



“Gothic Trajectories”

GANZA Interim Conference

Hosted Online
27th – 28th January 2022



Schedule of Presentations



Day One: Thursday, 27th January 2022

The following sessions will be held virtually via Zoom, and in New Zealand timings (GMT+13).

Format: 15-minute presentations in succession, followed by 15 minutes of collective questions and discussion.

Each session will include parallel panels, hosted virtually in different streams with a comfort break in between.

9.45am – 9.55am: Conference Opening (Stream 1)

Professor Lorna Piatti-Farnell (GANZA President)

9.55.am – 10.00am: Set up/Comfort Break

10.00am – 11.00am: Session One

Panel 1a (Stream 1)

Chair: Justin Matthews

- Erika Kvistad (University of South-East, Norway) – In the Ruins: Early YouTube Horror and the passing of time
- Agnieszka Łowczanin (University of Lodz, Poland) – Living with the Past: Gothic Presence of WW2 in Anna Bator’s *Ciemno, Prawie noc* [Dark, Almost Night]
- Knox Wagner (University of Toulouse, France) - Gender Specters: Hauntology of Trans Experiences

Panel 1b (Stream 2)

Chair: Nancy Johnson Hunt

- Tessa T. Baber (Cardiff University, UK) and Rebecca Lauren Bruce (Nottingham Trent University, UK) – Travellers, Tombs, and Terror: Gothic Tourism in Egypt’s ‘Mummy Pits’ and Victorian Fiction
- Louise Child (Cardiff University, UK) – Animated Bodies, Gothic Souls: Ghost, Possession and Indigenous Representation in *Chambers*
- Anna Kirsch (Durham University, UK) – The Ghost Animal as Environmental Imagination: The Gothic Wild in Tara French’s *In the Woods* and *Broken Harbour*

Panel 1c (Stream 3)

Chair: Carmel Cedro

- Madeline Potter (Edge Hill University, UK) – ‘A novel that nobody reads’: Melmoth’s Trajectory of Guilt from Maturin to Sarah Perry
- Rosalind Crocker (University of Sheffield, UK) – “It’s in the blood”: Heredity and the Neo-Gothic Novel
- Hannah O’Flanagan (Lancaster University, UK) – Weakening borders and fearfully desired: monstrous beings in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*

11.00am – 11.15am: Comfort Break

11.15am – 12.15pm: Session Two

Panel 2a (Stream 1)

Chair: Angelique Nairn

- Lorna Piatti-Farnell (Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand) – The Metal and the Flesh: Techno-Liminalities, and the Bio-Subversion of the Super-Body as a Gothic Space
- Kirstin Mills (Macquarie University, Australia) – iGothic Spectral Technologies and the Digital Adaptation of Classic Gothic Literature
- Matthew Thompson (Independent Scholar, Australia) – Spirit Island, Postcolonial Gothic and the Interactive Space

Panel 2b (Stream 2)

Chair: Erin Mercer

- N. Rene Hoff (Texas Woman’s University, USA) – “I knew a girl who knew this girl”: Gothic and Horror Tropes as Rhetorical Refusal in *True Blood* (2008-2014)
- Brandyn Whitaker (Middle Tennessee State University, USA) – Why the Cabin Can’t Save Us: An Exploration of the Cabin Setting from Frontier Gothic to Cabin Horror
- Disha Archarya (New Mexico Military Institute, USA) – “My hair disheveled and my violet lips, I was not fit to be seen”: Marguerite as a Gothic Heroine in *The Diary of Mademoiselle D’Arvers*

12.15pm – 1.00pm – Lunch Break

1.00pm – 2.00pm: Session Three

Panel 3a (Stream 1)

Chair: Ashleigh Prosser

- Jaya Yadav (University of Delhi, India) – (Re)locating the Gothic as a Metaphor for War: Analysing Ahmed Saadawi’s *Frankenstein in Baghdad*
- Alejandra Gianguilio-Lobo (Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica) – Gothic Tourism in the Tropics: Saint Luke Island as a penitentiary and a national park in Costa Rica

- Samira Aziz (Victoria University, New Zealand) and Nasrin Pervin (North South University, Bangladesh) - The Monstrous Mother in Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumder's "*Lalkomol Neelkomol*"

Panel 3b (Stream 2)

Chair: Blair Speakman

- Lucinda Janson (The Australian National University) - "The old centuries had and have powers of their own which mere 'modernity' cannot kill": *Dracula* and fin de siècle medievalism
- Jeanette Laredo (Independent Scholar, USA) - Monstrous Members and Ominous Orifices: Adult Toys and Our Queer Desire for the Monstrous Body

Panel 3c (Stream 3)

Chair: Donna Lee Brien

- Carmel Cedro (Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand) - 'Surprise! It's really a cake!' Examining the uncanniness of 'super realistic' cakes
- Alex Philp and Ella Jeffery (Queensland University of Technology, Australia) - "He doesn't belong in this house": The Cousin as Domestic Disruptor in Two Gothic Novels
- Erin Mercer (Massey University, New Zealand) - "That weird cat": Steven King's *Pet Semetary* and the Return of the Dead

2.00pm - 2.15pm: Comfort Break

2.15pm - 3.15pm: Session Four

Panel 4a (Stream 1)

Chair: Justin Matthews

- Enrique Ajuria Ibarra (Universidad de las Américas Puebla, Mexico) - Border Gothic: Globalization, Horror and Fantasies of Redemption in Marcus Sedgwick's *Saint Death* (2016-)
- Caitlin Kelly (The University of Queensland, Australia) - Faeries Where They Don't Belong: Retelling "*Laird Graham of Morphie and the Kelpie*" As Tropical Australian Postcolonial Gothic
- Sutirtho Roy (University of Kolkata, India) - The Post-human Agency as EcoGothic, Resistance: Undead Dogs, Uncanny Dinosaurs and Ancient Kaiju

Panel 4b (Stream 2)

Chair: Lorna Piatti-Farnell

- Donna Lee Brien (Central Queensland University, Australia) - Haunted Paradise: Violence and Death at Bondi Beach

- Gwyneth Peaty (Curtin University, Australia) – A Most Gothic Material: The Erotic Trajectories of Stone
- Ashleigh Prosser (The University of Western Australia) – From Panel Scenes to Netflix Screens: Ludogothic Re-imaginings in the Uncanny Superhero Family Drama of *The Umbrella Academy*

3:15pm – 3:30pm: Comfort Break

3.30pm – 4.30pm: Session Five

Panel 5a (Stream 1)

Chair: Erin Mercer

- Demi Schänzel (Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand) – American Gothic Video Games, and the Ghost of the American Dream
- Justin Matthews (Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand) – Science Fiction/American Gothic: The Liminality of Urban Space in the Television Series *Fringe* and *Debris*

Panel 5b (Stream 2)

Chair: Nancy Johnson-Hunt

- Ruth Barratt-Peacock (The Friedrich Schiller University Jena, Germany) and Sophia Staite (University of Tasmania, Australia) – Gothic Trajectories of Childhood: Nostalgia, Melodrama, and Space
- Gargi Bendre (D.G. Ruparel College, India) – A Monster of One’s Own: Feminist Perspective of the Possessed Woman
- Mukulika Batabyal (University of Delhi, India) – The Dead in the Kitchen: Confined to her Culinary Identity in Life and After

Panel 5c (Stream 3)

Chair: Blair Speakman

- Sarah Baker (Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand) – Contagious Horror: Parasites, Zombies and Pandemics
- Holly Randell-Moon (Charles Sturt University, Australia) – The mice plague or the beastly landscapes of regional and rural Australia
- Phillip Johnson (Tokyo International University, Japan) – Without the Aid of Any Mirror: The Value of Truth Lenses in Clark Ashton Smith’s Fables and Fairytales

4.30pm – 4.35pm: Comfort Break

4.35pm – 4.40pm: Day One Closing

Day Two: Friday, 28th January 2022

The following sessions will be held virtually via Zoom, and in New Zealand timings (GMT+13).

Format: 15-minute presentations in succession, followed by 15 minutes of collective questions and discussion.

Each session will include parallel panels, hosted virtually in different streams with a comfort break in between.

9.50am – 9.55am: Day Two Opening

Professor Lorna Piatti-Farnell (GANZA President)

9.55.am – 10.00am: Set up/Comfort Break

10.00am – 11.00am: Session Six

Panel 6a (Stream 1)

Chair: Justin Matthews

- Meltem Dağci (Anatolian University, Turkey) – Examination of Regional Differences of Horror-Gothic Tales in the Context of Vokal Culture
- Eser Pehlivan (Istanbul University, Turkey) – For the Love of Melancholia: Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* and the Ambiguous Mechanics of Creativity
- Onur Isik (Tokat Gaziosmanpasa University, Turkey) – The Role of Islam in Turkish Gothic Literature

Panel 6b (Stream 2)

Chair: Angelique Nairn

- Maureen DeLeo (The National University of Ireland Galway) – 'Stand we on guard': Haunting and W.B. Yeats's 'The Black Tower'
- Cat Smith (Nottingham Trent University, UK) – Reclaiming the Gothic Fairy-Tale: A.G. Slatter's *All the Murmuring Bones*

Panel 6c (Stream 3)

Chair: Carmel Cedro

- Brontë Schiltz (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK) – "As long as you are industrious, you will get on very well": Adapting *The String of Pearls'* economies of horror

- Leonie Rowland (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK) – She’s Like a Mirror: Consuming the Idol in Satoshi Kon’s *Perfect Blue* and Junji Ito’s *Tomie*

11.00am – 11.15am: Comfort Break

11.15am – 12.15pm: Session Seven

Panel 7a (Stream 1)

Chair: Blair Speakman

- Mattia Petricola (University of Bologna, Italy) – When did the New Death Become New? Undead Hybrids and the Gothic Medical Humanities
- Joe Howsin (Independent Scholar, UK) – Inside the Narrative Factory: Meta-narrative and Trauma in Contemporary Gothic
- Alessandra Pino (University of Westminster, UK) – From Gothic Food to Dark Food: Death at the Table in Isak Dinesen’s *Babette’s Feast*

Panel 7b (Stream 2)

Chair: Nancy Johnson-Hunt

- Claudia Sterbini (Durham University, UK) – ‘Wonderful as it seems in a sexual world’: Frigidity and blighted alien genitalia in *The War of the Worlds*
- Joana Rita Ramalho (University College London, UK) – The Tiger Lillies: Musical Journeys of Sin and Savagery
- Meriem Rayen Lamara (The University of Northhamptom, UK) – The Supernatural Other as Saviour in Twenty-First Century Gothic Literature

Panel 7c (Stream 3)

Chair: Enrique Ajuria Ibarra

- David Kumler (University of Washington, USA) – Racism and Ontological Terror in Victor LaValle’s *The Ballad of Black Tom*
- Christopher Weimer (Oklahoma State University, USA) – “Widderns Knows Its Own”: Lovecraftian Romance and the Single Sorcerer in Jordan L.Hawk’s *Whyborne and Griffin*
- Antonio Alcalá González (Tecnologico de Monterrey, Mexico) and Carl H. Sederholm (Brigham Young University, USA) – Reading Lovecraft Now

12.15pm – 1.00pm – Lunch Break

1.00pm – 2.00pm – Session Eight

Panel 8a (Stream 1)

Chair: Erin Mercer

- Courtney Glass (Florida International University, USA) – Bringing the Skeletons out of the Closet: Reading Gothic as Queer in Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

- Rachel M. Friars (Queens University, Canada) - "I say you do not have a name": Queering Dracula's Brides in S.T. Gibson's *A Dowry of Blood*

Panel 8b (Stream 2)

Chair: Lorna Piatti-Farnell

- Angelique Nairn (Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand) - Monstrous Mother Gothel: Making sense of morality in Disney's *Tangled*
- Jack McCormack-Clark (Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand) - The Medi-Evil Disney Narrative: The Intersection of the Gothic Mode and Fantasy in the *Black Cauldron* and its Arthurian Echoes
- Blair Speakman (Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand) - Gorgeous, vicious and a "little bit mad": The Queer-Gothic and excessive desire in *Cruella* (2021)

Panel 8c (Stream 3)

Chair: Sarah Baker

- Ali Fraser (Trent University, Canada) - The Death of Nightclubs: Gothic Nostalgia and the Right to the City
- David Hollands (Trent University, Canada) - Grindhouse Gothic: The Frenzied Ballyhoo of James Wan's *Malignant* (2021)

2.00pm - 2.15pm Comfort Break

2.15pm - 3.15pm - Session Nine

Panel 9a (Stream 1)

Chair: Justin Matthews

- Kerry Dean Carso (State University of New York, USA) - Washington Allston's *Monaldi*: The Painterly Gothic
- Emma Doolan (Southern Cross University, Australia) and Ella Jeffery (Queensland University of Technology, Australia) - "Dead space": Beach Houses, Building, and Aspiration in Amanda Lohrey's *The Labyrinth*

Panel 9b (Stream 2)

Chair: Gwyneth Peaty

- Nancy Johnson-Hunt (Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand) - Liberating the Grotesque: The Transmogrification of Racial Identities on *Lovecraft Country*
- Louise Pitcher (University of Western Australia) - Reimagining Charlotte's Gothic Agency in *Pride Prejudice and Zombies*
- Hannah Lamarre (Independent Scholar, USA) - "What Death Can(not) Join Together": Asexuality as Frustration of Destiny and the Devil in *Penny Dreadful*

Panel 9c (Stream 3)

Chair: Ashleigh Prosser

- Katarzyna Ancuta (Chulalongkorn University, Thailand) - Asian Gothic: Asian Folklore and Globalgothic
- Kay Hearn (Edith Cowan University, Australia) - Ghost Brides, Demons, and the Dichotomy of Passive and Active Bodies
- Aparajita Hazra (Diamond Harbour University, India) - The Ghostly Women in Bollywood Film: Exploring the Woman Question in Bollywood Cinema

3.15pm - 3.20pm Comfort Break

3.20pm - 3.30pm Conference Closing

Future plans and publication opportunities

Abstracts



Session One

Panel 1a

Erika Kvistad

University of South-East Norway

In the Ruins: Early YouTube Horror and the Passing of Time

From April to July of 2007, 38 videos were posted to Louise Paxton's YouTube channel, all filmed with a cheap digital camera. The first videos share her excitement about moving into a new flat in London, but before long she begins to document unsettling occurrences in her home: shadowy figures outside her house at night, muddy handprints on her windows, cold spots in her bedroom. By the time the final video is posted, Louise has gone missing; according to her missing persons website, she still is.

