. <i>A New Companion to English
Renaissance Literature and Culture</i> | Edited by Michael Hattaway |
| 69. <i>A Companion to the American Short
Story</i> | Edited by Alfred Bendixen and James
Nagel |
| 70. <i>A Companion to American
Literature and Culture</i> | Edited by Paul Lauter |
| 71. <i>A Companion to African American
Literature</i> | Edited by Gene Jarrett |
| 72. <i>A Companion to Irish Literature</i> | Edited by Julia M. Wright |
| 73. <i>A Companion to Romantic Poetry</i> | Edited by Charles Mahoney |
| 74. <i>A Companion to the Literature and
Culture of the American West</i> | Edited by Nicolas S. Witschi |
| 75. <i>A Companion to Sensation Fiction</i> | Edited by Pamela K. Gilbert |
| 76. <i>A Companion to Comparative
Literature</i> | Edited by Ali Behdad and Dominic
Thomas |
| 77. <i>A Companion to Poetic Genre</i> | Edited by Erik Martiny |

78. *A Companion to American Literary Studies* Edited by Caroline F. Levander and Robert S. Levine
79. *A New Companion to the Gothic* Edited by David Punter
80. *A Companion to the American Novel* Edited by Alfred Bendixen
81. *A Companion to Literature, Film, and Adaptation* Edited by Deborah Cartmell
82. *A Companion to George Eliot* Edited by Amanda Anderson and Harry E. Shaw
83. *A Companion to Creative Writing* Edited by Graeme Harper
84. *A Companion to British Literature, 4 volumes* Edited by Robert DeMaria, Jr., Heesok Chang, and Samantha Zacher
85. *A Companion to American Gothic* Edited by Charles L. Crow

A COMPANION TO
*A*AMERICAN
GOTHIC

EDITED BY
CHARLES L. CROW

WILEY Blackwell

This edition first published 2014

© 2014 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Registered Office

John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate,
Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

Editorial Offices

350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA

9600 Garsington Road, Oxford, OX4 2DQ, UK

The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19
8SQ, UK

For details of our global editorial offices, for customer services, and for information about how to apply for permission to reuse the copyright material in this book please see our website at www.wiley.com/wiley-blackwell.

The right of Charles L. Crow to be identified as the author of the editorial material in this work has been asserted in accordance with the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, except as permitted by the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

Designations used by companies to distinguish their products are often claimed as trademarks. All brand names and product names used in this book are trade names, service marks, trademarks or registered trademarks of their

respective owners. The publisher is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: While the publisher and author(s) have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. It is sold on the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering professional services and neither the publisher nor the author shall be liable for damages arising herefrom. If professional advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A companion to American gothic / edited by Charles L. Crow.
pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-470-67187-0

1. Gothic revival (Literature)-United States-History. I. Crow, Charles L., editor of compilation.

PS374.G68C66 2014

813'.0872909-dc23

2013018583

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Cover image: Edwin Romanzo Elmer, *Mourning*, 1890. De Agostini Picture Library / The Bridgeman Art Library.

Cover design by Richard Boxall Design Associates

This book is dedicated to Allan Lloyd-Smith (1945–2010)

Notes on Contributors

Antonio Alcalá González is founder of the International Gothic Congress, coordinator and full-time professor at TEC de Monterrey, Mexico City campus, and lecturer on literary criticism at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). He is currently completing his PhD dissertation on the effects of the *fin de siècle* on the work of William Hope Hodgson and H.P. Lovecraft.

Ellen E. Berry directs the Institute for the Study of Culture and Society at Bowling Green State University, Ohio. Her books include *Curved Thought and Textual Wandering: Gertrude Stein's Postmodernism*, and *Transcultural Experiments: Russian and American Models of Creative Communication*. She edits *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge*.

Ted Billy, Professor of English at Saint Mary's College (Notre Dame, Indiana), is the author of *A Wilderness of Words: Closure and Disclosure in Conrad's Short Fiction*. He has published more than thirty articles and notes on such writers as Poe, Thoreau, Hawthorne, and Melville.

Steven Bruhm is Robert and Ruth Lumsden Professor of English at the University of Western Ontario, Canada, and managing editor of the journal *Horror Studies*. He is the author of *Gothic Bodies: The Politics of Pain in Romantic Fiction*, and *Reflecting Narcissus: A Queer Aesthetic*. He is currently working on a book entitled *The Counterfeit Child*.

Michelle Burnham is Professor of English at Santa Clara University, California, where she teaches early American

literature, Native American literature, and popular culture. She has written and edited several books on early American and nineteenth-century American literature, and is currently at work on a book titled *The Calculus of Risk*.

