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The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales

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Baldick, Chris, ed. 2009. *The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales*. Oxford: OUP. ISBN 978-0199561537 [Edited Book]

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Abstract or Description

The Gothic tale has been with us for over two hundred years, but this collection is the first to illustrate the continuing strength of this special fictional tradition from its origins in the late eighteenth century. Gothic is generally identified from Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* and the works of Ann Radcliffe, and with heroines menaced by feudal villains amid crumbling ruins. While the repertoire of claustrophobic settings, themes, and threatening atmosphere established the Gothic genre, later writers from Poe onwards achieved ever greater sophistication, and a shift in emphasis from cruelty to decadence. Modern Gothic is distinguished by its imaginative variety of voice, from the chilling depiction of a disordered mind to the sinister suggestion of vampirism.

This anthology brings together the work of writers such as Le Fanu, Hawthorne, Hardy, Faulkner, and their earliest literary forebears, and emphasizes the central role of women writers from Anna Laetitia Barbauld to Isabel Allende and Angela Carter. While the Gothic tale shares some characteristics with the ghost story of horror and fantasy, the present volume triumphantly celebrates the distinctive features that define the and unsettling literary form.

Item Type: Edited Book

Departments, Centres and Research Units: English and Comparative Literature

Date: 2009

Item ID: 12877

Date Deposited: 25 Aug 2015 12:10

Last Modified: 23 Jun 2017 13:55

URI: <http://research.gold.ac.uk/id/eprint/12877>



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Goldsmiths, University of London, New Cross, London, SE14 6NW, UK
Telephone: + 44 (0) 20 7919 7166 / Email: gro@gold.ac.uk

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