Although there is no sign of this on the YouTube channel itself, Louise Paxton's YouTube channel is a fictional web series directed by Andrew Cull, who titled the project *In the Dark*. *In the Dark* is an early instance - arguably the first on YouTube - of the now large and established genre of fictional digital horror narratives that create their effects by in some way pretending to be real. These hoax narratives are usually designed to be consumed fresh; engaging with them as the story is being told is a more immersive and convincing experience than coming across them in retrospect. But do old hoax narratives simply stop working, or do they somehow change? This paper examines what we can learn from *In the Dark* about what happens to such narratives as time passes, reading this long-inactive YouTube channel as a curiously intact digital ruin: over the past fourteen years, what has fallen into disrepair, and what new ghosts may have moved in?

Erika.Kvistad@usn.no

Erika Kvistad is associate professor of English at the University of South-East Norway, and works on sexuality, horror, digital narratives, and the nineteenth century. Her Ph.D. is on sexual power dynamics in Charlotte Brontë, and she has previously published on sexual consent negotiation as a textual and cultural phenomenon, domestic spaces in Victorian horror, and the idea of the monstrous in university pedagogy. She is currently writing about digital haunted houses, and her most recent publication, in *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Gothic* (2020), is on haunted spaces in creepypasta and Twitter horror.

Agnieszka Łowczanin

University of Łódź (Poland)

Living with the past: Gothic presence of WW 2 in Anna Bator's *Ciemno, Prawie noc* [Dark, Almost Night]

The contemporary Polish writer Anna Bator (1968-) in 2013 won Nike, the most prestigious Polish literary award for her novel *Ciemno, Prawie noc* [Dark, Almost Night]. The novel begins when a detective is sent to Wałbrzych (ger. Waldenburg), her hometown now on the border with Germany, to investigate the disappearance of three

children. This return inevitably not only awakens in her the memories of the now deceased members of her family, but also unwittingly lures her to explore its dark secrets. As she plunges into this forgotten post-Communist industrial border territory, she realises that solving the criminal cases of the present inevitably demands that she engages both with her family's and the town's and her country's past. Wałbrzych – with its complex and troubled history of Polish, German, Nazi and Soviet presence, inerasable despite the passage of time – is seen as a silent reservoir of scrapped histories that can only partially be reassembled. The aim of this paper is to examine the ways in which the Gothic mode, with its clichéd conventions of a castle, villains and the supernatural, is used by the author to narrate the traumas experienced by previous generations and their impact on the present, how it is used in the story to harness the past and express the town's struggle to accommodate its architecture, its silent, crumbling yet formidable witness, and to explore the extent to which memory of the Second World War still powerfully shapes the cultural communal identity of its inhabitants.

agnieszka.lowczanin@uni.lodz.pl

Agnieszka Łowczanin is an associate professor in the Department of British Literature and Culture at the University of Łódź, Poland. She has written on novelists of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, focusing especially on the politics and poetics of the Gothic. She co-edited two volumes of essays: *All that Gothic* (2014) and *Gothic Peregrinations: the Unexplored and Re-explored Territories* (2019), and is the author of *A Dark Transfusion: the Polish Literary Response to Early English Gothic. Anna Mostowska Reads Ann Radcliffe*, published in 2018. Her current project is an edited collection on Polish Gothic.

Knox Wagner

University of Toulouse II (France)

Gender Specters: A Hauntology of Trans Experiences

Hauntology as a term originated as a mere wordplay in Derrida's *Specters of Marx* (1993), in which it was meant to express the specific problem posed to the concept of ontology by Derrida's deconstructive approach to presence, time, and causality. It was since used at length in many fields (for example, Davis 2005, Fisher 2012, Csordas 2020), and its already vague meaning now opens to a wide range of aesthetical and theoretical views regarding temporal and ontological disjunction. This paper aims to use hauntology as a lens for the understanding of gender transition, which can be broadly defined as a set of various transformation processes involving one's gender. Usual theorizations of gender transition, regardless of their ideological alignment, generally engage in considerations about sanity and truthfulness. Although I acknowledge the legitimacy of such preoccupations, I wish to get past the binaries associated with them and to help reconcile disagreements about the emphasis that each of them deserves. In this paper, I intend to use hauntology as a new way of analyzing some of the ontological problems posed by gender transition, as well as the narratives that aspire to solve them. In particular, I will discuss the usual opposition between performance and identity and the therapeutic exegeses of gender variance. I will specifically dwell on the idea of gender as an occult phenomenon, and explore the philosophical implications of such a conceptualization in both existing and potential discourses.

knox.lazare.wagner@gmail.com

Knox Wagner is a philosophy student at the University of Toulouse II, France, where he completed a few years ago an associate degree in French literature and a bachelor degree in publishing. He is involved in local queer militancy and emerging independent research networks. His interests include gender studies, epistemology, semiotics, themes of anxiety, history and time, identity and the unnatural

Panel 1b

Tessa T. Baber and Rebecca Lauren Bruce

Cardiff University (UK) and Nottingham Trent University (UK)

Travellers, Tombs and Terror: Gothic Tourism in Egypt's 'Mummy Pits' and Victorian Fiction

During the Victorian era, swathes of tourists descended on Egypt in search of adventure amongst her ancient wonders. A firm favourite on the travel itinerary were the mysterious 'mummy pits', which were rumoured to contain an untold number of the ancient dead. These burial-spaces soon became infamous as anecdotes about their exploration – and exploitation (for macabre souvenirs) – were widely shared by the press and in travelogues of the period. The horror of these 'dark abodes of death', instilled a terror in visitors to Egypt's necropolises – tangible in the accounts they left behind; these fed into popular gothic themes of the time. This was part of the fun however, and despite their fearsome reputation, the mummy pits remained a popular attraction until they were pillaged out of existence sometime in the early 20th century. This section of the paper considers what drew travellers to the pits, why they were exploited and how this fed into the 'mummymania' of the period [Tessa Baber].

The resulting wave of mummymania influenced Victorian literary culture; a cross-section between nineteenth-century travellers and tourists' activities and Victorian Gothic fiction developed during this time. I examine Bram Stoker's Gothic mummy novel, *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903) and Louisa May Alcott's 'The Mummy's Curse' (1869) which reveal the consequences of travellers and tourists' immoral activities in mummy pits. I focus on archaeological ideologies, ethical principles and the curse of the mummy to demonstrate the unethical actions of travellers; the characters themselves question, '[will] there be any graves for us who have robbed the dead![]' (*Jewel*, p.117). I consider the traveller's moral and social place in Egypt by their treatment of the mummified body, and how we can draw parallels from ancient Egypt to the westernised concept of the ancient Egyptian body in Gothic fiction [Rebecca Bruce].

tessbaber@gmail.com

Tessa Baber After obtaining a BA and MA in archaeology from Cardiff University, I am currently completing my PhD at the same institution. My thesis focuses on the burial phenomenon of the (now lost) 'mummy pits' in Egypt; preserved in the accounts of early travellers, extraction of archaeological data from these sources, helps to reconstruct the custom as it may have appeared in ancient times. I have broader interests in the history of the fascination with both

Egypt (Egyptomania) and her mummies (mummymania) and am co-founder of the International Society for the Study of Egyptomania (ISSE) (est. 2021).

rebeccabrucekw@hotmail.com

Rebecca Bruce, after completing my Law Degree, I went on to study a Masters in English where I specialised in Gothic literature, and Victorian visual and social culture. I am currently undertaking my PhD at Nottingham Trent University; my research concentrates on nineteenth-century travellers' unethical attitudes and perceptions towards the mummy, and the concept of 'travel and the body'. I am the creator and editor of *The Anatomy Shelf*: a free monthly newsletter that considers the body in history and literature. I am also the co-founder (with Tessa Baber) of the International Society for the Study of Egyptomania (ISSE) (est. 2021).

Louise Child

Cardiff University (UK)

Animated Bodies, Gothic Souls: Ghosts, Possession, and Indigenous Representation in Chambers

In this paper I draw from the anthropology of religion to suggest ways in which gothic television can explore expanded notions of personhood in which the ghost or soul of one person can be transmitted to another through transplanting of body parts. Similar to numerous accounts offered to anthropologists by indigenous peoples, the bodies depicted in these shows are repositories of vitality and emotion that are animated with memories and personalities, and furthermore reflect deeply ambivalent attitudes to medical science in modernity and late capitalism. The paper focuses on *Chambers* (2019), a supernatural heart transplant thriller in which Sasha, a young Navajo (Diné) woman, suffers a heart attack and is given a heart from the dead daughter of a rich white family. This family seek to establish a relationship with Sasha, and she is drawn into a web of their problems and secrets, a process intensified by dreams, visions, and emotions that seem to be triggered by a possession or telepathic connection with Becky, the donator of the heart. In an innovative move away from the burial ground scenario that haunts numerous ghost films featuring Native Americans, Sasha's Native American background is not depicted as either the source of the problem or its potential solutions. She is simply a normal young woman who is drawn into the power dynamics and religious cult practices of the rich white family of the girl who donated the heart. I therefore suggest that *Chambers* can be analysed as an innovative example of the Bluebeard myth, in which, rather than marrying a dangerous husband, a young woman is incorporated into a dangerous family, and this incorporation, which also takes place within her body, offers interesting reflections on the dynamics of colonialism and debates about appropriations of Native American cultures and spiritualities in the late 1990s.

ChildL@cardiff.ac.uk

Dr **Louise Child** is a Lecturer in Religion, Film and Television at Cardiff University. She has research and teaching interests in the anthropology of religion, indigenous film and television, and gothic studies. She has published papers on indigenous film and popular film and television and has co-edited (with Aaron Rosen) the book *Religion and Sight*, published by Equinox in

2020. Her forthcoming book *Dreams, Vampires, and Ghosts: Anthropological Perspectives on the Sacred and Society in Film and Television* is due to be published by Bloomsbury in 2022.

Anna Kirsch

Durham University (UK)

The Ghost Animal as Environmental Imagination: The Gothic Wild in Tana French's *In the Woods* and *Broken Harbour*

The gothic elements of Tana French's fiction, particularly the unidentifiable spectral animals in *Broken Harbor* and *In the Woods*, serve to impart a sense of unease and uncertainty transforming the certainty of the real expected by readers of the traditionally realist genre of crime fiction into the uncertainty of the gothic. Both *In the Woods* and *Broken Harbour* use a spectral animal as figments of a trauma narrative to represent some part of the impossibility of communicating trauma because trauma erases the narrative structure of memory itself. Throughout her *Dublin Murder Squad* series, French explores the psychological impact inflicted by the Celtic Tiger through narratives that blend tropes from a variety of Irish literary traditions such as fairy lore, Big House novels, Irish theatrical dramas, and Gothic novels into her crime fiction. Nature takes on a haunting gothic presence in French's fiction, with the notion of the liminal boundaries between humans and nature being a source of anxiety. Indeed, as Stacy Alaimo suggests in her book *Exposed: Environmental Politics and Pleasures in Posthuman Times*, the human home has become a site of considerable negotiation. Although French fulfils the mystery writer's bargain by providing solutions to her murders, she leaves some things unexplained, like the spectral animal presence in *In the Woods* and *Broken Harbour*. French's decision to leave nature unexplained forces us to consider how the presence of the non-human within narrative fuels an environmental imagination prompting new interpretations of human/nature relations.

anna.k.kirsch2@durham.ac.uk

Anna Kirsch completed her English Studies MA at Durham University with a thesis on environmental ethics and morality in Carl Hiaasen's crime fiction and is currently working on a Ph.D. on consumerism and violence in contemporary crime fiction. Anna is particularly interested in the application of philosophy through the lens of popular culture. Additionally, Anna has earned four film credits as a narrative consultant. Most notably, on *Living in the Future's Past* (2018) an award-winning documentary produced and narrated by seven-time Academy Award® nominee Jeff Bridges.