Lynette Carpenter has collaborated with Wendy Kolmar on two books about women's ghost stories. Under the pen names D.B. Borton and Della Borton, she has also published ten mystery novels. She teaches American literature and film at Ohio Wesleyan University.

Gavin Cologne-Brookes is Professor of American Literature at Bath Spa University, England. He is the author of *The Novels of William Styron: From Harmony to History* (1995), *Dark Eyes on America: The Novels of Joyce Carol Oates* (2005), and *Rereading William Styron* (2013). He is also the co-editor of *Writing and America* (1996, with Neil Sammells and David Timms), and of a *Studies in the Novel* special number on Oates (2006).

Charles L. Crow is Professor Emeritus at Bowling Green State University, Ohio, and has been a visiting scholar in Austria, the Czech Republic, China, and Croatia. He is a founding member of the International Gothic Association, and has edited books and written books and articles on American Gothic and on regional American literatures.

Carol Margaret Davison is Professor and Head of the English Department at the University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada. Her published books include *History of the Gothic: Gothic Literature 1764-1824* (2009) and *Anti-Semitism and British Gothic Literature* (2004). She is currently at work on a casebook of criticism of the British Gothic, 1764-1824, and a study of the Scottish Gothic.

Dara Downey lectures in the School of English, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland, and is currently researching late nineteenth-century American women's ghost stories and material culture. She has published on American Gothic writers including Edgar Allan Poe, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Henry James, Shirley Jackson, Stephen King, and Mark Z. Danielewski.

Justin D. Edwards is Professor of English Literature at the University of Surrey, England. He has published several books, including *Grotesque*, *Mobility at Large*, *Postcolonial Literature*, *Gothic Canada*, and *Gothic Passages*. He is also the co-editor of *Gothic in Contemporary Literature and Popular Culture* and *Postcolonial Travel Writing*.

David Fine (1934–2013) was Emeritus Professor of English from California State University, Long Beach. He published *The City, the Immigrant and American Fiction, 1880–1920*; *Imagining Los Angeles: A City in Fiction*, and *Missing Persons, a Novel*. He wrote dozens of articles and reviews and edited or co-edited four collections of essays.

Benjamin F. Fisher, Emeritus Professor of English, University of Mississippi, has authored or edited many studies of literary Gothicism, many on American topics, notably Poe, and Victorian Gothic writers. He is a member of the Executive Committee for the International Gothic Association and serves on the editorial board of that organization's journal, *Gothic Studies*. In 1989 he was awarded a Governor's Citation, State of Maryland, for outstanding work on Poe.

Teresa A. Goddu is Associate Professor of English and Director of the Program in American Studies at Vanderbilt University. She is the author of *Gothic America: Narrative*,

History, and Nation. She is currently completing a study of the antislavery movement's role in the rise of mass culture in the antebellum United States.

Richard J. Hand is Professor of Theatre and Media Drama at the University of Glamorgan, Wales. He is the co-editor of the *Journal of Adaptation in Film and Performance* and, in addition to adaptation and translation studies, his research interests include radio studies and horror studies.

Jerrold E. Hogle is University Distinguished Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies and Honors in English at the University of Arizona. His many publications range widely across Romantic poetry, literary theory, and Gothic literature and film, as in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction* and *The Undergrounds of "The Phantom of the Opera."*

William Hughes is Professor of Gothic Studies at Bath Spa University, England, and is the founding editor of the refereed journal *Gothic Studies*. The author, editor, or co-editor of fifteen books, he has a particular interest in the literary vampire and has published on J.S. Le Fanu, Bram Stoker, and Poppy Z. Brite.

Tanya Krzywinska is Professor in Screen Studies at Brunel University, England. She is the author of books and articles on different aspects of videogames and representations of the occult. Currently, she is working on a monograph, *Gothic Games*, and on an interactive Gothic fiction, "The Witch's Room."

Chad Luck is an Assistant Professor of English at Cal State University, San Bernardino. He has published essays on a range of authors including Herman Melville, Charles

Brockden Brown, and Elizabeth Stoddard. He is currently finishing a book project on ownership and affect in antebellum American literature.

Tony Magistrale is Professor and Chair of the English Department at the University of Vermont. He is the author of twenty books, including *Stephen King: America's Storyteller* and *The Films of Stephen King*.

William Moss holds the doctorate in English from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He has taught at Wake Forest University for forty years, with breaks for teaching stints in England, Ireland, China, and Japan. His teaching and research specialties are Southern literature and nineteenth-century American literature.

Bernice M. Murphy is an Assistant Professor and Lecturer in Popular Literature at Trinity College Dublin, Ireland. She has edited *Shirley Jackson: Essays on the Literary Legacy*, co-edited *It Came From the 1950s: Popular Culture, Popular Anxieties*, and is author of *The Suburban Gothic in American Popular Culture*. Her most recent research explores the relationship between horror and the American wilderness/countryside.

