

HELEN SUTHERLAND

**Wide Webs of Fear:
American Gothic Fiction and Its British Counterparts**

That American Gothic fiction exists as a distinct, geographically defined category seems self-evident if the contents pages of many studies of Gothic are a certain guide. What is less clear is the sort of Atlantic that separates American Gothic from its British counterpart; or, to put it another way, what characterises American Gothic as American.

In the search for such characteristics I shall refer to a number of Gothic texts, but constraints of space limit me to a detailed consideration of only two novels, both by Charles Brockden Brown: *Wieland* and *Edgar Huntly*, published in 1798 and 1799 respectively. I want to argue that these works are identifiably American and that their Americanness is linked to Brown's modification of Gothic convention. Although part of this strategy depends upon comparisons with British Gothic fiction, I should perhaps add that I am not arguing for specific influences, though these undoubtedly do exist and can be seen as two-way trade routes across the Atlantic.

Writing in the aftermath of the American War of Independence, and a decade or so after the establishment of the American Constitution in 1787, Brown's awareness of the importance of national identity is signalled in the title of his first novel, which is in full *Wieland; or The Transformation. An American Tale*. In other words, he is claiming that this tale has a quality or qualities specific to American writing or American life, or both.

This sense of Americanness is articulated more precisely in the address to the public prefacing *Edgar Huntly*, in which Brown wrote:

That new springs of action, and new motives to curiosity should operate; that the field of investigation, opened to us by our own country, should differ essentially from those which exist in Europe, may be readily conceived. The sources of amusement to the fancy and instruction to the heart, that are peculiar to ourselves, are equally numerous and inexhaustible. It is the purpose of this work to profit by some of these sources; to exhibit a series of adventures, growing out of the condition of our country, and connected with one of the most common and most wonderful diseases or affections of the human frame.

One merit the writer may at least claim; that of calling forth the passions and engaging the sympathy of the reader, by means hitherto unemployed by preceding authors. Puerile superstition and exploded manners; Gothic castles and chimeras, are the material usually employed for this end. The incidents of Indian hostility, and the perils of the western

wilderness, are far more suitable; and, for a native of America to overlook these, would admit of no apology.¹

So Brown sweeps away castles, chimeras and ‘puerile superstition’ and repudiates the supernatural. Even excessive religious practice seems included in this condemnation, for it is in a temple given over to his private and gloomy devotions that Wieland Senior dies mysteriously in an incident of spontaneous combustion, a phenomenon which in Brown’s day was seen as an ‘awful and mysterious phenomenon of *nature*’² rather than as a manifestation of the supernatural. For all that, the mystery of this particular phenomenon of nature creates a degree of ambiguity which predisposes the next generation to accept, and respond to, the seemingly marvellous, and qualifies their reliance on reason and the senses as sources of knowledge.

The actuality of spontaneous human combustion is, of course, a contested issue, and as Markman Ellis notes in *The History of Gothic Fiction* (2000), even today it is ‘hovering on the edge of empirical verifiability and sensational anecdote’.³ At the beginning of the twenty-first century it seems much closer to sensational anecdote, but by the end of the eighteenth century there had been a number of recorded incidents which suggested that the phenomenon was verifiable, while in the nineteenth it was widely discussed in scientific papers. One such paper is ‘On Spontaneous Combustion’ by Alexander Ogston, MD, published in *British and Foreign Medico-Chirurgical Review* (1870), which quotes the report of the incident behind Brown’s description of the phenomenon in *Wieland*.⁴

Having banished many of the characteristic Gothic markers, Brown has to find new ways of affecting the sensibilities of his readers, and at first glance it would seem that Julia Kristeva’s concept of the abject would illuminate the operation of this particular incident, as it does so much nineteenth-century Gothic fiction. Abjection can be described as the process by which anything a culture perceives as unclean, disorderly, or antisocial is cast off, so that the subject doing the casting off can then be admitted into the symbolic order, while the abject is that improper material that is so cast off. Abjection is simultaneously somatic and symbolic and typically creates a powerfully visceral response even when mediated through the written word. In *The Gothic Vision. Three Centuries of Horror, Terror and Fear* (2002) Dani Cavallaro suggests that ‘especially threatening are these borderline parts of the physiological apparatus through which abject materials pass and the materials themselves: blood, semen, urine, faeces, tears, milk, sweat’.⁵

