2022

Queer Gothic Literature and Culture

Laura Westengard
CUNY New York City College of Technology

Queer Gothic Literature and Culture
Laura Westengard

Since the first Gothic novel, Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), the Gothic has included themes of transgressive sexuality. The novel begins with the death of Conrad, a young man who is engaged to be married to Isabella. After a giant helmet falls from the sky and crushes him, his father Manfred decides that he will take the place of his dead son and marry the young woman who had been positioned to be his daughter-in-law. Following this declaration, Manfred frantically attempts to control the fracturing of his patriarchal power by chasing Isabella through dark subterranean passages, imprisoning those who interfere with his plans, and dodging ancestral ghosts and giant append-ages. Walpole's novel is credited with establishing the hallmarks of what would come to be known as Gothic fiction. These hallmarks include haunting, medieval castles, Catholic monasteries, catacombs, supernatu-ral prophetic occurrences, subterranean passages, ancestral curses, ter-rorised vulnerable women and eroticised power dynamics. These themes and tropes recurred throughout the centuries that followed and have come to be recognised as 'Gothic', but in addition to these more recog-nisable Gothic tropes, eighteenth-century Gothic fiction also established the enduring and pervasive relationship between the Gothic and non-heteronormative genders and sexualities, often known as 'queer Gothic'.

Though 'queer' initially denoted oddness or peculiarity, the term later developed as a derogatory epithet for homosexuals, but by the late twen-tieth century queer had been reclaimed by many in the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) community as a marker of politicised resist-ance to the original stigma of the term. Susan Stryker notes that this use of queer first appeared on flyers at the 1990 New York Pride march after being adopted by the political protest group ACT-UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), and today it often stands for a defiant, anti-normative positionality.[1] However, queer also functions as an umbrella term that broadly represents a 'range of nonnormative sexual practices and gender

identifications' both including and exceeding the meanings of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender.[2] The broad understanding of queer as both odd and as indicating non-normative genders and sexualities helps us understand the way the term is conceptualised in relation to the Gothic. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, a scholar whose career began in Gothic literary studies but who is best known as a founder of academic queer studies, frames queer as an 'open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or can't be made) to signify monolithically'.[3] Queerness in this sense functions as a placeholder for non-normative genders and/or sexualities and serves as a refusal to be neatly defined, pinned down or contained by any single or unchanging meaning, making it a flexible term but also potentially confusing and disturbing to those who expect tidy and predictable behaviours, identities and meanings. This refusal to remain strictly moored to the status quo reflects the disruptions of early Gothic narratives in which the inciting incidents mark a departure from 'normal' life and takes readers into the realm of the irrational, perverse and supernatural.

In *Queer Gothic* (2006), George Haggerty notes that Gothic fiction emerged before the codification of sexuality as we know it today, and that its themes of terror, fear, flight and desire all hold a sexual valence that challenge and reshape heteronormative structures. Indeed, 'social-sexual relations', he claims, 'are the most basic common denominator of Gothic writing'.[4] Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Gothic fiction created a host of metaphors, aesthetics and settings that have resonated throughout the centuries in various forms of cultural production that contemplate, represent, condemn and celebrate queerness. Since social-sexual transgression is foundational to Gothic form and content, twentieth-century cultural producers who incorporate the Gothic often do so 'to evoke a queer world that attempts to transgress the binaries of sexual decorum'.[5]

It is important to note that although the Gothic is inherently queer, its purposes have often been conservative. Maggie Kilgour explains that the 'momentary subversion of order' that characterises the majority of Gothic narratives is followed by 'the restoration of a norm, which after the experience of terror, now seems immensely desirable'.[6] Readers enjoy the titillating details of the 'subversion of order', or the queering of the status quo, but ultimately the narrative reinforces adherence to norms by the destruction of those situations and creatures that represented divergence. In this way, Gothic metaphors serve not only as markers of disorder, but also consistently function as markers of outsider status.

