In describing his proto-Gothic fiction, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) as a translation, Horace Walpole was deliberately playing on national anxieties concerning the importation of war, fashion and literature from France in the aftermath of the Seven Years War. In the last decade of the eighteenth century, as Britain went to war again with France, this time in the wake of revolution, the continuing connections between Gothic literature and France through the realms of translation, adaptation and unacknowledged borrowing led to strong suspicions of Gothic literature taking on a subversive role in diminishing British patriotism. Angela Wright explores the development of Gothic literature in Britain in the context of the fraught relationship between Britain and France, offering fresh perspectives on the works of Walpole, Radcliffe, ‘Monk’ Lewis and their contemporaries.

**Angela Wright** is Senior Lecturer in Romantic Literature at the University of Sheffield. She is author of *Gothic Fiction: A Reader’s Guide to Essential Criticism* (2007).
This series aims to foster the best new work in one of the most challenging fields within English literary studies. From the early 1780s to the early 1830s a formidable array of talented men and women took to literary composition, not just in poetry, which some of them famously transformed, but in many modes of writing. The expansion of publishing created new opportunities for writers, and the political stakes of what they wrote were raised again by what Wordsworth called those ‘great national events’ that were ‘almost daily taking place’: the French Revolution, the Napoleonic and American wars, urbanisation, industrialisation, religious revival, an expanded empire abroad and the reform movement at home. This was an enormous ambition, even when it pretended otherwise. The relations between science, philosophy, religion and literature were reworked in texts such as *Frankenstein* and *Biographia Literaria*; gender relations in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and *Don Juan*; journalism by Cobbett and Hazlitt; poetic form, content and style by the Lake School and the Cockney School. Outside Shakespeare studies, probably no body of writing has produced such a wealth of comment or done so much to shape the responses of modern criticism. This indeed is the period that saw the emergence of those notions of ‘literature’ and of literary history, especially national literary history, on which modern scholarship in English has been founded.
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BRITAIN, FRANCE AND THE GOTHIC, 1764–1820

The Import of Terror

ANGELA WRIGHT

University of Sheffield
For my parents, Robert and Mary Wright
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1 William Hogarth, ‘The Invasion’, 1756. Plate One: France; Plate Two: England [author’s own collection].  

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Chapter 4 contains some earlier material which was published in two essays: ‘How We Do Ape Thee, France! The Cult of Rousseau in Women’s Gothic Writing in the 1790s’ (published in Le Gothic, ed. Avril Horner
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