A second glance, however, casts doubt on the accuracy of describing the spontaneous combustion of Wieland as an example of abjection, for it seems not to go far enough in the direction of the disgusting. True, we are told that ‘Fever and delirium terminated in lethargic slumber, which, in the course of two hours, gave place to death. Yet not until insupportable exhalations and crawling putrefaction had driven from his chamber and the house every one whom their duty did not detain’,⁶ but this is less extreme than its source, in which the surgeon in attendance notes that even before death ‘putrefaction had already made such progress that the patient’s body exhaled an unbearable stench [and] I saw the worms which came from it crawl even out of the bed’.⁷ (This last point irresistibly reminds one of Victor Frankenstein’s dream of his dead mother in Vol. I, Chapter IV of *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, who

is known to have read Brown's work during the years just prior to writing her novel in 1818.)

Brown's writing is also restrained in comparison to Dickens' description of spontaneous combustion in *Bleak House* (1852). He wrote:

'See how the soot's falling...Confound the stuff, it won't blow off—smears, like black fat... Fah!...Let us open the window a bit, and get a mouthful of air'. Mr Guppy, sitting on the window-sill...continues...to tap it, and clasp it, and measure it with his hand, until he hastily draws his hand away. 'What, in the Devil's name', he says, 'is this! Look at my fingers!'

A thick, yellow liquor defiles them, which is offensive to the touch and sight, and more offensive to the smell. A stagnant, sickening oil, with some natural revulsion in it that makes them both shudder...It slowly drips and creeps away down the bricks; here, lies in a little thick nauseous pool.

'This is a horrible house', says Mr Guppy...give me some water or I shall cut my hand off'...The lodger says, 'it's the appointed time at last. Shall I go?' Mr Guppy nods, and gives him a "lucky touch" on the back; but not with the washed hand, though it is his right hand...Tony comes swiftly back...'The old man's not there...the burning smell is there—and the soot is there, and the oil is there—and he is not there!' ...

They go down, more dead than alive, and holding one another, push open the door of the back shop...There is very little fire left in the grate, but there is a smouldering suffocating vapour in the room, and a dark greasy coating on the walls and ceiling...

Here is a small burnt patch of flooring; here is the tinder from a little bundle of burnt paper, but not so light as usual, seeming to be steeped in something; and here is—is it the cinder of a small charred and broken log of wood sprinkled with white ashes, or is it coal? O Horror he IS here! and this, from which we run away, striking out the light and overturning one another into the street, is all that represents him.⁸

As one might expect, Edgar Allan Poe also locates his horrors at the point of dissolution. In 'The Facts in the Case of M Valdemar' (1847), for example, the narrator records how he mesmerised Valdemar at the point of death and maintained him in that state for seven months. The awakening process is begun, but on hearing the corpse utter the impossibility, 'I say to you that I am dead', it is greatly accelerated, and the narrator records:

As I rapidly made the mesmeric passes, amid ejaculations of 'dead! dead!' absolutely *bursting* from the tongue and not from the lips of the sufferer, his whole frame at once—within the space of a single minute, or even less—shrunk—crumbled—absolutely *rotted* away beneath my hands. Upon the bed, before the whole company there lay a nearly liquid mass of loathsome—of detestable putridity.⁹

Both Dickens and Poe thus erode the borderline parts of the physiological apparatus to the point where that apparatus or body collapses into the abject material itself,

suggesting, perhaps, that this ‘liquid mass of loathsome—of detestable putridity’ is all that the body—all that *my* body—has ever really been. Although both authors simultaneously fascinate and repel their readers, Poe creates an extra *frisson* by making his readers the actual witnesses of the process of abjection. The overall achievement of these authors is to engage their readers far more deeply than Brown, who merely informs his readers that the elder Wieland’s death was attended by ‘insupportable exhalations and crawling putrefaction’.