Monstrosity, vampirism and ghostliness mark a character as 'other' and therefore a symbol of fear and a threat to the social order. Gothic metaphors have a dual function, however, because they represent social anxieties and desires both at once; while readers know the sexually perverse vampire is a threatening monster that will usually be destroyed in the end, in the meantime they are able to eroticise and be thrilled by the vampire's difference, which can be read as representing sexual, racial, class, ability or any other kind of 'otherness', or 'deviant subjectivities opposite which the normal, the healthy, and the pure can be known'.[7]

In *Gothic Queer Culture* (2019), I argue that the conservative aim of the Gothic performs 'insidious' trauma for queer readers and viewers who turn to the Gothic to see representations of queerness, but who must endure the underlying message that queerness is monstrous and must be destroyed for the sake of the norm. Like the term 'queer' itself, queer audiences have at times reclaimed even conservative and marginalising Gothic metaphors, a strategy that removes some of the 'linguistic and aesthetic violence committed by queer dehumanization in popular culture'.[8] Queer people are cultural creators as well, and many turn to Gothic tropes and aesthetics to explore non-normative desires and anxieties. In her study of lesbian Gothic fiction, Paulina Palmer points out that the Gothic 'confronts the writer with contradictions' since many of the features of the Gothic as a metaphor for queer sexuality are problematic. At the same time, however, the Gothic is attractive to lesbian and queer writers because of its 'tendency to question mainstream versions of "reality" and to interrogate the values associated with them'.[9] This dual function of Gothic tropes persists throughout the twentieth century, as they function as affirmation and representation, as well as devices that use queer Gothicism to further marginalise those who stray from the norm. Regardless of its contradictions, or perhaps because of them, queerness is embedded in the roots of Gothic fiction, and conversely the Gothic has become a means of creating a 'queer world' in art, literature and culture.

Gothic themes and tropes have morphed over the years to reflect shifting cultural anxieties and desires around queerness. Jack Halberstam defines Gothic as the 'rhetorical style and narrative structure designed to produce fear and desire within the reader', often achieving its aim through the deployment of excess.[10] The production of simultaneous fear and desire is a hallmark of the Gothic, and it is also a characteristic of twentieth-century cultural attitudes towards queerness, making queerness itself expressly Gothic in the public imagination. This Gothic swirl of anxiety and desire as well as the metaphors and aesthetics originating in early Gothic fiction appear frequently in twentieth-century

queer cultural production – that is, cultural production created by queers as well as production that navigates queerness in its content. In early twentieth-century literature and film, for example, Gothic metaphors such as haunting, vampirism and monstrosity often served as cautionary warnings against non-normative gender expressions and sexual behaviours. Later these tropes shifted to represent psychological repression, fetishised sexuality and even empowered political resistance. The remainder of this chapter will examine examples of queer Gothic cultural production in the twentieth century, both in its conservative and reappropriated forms, by highlighting textual examples that generate simultaneous fear and desire, utilise Gothic tropes or aesthetics, and that relate broadly to non-normative genders and/or sexualities.

Since the first ancestral ghosts began wandering the halls of the Castle of Otranto, haunted houses and spectral apparitions have been persistent Gothic tropes. Terry Castle explains that lesbianism in literary history appears as 'something ghostly: an impalpability, a misting over, an evaporation, or "whiting out" of possibility'.[11] Beyond the decorporealisation of lesbians specifically, the ghostly frequently stands in for the ineffable, that which refuses to make itself clear within the rational structures of society, and the unspeakable. All of these qualities also map on to queerness in its fluidity, resistance to normative scripts and frameworks, and its taboo nature. Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), for example, is haunted by that which cannot be spoken. The novella follows the experience of a governess who believes that her charges, Flora and Miles, are haunted by and perhaps secretly collaborating with the ghosts of a former governess, Miss Jessel, and a former valet, Peter Quint. The narrative circulates around the '"unmentionable" thing that Miles did at his boarding school, the implicitly homosexual transmission of words that remain unspecified in the text'.[12] The ghosts of this text represent the governess's vague and unconscious suspicion of inappropriate intimacies between the adults and the children of the manor that linger beyond death, as well as the reverberations of the unspeakable that are carried on through Miles's behaviour at boarding school.