Andrew Hock Soon Ng is Senior Lecturer and teaches contemporary fiction, postcolonial writing, and theories of authorship at Monash University, Malaysia. He is the author of *Dimensions of Monstrosity in Contemporary Narratives* (2004), *Interrogating Interstices* (2007), and *Intimating the Sacred* (2011). His research focus is on Gothic literature and horror narratives, and he has published essays in various international journals.

Kathleen L. Nichols is Professor Emerita of English at Pittsburg State University, Kansas. Her recent publications include a collection of “Native American Myths, Narratives, and Songs” in *Native America* and “Return of the Goddess in the Novels of Toni Morrison and Leslie Marmon Silko” in *Goddesses in World Culture*.

Martin Procházka is Professor of English, American, and Comparative Literature and the Head of the Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures at Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic. His recent books include *Transversals* (2012) and *Ruins in the New World*. He is the founding editor of an international academic journal, *Litteraria Pragensia*.

David Punter is Professor of English at the University of Bristol, England, and has written many books and essays on the Gothic, the best known of which is *The Literature of Terror*. His most recent books include *Writing the Passions; Metaphor; Modernity;* and *Rapture: Literature, Addiction, Secrecy*.

Arthur Redding is an Associate Professor of English at York University in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. He is author of “*Haints*”: *American Ghosts, Millennial Passions, and Contemporary Gothic Fiction* (2011), *Turncoats, Traitors, and Fellow Travelers: Culture and Politics of the Early Cold War* (2008), and *Raids on Human Consciousness: Writing, Anarchism, and Violence* (1998).

Faye Ringel, Professor Emerita of Humanities at the US Coast Guard Academy, New London, Connecticut, holds the doctorate in comparative literature from Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island. She is the author of *New England's Gothic Literature: History and Folklore of the*

Supernatural and articles on fantastic literature including Lovecraft, King, and Gothic medievalism.

Chad Rohman, Professor and Chair of English at Dominican University (River Forest, Illinois), is the current editor of the *Mark Twain Circular* and co-editor of *Centenary Reflections on Mark Twain's No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger* (2009). He regularly publishes and presents on Mark Twain and other American writers.

Carol Siegel, Professor of English at Washington State University, Vancouver, is the author of *Lawrence among the Women; Male Masochism: Modern Revisions of the Story of Love; New Millennial Sexstyles; and Goth's Dark Empire*. She is currently working on a study of the representation of sexuality in non-pornographic cinema.

Matthew Wynn Sivils is an Assistant Professor of English at Iowa State University and has published numerous articles on the works of early American Gothic writers, including Charles Brockden Brown, John Neal, and James Fenimore Cooper. He is co-editor of the award-winning scholarly journal, *Literature in the Early American Republic*.

Andrew Smith is Reader in Nineteenth-Century English Literature at the University of Sheffield, England. Published books include *The Ghost Story 1840-1920: A Cultural History* (2010), *Gothic Literature* (2007), *Victorian Demons* (2004), and *Gothic Radicalism* (2000). He is joint president of the International Gothic Association.

Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet is Professor of American Literature at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland. Her first book, *The Poetics and Politics of the American Gothic*, was published in 2010, and a co-edited collection of essays,

The Gothic in Contemporary Literature and Popular Culture, was published in 2012.

Sherry R. Truffin is an Associate Professor of English at Campbell University in North Carolina, where she teaches courses in American Literature and English Composition. In addition to her first monograph, *Schoolhouse Gothic*, she has published essays on James Baldwin, Stephen King, Chuck Palahniuk, Joyce Carol Oates, and *The X-Files*.

Ronja Vieth holds an MA in American Literature from TTU Carolina Wilhelmina/Braunschweig in Germany, an MA from the University of Louisiana in Lafayette, and a PhD from Texas Tech University. Her national and international presentations and publications include her article on Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian* as Frontier Gothic.

Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock is Professor of English at Central Michigan University. He is the author or editor of fourteen books, including *The Vampire Film: Undead Cinema* (2012), *Charles Brockden Brown* (2011), and *Scare Tactics: Supernatural Fiction by American Women* (2008). His *Encyclopedia of Literary and Cinematic Monsters* was published in 2013.

Maisha L. Wester is an Associate Professor at Indiana University. She teaches African American Literature, American Gothic Literature, and Horror Film Studies. Her publications include *African American Gothic: Screams from Shadowed Places*, and "Gothic and the Politics of Race," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Modern Gothic*.

John Whatley is a teacher and administrator at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, Canada. His interests are in Romantic and Gothic literature, crime and literature,

the literary essay, and the relation between the social sciences and literary criticism. He has published on Gothic and Romantic literature.