A second incident simultaneously suggests and denies the applicability of abjection, this time in *Edgar Huntly*. In this case the eponymous hero finds himself in a deep pit in the heart of a mountain, brought there by means unknown and left for an unknown period of time. Tormented by hunger, Edgar muses:

My hunger speedily became ferocious. I tore the linen of my shirt between my teeth and swallowed the fragments. ... My heart overflowed with cruelty, and I pondered on the delight I should experience in rending some living animal to pieces, and drinking its blood and grinding its quivering fibres between my teeth. (164)

Finally escaping the pit, Edgar is confronted by a panther, which he kills with a tom-hawk he had previously found. He explains:

My hunger had arrived at that pitch where all fastidiousness and scruples are at an end. I crept to the spot...I will not shock you by relating the extremes to which dire necessity had driven me...No alternative was offered, and hunger was capable to be appeased, even by a banquet so detestable.

If this appetite has sometimes subdued the sentiments of nature, and compelled the mother to feed upon the flesh of her offspring, it will not excite amazement that I did not turn from the yet warm blood and reeking fibres of a brute. (167)

Although it trembles on the edge of the ridiculous (how does one begin to eat a raw, newly killed big cat?) the detail with which this vampiric vision is described is disturbing and there is a marked focus on blood, one of the fluids which Cavallaro describes as particularly threatening. Despite this, however, the incident does not quite meet the requirements of abjection, perhaps because its bizarre quality mitigates the disgusting elements, and it operates on the symbolic level alone, for having feasted on the panther (an animal indigenous to America) Edgar goes on to escape the mountain lair. In the process he overcomes four ferocious ‘Red-men’ and frees a captive young woman. Consuming the native animal, it seems, not only provides necessary physical nutrition, but also imparts an animal ferocity and agility which enables the white man to overcome the native inhabitants of the wilderness.

It seems to me, therefore, that while the concept of the abject can usefully be brought to bear upon the incidents recorded by Dickens and Poe, it is less helpful in considering *Edgar Huntly* or *Wieland*, both significantly earlier works. So perhaps we must very tentatively suggest that the exploitation of the disgusting which is at the heart of abjection was not developed until the early years of the nineteenth century.

This in turn suggests we need to refocus slightly on Brown's texts to see how he operates on the readers' sensibilities without relying on the 'puerile superstition and exploded manners' or 'chimeras' he rejected at the outset.

In *Wieland*, the death of Wieland Senior is rapidly followed by that of his wife, and thereafter his two children, Theodore and Clara, are brought up reasonably and moderately. They develop a rational religion of their own based on 'lively feelings, excited by reflection on our own happiness, and by the grandeur of external nature' (20–21), the rational aspect of which is shadowed by a sense of the supernatural mystery and uncertainty surrounding their father's death.

Theirs is the first generation to be born on American soil, and the obvious differences in spiritual outlook between their views and their father's gloomy and guilt-ridden religiosity, which is the result of his conversion to an extreme Protestant sect after he had moved from Germany to London in his youth, are heightened by the changes made to the temple where Wieland had offered his solitary devotions. After his death it was furnished with a bust of Cicero and a harpsichord and it became the place of education for Theodore's children and a place of harmony and affability for the adults, rather than the locus of an isolation as spiritual as it was physical. The rationality of the Enlightenment thus replaces a religious faith which was essentially beyond or outwith the realm of reason.