Haunted houses speak to familial traumas, angst-ridden psycho-sexual development and the *unheimlich* of the Freudian uncanny. Freud's concept of the uncanny explains the eerie feeling when the known and familiar reveals itself to be strange because something that 'ought to have remained secret . . . has come to light'.[13] The hidden-away spaces of the home such as attics, basements and closets hold the secrets that threaten to burst forth at any moment, turning the domestic space into a nightmare. The 'unhomely home', Palmer notes,

evokes a domestic space that, though ostensibly warm and secure, is disturbed by secrets and the return of repressed fears and desires. The implications that it evokes of a tension or clash between the familiar and the unfamiliar, the homely and the strange, make it particularly relevant to queer existence.[14]

The return of repressed desires, traumas and family secrets, those taboos that are so often hidden from the world behind the closed doors of the home, triggers the sense that a house that was once known has become strange and eerie. Of course, the figure of the closet is decidedly resonant with queer coming-of-age narratives involving the development, initial concealment and later revelation of secret sexual desires. In Gothic texts, hidden queerness represented by the uncanny, the ghostly or the monstrous often serves as a cautionary tale by making queerness the source of evil, violence and fear. Shirley Jackson's 1959 novel *The Haunting of Hill House* introduces an anthropomorphised, even malevolent, house that 'stood by itself against its hills, holding darkness within'.[15] The house appears at first glance to be the epitome of solidity in which 'walls continued upright, bricks met neatly, floors were firm, and doors were sensibly shut', but the domestic familiarity of the house quickly slips away as the protagonist, Eleanor Vance, introduces her repressed desires, grievances and regrets into the space.[16] The hauntings that emerge from the house are seemingly directed at Eleanor, who develops a nascent attraction to the confident and modern Theodora and who struggles with guilt over the death of her mother for whom she was caretaker. Eleanor's psyche is childlike and reactive, with an abundance of repressed fears and desires, which appear to give rise to the supernatural occurrences in the house. The swirl of unacknowledged queerness and unspoken guilt emerging as hauntings turn the house from steady and sensible to suffocating, overbearing and threatening. Palmer explains that the 'spectre and phantom, key signifiers of the uncanny, carry connotations of "excess" since their appearance exceeds the material, and this is another concept that connects the uncanny with "queer"'.[17] The house seems to burst at the seams with an excess of closeted content taking the form of ghostliness.

The vampire figure emerged most famously in Gothic literary history with Bram Stoker's 1897 novel, *Dracula*. Vampirism has appeared as a Gothic metaphor throughout the twentieth century, often taking on drastically shifting shapes and meanings. Across all of these iterations, however, the vampire is associated with queerness, whether as a threatening cautionary figure, an erotic outsider or a proud identity category. William Patrick Day explains that vampire legends in the twentieth century shifted drastically in response to historical and cultural contexts, and this significatory shapeshifting is aligned with the

Gothic's foundational characteristic of encompassing both the fears and desires of its moment. Day explains that early twentieth-century vampires served as cautionary tales focused on 'affirming nineteenth-century morals and controlling our baser impulses', and later vampire narratives became increasingly erotic 'initiatory tales asserting the necessity of exploring the fearful unknown'.[18] By the end of the twentieth century, the vampire had become a figure of 'liberation from the fear and terror generated by ignorance or outdated notions of sexuality'.[19] As 'Gothic social barometers', the vampire's form and function shift over time, but one factor that remains consistent is the relationship between vampirism and non-normative sexualities and genders.[20]

During the height of twentieth-century censorship in Hollywood, queerness became subtext, often represented by Gothic metaphors circulating in films. An iconic figure in twentieth-century queer Gothic cinema is the monstrous, vampiric lesbian who preys on young, virginal women. Sheridan Le Fanu's 1872 *Carmilla* introduced the figure of a strange vampire woman who appears one day following a carriage accident and proceeds to seduce the innocent and vulnerable young Laura, causing her increasing weakness and lethargy but also inexplicable fascination and pleasure. Carmilla sneaks into women's bedrooms at night and feeds from their breasts as they are unwittingly ushered into intimate romantic and erotic attachments. Twentieth-century cinematic representations of vampirism owe much to this early Sapphic vampire. Cold and repressed on the surface, part of the horror of these characters is the reveal of the perverse and evil nature underneath their icy and civilised exterior.

At times this vampirism is explicit, such as in the case of Countess Marya Zaleska in *Dracula's Daughter* (Lambert Hillyer, 1936), and at times monstrosity/vampirism is only vaguely implied as a means of coding the predatory, queer nature of the character, as with Mrs Danvers in *Rebecca* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1940) and Miss Holloway in *The Uninvited* (Lewis Allen, 1944). Countess Zaleska seeks out psychiatric help in the hope that she might be cured of her unholy urges. She makes a valiant but short-lived effort to resist the flesh of young women but soon after preys upon a beautiful woman who is brought to her art studio as a model. The model's dynamic has implications around class, economic vulnerability and sex work, while the pathologised yet incurable status of Countess Zaleska stands in for lesbian sexual desire. Queer viewers have often identified with queer Gothic characters, but in films of this period their presence is intended as a warning and a threat and they are almost always destroyed in the end (either by death or madness), as is the case with Zaleska who ultimately pays the price for her queer appetites.