Panel 1c

Madeline Potter

Edge Hill University (UK)

'A novel that nobody reads': Melmoth's Trajectory of Guilt from Maturin to Sarah Perry

How does guilt haunt us? How does it trail and entrap us, and how do we face it? In 1820, Charles Maturin wrote *Melmoth the Wanderer*: as Alison Milbank explains, drawing on René Girard, the Faustian Melmoth is a sacrificial scapegoat, whose 'sin and guilt are to be exchanged' if he is to be freed of his curse. Nearly two centuries later, Sarah Perry's *Melmoth* reimagines the wandering hero: Melmoth is now a woman, cursed to wander the world, bearing witness to the world's atrocities, a shadowy spectre of guilt, whose bloody footsteps and meandering black robe are a constant, unshakeable presence to those who sin. This paper explores how and why Perry's *Melmoth* abandons the transactional logic of the original Melmoth in favour of an exploration of guilt as shared experience. If Maturin's Melmoth sought to free himself of his curse, passing on his sin to others, Perry's seeks companionship in her lonely guilt, attempting to lure those who have given into despair as a consequence of their own guilt. Maturin's aims for a quick exchange with his victims; Perry's wants her victims to join her. Contrasting the theological assumptions of the two novels, I argue that while both Maturin and Perry's texts reflect models of resistance in the face of ultimate despair (and consequent damnation), Perry's *Melmoth* frames guilt as a unifying principle in the face of a world which emerges as painfully fragmented and fragmenting. I argue that within this isolating reality, Girard's scapegoating mechanism collapses, and guilt becomes a shared experience, masquerading as solace, intimacy, and closeness. This trajectory from the Romantic Wanderer to the modern Witness allows Perry to overcome the finitude of Maturin's tale and frame a narrative of continued, live guilt, making her readers examine and question their own guilty conscience alongside her characters.

madeline.potter@york.ac.uk

Dr. Madeline Potter is a BARS/BAVS Nineteenth-Century Research Fellow at Edge Hill University (UK), working on a project on Bram Stoker and John Keble, which explores *Dracula* through the lens of Keble's focus on how one might seek God in a fallen, monstrous world. She researches theology and the Irish Gothic, with a particular focus on monstrous figures and the religious aspirations and anxieties they embody. She is editing the collection *Theology and Vampires*, forthcoming with Fortress Academic in 2022. She is also interested in the tensions and intersections between medicine and theology in the context of Victorian Gothic literature.

Rosalind Crocker

University of Sheffield (UK)

"It's in the blood": Heredity and the Neo-Gothic Novel

The neo-Victorian project is one inescapably concerned with ideas of inheritance. Drawing on the settings, forms, and motifs of nineteenth-century writings, whilst treating them self-consciously and, often, satirically, neo-Victorian texts have commonly been characterised as reciprocal conversations between past and present, reflecting as much about their authorial contexts as their diegetic histories. In this way, the notion that neo-Victorian writing has descended linearly from the Victorian is complicated, but the genre nonetheless exposes a trajectory between the nineteenth century and the twenty-first which is implicated in ideas of inheritance and descent.

This formal consideration of heredity is often reinforced by a thematic exploration, and this is particularly prevalent in texts which adhere to neo-Gothic convention. Texts which draw on key Gothic tenets in their examination of the nineteenth century – bodily abjection, ghostly presences, monstrosity – are more likely to directly consider issues of descent in their cross-temporal forms, offering a generic and thematic form of textual haunting. An emphasis on blood as both a literal and symbolic carrier of inherited qualities is also often inflected with a Gothicised potential, particularly around congenital illness or hidden familial origins.

This talk will consider the role of heredity in the neo-Gothic novel, drawing on these ideas around neo-historical form corresponding with diegetic themes of descent. In particular, I will look to the symbolic role of blood in terms of inheritance, looking at the nineteenth-century Gothic conventions around illness, aristocracy, and hidden histories which have continued to define the mode. I will look at texts including Barbara Vine's *The Blood Doctor*, E.S. Thomson's *Beloved Poison* and Sarah Water's *Fingersmith* to examine the ways in which blood, both literal and metaphorical, figures in the neo-Gothic genre and interacts with the imperatives and influences of neo-historicism more widely.

rcrocker1@sheffield.ac.uk

Rosalind Crocker is a PhD student at the University of Sheffield, looking at the figure of the 'medical man' in neo-Victorian fiction. She is the co-organiser of the Sheffield Gothic postgraduate research strand, and has presented widely on neo-Victorianism and the Gothic. Her research, also on contagion, resurrectionism and patient narratives, is funded by the AHRC through WROCAH.

Hannah O'Flanagan
Lancaster University (UK)

Weakening borders and fearfully desired: monstrous beings in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*

Monstrous beings and figures that walk the line between human and animal have, for obvious reasons, been key players in the literature of the Gothic since its inception. As both a scientific and a moral figure that crosses multiple trajectories, the monster was especially key in the nineteenth century owing to the developments in theories surrounding human evolution and behaviour (such as Darwin's work on evolutionary theory and Freud's psychoanalytical theory), as well as increasing tensions and anxieties following social developments and the increasing destabilization of the empire.

This paper seeks to offer a reading of Bram Stoker's seminal 1897 work, *Dracula*, through the lens of Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's *Seven Monster Theses* to explore the way in which Stoker constructs the monstrous to reflect social and cultural anxieties of the wider *fin-de-siecle* society. Both the undead creatures encountered within the novel and the human characters that they prey upon are monstrous figures that cross over both moral and spiritual boundaries, as well as tangible geographic locations. Cohen's theory shows the monstrosity inherent in this liminality and in moving between both states of beings and locations more generally. The *Seven Theses* is a work that seeks to explore and analyse the ways in which the monstrous can be interpreted, as well as interrogating the different effects it has on a symbolic as well as textual level. Using this as a framework, I will argue that the characters in the text are monstrous because they weaken the

boundaries, and cross borders, between concepts; further, that they especially blur the distinction between human and animal, acting as beings within the text to be both desired and feared.

hannah.of@hotmail.co.uk

Hannah O’Flanagan (she/they) is a Ph.D. candidate at Lancaster University, where her thesis will explore asexuality and non-sexual queerness in the ghost stories and short Gothic fiction of the *fin-de-siecle*. Her other research interests include monstrosity, the figure of the werewolf and the vampire, folklore and folk horror, the ecoGothic and Gothic mycology, Victorian occulture and psychic detectives, and the Egyptological Gothic.

Session Two

Panel 2a

Lorna Piatti-Farnell

Auckland University of Technology (New Zealand)

The Metal and the Flesh: Techno-Liminalities, and the Bio-Subversion of the Super-Body as a Gothic Space

The fame of the Marvel Cinematic Universe as a repository for fantastical superhero exploits is indeed undeniable. The MCU (as it is often referred to), however, is not commonly associated with Gothic narratives and iconographies, and it is instead instantly cited tales of superheroes, big explosions, impressive CGI, and long-winded fighting scenes. And yet, within the folds of the MCU’s many transmedia storylines, hides the presence of dark and haunted figures, often sitting at the cusp between human and machine, human and animal, and human and alien. Indeed, experimental biotechnologies are regularly associated with the creation and exploits of the ‘superhumans’. The enhanced ‘super-body’, as it can be termed, is a porous, liminal, and intersectional entity. This in-between status is particularly evident in the character of Bucky Barnes, the eponymous Winter Soldier of several MCU narratives. Taking this in-between status as a point of departure, this paper explores the representation of Bucky’s super-body as a Gothic space within the MCU, sited at the centre of complex social, cultural, and political re-renegotiations of identity. Indeed, the technological aspect of Bucky’s transformation into the Winter Soldier becomes even more pronounced as part of a Gothic trajectory. Unavoidably identifiable by its iconic metal arm, and forever changed by the super-soldier serum that runs through it, Bucky’s body is transformative and transitional, and generates fear precisely because of its refusal to adhere to absolute categories. While there is a suggestion, of course, that all super-bodies in the wider Marvel Cinematic Universe are ‘abnormal’ to some extent, a distinctive sense of uneasiness particularly surrounds Bucky, as a somewhat devious presence that exceeds even the bounds of superhumanity via both transhuman and posthuman experimentation. The procedures that created his super-body also altered his sense of self, transforming him into a highly

dualistic being. While ostensibly projected as inherently superior in a number of ways, Bucky's super-body is also a tortured body, carrying with it a Gothicised history of suffering, which inevitably marks him as Other.

lorna.piatti-farnell@aut.ac.nz

Lorna Piatti-Farnell, PhD, is Professor of Popular Media and Culture at Auckland University of Technology, where she is also Director of the Popular Culture Research Centre. She is President of the Gothic Association of New Zealand and Australia (GANZA). Her research interests lie at the intersection of popular media and cultural history, with a focus on Gothic Studies. She has published widely in these areas, including (among others) *Consuming Gothic: Food and Horror in Film* (Palgrave 2017), *The Vampire in Contemporary Popular Literature* (Routledge, 2014), and *Gothic Afterlives: Reincarnations of Horror in Film and Popular Media* (editor, Lexington, 2019). She's currently working on a new edited project entitled *Disney's Gothic Kingdom: Dark Shadows in the House of Mouse* (in conjunction with Prof. Jeffrey Weinstock; Lexington), while also completing her latest monograph, entitled *Poison and the Popular Imagination: Insidious Matters, Dark Histories, and Infamous Tales* (Lexington). Prof. Piatti-Farnell is sole editor of the 'Routledge Advances in Popular Culture Studies' book series, as well as co-editor (with Prof. Carl Sederholm) of the 'Horror Studies' book series for Lexington.

Kirstin A. Mills

Macquarie University (Australia)

iGothic: Spectral Technologies and the Digital Adaptation of Classic Gothic Literature

In recent years, classic nineteenth-century Gothic literature like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Washington Irving's 'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow', and the short stories of Edgar Allan Poe, have increasingly been adapted into new digital forms designed to be read and experienced via smart phones and tablets. Demanding an immersive, interactive reading experience, these "digital book" applications position the reader at the boundaries of multiple worlds where they simultaneously occupy the external world of their bodies as they swipe screens and manipulate moving graphics, while also hovering spectrally as a character and author within the realm of the narrative itself. These technologies, I argue, represent new forms of Gothic not only in the spectral relationship they posit between reader and text, but also in their innovative approach to resurrecting and revivifying the ghost of classic gothic literature, where the intersection of literature and technology encourages new interpretations and contextual understandings of nineteenth-century texts. Drawing on a range of examples of Gothic "digital book" applications, this paper examines these texts as new forms of digital Gothic, exploring the ways they embrace contemporary digital technologies to paradoxically return us to the historical and narrative contexts of their original nineteenth-century forebears in a manner completely different from – and arguably unavailable to – traditional forms of printed literature. Representing the most recent point in a trajectory of gothic adaptation since the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, I argue that these digital texts not only advance this trajectory towards an increasingly digital future, but also redirect it back towards its buried origins. This process ensures a dual haunting where twenty-first-century readers digitally haunt the

past, while the Gothic past continues to haunt the digital present. If the future is digital, it is therefore, I argue, already Gothic.

kirstin.mills@mq.edu.au

Kirstin A. Mills is Lecturer and Director of the Master of Research in the Faculty of Arts at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia. Her research focuses on Gothic and fantastic literature of the long nineteenth century, with a particular focus on the intersections between space, the supernatural, and the sciences of the mind, as well as the adaptation of these texts into twenty-first-century digital and visual media. She has published on aspects of these ideas in the writings of authors like Horace Walpole, S.T. Coleridge, Washington Irving, Edgar Allan Poe, Mary Shelley, and Lucas Malet, and is developing her first monographs.

Matthew Thompson

Independent Scholar (Australia)

Spirit Island, Postcolonial Gothic and the Interactive Space

Andrew Smith and William Hughes describe Postcolonial Gothic as a genre where “Gothic use of nonhuman and ab-human figures such as vampires, ghosts and monsters of various kinds is calculated to challenge the dominant humanist discourse” (Smith and Hughes 2003, 2). Such texts are becoming increasingly prevalent as authors in the 21st century not only attempt to give voice to repressed histories and traumas of colonised peoples, but also reflect upon the complicity of their own mediums in perpetuating narratives about the superiority of Western civilisation. One particularly intriguing example of this is *Spirit Island* (2017), a board game where players take the role of elemental spirits who are attempting to banish European colonial invaders from their island home. The game therefore not only positions the players up against the European powers, but then shows the toll that these invaders have on the island, as they cause damage (or Blight) as they change the landscape to suit their purpose. This paper will therefore examine how *Spirit Island* uses the features of Postcolonial Gothic fiction as well as the unique aspects of its medium to make players challenge their own pre-conceptions about colonialism and the Enlightenment. By doing this, it will also analyse how *Spirit Island* brings into stark relief much of the older thinking that surrounds board games; as well as examine the power of board games to both challenge and reinforce colonial narratives.

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matthew.thompson7@uqconnect.edu.au

Dr **Matthew Thompson** is an independent scholar who has worked for both Griffith University and the University of Southern Queensland. His PhD Thesis examined the evolution of the mythology of Jack the Ripper and how it has informed serial killer and Neo-Victorian narratives. He has also written journal articles in *Aeternum* and *The Australasian Journal of Popular Culture*; as well as book chapters in 2019’s *Gothic Afterlives* and the upcoming superhero study *The Superhero Multiverse*. His current projects include examining portrayals of vampirism and serial killers in ‘new’ media such as video games and board games.