Following this argument through suggests that the spontaneous combustion of Wieland symbolises the rejection of the gloomy, non-rational and isolating beliefs which were his inheritance from his European forbears. Like Edgar's consumption of the panther, this incident operates on the symbolic level alone, rather than on the symbolic and somatic levels simultaneously necessary for abjection to take place, for the act of burning up the flesh of this man becomes a symbol of the burning away of the 'puerile superstition' of the past, which was imbibed from both Europe and Britain. In this way a new beginning is provided for a new country, a beginning which is based on the Enlightenment ideals of the supremacy of the individual understanding, lively feelings, the grandeur of nature, the arts and letters.

However, just as in the process of abjection the abject material is never annihilated but remains on the margins as a threatening presence, so, too, the excessive religious temperament of the father remains on the margins of Brown's story to return in the non-rational acts of the son, Theodore: by killing his wife and children in response to what he believed was the voice of God, Theodore made the act of murder an act of religious obedience. Clearly this incident demonstrates the dangers of relying upon divine revelation as the basis for living, and seems to privilege an Enlightenment rationale based on reason and reliance on the senses working together as the source of knowledge.

The situation is not quite as simple as this, however, for the reader knows that Theodore has been accustomed to hearing a voice projected by the hidden ventriloquist, Carwin. Although ventriloquism itself is a natural phenomenon, at the end of the eighteenth century it was considered to be less well attested than spontaneous combustion and moreover carried an aura of mystery.¹⁰ Carwin's ventriloquism thus predisposes Theodore to accept the authority, and obey the commands, of a voice without a speaker. Relying on his senses (the voice he hears) and reason (his past experience of hearing voices) results in murder, for in this instance the voice is not that of a ventriloquist, but a symptom of his own madness. It

is a move that cuts the ground from beneath the readers' feet, for this incident shows that neither supernatural intervention nor the Enlightenment rationale based on reason and the senses are reliable guides to action.

Symbolically, Theodore's murder of his family may suggest that the new order of the recently established new country as set out in the Constitution of 1787 is threatened by the very absence of reason and moderation which characterised the Old World and its 'puerile superstition'. And given British distrust of America and American democracy regularly expressed in the Press I think we can suggest a specifically political interpretation at this point: Britain has been cast off, but it hovers on the margins as a critical, if not a dangerous, presence. So we can argue that Brown is using Gothic as a means of commenting upon America's political situation, as well as exploring the philosophical question of the nature and reliability of knowledge.

The sense of the Old World haunting the new with its threatening presence on the margins is also evident in *Edgar Huntly*, although in this case the explanation is concerned with the operations of the uncanny upon the human psyche. Despite the survival skills already discussed, Edgar Huntly is a young man characterised by an excessive sensibility which shades into a degree of feminisation of character, and this aligns him with the central character of many a British Gothic novel—and here the novels of Ann Radcliffe come to mind, as does *Frankenstein*. Pulling against this, however, is the manly quest to find the killer of his close friend, and as the suspected murderer journeys out into the untamed western wilderness, Edgar follows, only to lose his quarry in a labyrinth of caves.

These, I would suggest, can be compared to the architecture of Gothic castles in British Gothic fiction, but rather than symbolising illicit or hidden desire, they are an externalisation of the protagonist's tortured psyche. Furthermore, rather than being man-made structures, the labyrinth is a natural part of the American landscape, formed by natural processes operating in that precise locale. It is in these caves that Edgar is trapped, and from these caves that he escapes, rescuing the young woman from her Indian captors, whom he later kills. We could therefore suggest that this strand of the story operates on two levels, for in the first place Edgar's escape from the caves can be seen as his escape from the traps and pitfalls of his own neurotic psychology, at least temporarily. On the second level, however, his escape symbolises the American pioneer dream of clearing and making the land habitable, a place where one can be at home.

