



# **Gothic Fiction and the Invention of Terrorism: The Politics and Aesthetics of Fear in the Age of the Reign of Terror**

*Joseph Crawford*

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This book examines the connections between the growth of 'terror fiction' - the genre now known as 'Gothic' - in the late eighteenth century, and the simultaneous appearance of the conceptual origins of 'terrorism' as a category of political action. In the 1790s, Crawford argues, four inter-connected bodies of writing arose in Britain: the historical mythology of the French Revolution, the political rhetoric of 'terrorism', the genre of political conspiracy theory, and the literary genre of Gothic fiction, known at the time as 'terrorist novel writing'. All four bodies of writing drew heavily upon one another, in order to articulate their shared sense of the radical and monstrous otherness of the extremes of human evil, a sense which was quite new to the eighteenth century, but has remained central to the ways in which we have thought and written about evil and violence ever since.

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