Panel 2b

N. Rene Hoff

Texas Woman's University (USA)

"I knew a girl who knew this girl": Gothic and Horror Tropes as Rhetorical Refusal in *True Blood*

Charlaine Harris' *Southern Vampire Mysteries* and the cable television show adaptation *True Blood* have sparked a body of scholarship. However, most scholarship deals with either the novels or the show, and few scholars have discussed them together through the lens of adaptation. Even fewer have discussed how the adaptation from novel to show functions rhetorically. In this paper, I will examine how *True Blood*'s showrunners make rhetorically significant changes that persuade casual, entertainment-seeking viewers into discourse about difficult societal topics. Kenneth Burke asserts that presenting an argument in a form or pattern that is familiar to the audience invites it to "participate" in the speaker's assertion regardless of the subject matter or agreement with the assertion because the rhetor can "awaken an attitude of collaborative expectancy" in the audience. Gothic / horror conventions - being so well-established and familiar to the audience - have an appeal, which can draw an audience into difficult conversations, potentially moving it toward agreement, and as a work of Gothic literature, *True Blood* contains expected conventions. However, it is important to note that it does not merely contain Gothic / horror conventions; it employs them. One way that the show uses Gothic / horror conventions rhetorically is to subvert audience expectations. John Schilb argues that when rhetors refuse to do what audiences expect, the refusal can be rhetorical because "the rhetor seeks the audience's assent to another principle, cast as a higher priority." Moreover, rhetorical refusals "deliberately challenge the frame that their audience brings to the occasion," which includes violating expected patterns such as Gothic / horror tropes. Using the concepts of surprise / subversion of expectations, I will examine adaptive changes such as the show's opening scene, which does not appear in the novel. Though, as others have pointed out, the scene surprises audiences for a humorous effect, I will argue that not only are the surprises humorous, they are a rhetorical refusal, aimed at a particular effect: to draw attention to how people otherize one another and invite the audience to reconsider their own preconceived notions about those who are different from themselves.

nrcampbell@twu.edu

N. Rene Hoff holds a Master of Arts degree in English from Texas Woman's University and is a Ph.D. candidate in their Rhetoric program. She has taught high school English for many years and is an adjunct professor. Her research interests include adaptation, rhetoric of literature and film, vampires, gothic and southern gothic, detective fiction, British and American literature, film, the works of Alfred Hitchcock, film noir, and television.

Brandyn Whitaker

Middle Tennessee State University (USA)

Why the Cabin Can't Save Us: An Exploration of the Cabin Setting from Frontier Gothic to Cabin Horror

From Abraham Lincoln's humble upbringing to the rugged individualism of frontiersmen conquering the West, the cabin location has become an intrinsic icon of American culture and identity. The veneration of the colonial and frontier mythic landscape that the log cabin is linked to became important in defining a perceived American exceptionalism and creating a unifying mythic narrative, starting with the first colonists (most prominently seen in Frederick Jackson Turner's *Frontier Thesis*). Much in the same way that Hawthorne drew from and dramatized the Puritans, both frontier gothic and cabin horror works have engaged with this cultural frontier mythos, resulting in pieces such as Ambrose Bierce's "The Boarded Window," and Sam Raimi's *The Evil Dead*, the originator of the cabin horror genre.

For a wilderness location of such importance to gothic fiction and horror, there has been a surprising absence of ecoGothic scholarship on the American cabin. My paper begins by outlining how the cabin became inherently linked to the frontier and westward expansion. I then examine how both frontier gothic literary works and the cabin horror film genre utilize similar techniques to establish their cabin location and then depict the wilderness as an opposing, outside threat. As the conflict between the protagonists and the wilderness turns more violent the characters' ecophobia is externalized. Such externalization manifests in a contest for dominion over the land. The cabin setting removes readers and audiences from the comfort of their own home and situates them in a more vulnerable location at the forefront of a battle for agency and control over a chaotic and ultimately irrepressible wilderness.

brw2x@mtmail.mtsu.edu

Brandyn Whitaker recently completed graduate work at Middle Tennessee State University. Having always been enamored with American literature and film's use of the North American wilderness, ecocriticism and the ever-growing fields of ecohorror and ecoGothic studies have dominated his research interests.

Disha Acharya

New Mexico Military Institute, Roswell (USA)

"My hair dishevelled and my violet lips, I was not fit to be seen;" Marguerite as a Gothic Heroine in *The Diary of Mademoiselle D'Arvers*.

Nineteenth-Century Indian writer Toru Dutt (1856-1877) proclaimed in one of her letters that "novels are true and histories are false"; this replacing of history with fiction reflected her concerns with identity formation with fiction allowing more creative freedom to her in a restrictive Bengali household. By blurring the lines between the two, Dutt questioned identity politics and drew attention to the patriarchal notions of transgression and crossing of boundaries for women. As a colonial subject, Dutt, was one of the first Indian

women who not only travelled to Europe but also wrote in French and English at a time when Indian women had few opportunities to be educated.

Donna Heiland in *Gothic and Gender* argues that gothic fiction is about “transgressions of all sorts: across national boundaries, social boundaries, sexual boundaries, the boundaries of one’s own identity”. One can see these transgressions play out in Dutt’s novels. The gothic mode became a vehicle through which Dutt gave voice to her displacement and dislocation as a writer and a colonial subject traveling to France and England. This chapter argues that the novel as a gothic romance is a vehicle to explore female desire and the unhomely. The transgressive female protagonist in *The Diary of Mademoiselle D’Arvers*, Marguerite, illustrates Dutt’s use of the female gothic to express her concern with resistance to regimented gender roles within patriarchal structures. In adopting the gothic tropes of the unhomely, haunted spaces, madness, and death, Dutt is able to articulate liminality as a marginalized woman who felt unhomed and wished to write in a time when Indian women were most often discouraged to do so. Her novels, which have been characterized as mere fragments, are more than that: they are acts of resistance.

acharya.disha@gmail.com

Disha Acharya recently completed her Ph.D. in English from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. She is currently working on a recovery project of Toru Dutt, Olive Schreiner, and Sara Jeanette Duncan’s works of fiction. She completed her Bachelor’s, Masters and M.Phil. from India where she also taught for five years before embarking on her Ph.D. in Folklore and Literature in the U.S. She is currently teaching as an Associate Professor at New Mexico Military Institute, Roswell.

Session Three

Panel 3a

Jaya Yadav

University of Delhi (India)

(Re)locating the Gothic as a Metaphor for War: Analysing Ahmed Saadawi’s *Frankenstein in Baghdad*

The genre of Gothic fiction has often been traced to the 19th century, with interlinks to Romanticism, viewing Mary Shelley, John Polidori, amongst other white Europeans as its pioneers. (Re)locating the horror with contemporary societies, through a postcolonial lens, transcending modern day national borders, and arguably languages, analysing Ahmed Saadawi’s *Frankenstein in Baghdad* (2013) becomes an important intersection to underline themes of conflict, identity, and trauma. In mapping a literary historiography of the reimagining of gothic fiction through questions of agency, as well as an exploration of the ‘banality of evil’ in contemporary Iraq, it is imperative to decentre readings of Gothic fiction from Eurocentrism, moving away from ‘Orientalist’ labels on fiction from other parts of the world. *Frankenstein in Baghdad* uses the figure of Shelley’s creation of a superhuman/supernatural being, who is dehumanised by his creator, to examine the

systematic erasure of innocent citizens of Iraq by senseless killings, part of 'collateral damage', in a war where they have no voice in to express their grief, or their horror. Saadawi uses the gothic, not as an external element, but rather as an internalised psychological perspective of war, complicating hegemonic discourses on what constitutes 'justice', and what it means to be 'innocent' in order to grapple with the ongoing trauma, intensified on the streets of Baghdad. Hadi, a junk dealer, begins to stitch body parts from different bodies, in an attempt to bring forth a sense of dignity, and closure to nameless victims. However, as the novel progresses, the distinctions between victims and perpetrators is blurred, as the 'monster' states, "there are no innocents who are completely innocent, and no criminals who are completely criminal ... every criminal he had killed was also a victim." The text brings forth a complex interplay of politics and war, where it raises issues of accountability and agency, asking, who can speak for the dead in a world. In this manner, the novel acts as a mode of alternative historiography, chronicling the lives of the unnamed and voiceless.

jayayadav689@gmail.com

Jaya Yadav is a Ph.D. scholar at the University of Delhi, working on contemporary South Asian Literature. For her MPhil dissertation, she worked on Amitav Ghosh's fiction. She is interested in the interdisciplinary aspect of literature and its role in articulating questions of identity, historiography and politics. She grew up in Turkmenistan, England and Nepal, before relocating to India for university. She is an Assistant Professor at the Department of English at Janki Devi Memorial College in New Delhi and also works as a Senior Editor at *Strife* Blog and Journal, Department of War Studies, KCL.

Alejandra Giangiulio-Lobo

Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica

Gothic Tourism in the tropics: Saint Luke Island as a penitentiary and a national park in Costa Rica

The country of Costa Rica in Central America might not have architectural sites that can compete with old manors and houses in other countries in Latin America, or with more elegant and notorious sites in Europe. Yet the Gothic does not escape latitudes and longitudes and Costa Rica has its own Gothic tourist attractions. One that has recently attracted a lot of attention in the press for its natural beauty yet pernicious history is Isla San Lucas, or Saint Luke Island, located in the Pacific coast of the country, close to the city of Puntarenas. The island is famous locally because it contained a penitentiary which was active between the years 1873 to 1991. Also, the island is the setting of the novel *The Lonely Men's Island* by Costa Rican author Jose León Sánchez, who was an inmate there for more than twenty years, after being accused of stealing the figure of the Virgin of Los Angeles in 1950.

The novel was written on the island in 1963, and then published in 1969. Nowadays, the island is a national park, recently declared so in 2020. The buildings and pebbled roads still stand as witnesses of the atrocities that happened there for more than one hundred years, and the graffiti on the walls of the cells tell the stories of the hundreds of inmates who lived and died on the island. Contrasting to the grim and oppressive atmosphere that is felt throughout the visit to the prison and other buildings, the natural beauty

cannot be denied: exuberant flora, pristine beaches, and sublime sights ease the visitor's memories of what was before seen. The presentation will account relevant historical, literary, and visual aspects related to the island as a Gothic tourist attraction.

alejandra.giangiulio.lopez@una.ac.cr

Alejandra Giangiulio-Lopez is professor at Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica since 2013. She is interested in studying and understanding the Gothic in the tropical environment of her country.

Samira Aziz & Nasrin Pervin

Victoria University (New Zealand) and North South University (Bangladesh)

The Monstrous Mother in Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumder's "Lalkomol Neelkomol"

There is a scholarly consensus that folktales and fairy tales intended for children bear both explicit and implicit Gothic elements. Children's tales all over the world have used the figure of the evil stepmother who is intent on harming her stepchildren, and India is no exception. For instance, the monstrous mother features prominently in a number of Assamese folktales like "Tejimola" and "Champawati" in Lakshminath Bezbarua's anthology *Burhi Aair Sadhu* (1911), translated as *Grandma's Tales*. Our focus will be on the evil stepmother in the story "Lalkomol Neelkomol" from Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumder's *Thakurmar Jhuli* (similarly translated as *Grandma's Basket of Stories*). Several generations in both Bangladesh and the Indian state of West Bengal have grown up with these tales since the anthology's publication in 1907. Our paper examines the (literally) monstrous mother, story's the demon queen, who determines not only to harm her stepson but also her own son. Reading this figure through Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection, we explore the complex position of motherhood and an equally complex bond between mother and child.

samira.aziz@vuw.ac.nz

Samira Aziz is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of English and Modern Languages, North South University, Bangladesh. She is currently on study leave to pursue a doctorate in contemporary Gothic literature at Victoria University of Wellington.

nasrin.pervin@northsouth.edu

Nasrin Pervin is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of English and Modern Languages, North South University, Bangladesh.

Panel 3b

Lucinda Janson

The Australian National University

'The old centuries had and have powers of their own which mere "modernity" cannot kill': *Dracula* and fin de siècle medievalism

This paper explores the trajectories of the medieval in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, adumbrating the ways in which the medieval past haunts an apparently technological and rational modernity. While critics have exhaustively studied the novel's sexual, imperial, and post-colonial contexts, comparatively little attention has been paid to *Dracula's* medieval contexts. This paper argues that *Dracula* draws not on a precise, historical understanding of medieval Transylvania, but rather activates a medievalist sense of a mythical, feudal past. A number of scholars have drawn attention to the contrast in the novel between the medieval, vampiric past and the modern, English present. However, this paper contends that the text does not establish a simplistic dichotomy between Dracula's ancient power and his foes' modern techniques. Instead, it suggests that it is more productive to explore Stoker's juxtapositions, connections, and elisions of a medieval, European past and a modern English present. The novel ostensibly pits the medieval Count Dracula against the forces of occidental modernity, yet ultimately undermines any simplistic dichotomy between past and present. This paper will contextualise *Dracula* within late nineteenth-century discourses of medievalism, and also explore the resonances within the text of earlier medieval and medievalist texts, such as Sir Walter Scott's *Marmion*. The paper will conclude that while the novel stridently attempts to assert its own modernity, the overwhelming potency of the medieval past creates a more complex and ambiguous trajectory.

lucindajanson@gmail.com

Lucinda Janson has completed an Honours in English Literature at the ANU in 2019, graduating with a Bachelor of Philosophy and a Diploma of Languages (Latin). She received the University Medal, and the Leslie Holdsworth Allen Memorial Prize for the best performance in English Honours. I have had articles published in *The ANU Historical Journal II* and in *The ANU Undergraduate Research Journal*. I was named the Regional Winner (Oceania) in the Literature category at the 2020 Global Undergraduate Awards. My research interests include the works of Lord Byron, women's writing of the long nineteenth century, aestheticism, and theories of genre, gender, intertextuality, and sexuality. I am currently studying at the University of Melbourne.