In the course of these adventures, Edgar escapes death on a number of occasions. However, as these are presented as resurrections rather than 'near misses', they create a flickering sense of the uncanny, especially as Edgar appears to the other characters as a ghost—one who has been familiar in the past but is now made strange through death, and should therefore have remained hidden, out of sight of the living. Edgar thus becomes an embodiment of Schelling's formulation of the uncanny referred to by Freud in his essay 'Das Unheimliche' or 'The Uncanny': 'everything is *unheimlich* that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light'.¹¹ Buried in this statement that what was hidden has come to light is the implication that the hidden has come *back* to light, and this sense of return is vital in the creation of the uncanny. As Nicholas Royle observes in his study, *The Uncanny* (2003) the uncanny 'would appear to be indissociably bound up with a sense of repetition or

“coming back”—the return of the repressed, the constant or eternal recurrence of the same thing, a compulsion to repeat’.¹²

In his seminal essay, Freud argues that one of the causes of the uncanny is intellectual uncertainty, and alongside this, I think, goes transitoriness, since with time uncertainty hardens into certainty. In consequence, that experience we distinguish by the term ‘uncanny’ cannot be sustained, although the author may—and often does—use a number of incidents which provoke this type of fear so that the uncanny returns to haunt the text in what might be seen as a double haunting: the uncanny is haunted by the repeated components which create it, but the uncanny is also what haunts the text.

Brown, for example, uses the repeated incidents of Clithero Edny's sleepwalking to provoke a sense of the uncanny in the witness, Edgar. The uncanny is here the result of fusing together two familiar actions which are normally kept apart—sleeping and walking—with the resultant single action of sleepwalking being made strange by the unfamiliar combination of these two familiar actions. However, the repetition of this action makes the unfamiliar familiar again: the *unheimliche* moves towards and repossesses the *heimliche*. Alongside this, moreover, is the ‘compulsion to repeat’ which Royle sees as bound up with the uncanny, and in this case the repeated actions are those originally performed while waking, making the sleepwalking incident a self-parodic haunting.

Indeed, we could go further and argue that the uncanniness of sleepwalking is heightened by the mechanical quality often ascribed to sleepwalking: the witness is never entirely sure if what they are seeing is organic or inorganic, human or mechanical. And as Ernst Jentsch, as cited by Freud, notes, ‘one of the most successful devices for easily creating uncanny effects is to leave the reader in uncertainty whether a particular figure... is a human being or an automaton, and to do it in such a way that his attention is not focused directly upon his uncertainty’ (*Uncanny*, 227). In effect Brown creates intellectual uncertainty to generate uncanny effects, then in a return movement uses the uncanny to re-create intellectual uncertainty in the reader as a means of ‘calling forth the passions and engaging the sympathy’ without recourse to ‘puerile superstition and exploded manners, Gothic castles and chimeras’ (*Edgar Huntly*, 3).

The focus on sleepwalking clearly reflects contemporary scientific interests in the nature of consciousness. However, Marina Warner has recently identified a late eighteenth-century interest in soul-theft or the dissociation of the ‘mortal husk’ from the ‘disembodied, roaming spirit’ which came to be known as the chief characteristic of the zombie.¹³ Sleepwalking can thus be seen as a temporary soul-theft and is, therefore, inherently uncanny.

Sleepwalking is not only a major source of uncanny effects in the novel, but it also constitutes the major link between Clithero and Edgar since they are both sleepwalkers. Other links include the similarity in name—Edny and Edgar—their relationship to Mr Sarsefield, who has acted as father figure to each at some point in their lives, and their excessive sensibility, which in Clithero's case extends to madness, that condition described by David Punter as ‘the complete dislocation of the mind under pressures which cannot even be accurately categorised as internal or external’.¹⁴ Turning again to Freud's essay we are told that madness has an uncanny effect because the ‘layman sees in [it] the working of forces hitherto unsuspected in

his fellow-men, but at the same time he is dimly aware of them in the remote corners of his own being' (243). Looking externally, nothing is suspected, but turning the gaze inward locates the working of mysterious and threatening forces.