Later in the twentieth century, the lesbian or bisexual vampire figure remains predatory, but her queer sexuality is more explicit. *Daughters of Darkness* (*Les lèvres rouges*, 1971) features a character based on the historical figure Elizabeth Bathory, a sixteenth-century Hungarian countess who was rumoured to have tortured and murdered hundreds of young women and bathed in their blood. In the film, an immortal Bathory arrives with her assistant at a nearly empty hotel in Belgium and eventually seduces young newlywed Valerie into abandoning her husband for a vampiric affair involving both sex and blood. In *The Hunger* (1983), elegant vampire Miriam infiltrates Manhattan nightlife with her lover John, seducing young people of all genders and drinking their blood. Eventually, she sets her sights on Dr Sarah Roberts and proceeds both to make love to her and turn her into an immortal companion.

Vampire sexuality is not confined to lesbianism, however. In Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976), the first novel in *The Vampire Chronicles* series, readers are introduced to one of the most famous vampire pairs, Louis de Pointe du Lac and Lestat de Lioncourt. Haggerty notes that the 'sine qua non with which this author mesmerises her readers, however, is homoerotic desire'.[21] The relationship between Louis and Lestat is one of predation and intimacy, and their bond, though fraught, is decidedly homoerotic. *Interview with the Vampire* is not the only example of homoeroticism in the *Chronicles*. Indeed, 'Lestat's devoted friend Nicholas from *The Vampire Lestat*; Armand, Daniel, and David, the central characters who emerge throughout the Chronicles – all these dazzling young men can be read as gay'.[22] These characters grapple with their inherently queer desires, and ultimately reflect the shift in the role of the vampire from villainous seducer to glamorous protagonist whose humanity is enhanced by occupying the status of 'other'. This is a distinct shift from the Gothic othering that fetishises, marginalises and ultimately destroys difference for the sake of shoring up notions of what it means to be a 'normal' human. Vampirism in Rice's *Chronicles* can be mapped directly on to the personal journey of the discovery and acceptance of queerness.[23] In this world, becoming a vampire means 'awakening and accepting one's own secret nature – whatever is there but has been repressed, especially one's sensual, sexual nature',[24] and in the late twentieth century the meaning of queer identity shifted drastically from something deeply pathologised and maligned to a marginalised identity category to be accepted and even celebrated.[25]

While vampires are arguably a type of monster, monstrosity more generally is another Gothic metaphor that often signifies queerness. In Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* (1818), Victor Frankenstein pieces together a creature with parts from 'the unhallowed

damps of the grave' and the 'living animal', and the creature that is brought to life represents a type of monstrosity that queers the boundaries of humanity as well as normative procreation.[26] Because of the creature's multiplicitous difference, Frankensteinian monstrosity has been deployed to represent the threat of sexual and gender transgression, and conversely has been reappropriated as a resonant figure for some queer and transgender audiences. The dehumanising effect of monstrosity as a stand-in for gender non-conformity has a long history in the genre of horror cinema. In films such as *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974) and *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991) the killers use the salvaged flesh of their victims to construct their genders; both Leatherface and Buffalo Bill wear the scalps (and in the case of Leatherface the whole face) of their victims as a way of accessing femininity. This kind of Frankensteinian monstrosity of pieced together bits of flesh is problematically used to conflate gender variance with the monstrous and grotesque. In films such as *Psycho* (1960), *Dressed to Kill* (1980) and *Sleepaway Camp* (1983, released as *Nightmare Vacation* in the UK), the reveals that show the killer to be gender non-conforming imply that gender non-conformity itself, not murderous behaviour, is the ultimate monstrosity.