Jeanette Laredo

Independent Scholar (USA)

Monstrous Members and Ominous Orifices: Adult Toys and Our Queer Desire for the Monstrous Body

The Gothic has always been concerned with things that exceed and threaten the boundaries of normalcy, and this is especially true of the monstrous body. Vacillating between human and nonhuman, male and female, living and dead, the monstrous body has been an object of horror, fear, disgust, pity, and sexual desire. After the release of *The Shape of Water* (2017) – Guillermo Del Toro's Academy Award-winning film about a mute woman who falls for an amphibian monster – Etsy seller XenoCatArtifacts created a run of handmade silicone dildos based on the vibrant design of the creature that sold out. But the huge demand for this monster's member is only a small part of a much bigger market for monstrous sex toys. Bad Dragon has been making creature themed sex toys since 2011

and Primal Hardware recently released its Ovipositor: a hollow dildo that implants gelatine eggs into its user-host. This presentation will explore how the aforementioned sex toys embody the queer gothic by challenging the limits of "normal human" sexuality to express a modern desire for a monstrous body that transcends limiting categories of gender and sexuality.

jeanettelaredo@gmail.com

Dr **Jeanette Laredo** is an independent scholar of all things awful including 18th-century British Gothic literature and Victorian horror. She writes about the dark desires and unrestrained violence that lurk beneath the veneer of polite society. She spends her nights listening to podcasts about murder and sipping tea.

Panel 3c

Carmel Cedro

Auckland University of Technology (New Zealand)

'Surprise! It's really a cake!' Examining the uncanniness of 'super-realistic' cakes

Cake art has evolved to be an almost boundless expression of imagination, moulding icing, fondant, and buttercream into wondrous creations. Increasingly, everyday objects, such as shoes, toilet paper, animals, handbags, other types of food, and so on, have become the focus of incredibly realistic cakes. Mesmerising videos across social media show what seem like ordinary objects cut to reveal layers of cake.

This paper seeks to explore these creations and the performative nature at their crux, as well as the reactions evoked by them. It will investigate whether the experience is transgressive, or merely a celebration of excess that embraces the theatrical and blurs the lines between artistic expression and making a cake. More importantly, it will contemplate whether the mis-match of senses and challenged pre-conceptions produce an unsettling or disturbing effect in its viewer.

Using Nicholas Royle's examination of the Uncanny to be "a crisis of the proper and natural, it disturbs any straightforward sense of what is inside and what is outside" (2003, p. 2), and Julia Kristeva's ideas of abjection as a disturbance to "identity, system, order... what does not respect borders, positions, rules...the in-between, the ambiguous, and the composite" (1982, p. 4), this paper will attempt to examine the inherent Gothic modes represented within the fantastical cakes; and the implications of these uncanny experiences to transform mundane, everyday objects into cake form.

carmel.cedro@aut.ac.nz

Dr **Carmel Cedro** is a cultural historian and lecturer in popular culture studies. She has written on the relationship between representations of femininity, cake, and baking in cookbooks; food and otherness in Victorian fiction; Gothic trends in contemporary wedding cake decoration; and traced the influence and history of the Dolly Varden cake in popular culture. Her research interests focus on twentieth and twenty-first century social history, food studies, gender, and Gothic intersections in contemporary popular forms.

Alex Philp and Ella Jeffery

Queensland University of Technology (Australia)

“He doesn’t belong in this house”: The Cousin as Domestic Disruptor in Two Gothic Novels

The family unit in the gothic novel has been widely discussed and the decay or distortion of family relationships is often central to gothic narratives. While Anne Williams (1995, 4) describes the gothic mode as ‘an illegitimate cousin who haunts the margins of “literature”’, the figure of the cousin in gothic literature has largely been relegated to the periphery of critical scholarship. This paper contends that the cousin occupies a particularly unheimlich position in the family unit: a cousin might be of the same age, or so distant in age that they are almost a stranger; they might be entirely unfamiliar, or raised from childhood with their cousins; they might be an acceptable – even desirable – romantic interest or an entirely taboo one; they might share family resemblance or be utterly unrecognisable. While clearly a flexible, shifting figure within (or on outskirts of) the family unit, what is consistent across many canonical and contemporary gothic novels alike is that the arrival of a cousin causes significant upheaval – either immediate or generational – that undermines, dismantles, or enacts a renegotiation of the domestic order. The intrusions of Rachel in Daphne du Maurier’s *My Cousin Rachel* (1951) and Charles in Shirley Jackson’s *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* (1962) both reflect and reinforce this trajectory. In this paper, we consider the ways in which Rachel and Charles support our interpretation of the cousin as a disruptive figure within gothic texts. In gothic texts, the fluidity of the cousin figure – Rachel and Charles can be variously read as intruders, sexual disruptors, spectres from the past – reveals and complicates social anxieties about the shifting structure of ‘family’ in the West.

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ak.philp@qut.edu.au

Alex Philp’s research examines sister relationships in Gothic fiction. Her research has appeared in *New Writing*, *Transnational Literature*, *TEXT: Journal of Writing and Writing Courses*, and *eTropic*. Her latest book chapter (2020, Palgrave Macmillan) examines the symbol of the thylacine in Tasmanian Gothic writing. She is an Associate Lecturer in Professional Communication in the Faculty of Creative Industries, Education and Social Justice at QUT.

e.jeffery@qut.edu.au

Dr Ella Jeffery is a Lecturer in Creative Writing in the School of Creative Practice at Queensland University of Technology. She researches intersections between contemporary literature, television, and renovation culture, and is particularly interested in conceptions and representations of unstable or insecure dwelling in twenty-first century Australia. Her recent research appears in *The Routledge Companion to Australian Literature*, *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* and *Journal of Australian Studies*.

Erin Mercer

Massey University (New Zealand)

“That weird cat”: Steven King’s *Pet Semetary* and the Return of the Dead.

For Steven King, “the most obvious psychological pressure point is the fact of our own mortality” and he consistently exploits this sensitivity throughout his work by utilising an array of uncanny revenants that confront the reader with buried knowledge and surmounted beliefs regarding death. In *Pet Semetary* (1983), the Creed family are repeatedly confronted with the returning dead, first as nightmares and traumatic memories, and then in the form of their pet cat, Church, who is killed on the highway outside the family home. In an attempt to protect his family from grief, Louis Creed buries the cat secretly in a Native American burial ground, from which the cat returns. The power of the Micmac burial ground to resurrect the dead is too tempting for Louis to ignore when his young son Gage is killed, leading to yet another grisly resurrection. King’s use of the uncanny in this novel adheres to Freudian theory in that the returning dead reify anxieties related to death, while also gesturing towards what Freud called “the death drive” by exploring the contention uttered by one of its characters: “Sometimes dead is better.” What makes *Pet Semetary* most interesting, however, is where it evades psychoanalytic theory. King represents psychology and its attendant “comforting jargon” as failing to adequately explain death and what might lie beyond. King’s uncanny in *Pet Semetary* is thus not solely psychological and it insists on a bridge between internal structures and external entities that exceed rational understanding.

E.Mercer@massey.ac.nz

Erin Mercer is Programme Coordinator and Senior Lecturer in English at Massey University. She is the author of *Telling the Real Story: Genre and New Zealand Literature* (Victoria University Press 2017) and *Repression and Realism in Post-war American Literature* (Palgrave 2011). Her research has been published as book chapters and articles in journals such as *Gothic Studies*, *The Journal of American Culture*, *The Journal of Popular Culture* and *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*.

Session Four

Panel 4a

Enrique Ajuria Ibarra

Universidad de las Américas Puebla (Mexico)

Border Gothic: Globalization, Horror, and Fantasies of Redemption in Marcus Sedgwick’s *Saint Death* (2016-)

Complex issues arise with national borders, best noticed in the one that divides Mexico and the United States. In this liminal location, cultural, social, and economic relations become highly contradictory. On the one hand, it thrives with opportunities for industrial profit and the constant, daily exchange of the region’s inhabitants from one side to the other. On the other hand, it is a hotspot for drug trafficking, violence, and poverty, exacerbated in Mexico. David Punter suggests that this “long, wide open border [...] occasions horror in those whose role it is to police the boundaries of the nation state” (2016, p. 169). These horrors are given voice in fiction, where migration and poverty are

affected by gang violence and death, and are represented by means of haunting and the supernatural, such as in Marcus Sedgwick's novel *Saint Death* (2016).

Set in Juárez, the plot focuses on Arturo, a teenager who helps his friend Faustino pay off a debt by playing cards with drug cartels. The two boys ask *Santa Muerte*, or Saint Death, for good luck. Saint Death is a popular cult figure in Mexico, notoriously granting wishes to those who approach her. Feeling lucky at first, Arturo gambles it all to end up owing even more money than his friend does, an amount he can only pay with his own life. The purpose of this paper is to explore monstrosity, the divine, and death in the border urban setting represented in Sedgwick's novel. With its uncanny figure of devotion as a symbol of protection and deception, the narrative reveals a Gothic look at the failed promise of multiculturalism and globalization. Instead, what Arturo faces is inequality and poverty, plagued by the horrors of social violence and death itself.

enrique.ajuria@udlap.mx

Enrique Ajuria Ibarra is Senior Assistant Professor at Universidad de las Américas Puebla (UDLAP) in Mexico. He has published widely on Mexican Gothic and Mexican Horror Cinema, and is the editor-in-chief of the peer-reviewed online journal *Studies in Gothic Fiction*.

Caitlin Kelly

The University of Queensland (Australia)

Faeries Where They Don't Belong – Retelling “*Laird Graham Of Morphie And The Kelpie*” As Tropical Australian Postcolonial Gothic

Reflecting on the ongoing process of writing a novella retelling the Scottish folktale *Laird Graham of Morphie and the Kelpie*, this paper will discuss how creative practice can be used to expand and diversify the representations of Australian landscape and history within the genre of Australian Gothic. The project aims to expand the often-homogenized concepts of Australian landscapes and colonial identities, arguing that tropical Far North Queensland is an underrepresented yet ideal setting for gothic storytelling within Australia and combined with local Scottish colonial history, can provide a diverse avenue for further Australian Gothic writing. Drawing on the sub genres of Tropical and Postcolonial Gothic, the paper will discuss the potential of Far North Queensland as a Gothic setting and the often-overlooked role Scottish pastoral settlers played in the colonization of Northern Australia. Texts such as Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), a novel set in Jamaica, demonstrate the effectiveness of the Tropical-Postcolonial intersection in creating an engaging Gothic novel. Far North Queensland has been underutilized in existing Australian Gothic literature and provides a similar setting to Rhys' Jamaica which is ideal for this blended approach to Gothic. The perceived dissonance of a tropical setting to what is considered “classic” Gothic combined with the historical scars of colonialism create an intersection ripe for Gothic interpretation. These themes of tropical landscapes and postcolonial history will be woven together against the frame of the kelpie folktale, using its retelling to add further layers of symbolism and metaphor in the portrayal of the novella's themes. This paper reflects on these underrepresented areas of Australian identity and how through creative practice, they can be used to critically engage with and represent Australian landscape and history.

c.h.kelly@uq.net.au

Caitlin Kelly is currently studying a Creative Writing Masters at The University of Queensland, Brisbane. She has previously completed her Bachelor of Arts Honours at James Cook University and was awarded first class honours for her thesis “The Telling of the Bees: Exploring how climate fiction and folklore can be used to engage people with the social and environmental crisis of climate change”. Her short fiction has been published in *Underground Writers* and she has performed at reading events by *The Hearth Collective* and *Sūdō Journal*.

Sutirtho Roy

University of Kolkata (India)

The Post-human Agency as EcoGothic Resistance: Undead Dogs, Uncanny Dinosaurs and Ancient Kaiju

The intrusion of the non-human Other into familiar human spaces has formed a staple trope of Gothic horror, such that animals conventionally associated with fear, disgust and repulsion often feature in these narratives. The rise of Darwinism, advances in biotechnology and an increasing interest in speculative science have significantly contributed to this genre, leading to the emergence of EcoGothic narratives populated by bizarre and monstrous creatures. The purpose of this study is to address the liminal space in which these animals exist and how their very presence destabilizes humanistic notions of nature and the environment. As such, it seeks to look at *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom*, *Godzilla: King of the Monsters* and *Frankenweenie* as reflections of the changing human gaze on animals and animal agency.