Clithero, we learn, fled the Old World when his madness became apparent and he became violent. So just as we saw that Wieland Senior's religious excesses were an inheritance from the Old World which overturned reason in the new, Clithero's madness can symbolise the dangers of the Old World now affecting—or infecting—the new. The final irony is, however, that Clithero was not the murderer of Edgar's friend, as Edgar had suspected; that murder was one of the incidents of 'Indian hostility' and had probably been committed by one of the Indians whom Edgar killed when escaping from the labyrinth of caves. The threat, it seems, arose from the conditions of the New World, not the Old.

The links between Clithero and Edgar are, I think, strong enough to forge them into a double or *doppelgänger*, the idea of which is deeply disturbing because we tend to regard ourselves as both unique and inviolate in our individuality. The figure of the double interrogates both these aspects: the double is the same as me and therefore I am not unique, and if another 'me' exists I am not inviolate in my individuality. And even worse, which is 'me' and which is the double or other? The double therefore undermines the very concept of self, in part by making 'what is known of old and long familiar' (*Uncanny*, 220) and, specifically, what is known from the inside, external and therefore unfamiliar and strange: the self has become uncanny to itself.

Although many writers of Gothic have used the figure of the double, it is particularly closely associated with Scottish writers. James Hogg, for example, uses it to powerful effect in the pairing of Gil-Martin and Robert Wringhim in *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), and whether Gil-Martin is identified as Satan or as a figment of a diseased imagination, he is Robert's Other. Robert Louis Stevenson also uses the notion of the dark double in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), although I would argue that the melodramatic and sensationalist aspects of this text undermine the uncanniness of the double.

This stands in stark comparison to Stevenson's use of the double in his story of two brothers, *The Master of Ballantrae. A Winter's Tale* (1889), the dénouement of which takes place in the American wilderness. Here the brothers, initially dissimilar, become each other's double in the final corruption of the virtuous brother, and in their deaths. The older brother, the Master, we learn has finally died and been buried by his Indian servant Secundra Dass, and the ensuing events are recorded by Mr Mackellar, who acts as a servant to Henry, the younger brother. Secundra Dass, however, maintains that although the Master is buried he is not dead, and then proceeds to exhume him:

When he [Secundra] moved aside, I beheld the face of the Master wholly disengaged. It was deadly white, the eyes closed, the ears and nostrils plugged, the cheeks fallen, the nose sharp as if in death, but for all he had lain so many days under the sod, corruption had not approached him, and...his lips and chin were mantled with a swarthy beard...The sight held us with a horror not before experienced. It may have been three hours and it may have been five that the Indian laboured to reanimate his master's body. One thing only I know, that it was still night, and the moon was not yet set,

although it had sunk low, and now barred the plateau with long shadows, when Secundra uttered a small cry of satisfaction: and leaning swiftly forth, I thought I could myself perceive a change upon that icy countenance of the unburied. The next moment I beheld his eyelids flutter; the next they rose entirely, and the week-old corpse looked me for a moment in the face.

So much display of life I can myself swear to. I have heard from others that he visibly strove to speak, that his teeth showed in his beard and that his brow was contorted as with an agony of pain and effort. And this may have been; I know not, I was otherwise engaged. For at that first disclosure of the dead man's eyes my Lord Durisdeer fell to the ground, and when I raised him up he was a corpse.¹⁵

Even in death, the brothers are each other's double; perhaps, it could be argued, especially in death, for while the Master was buried but not dead, his brother was dead but not buried. Immediately prior to finding the Master's grave Mackellar comments: 'My lord (or what I still continued to call by his loved name)...stood gazing before him...My mind swung at a tangent...Was not my lord dead also? A maimed soldier, looking vainly for discharge, lingering derided in the line of battle? A kind man, I remembered him; wise, with a decent pride, a son perhaps too dutiful, a husband only too loving, one that could suffer and be silent, one whose hand I loved to press' (268). The tone is that of an elegy, although the living man is standing before us.