In 'My Words to Victor Frankenstein above the Village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage', Susan Stryker explains her 'deep affinity' with Frankenstein's creation:

> Like the monster, I am too often perceived as less than fully human due to the means of my embodiment; like the monster's as well, my exclusion from human community fuels a deep and abiding rage in me that I, like the monster, direct against the conditions in which I must struggle to exist.[27]

Stryker's relationship to monstrosity reflects the long tradition of queer audiences recognising the dual function of queer Gothic content. The Gothic both represents non-normative ways of being and condemns those who might be deemed monstrous by cis-heteronormative standards. Conversely, queer audiences often turn to Gothicism to access admittedly problematic representations, and at times queer viewers even identify with the Gothic antagonists, thereby powerfully reframing their meaning. While the monstrosity of transgender characters in the twentieth-century horror films I describe here is certainly culpable in creating a larger trans-antagonistic atmosphere, Stryker speaks to the creativity of queer viewership in knowingly engaging with queer Gothic monstrosity with a nod to its contradictory aims and effects.

The adoption and redeployment of the marginalising projection of monstrosity on the queer body occurred during the 1980s and 1990s, the height of the AIDS crisis. At a time when the queer body was associ-

ated with disease, decay and death, the attribution of monstrosity was a means of alienating and dehumanising those who were most associated with the virus in the public imagination, gay men. The notorious reluctance of the US government even to speak the name of the virus (let alone recognise the many who were ill and dying or dedicate significant resources to stopping its spread) is directly linked with the dehumanisation of queers. Queer, HIV-positive writers, performers and artists responded to the effects of Gothic monstrosity by creating pieces that reflect monstrosity in aggressively haunting ways. Poets and writers such as Gil Cuadros and David Wojnarowicz played with the devastating effects of their own mortality and the losses surrounding them. Cuadros wrote the mixed-genre book *City of God* in 1994 as he struggled with the seemingly hopeless state of being an HIV-positive, queer Chicano living in a country that did not view him as worthy of care. Rather than avoiding or disavowing the inhumanity projected on to him, *City of God* 'revels in the negativity of monstrosity, death, decay, and loss, and deploys the darkness of Gothicism not only to acknowledge the horrors of undeniable trauma, but also to powerfully reimagine what it means to be in a place of hopelessness and alienation'.[28]

Similarly, David Wojnarowicz's writing and visual art angrily reflected his deep resistance to normative scripts and their attendant judgements projected on to the bodies of queers. The photographic depiction of those dying from AIDS-related illnesses often highlighted the 'excesses of the wasted queer body [and] were offered up to the public as the endpoint of queer identity – a monstrous confluence of non-normative desire, threat, infection, and abjection'.[29] In the series of three touching, spiritual photographs taken at the deathbed of his close friend and former lover, Peter Hujar (*Untitled (Peter Hujar)*, 1987), Wojnarowicz simultaneously refused to sanitise the ravages of the virus while simultaneously portraying the wasted queer body as a site of transcendence. Queers in the United States at this time were always already cathected to death in the public imagination, marking them as a kind of living dead creature. Wojnarowicz used his own body to reframe the attribution of undead monstrosity in pieces such as *Untitled (Silence = Death)* (1989) and *Untitled (Face in Dirt)* (1990). *Untitled (Silence = Death)* is a black and white photographic self-portrait featuring Wojnarowicz's grimacing face with his mouth stitched closed like a cadaver. The stitched mouth holds another resonance, however, since it evokes the crudely stitched together body of Frankenstein's creature, a being brought to life, given intelligence and heightened emotions, and then abandoned by all. *Untitled (Face in Dirt)*, another black and white photographic self-portrait, frames Wojnarowicz's face peeking out from underneath dirt

and rock under which he seems to be buried alive, straddling the world of the living and the realm of death and marking him as undead. Both of these self-portraits highlight the sense that queer and HIV-positive people were considered vectors of death as well as forsaken as always already dead at a time when there was no viable treatment or cure for HIV/AIDS. By directing the viewers' gaze to his living face marked as undead and monstrous, Wojnarowicz offers an angry indictment of a society that has forsaken an entire generation of gay men. Both Cuadros and Wojnarowicz use Gothic monstrosity as a reappropriation and enraged redeployment of the popular association between queerness, death and a disposable, monstrous inhumanity.