This paper hopes to explore the idea of ‘de-extinction’ via hybridization and cloning, and analyse the ethics of merging the human with the non-human. To that extent, it looks at the setting of *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* which juxtaposes prehistoric animals with Gothic scenes to explore the horrific implications of dissolving temporal boundaries. This paper also provides a counter-gaze to anthropogenic exceptionalism by highlighting human helplessness in the presence of gigantic, eldritch entities of *Godzilla: King of the Monsters*. It brings out *Frankenweenie* as an attempt to overcome such helplessness, rethink the hubris associated with creation or reanimation of life and delve into the dynamics of care while negotiating with the same. Finally, this paper hopes to delineate a common thread linking the three films, delve into the manners in they each challenge and adhere to anthropocentric narratives, and ponder upon the possibility of escaping humanistic biases altogether while rendering the non-human in speculative fiction.

sutirthoroy1998@gmail.com

Sutirtho Roy, pursuing an MA in English Language and Literature from the University of Calcutta, has earned his BA with a First Class while ranking first. He has co-authored an anthology of poetry, written a novel which has garnered positive reviews, won medals at Olympiads, ranked third in a state-wide essay contest and bagged a prize at a quiz contest organized by Oxford. He has served as panellist at international workshops, and his papers have been selected for presentation at Brit Grad and NEPCA, and publication in international journals. He hopes to pursue research in animal studies, ecocriticism and post-humanism.

Panel 4b

Donna Lee Brien

Central Queensland University (Australia)

Haunted Paradise: Violence and Death at Bondi Beach

Representations of violence and death at Sydney's Bondi Beach exist at odds with prevalent and iconic imaging of the location as a paradise – a place of outstanding natural beauty that is famed for the plethora of leisure activities and pleasures that are enjoyed there. To probe this dissonant disjuncture, a range of representations of violence and death at Bondi Beach will be presented and explored. This includes representations in books, films, television series, art and social media as well as monuments to loss. The Gothic features of these dark images will be explored, locating them within the range of representations of Bondi Beach and the functions of these narratives.

d.brien@cqu.edu.au

Donna Lee Brien is an Emeritus Professor of Creative Industries at Central Queensland University, Australia where she is currently undertaking a second doctorate at the Australian Catholic University, Australia, where she is writing a history of Bondi Beach. A previous President of the Australasian Association of Writing Programs, Donna has authored and edited 23 scholarly books. Her latest books are *The Shadow Side of Nursing: Paradox, Image and Identity*, written with Margaret McAllister (Routledge 2020) and *Writing the Australian Beach: Local Site, Global Idea*, edited with Elizabeth Ellison (Palgrave Macmillan 2020).

Gwyneth Peaty

Curtin University (Australia)

A Most Gothic Material: The Erotic Trajectories of Stone

Alongside graveyards, medieval castles and cathedrals are the most recognisable and iconic of Gothic locations. With their flying buttresses, pointed arches, crumbling facades and monstrous statuary, these looming buildings have become synonymous with tales of Gothic sensation; from *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), to *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (1831), *Dracula* (1897), the *Gormenghast* series (1946-1956), and beyond. This paper examines what such landmarks are built from – exploring the concept of stone as a quintessential Gothic material. I argue that stone has long been mythologised in the context of the Gothic; perpetually infused with a sense of agency and intent. Indeed, the 19th century instructional guide *A Manual of Gothic Stone Carving* (1855) argues that there is a certain “spirit” observable in ancient carvings that one must replicate if they wish to create true Gothic stonework. This “spirit,” the authors argue, “can only be imparted by the carver himself. It cannot be caused by the architect’s design or the draughtsman’s geometrical copies; it must be the work of the hand which guides the chisel” (iv). Shaped by passion rather than abstract planning, Gothic stone is more than simple rock. In his well-known defence of Gothic architecture, *The Stones of Venice* (1851-53), John Ruskin

describes Gothic masonry as “full of wolfish life; fierce as the winds that beat, and changeful as the clouds that shade them.” This is no static mineral, but something dynamic and potentially expressive. In more recent Gothic novels, this sense of a spirit or ‘life’ lurking beneath the surface of stone has been taken up by romance writers who infuse statues and monstrous carvings with erotic energy. Accordingly, this paper traces how contemporary narratives starring gargoyles and shapeshifters draw on this much older legacy of Gothic stone.

g.peaty@curtin.edu.au

Dr Gwyneth Peaty is a Research Fellow in The Centre for Culture & Technology at Curtin University, Western Australia. She completed a PhD at the University of Western Australia, and her research interests include popular culture, disability, digital media, horror, monstrosity, and the Gothic. Recent publications include “Joyful Encounters: Learning to Play Well with Machines” in the *Cultural Science Journal* (with Eleanor Sandry) and “The familiar places we dream about: Pokémon GO and nostalgia during a global pandemic” in the *Australasian Journal of Popular Culture* (with Tama Leaver). She is the Australian representative for the Gothic Association of New Zealand and Australia.

Ashleigh Prosser

The University of Western Australia

From Panel Scenes to Netflix Screens: Ludogothic Re-imaginings in the Uncanny Superhero Family Drama of The Umbrella Academy

The Umbrella Academy (2007-2013, 2018-) is an Eisner-award winning comic book series created and written by Gerard Way, illustrated by Gabriel Bá, coloured by Dave Stewart, and published by Dark Horse Books. The story follows a dysfunctional family of seven uncanny superheroes who began their lives as the famous inexplicably superpowered children instantaneously born at the same time in random spontaneous pregnancies around the world. They were then adopted by wealthy scientist Sir Reginald Hargreeves’ to form The Umbrella Academy in order to (eventually) save the world. Having disbanded after the death of one sibling and the disappearance of another when they were teenagers, their father’s mysterious death causes them to reunite as adults as they attempt to save the world from the impending apocalypse. Executive-produced by Way and Bá, Netflix released a ten-episode first and second series adaptation of The Umbrella Academy (in 2019 and 2020 respectively), to widespread popular critical acclaim. The two series loosely adapt the first two collected volumes of the comics (*Apocalypse Suite* and *Dallas*). In 2021, a third ten-episode series was officially confirmed, and is planned for release in 2022. This paper will explore the ‘ludogothic’, first conceptualised by Fred Botting, and the ways in which it can be found at play within the Umbrella Academy’s textual hybrid universe, wherein: Piecing together elements of texts from different periods, mimicking forms, subverting assignments of aesthetic value between high and low culture rendered interpretation and meanings plural, partial and political (2014: 178). It will argue that in re-imagining the uncanny superhero family drama of The Umbrella Academy from its comic-book universe to that of Netflix’s digital media world, one finds the ludogothic to “manifest an implosion of reflexive, reversible yet readerly entanglements of conventions and cultural mores” (Botting 2014: 200).

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ashleigh.prosser@uwa.edu.au

Dr Ashleigh Prosser FHEA is an early career researcher, and Manager (Capability Development) in the Educational Enhancement Unit (Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education) at The University of Western Australia. She completed her PhD by research in English & Cultural Studies at The University of Western Australia, for which she wrote a study of the Gothic mode in contemporary author Peter Ackroyd's London-based novels and historical works. Ashleigh's research interests lie with the Gothic, and its relationship to haunting and the uncanny in literature and popular culture. Ashleigh is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, the Managing Editor of *Aeternum: The Journal of Contemporary Gothic Studies*, and the Social Media Manager for the Gothic Association of New Zealand and Australia (@GANZA_Official).

Session Five

Panel 5a

Demi Schänzel

Auckland University of Technology (New Zealand)

American Gothic Video Games, And The Ghost Of The American Dream

Drawing on a long history of dark romanticism, naturalism and macabre magical realism; American Gothic literature flourished during the Great Depression in the wake of immense economic discrepancy and deepset fears toward a then (seemingly) decaying America. With fables oft found grappling with systems of aristocratic oppression, embittered disillusionment toward fantasies of the pastoral idyll, and capturing the poetic fears of the collective consciousness; American Gothic literature has long been heralded as a medium uniquely composed to grapple with burgeoning sentiments of cultural despair.

It is perhaps unsurprising that this literary genre should reemerge in the wake of unprecedented economic and socio-cultural turmoil over the last two decades, only now within the emerging medium of the video game. *Kentucky Route Zero* (2013), *Night In The Woods* (2017), *Where The Water Tastes Like Wine* (2018) and *Southern Monsters* (2021) are a collection of independently-published video games uniquely positioned at the intersection at this literary re-emergence. Each respectively drawing on over a century of gothic inspiration to critically reflect on the loss of personal identity, physical disability in a country without universal healthcare, and found humanity and queerness during the systematic suffocation of the American underclass. As such, this paper positions this collection of video games as a literal reincarnation of the lingering sentiments, critical reflections and burgeoning despair of historical American Gothic literature. Tracing both the historical lineage these video games draw

such inspiration from, and how these fables have been reincarnated for the contemporary age.

dschanzel@gmail.com

Demi Schänzel is an academic researcher in the digital humanities, advocating for compassionate design practices and exploring the intersection between game studies, social networks and online communication. They're presently undertaking their doctorate on the rising emergence of virtual social zones, and the digital spaces we've come to consider home. Their research critically examines the poetics of commercial social networks, video games and our growing cultural relationship to these emerging mediums.

Justin Matthews

Auckland University of Technology (New Zealand)

Science Fiction/American Gothic: The Liminality of Urban Space in the Television Series *Fringe* and *Debris*

The science fiction television shows *Fringe* (2008) and *Debris* (2021) developed by J. H. Wyman, offer the stories of protagonists trying to understand strange phenomena that occur in the everyday American urban landscape. These phenomena manifest effects that transform and make uncanny these otherwise pedestrian and normal urban places. In each television series, their premises explore the exploration of ongoing phenomena perpetrated by an undefined entity that remains hidden and unknowable. It is, however, the direct effects of these manifestations that modify and reshape the urban landscape of the American metropolis and larger conurbation into a form of liminal space that disrupts its environment and its residents. Resultant effects generate a shift in the urban landscape, coercing it to become a zone of the in-between and present it as a new threshold that is both familiar and unfamiliar and, in this duality, dangerous and monstrous; it becomes 'othered'. This transformation of the urban space invokes a form of Foucault's 'Heterotopia Space' where cultural and institutional spaces become 'othered' through a transfiguration into states that are disturbing, incompatible, or transforming. Heterotopias then become worlds within worlds, mirroring the normal while still upsetting what sits outside. *Fringe* and *Debris* explore how the key protagonists must navigate, negotiate and interact with the liminal zone instantiated between the Heterotopias and the banal, everyday American urban landscape. The liminal zone delineates an ordinary arrangement on one side with a macabre and perverse materiality on the other. What entails through this alchemy of urban liminality and heterotopias as transfigured territory is Wyman's interpretation for a form of science fiction 'American Gothic'.

justin.matthews@aut.ac.nz

Justin Matthews is a lecturer in the Digital Communication Department within the School of Communication Studies for the Auckland University of Technology. His research is primarily focused across the area of user interfaces and experiences, future studies, gaming studies and narrative design and popular culture. He is currently completing a PhD exploring speculative

user interface designs from science fiction moving-image and their relationship to contemporary technology experiences.

Panel 5b

Ruth Barratt-Peacock and Sophia Staite

The Friedrich Schiller University Jena (Germany) and The University of Tasmania (Australia)

Gothic Trajectories of Childhood: Nostalgia, Melodrama, and Space

Frustrated after a difficult morning at school, a child uses break time to sneak a toy bat from his bag. Pressing the bat to his hand he hears it play the transformation sound effect from Kamen Rider Kiva, a superhero who transforms from a weak human into a powerful vampire through this bat's bite. This sound, associated with both the flood of empowerment it represents in the television show and with the warmth and security of Sunday morning television watching at home, reassures the child. Reinvigorated, he returns the toy to his bag and runs out to play.

In this paper we take the musical television tie-in toy as our object of study, using it to theorise a link between childhood, nostalgia, space, and the melodramatic mode in children's fiction. We argue that melodrama and nostalgia in combination are uniquely fitting for the form and function of children's play within a media ecosystem.

Because childhood is constructed strongly through space, the music/toy/screen connection represents an opportunity to conceptualise a 'third space' that combines the different spaces childhood is performed in (for instance, playing with the toy during breaktime crosses the border between the institutional-learning-space of the school and the home-recreation space of the living-room TV or the is-space of reality vs. the potential-becoming-fantasy space of TV). Our preliminary findings suggest a strong link between nostalgia, melodrama and space in what we describe as the "Gothic Trajectory" of early childhood.

rbarrattpeacock@gmail.com

Ruth Barratt-Peacock recently completed her post-graduate studies at the Conservatorium of Music Franz Liszt Weimar and the Friedrich Schiller University Jena. Her research interests range from Australian literature, Romanticism studies, and literature in the Anthropocene through to ludo musicology and metal music studies.

sophiaastaite@gmail.com

Sophia Staite is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Tasmania, researching the adaptation of Japanese children's television franchise *Kamen Rider* into anglophone versions. Her research interests include childhood, gender, and Japanese popular culture.

Gargi Bendre

D. G. Ruparel College (India)

A Monster of One's Own: Feminist Perspective of the Possessed Woman

This paper seeks to analyse the possession movie as an important revisionist tale of the wronged woman in regional Indian films. The films for analysis are two Hindi films *Stree* and *Bulbbul* and a Marathi film called *Kanika*.

It is observed that most possessions that occur in Indian regional films occur to women who are then exorcised of these 'evil' possessions. The men are usually the rational ones who try to find scientific reasons for that occurrence. The men are also the 'victims' of violence. At the end of the film, the women are freed of their possessions and status quo is preserved.