Stevenson's gruesome *dénouement* (which he described to Henry James as 'steep; steep, sir!...even very steep'¹⁶) is a dramatic symbol of the destructive power of sibling love and rivalry, and an expression of the horror of a corruption which makes a good man ultimately more corrupt than his less virtuous brother. And these are weighty matters, which have been explored throughout the novel and finally expressed in this Gothic incident. I would similarly argue that Charles Brockden Brown uses Gothic to comment on the matters of importance that are embedded in his fiction.

Indeed, I would go further, and suggest that Brown did not merely use Gothic, but he transformed it so that his protagonists walk through an American world; a wilderness, an untamed landscape within which the protagonist can prove himself and enact a version at least of the American dream. It is a world in which superstition has no place as a guide to action, but also a world in which an empirical rationale is shown to be inadequate as a basis for living, and because Brown uses these two aspects to interrogate each other, never allowing the reader to settle for one or the other, it is a world which is inherently ambiguous and unstable; a world without closure or easy answers. It is these aspects which give Brown's works a quality that distinguishes them from their British counterparts, even when broad similarities between British and American Gothic can be traced. At the same time, however, Gothic allows Brown to explore some of the anxieties arising from the very newness of the world he occupied and perhaps especially to address the fundamental question of how a new world deals with the burden of the old.

University of Glasgow

NOTES

1. Charles Brockden Brown, *Edgar Huntly or Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker*, ed. Sydney J. Krause and S.W. Reid (Kent and London: Kent State University Press, 1984), 3.
2. William Dunlap, *Memoirs of Charles Brockden Brown, the American Novelist* (London: Henry Colburn, 1822), 91.
3. Markman Ellis, *The History of Gothic Fiction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 126.
4. The report in question is that on the combustion of Don Gio Maria Bertholi, originally published in one of the journals of Florence according to Brown's own footnote and reprinted in the *Literary Magazine and British Review*, 4 (May 1790): 336–39. In *Charles Brockden Brown: Pioneer Voice of America* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1952) David Lee Clerk accepts the case of Bertholi as Brown's source (p.167), while Donald A Ringe has identified the journal. See Donald A Ringe, *American Gothic. Imagination and Reason in Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1982), 45n.
5. Dani Cavallaro, *The Gothic Vision. Three Centuries of Horror, Terror and Fear* (London and New York: Continuum, 2002), 199–200.
6. Charles Brockden Brown, *Wieland, or The Transformation. An American Tale and Memoirs of Carwin the Biloquist*, ed. Emory Elliott, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 17.
7. Quoted by Alexander Ogston in 'On Spontaneous Combustion', *British and Foreign Medico-Chirurgical Review*, January 1870, reprinted in an untitled collection of papers and essays held by Glasgow University Library.
8. Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*, ed. Stephen Gill (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1996), 472; 474–79.
9. Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar', in *Selected Tales*, ed. Julian Symons, The World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 277.
10. *Oxford English Dictionary* dates the first use of the word 'ventriloquism' to 1797 and cites *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (ed. 3), XVIII, 639/2 as its source. The word 'ventriloquist', however, is noted as having been in use since 1656 when Thomas Blount defined it principally as an evil spirit speaking in the belly (*Glossographia*). The coining of the word 'ventriloquism' just one year before Brown's novel suggests that this was an area of particular interest at the time, when it was likely to carry echoes of the supernatural associated with 'ventriloquist'.
11. Sigmund Freud, 'Das Unheimliche' (1919), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, vol. XVII, ed. and trans. James Strachey. (London: The Hogarth Press, 1955), 225.
12. Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 2.
13. Marina Warner, *Fantastic Metamorphoses, Other Worlds. Ways of Telling the Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 120.
14. David Punter, *The Literature of Terror*, vol. I The Gothic Tradition (London and New York: Longman, 1996), 68.
15. Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Master of Ballantrae. A Winter's Tale* (London and Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, n.d.), 273–74.
16. Robert Louis Stevenson to Henry James, March 1888 in *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. Sidney Colvin (2 vols.) (London: Methuen 1901), vol. II, 99.