Gina Wisker is Professor of Contemporary Literature and Higher Education at the University of Brighton, England, a National Teaching Fellow, and co-editor of online dark fantasy journal *Dissections* and poetry magazine *Spokes*. Gina's books include *Horror Fiction* (2005), *The Good Supervisor* (2008), and *Wicked* (creative work, 2012). Her essays often explore women's vampire writing and the Gothic.

Preface

Gothic American literature offers essential insights into the history and culture of the United States. This statement would not have been understood or accepted a few decades ago.

As late as the 1950s, the Gothic was regarded as a minor European tradition concerned with gloomy mansions and imperiled maidens and having little relevance in America. The achievements of Hawthorne, Melville, and Poe were accepted, and Faulkner sometimes was called a writer of Southern Gothic, but the larger pattern of American Gothic, and the usefulness of the category, was not generally recognized. I qualify the statement only because a few earlier scholars, notably Harry Levin in *The Power of Blackness: Hawthorne, Poe, Melville* (1958), provided ideas that anticipate the direction of current scholarship.

In the 1960s, a period of great change in literary studies, as in many aspects of our culture, the definition of the Gothic was radically revised, and broadened, both in the United States and in Europe. While a full account of the theory of the Gothic will be found in Jerrold Hogle's chapter, the first in this volume, we should note Leslie Fiedler's *Love and Death in the American Novel* (1960) as a paradigm shifter in American Studies. Fiedler's work made irrelevant the earlier critical conversation about the contending romance and novel traditions in American literature, and defined a single broad tradition of American Gothic comprising the culture's dark, repressed, and oppositional elements, running back at least to Charles Brockden Brown. All subsequent discussions of American Gothic were shaped by this insight.

At the end of the 1960s, discussion of British and European Gothic was reenergized by Robert Hume's PMLA essay "Gothic Versus Romantic" and the debate it provoked. Through the 1970s and 1980s, a number of works on American Gothic appeared, in many instances extending Fiedler's ideas. *Uncanny American Fiction: Medusa's Face* (1989) by Allan Lloyd-Smith (then known as Allan Gardner Smith), a British scholar of American culture, illustrates the merging of Gothic theory with the ideas of Derrida and Lacan in this period.

A defining moment in contemporary Gothic Studies was the foundation of the International Gothic Association (IGA) in 1991, with Allan Lloyd-Smith as its first president. The scholars attending the first IGA meeting at the University of East Anglia, its second, at Stirling, Scotland, in 1995, and subsequent biennial meetings, provided a cadre who developed Gothic courses and even degree programs in Britain, the United States, Canada, and indeed around the world. They, and their students, the second generation of IGA scholars, are well represented in this collection of essays.

Today Gothic Studies is well established in the academy. Several British universities offer MA degrees in the field, and one of the contributors to this volume, William Hughes, holds the title of Professor of Gothic Studies. The respected journal *Gothic Studies*, which was born at the Stirling IGA conference, can be found in university libraries globally and provides a juried forum for research. Major university presses publish significant new books every year, as the bibliographies of the following chapters attest. Courses in American Gothic, specifically, scarce heard of a few decades ago, are now taught in university English Departments and American Studies programs throughout the United States and in many other countries.

Thus, to return to the assertion of our opening sentence, our growing understanding of the Gothic has begun to reshape the larger disciplines of American Studies and American literature. Far from being a footnote to our literary tradition, the Gothic is now seen as essential to understanding our literature, and indeed our national project. The dominant, sanctioned history of the United States has been a narrative of social, economic, and technological progress. This narrative also asserts the doctrine of American exceptionalism, the belief that the country's essential innocence and its destiny place it above the constraints and judgments of other nations and of history. In contrast to this triumphant story, the Gothic is a counter-narrative, an alternative vision, recording fear, failure, despair, nightmare, crime, disease, and madness. The Gothic is that which is left out, what is excluded, by what W.D. Howells unfortunately once described as the smiling aspects of life that are more typically American. The Gothic thus is the natural medium for expression of our great national failures and crimes, such as the enslavement of Africans and the displacement and destruction of indigenous peoples. The Gothic is also a vehicle for stories of the oppression of women, and indeed for all groups forced to the margins of power by a patriarchal culture. The development of Gothic Studies has paralleled, and contributed to, the feminist movement and the field of women's studies, and the rediscovery of significant women authors of the nineteenth century. The Gothic also represented homosexuality obliquely in repressive times, and now directly engages gay culture. Gothic literature is the place where the nightmares of small and private lives have found expression. Indeed, only by studying American Gothic, a literature often of hysterical extremes, violence, obscurity, and the surreal, can one reach a balanced and rational understanding of American culture from colonial times to our present postmodern age.