However, in recent years the same possession narrative is being used to discuss the revenge of a woman wronged due to gender-based violence. The women who are possessed are the monstrous other whose possession is the only way to seek revenge for their ill-treatment. All three films deal with some form of gender-based violence meted out to them in a misogynistic world. *Bulbbul* highlights the treatment of women in 19th Century India. *Stree* uses the possession story to highlight the dangers of male entitlement on women's bodies and *Kanika* raises the issue of female foeticide which is a real problem in India. I seek to examine how the monstrous in these films are but necessary tools to give a voice to the voiceless, thus making the horror genre socially relevant.

gargi.bendre@ruparel.edu

Gargi Bendre is an Assistant Professor of English at D. G. Ruparel College in Mumbai, India teaching for the past seven years. She completed her PhD at the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. The topic of her dissertation was fantasy fiction mainly focusing on vampire and zombie fiction. Her areas of interest are crime fiction, fantasy fiction, Gothic fiction, horror fiction and true crime.

Mukulika Batabyal

University of Delhi (India)

The Dead in the Kitchen: Confined to her Culinary Identity in Life and After

The construction of the identity of a woman in most discourses remains similar across cultures: irrespective of her individual identity, she is invariably associated with her archetypal role of the caregiver. In the figure of this archetype one of her primary functions restricts her to the space of the kitchen where she is expected to provide edible food for her family. But when we consider the complete possibility of this archetype, a woman's identity has a clear division: that of the "good mother" and the "evil mother". While the "good mother" nurtures and nourishes, the "evil mother" turns her ordained space into a site of malevolence and weaponizes it to meet her own ends. A reiteration of this archetype can be observed in a variety of folk narratives. In narrowing down this archetype to the context of the global South (particularly the context of Bengal) what we discover is that, not only does the base of the archetype remain the same, but rather, this culinary/cultural identity is further exploited to ensure fixity.

Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" addresses the issue of the double marginalisation of the gendered subaltern stating "the subaltern as female

is even more deeply in shadow.” Her existence is not only restricted to the walls of the kitchen but she has no voice outside it. All kitchen politics conspire to keep her within its confinements not even liberating her in death. In death she reappears in the figure of a শাঁকচুন্নী (the ghost of a married woman), or a ডাইনি (witch) who continues to provide for her family or lures her victims with food as represented in various short stories by male writers.

In my presentation I would like to illustrate how the women in these stories do not achieve any liberation from their culinary identity even in death and every attempt at escape from that ordained space is recorded as an act of transgression. Using a psychoanalytical approach, I will attempt to understand her presence as the Freudian “uncanny”, whose death relegates her further away from the centre of the discourse but whose services are still essential to the functioning of it. The main aim of this presentation will be to bring out the gender politics that govern the space of the kitchen and how these stories reaffirm the patriarchal narrative that provides fixity to gendered identities in life and after which crucially impacts representation of gender roles especially in the global South.

mukulikabatabyal@gmail.com

Mukulika Batabyal is a MPhil Research Scholar at the Department of English, University of Delhi, New Delhi, India. Her research interests include speculative fiction, late-capitalism, young adult fiction, media and propaganda studies, gothic studies, food studies, and cinema studies.

Panel 5c

Sarah Baker

Auckland University of Technology (New Zealand)

Contagious Horror: Parasites, Zombies, and Pandemics

Infectious disease has always been a part of film, television and literature and the representation of disease and disorder has contributed greatly to the genre of horror and the gothic. From the earliest Babylonian and Hebrew texts to Medieval times where vampires and werewolves contained narratives of a contagious component, to Victorian horror centered on fears around infection and contamination, these stories have been updated and centre around parasites, zombies, and pandemics. The mutability in Gothic texts provides a platform for many social issues and anxieties to be addressed; its ability to shift and adapt to reflect contemporaneous social trends is partly what has enabled it to remain popular (Botting 1995). Many films and television programmes have presented contagion in the form of parasitic terror, often in the form of alien invaders or zombie plagues.

The *Alien* (1979) film and its prequel and sequels presented memorable examples of parasitic terror while *World War Z* (2013) and programmes like the *Walking Dead* (2010-) and *Fear the Walking Dead* (2015) have all presented zombie narratives within a Gothic framework. The zombie forces a confrontation with the fears of life and death, freedom and enslavement, and the destruction of modern society. 2020 saw the real-world arrival of a pandemic in the form of COVID-19. In 2020 the film *Songbird* an American dystopian

science fiction film based on the COVID-19 pandemic focused on the mutation of the COVID-19 virus which has mutated in COVID-23 while the world is in the fourth pandemic year. Here people take their temperature on cell phones and are disappeared into quarantine camps where they are left to die or forcibly get better. This paper considers texts that focus on contagion and pandemics and the evolution of its presentation.

sarah.baker@aut.ac.nz

Dr Sarah Baker is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Communication at Auckland University of Technology. She is the co-founder of the AUT Popular Culture Centre and a member of JMAD and the AUT Media Observatory Group. She is the Secretary of GANZA (The Gothic Association of New Zealand and Australia). She is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. Her research interests include political economy, current affairs television programmes, and popular culture focusing on the Gothic, Sexuality and gender.

Holly Randell-Moon

Charles Sturt University (Australia)

The mice plague or the beastly landscapes of regional and rural Australia

Beginning in the spring of 2020, a mouse and rat plague spread across the rural grain belt in New South Wales, Australia. Lasting for almost 10 months, the plague was described by the local media as a 'horror' which 'terrorised' farmers. This escalation in the number of mice and rats caused disruption to farming and living conditions in regional and rural New South Wales. Analysing media and community responses to the plague, this article shows how the mice and rats were constructed as abject matter out of place (Douglas, 1966). The re-presentation of mice and rats as a 'plague' signals a disturbance of the 'natural' order of things where the landscape is 'normally' anthropocentrically managed for monocultural farming. And yet it is the latter which has exacerbated climate change and drought conditions, which meant the unusually moist and fecund 2020 spring created the perfect conditions for mouse and rat breeding. Chris Philo and Chris Wilbert identify two ways of approaching animal geographies: 'animal spaces' and 'beastly spaces'. The former refers to human-centred understandings of animals and how they relate to and have value for humans. The latter considers space and geography from an animal-perspective and how other forms of matter as 'more-than-human' might challenge and indeed, exceed human forms of control and representation of non-humans. Turning away from the dominant animal spaces re-presentation of the mice and rats, this paper explores the latter as facilitating a beastly landscape that radically de-centres human control and investment in the environment.

hrandell-moon@csu.edu.au

Dr Holly Randell-Moon is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Indigenous Australian Studies, Charles Sturt University, Australia. She has published on infrastructure, biopower, and settler colonialism in the journals *Media International Australia* and *Westminster Papers in Culture and Communication* and the edited book, *Colonialism, Tourism and Place: Global Transformations in Tourist Destinations* (2020). Along with Ryan Tippet, she is the editor of *Security, Race,*

Biopower: Essays on Technology and Corporeality (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). She is co-editor of the journal, Somatechnics.

Phillip Johnson

Tokyo International University (Japan)

Without the Aid of Any Mirror: The Value of Truth Lenses in Clark Ashton Smith's Fables and Fairytales

An epistemological undertow courses beneath many gothic, fairytale, and weird stories. What constitutes grounds for characters' confidence in their perception of reality is often taken for granted, especially with respect to morality and a sense of retributive or restorative justice. In many cases, supernatural elements in such stories are brought to bear as a supposedly objective point of view in terms of morality. Ghosts know indubitably when they've been wronged; animals helped or shown mercy can be counted on to provide reciprocal aid; hints at something undermining the idea of an Anthropocene will be justified.

Clark Ashton Smith's prose and poetry, in contrast to typical genre conventions, often upset the trope that protagonists should take for granted the supernatural, purportedly objective moral/epistemic lenses they are invited to make use of. In *The Enchantress of Sylaire*, it is a literal magic mirror that reveals (supposedly) true forms. In *The Touch-Stone*, it is an ordinary-seeming rock. Both devices are summarily rejected after brief use by the protagonists, both of whom express a preference for physical beauty and comforting illusions. In neither story is this presented as a particularly tragic end.

To what degree is this benign hypocrisy commendable? This presentation will examine the question as it has been treated in Smith's works, as well as its fictional treatment from 2020. The ramifications of public engagement with epistemological questions perhaps have never been more relevant in the 21st century. Not only the *means* through which we decide what's true, but the *value* of that (limited) truth, seems likely to be a problem of accelerating importance.

phillipteacher@gmail.com

Phillip Johnson is a Global Teaching Fellow at Tokyo International University. A teacher of writing and research skills, he also enjoys smuggling literature and epistemology into his classes, and any food that would make a Hunger Artist renounce their profession.

Session Six

Panel 6a

Meltem Dağcı

Anatolian University (Turkey)

Examination of Regional Differences of Horror-Gothic Tales In The Context of Vokal Culture

Gothic can find its place in almost every literary genre and usually shows itself as the dominant genre in the work it enters. It is like a perfume bottle in which everything evil is filled. You open it up and it spreads out in a thick mist, it attracts, draws it to its centre. It is also possible to write richly lived and livable stories, from psychological thrillers to serial killers, but the "Vokal Culture" of our society from the pre-television-radio era, the "scary narratives" sometimes embellished with exciting "bandit tales", the eyes that know how to search and write, from alkara to ghosts. It provides a very fertile material for pens that want it. If you are familiar with "gothic literature", you know that the basis of the subject is mostly stories based on vokal culture elements.

Vokal expressions, which are also met with the concepts of vokal culture, vokal tradition or traditional culture, are various forms of expression that are transmitted from generation to generation or within the same generation, with or without a literary quality, and which are determined as references on which behavior, attitudes, norms and beliefs are based on by the whole people and contain references in this context. contains. In this study, the structural formation and regional differences of the horror-gothic folk tales in the context of vokal culture in Turkish Literature will be discussed.

dagci.meltem@gmail.com

Meltem Dağcı graduated from Anadolu University, Department of Turkish Language and Literature. In recent years, she has been interested in stories and novels in the genre of science fiction and fantasy. There is currently a sci-fi story file. Her stories, book articles and interviews have been published in various magazines and newspapers. She has been on the team of the Edebiyat Nöbeti Magazine for six years. She has been continuing her conversations with the Writer's Room in Edebiyat Haber for about two years.

Eser Pehlivan

Istanbul University (Turkey)

For the Love of Melancholia: Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* and the Ambiguous Mechanics of Creativity

Consisting of a frame narrative, and a woman's account as to her experiences in a haunted house, Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* has become one of the most controversial texts in the twentieth-century literary scene. The governess' accounts of the events that commence with her undertaking the care of two kids, and the mysterious events that follow are structured around gaps and silences that transform the act of reading into one of compulsory interpreting that is presented to the reader through two separate readers of the text. The only thing that is explicitly not imbued with the politics of ambiguity is the insisted materiality of the governess' manuscript, which is passed down to an unnamed narrator by a friend at Christmas gathering. James positions the governess' manuscript as the thing that returns and engenders a story essentially about loss, which utilizes the Gothic genre as a mode of contagious and anxiety inducing mode of history making solely dependent on memories and the readers' ability to interpret. What this paper will argue is that *The Turn of the Screw* is not a text that is structured to offer any definite interpretations or meanings, what Henry James achieves, ultimately, is a complex and formal engagement with the concept of the Freudian uncanny to reveal

the melancholic aspects of writing a story, as the materiality of the manuscript, and its contagious nature, positions the concept of authorship as a form of haunting itself.

eser.pehlivan@gmail.com

Eser Pehlivan works as a research assistant in Istanbul University. She got her undergrad and master's degree from Istanbul University American Culture and Literature department and is currently getting her PhD in English Literature at Bogazici University. Her research interests are Victorian gothic novel, twentieth century literature, and critical theory.

Onur Isik

Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University (Turkey)

The Role of Islam in Turkish Gothic Literature

For Turkish readership Gothic Literature is a genre belonging to Europe because of its famous chateaus and Christian elements. However, similarly, religion, has a similar way of usage in Turkish Literature. Although Turkish Gothic tradition is not old and rich as British or German, it is a known fact that each culture gives an authentic shape to Gothic according to its own environment. It is possible to see Islamic practices are used to show Islam's healing power when Deus ex Machina is needed. In other works, the reader witnesses the dark side of this religion which includes supernatural devilish creatures coming from terra incognita. This paper aims to unfold an unpopular genre's past and present in Turkey, starting from a folktale figure known as Keloğlan. The tales of Keloğlan, one of the milestones of Turkish Folk Literature, has a very interesting feature which can be described as Grotesque Tales for Children. According to findings of some researchers such as Tahir Alangu and Ignacz Kunos, Keloğlan, who is known for his good-heartedness and purity, is indeed, quite cunning, sneaky, and even evil. In these tales, Keloğlan is portrayed as an innocent but wise character. Until now, this character has always been seen as a reflection of the "Purity of Turkish Villager". However, as the researchers collect older versions of the tale, this thought is about to collapse. It is indisputable that Turkish Gothic Literature has been influenced by these tales. That is why, while reviewing the current condition of Gothic Literature in Turkey, common points of selected tales of Keloğlan and contemporary Turkish Gothic Literature will be beneficial in terms of displaying the employment of Islam in these works.

onur.isik@gop.edu.tr

Onur Isik (Ph.D.) is currently working at Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University as a lecturer in the department of Foreign Languages and Cultures. He researches on American literature, Gothic literature, comparative literature, and psychoanalytic criticism.

