



# Lesbian Gothic Transgressive Fictions: Transgressive Fictions

*Paulina Palmer*

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## **Lesbian Gothic Transgressive Fictions: Transgressive Fictions** Paulina Palmer

Tracing the growth of lesbian Gothic fiction over the 25 years since the advent of the Women's Movement and Gay Liberation in the 1970s, this text discusses a wide selection of novels and stories, contextualizing and re-evaluating them in the light of changing currents in lesbian/queer culture and politics. The figure of the lesbian, frequently portrayed in a homophobic/misogynistic light, has long been a standard component of popular Gothic fiction and film. The author argues, however, that in more contemporary fiction, motifs and modes of fiction with Gothic associations, such as the witch, the vampire, the spectral visitor and the Gothic thriller, have been appropriated by writers adopting a lesbian viewpoint to articulate the transgressive aspect of lesbian sexuality and existence. Writers whose texts receive discussion include Rebecca Brown, Pat Califia, Emma Donoghue, Katherine V. Forrest, Ellen Galford, Sarah Schulman, Mary Wings and Jeanette Winterson. Included are such topics as the production of lesbian subjectivity and sexuality; relations between women; women's complex relationship with history and "the lesbian past"; the performative aspect of role and identity; and the construction of alternative familial groups and formations.

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