

Preoccupied with the anxieties of modernity, academic criticism has largely characterized Gothic fiction as a literature of fear and anxiety – yet most Gothic writing engages with the comic in one form or another. However, in the midst of a welter of 'spoofs' and 'ironic slasher movies', 'comic Gothic' has perhaps been easily dismissed as parody in its lower sense. *Gothic and the Comic Turn* offers a fresh perspective on Gothic fiction, arguing that the value of the comic turn in Gothic texts has been largely overlooked. Gothic writing does indeed express the fragmentation of the modern subject but this expression is characterized by irony, scepticism, and the enjoyment of comic incongruity even as it engages with anguish, fear, isolation and alienation. Tracing an historical trajectory from the late Romantic period through to the late twentieth century, this book examines how varieties of comic parody and appropriation have interrogated the complexities of modern subjectivity. Writers examined include Maria Edgeworth, Eaton Stannard Barrett, E. T. A. Hoffmann, George Meredith, George du Maurier, Djuna Barnes, Evelyn Waugh, Stella Gibbons, Barbara Comyns, Muriel Spark, Iain Banks, Patrick McGrath, Fay Weldon and Angela Carter.

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