As I have shown with this brief overview of several common Gothic metaphors, the Gothic serves several purposes in twentieth-century literature and culture, and those purposes are often at odds, making the Gothic a kind of battleground in which relevant anxieties and desires emerge in a swirling and incoherent blend of conservatism and anti-normativity. Since its emergence as British popular fiction in the eighteenth century, the Gothic has often functioned to define and establish what it means to be 'normal' by telling tales that marginalise, exclude and destroy those who diverge from the norm. Of course, that divergence occupies the majority of the narrative and is a large part of its appeal, making the content of these Gothic cautionary tales queer. Those with non-normative genders and sexualities have both created and consumed Gothic content and are certainly well aware that the pleasure of finding representation within queer Gothic tropes and metaphors is tempered by the damage done by associating non-normative 'outsiders' with the haunted, the vampiric and the monstrous. Queers are not simply consumers of queer Gothic literature and culture. Queer cultural producers have also turned to the Gothic to reappropriate historically damaging tropes, to express queer experiences and subjectivities, and to push back against cultural assumptions that link queerness with the threatening and the inhuman. In this function, Gothic queer literature and culture can be read not only as expressions of non-normativity but also as anti-normative creations that use the Gothic as a means of exploring imaginative new ways of existing that are not limited by cultural norms or even the confines of material humanity.

Key Works

Djuna Barnes, *Nightwood* (1936). A modernist text that includes lesbian themes paired with Gothic aesthetics and tropes.

Daphne du Maurier, *Rebecca* (1938). A Gothic tale that deploys ghosts, obsession and paranoia to allude to lesbian sexuality as well as class and gender conflict.

Rebecca (1940). Alfred Hitchcock's first American film adapts du Maurier's novel with a striking Gothic aesthetic and emphasises the lesbian-coded figure of Mrs Danvers.

The Haunting (1963). A film adaptation of *The Haunting of Hill House* that makes the novel's lesbian undertones slightly more explicit.

Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975). A decidedly campy version of queer Gothic, including allusions to *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*. Featuring Dr Frank-N-Furter, a self-proclaimed 'sweet transvestite from Transexual, Transylvania'.

Jewelle Gomez, *The Gilda Stories* (1991). A vampire story with an intersectional lens. Includes a black vampire protagonist in order to interrogate the history of United States slavery and the legacy of racism and othering.

Further Critical Reading

Fincher, Max, *Queering Gothic in the Romantic Age: The Penetrating Eye* (2007). Provides an overview of the queerness in Gothic fiction from 1765 to 1820. Helpful for investigating the roots of queer Gothic tropes.

Hughes, William, and Andrew Smith (eds), *Queering the Gothic* (2009). Models queer reading practices and Gothic reading practices for a range of texts from the eighteenth century to the present. Explores queerness in Gothic texts and the Gothic in queer texts, including both literary and pop culture examples.

Marshall, Nowell, *Romanticism, Gender, and Violence: Blake to Sodini* (2013). Reflects on the connection between compulsory gender norms, Gothic affect and violence. Makes relevant connections to contemporary political conversations around LGBTQ+ bullying by exploring queer Gothic texts from the eighteenth century to the early twenty-first century.

Rigby, Mair, 'Uncanny Recognition: Queer Theory's Debt to the Gothic' (2009). Succinct overview of the interdependency of queer theory and Gothic fiction.

Bibliography

Auerbach, Nina, *Our Vampires, Ourselves* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

Castle, Terry, *The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

Cuadros, Gil, *City of God* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1994).

Day, William Patrick, *Vampire Legends in Contemporary American Culture* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2002).

Fincher, Max, *Queering Gothic in the Romantic Age: The Penetrating Eye* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

Freud, Sigmund, 'The Uncanny' [1919], in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), vol. XVII, pp. 219–56.

Haggerty, George E., 'Anne Rice and the Queering of Culture', *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, 32.1, 1998, pp. 5–18.

Haggerty, George E., *Queer Gothic* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006).

Halberstam, Jack, *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995).

Hale-Stern, Kaila, 'Anne Rice Confirms that the Vampires Louis and Lestat are a Same-Sex Couple with a Child', *Gizmodo*, 17 October 2012, <https://io9 .gizmodo.com/anne-rice-confirms-that-the-vampires-louis-and-lestat-a-595 2076> (last accessed 1 April 2021).

Hughes, William, and Andrew Smith (eds), *Queering the Gothic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

Jackson, Shirley, *The Haunting of Hill House* [1959] (New York: Penguin, 2013).

James, Henry, *The Turn of the Screw* [1898] (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1991).

Kilgour, Maggie, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995).

Le Fanu, Joseph Sheridan, *Carmilla* [1872] (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2013).

Love, Heather, 'Queer', *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 1.1-2, 2014, pp. 172–6.

Marshall, Nowell, *Romanticism, Gender, and Violence: Blake to George Sodini* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2013).

