



# Horrifying Sex: Essays on Sexual Difference in Gothic Literature

*Ruth Bienstock Anolik*

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The Gothic moment in literary history arose in the age of the Enlightenment, and the Gothic fascination with the unknown reflects the Enlightenment's response to the limits of reason. Traditionally, the emblem of the unknown that lurks in the Gothic is the supernatural, the monstrous, and the inhuman. Often overlooked is the observation that Gothic texts are also haunted by figures that represent the mystery of sexuality. This collection of essays sharpens that observation and asserts that Gothic anxieties about sexuality are likewise rooted in fear of the unknown, represented by sexual practices and desires that either lie hidden or deviate from cultural norms. The first three sections refer to popular as well as marginalized Gothic texts to portray the three prototypes of sexual "deviance": the female sexual Other in "The Fatal Woman"; the male sexual Other in "The Satanic Male"; and the homosexual Other in "Homosexual Horror." The fourth section covers literary works that celebrate sexual difference and question the idea that the sexually "deviant" is socially Other.

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