Ní Fhlainn, Sorcha, *Postmodern Vampires: Film, Fiction, and Popular Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

Palmer, Paulina, *Lesbian Gothic: Transgressive Fictions* (London: Cassell, 1999).

Palmer, Paulina, *The Queer Uncanny: New Perspectives on the Gothic* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012).

Rice, Anne, *Interview with the Vampire* [1976] (New York: Ballantine Books, 1997).

Rigby, Mair, 'Uncanny Recognition: Queer Theory's Debt to the Gothic', *Gothic Studies*, 11.1, 2009, pp. 46–57.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, *Tendencies* (London: Routledge, 1994).

Shelley, Mary, *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* [1818] (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992).

Soltysik Monnet, Agnieszka, 'Recovering "Covering End": What Queer Theory Can Do for "The Turn of the Screw"', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 36.1, 2008, pp. 247–52.

Stoker, Bram, *Dracula* [1897] (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1993).

Stryker, Susan, 'My Words to Victor Frankenstein above the Village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage', *GL/Q: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 1, 1994, pp. 237–54.

Stryker, Susan, *Transgender History* (Berkeley, CA: Seal Press, 2008).

Walpole, Horace, *The Castle of Otranto* [1764] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Westengard, Laura, '"Conquering Immortality": Gothic AIDS Literature as Queer Futurity in Gil Cuadros's *City of God*', *Journal of Narrative Theory*, 45.2, 2015, pp. 274–300.

Westengard, Laura, *Gothic Queer Culture: Marginalized Communities and the Ghosts of Insidious Trauma* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2019).

Filmography

Daughters of Darkness (*Les lèvres rouges*) (dir. Harry Kümel, Henry Lange, Belgium, France, West Germany, 1971).
Dracula's Daughter (dir. Lambert Hillyer, Universal Productions, USA, 1936).
Dressed to Kill (dir. Brian De Palma, Filmways Pictures, USA, 1980).
The Hunger (dir. Tony Scott, Metro Goldwyn Mayer, USA, 1983).
Psycho (dir. Alfred Hitchcock, Shamley Productions, USA, 1960).
Rebecca (dir. Alfred Hitchcock, Selznick International Pictures, USA, 1940).
The Silence of the Lambs (dir. Jonathan Demme, Strong Heart, USA, 1991).
Sleepaway Camp (dir. Robert Hiltzik, American Eagle Films, USA, 1983).
The Texas Chain Saw Massacre (dir. Tobe Hooper, Vortex, USA, 1974).
The Uninvited (dir. Lewis Allen, Paramount Pictures, USA, 1944).

Notes

1. Stryker, *Transgender History*, p. 134.
2. Love, 'Queer', p. 172.
3. Sedgwick, *Tendencies*, p. 7.
4. Haggerty, *Queer Gothic*, p. 2.
5. Ibid., p. 2.
6. Kilgour, *Rise of the Gothic Novel*, p. 8.
7. Halberstam, *Skin Shows*, p. 2.
8. Westengard, *Gothic Queer Culture*, p. 13.
9. Palmer, *Lesbian Gothic*, p. 9.
10. Halberstam, *Skin Shows*, p. 2.
11. Castle, *Apparitional Lesbian*, p. 28.
12. Soltysik, 'Recovering "Covering End"', p. 249.
13. Freud, 'The Uncanny', p. 225.
14. Palmer, *Queer Uncanny*, p. 15.
15. Jackson, *Hill House*, p. 1.
16. Ibid., p. 1.
17. Palmer, *Queer Uncanny*, p. 7.
18. Day, *Vampire Legends*, p. 27.
19. Ibid., p. 31.
20. Ní Fhlainn, *Postmodern Vampires*, p. 117.
21. Haggerty, 'Anne Rice', p. 5.
22. Ibid., p. 5.
23. See Day, *Vampire Legends*, and Haggerty *Queer Gothic*. Also, in a 2012 interview Rice confirmed that Louis and Lestat 'were the first vampire

same-sex parents', further aligning their relationship along a contemporary homonormative trajectory.

24. Day, *Vampire Legends*, p. 45.
25. See Auerbach, *Our Vampires, Ourselves*, and Ní Fhlainn, *Postmodern Vampires*.
26. Shelley, *Frankenstein*, p. 53.
27. Stryker, 'My Words to Victor Frankenstein', p. 238.
28. Westengard, 'Conquering Immortality', p. 277.
29. Ibid., p. 283.