Panel 6b

Maureen DeLeo

The National University of Ireland Galway

'Stand we on guard oath-bound': Haunting and W. B. Yeats's 'The Black Tower'

In the second volume of his autobiography of W. B. Yeats, Roy Foster states that the poet was haunted by the imagery of St Enda's pupils performing Standish O'Grady's *The Masque of Finn* (Foster 648). Thirty years later, this haunting culminated in his last poem, 'The Black Tower', in which living dead soldiers continue to guard a tower because they are oath-bound to do so. The poem concerns multiple layers of haunting; the soldiers themselves as spectres, the threat of war and a Celtic past as Foster notes, as well as an Arthurian echo that W. J. Keith explores in 'Yeats's Arthurian Black Tower'. Given Yeats' lifelong interest in the Tarot, the significance of the Major Arcana card, 'The Tower', cannot be ignored in relation to the space in which this haunting occurs, especially when one considers Thoor Ballylee, Yeats's residence from 1921 to 1929. Furthermore, it is critical that this poem be read in relation to 'Easter, 1916'. The Rising had a profound effect on Yeats, who knew several of the Proclamation's signatories, all of whom were executed.

This paper examines the ways in which Yeats's personal and artistic hauntings merge, formulate, and inform his final poem. 'The Black Tower' does not simply concern the haunting of a tower by soldiers who remain simply out of a sense of duty. The poem presents and articulates the complexities of haunting in a multi-faceted manner. It demonstrates the blending of personal and artistic haunting that Yeats felt for decades after the 1916 Rising, culminating in the poem's exploration of spectres that remain ever present in a suspended state between life and death because they are bound to their own haunting.

m.deleo1@nuigalway.ie

Maureen DeLeo is a PhD student in the School of English at NUI Galway. Her current research examines Mother Ireland as a being rather than as an abstract symbol in early 20th century Irish literature. She has previously published on Yeats's incorporation of the Tarot in his poem, "The Wild Swans at Coole". Her research interests include the Gothic, critical theory, representations of child-like and childish characters, and late 19th Century British literature.

Cat Smith

Nottingham Trent University (UK)

Reclaiming the Gothic Fairy-Tale: A. G. Slatter's *All the Murmuring Bones*

Built upon the world of her short story collection, A. G. Slatter's fantasy novel, *All the Murmuring Bones* (2021), tells the story of the O'Malleys: an ancient family who gained their power from a pact with the sea. Raised by her grandparents, Óisín and Aoife, Miren is the last daughter of the house. Whilst Slatter uses fairy-tales as subverted lessons, she also employs maritime folklore related to the O'Malley family in order to discuss the back and forth between patriarchal and matriarchal systems. Throughout this novel, Miren mocks the narrative of her own story, told in a fairy-tale fashion but with none of the stereotypical happy endings. As she noted early in the novel, 'None of the tales in this book end with the words "happily ever after"' (p.39), demonstrating that

socially and morally acceptable endings are not always achievable and the fair, happy endings depicted in fairy-tales are simply that: fairy-tales.

Through this combination of fairy-tales, folklore, and feminism, *All the Murmuring Bones* demonstrates the position of women as they attempt to redefine the morality of their family and their power whilst relearning and reinventing their roles as women – an issue of the modern day in which being a woman, or a feminist, is a convoluted concept. By reclaiming and rewriting fairy-tales, Slatter creates a platform upon which female identity can be concerned from numerous perspectives and, in a postmodern manner, redefined beyond the traditional stereotypes often presented in Gothic literature. This paper will examine the positions of female characters in *All the Murmuring Bones*, and the manner in which they use their positions to their advantage or are limited in their freedoms by societal expectations.

cat.smith2014@my.ntu.ac.uk

Cat Smith is a final-year Postgraduate Researcher at Nottingham Trent University. My thesis examines the resurgence of Gothic literature in the twenty-first century through a postmodern lens. She has been examining literature of the last twenty years as recreates the purpose of traditional eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Gothic texts: reactive social commentary.

Panel 6c

Brontë Schiltz

Manchester Metropolitan University (UK)

“As long as you are industrious, you will get on very well”: adapting *The String of Pearls*’ economies of horror

Cannibalism has always been a ripe metaphor for capitalism. As Mark Steven notes in *Splatter Capital*, ‘Marx’s writing overflows with tropes and figures born of the gothic’, including a ‘taste for human viscera’. Aptly, then, money is the inciting force of all the horrors in *The String of Pearls*. From Sweeney Todd’s murderous thirst for wealth, to the asylum as a means to sequester family finances, to the mining of the empire – a theme that grows more horrific with time – it is the desired prize for which every monstrous act is committed. The author – suspected to be Thomas Peckett Prest – cannot even resist mentioning capital during the grisly reveal that the text’s villain, barber Sweeney Todd, kills his clients ‘to cut them up for Mrs Lovett’s pies! after robbing them of all the money and valuables they might have about them.’ No amount of money offers security – the wealthy fall victim to Todd when they boast of their wealth, and the impoverished to Lovett when they turn to her in desperation for work. The narrative thus constructs London as an urban Gothic space that is voracious in its appetites.

This paper examines how this essential aspect of the penny dreadful has bled into subsequent adaptations, focusing particularly on Stephen Sondheim’s infamous *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, written at the dawn of neoliberalism, and Tim Burton’s film adaptation, produced on the brink of the global financial crisis, but also lesser-known adaptations. Noting the increasing lack of resolution offered at the narrative’s close, it reads these texts in the light of Lenin’s conception of capitalism as

'horror without end'. In doing so, it offers a reappraisal of the influential, prescient, yet often overlooked commentary on capitalism and class sparked by *The String of Pearls*.

bronte.schiltz@gmail.com

Brontë Schiltz graduated from the Manchester Centre for Gothic Studies at Manchester Metropolitan University in 2020 with a Masters in English Studies: The Gothic, and is currently working as an independent researcher. Her research interests include the televisual Gothic, the queer Gothic and Marxist horror.

Leonie Rowland

Manchester Metropolitan University (UK)

She's Like a Mirror: Consuming the Idol in Satoshi Kon's Perfect Blue and Junji Ito's Tomie

Neoliberal Japan is often discussed in Gothic terms, with Charles Shirō Inouye arguing that 'Japanese culture is profoundly Gothic' (2012:444). More specifically, this paper suggests that the Gothic is embedded in Japan's consumer culture, which vocalises (and capitalises on) the 'frustrations of life in the global economy' (Cross, 2006:xvii) through the commodification of young women. To this end, the Japanese idol industry repackages teenage girls as antidotes to the crippling demands of late-capitalist labour. These girls are 'supposedly untainted by commercial professionalism' (Aoyagi, 2005:33), offering an escape from corporate life that reaffirms the system it appears to abandon. Satoshi Kon's *Perfect Blue* and Junji Ito's *Tomie* assess this phenomenon in a Gothic framework, generating horror through the simultaneous loss of control over young female selfhoods and the impulse to commodify their innermost parts. Far from being 'untainted by commercial professionalism,' this creates a tension between the desire for observation and the fear of being watched, both of which manifest as physical violence.

With this in mind, my paper addresses the following questions:

1. How do *Perfect Blue* and *Tomie* rework Gothic tropes to translate Japan's economic landscape into a symbolic field, and why is this appropriate given the image-based nature of neoliberal marketing?
2. How (and to what end) do these texts articulate the manipulation and exploitation of spiritual practice (particularly animism and rituals of worship) for economic gain that is embodied by the idol industry?
3. Finally, how are these texts, and the Japanese Gothic more generally, used to simultaneously challenge and reinforce the commodification of people as a viable solution to the fractured identities caused by late-capitalism?

The paper concludes that to consume these girls is to replicate the loss of selfhood they undergo, since their patrons, in the search for an alternate reflection, are filled with their images.

leonierowland@outlook.com

Leonie Rowland is a Ph.D. student with the Manchester Centre for Gothic Studies at Manchester Metropolitan University, where she also completed her MA. She is researching commodity

animism in the Japanese Gothic. Leonie is Assistant Reviews Editor at The British Society for Literature and Science and Editor-in-Chief of The Hungry Ghost Project. Her academic work has been published in *The Dark Arts Journal* and is forthcoming in *Fantastika Journal* and *Japanese Horror: New Critical Approaches* (Lexington). Her debut collection of prose is available from Dreich.

Session Seven

Panel 7a

Mattia Petricola

University of Bologna (Italy)

When did the New Death Become New? Undead Hybrids and the Gothic Medical Humanities

During the 1960s, the notion of brain death and the subsequent rise of medical transplant science led to a profound redefinition of death as a social construct. In his 2015 essay on biomedical horror, Roger Luckhurst argues that, by blurring the boundaries between life and death, the so-called 'New Death' «unleashed a whole new order of liminal ontologies» (84), thus widening that area of the Gothic imagination devoted to the narrativisation of undead hybrids. In this paper, I propose to re-read the cultural genealogy of the New Death and its relationship to the Gothic by putting them in the context of the cultural processes which, over the last 250 years, have progressively transformed the binary opposition 'life vs. death' into a continuum. I would like to show how the proliferation of liminal ontologies highlighted by Luckhurst could be traced back to the gothic re-elaboration of medical knowledge about death that has been ongoing since the end of the XVIII century. In order to do so, I will first pinpoint the crucial moments in the history of the redefinition of death from the perspective of the medical humanities. I will focus, in particular, on the *Dissertation sur l'incertitude des signes de la mort*, published by Jacques-Jean Bruhier in 1749, and on the re-conceptualization of life as electric and magnetic energy in American mesmerism at the half of the Eighteenth century. I will then analyse E.A. Poe's 'mesmeric trilogy' (1844-45) and H.P. Lovecraft's short story *Cool Air* (1928), showing how these texts depend on the same semiotic coordinates that construct contemporary narratives on the new undead, such as the notion of death as a process that unfolds through a series of intermediate states and the idea that life can be suspended through cryogenisation.

mattia.petricola@gmail.com

Mattia Petricola received his Ph.D. in 2019 from the University of Bologna and has been a postdoc research fellow in comparative literature at the University of L'Aquila (Italy). His research interests sit at the crossroads of thanatology, speculative fiction, intermedial studies, and queer theory. He has published articles on Philip K. Dick, Peter Greenaway, the notion of spectrality in media studies, and queer hermeneutics. In 2021 he edited a dossier entitled *What do we Talk about when we Talk about Queer Death?* for *Whatever. A Transdisciplinary Journal*

of Queer Theories and Studies. He is the Italian ambassador of the Association for the Study of Death and Society (ASDS).

Joe Howsin

Independent Scholar (UK)

Inside the Narrative Factory: Meta-narrative and Trauma in Contemporary Gothic

Trauma has formed both an implicit and explicit facet of the Gothic since its inception, from the sudden shock of a gigantic helmet crushing a groom in *The Castle of Otranto*, to the insistent return of past violence in the ghost stories of M.R. James. In this way, Gothic has depicted essential features of trauma: the unforeseen event and the fixity of the memory. But contemporary Gothic has since expanded the mode's depiction of this phenomenon into a third key aspect: the tendency for traumatic memories to become distorted even as the essential truths of the experience remain fixed.

Through their use of meta and multi-layered narratives, Sarah Perry's *Melmoth* and Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves* play out the way in which traumatic memories trigger a compulsive narrative creating machine, one geared towards assimilating the incomprehensible into the regular flow of memory and time. Instead of assimilating the memory in a more palatable form, however, the memory instead becomes distorted into even more baffling and terrifying forms. The novels highlight this both formally and narratively; each main narrative thread begins in a world steeped in realism and coherent logic, but when fantastic subplots enter the protagonist's field of view (a house with impossible dimensions and a centuries spanning witness of historical trauma) the main thread becomes increasingly disordered, until it eventually resembles the very fantasies from which it was originally set apart.

In dramatizing this overproduction of traumatic narratives, contemporary Gothic highlights the necessity for witnessing, the difficulties of working through, and the unique capacity for fiction (and, in particular, the fantastic) to coherently articulate phenomena that cannot normally be articulated.

joehowsinwork@gmail.com

Joe Howsin (He/him) is an Independent Scholar researcher who studied with Manchester Metropolitan University's centre for Gothic studies MA programme. His academic work has been published by *The Dark Arts Journal* and *Fantastica Journal* and he has spoken at conferences including MMU's symposium on the work of Thomas Ligotti, *Embodying Fantastica* and *Twin Peaks at Thirty*. His non-fiction can be found in *The Walled City Journal*, *Not Deer Magazine*, *Dreich*, *The London Independent Scholar Short Story Prize* and *Horrified Magazine*. His Twitter handle is @FlayThrowsCats.

Alessandra Pino

University of Westminster (UK)

From Gothic Food to Dark Food: Death at the Table in Isak Dinesen's *Babette's Feast*

This paper addresses the role of food as a Gothic mediator of memory in Isak Dinesen's *Babette's Feast* (1958). In this short story, food becomes the anxious meeting point between the migrant and political unease exemplified by the character of Babette Hersant, who arrives from Paris to take refuge in a small Norwegian town following the fall of the Paris Commune. Within this framework, food and its consumption find a literary output in how memories are altered and transformed by a re-living of traumatic experiences through a language that relies on food. The re-enactment through the meal Babette hosts for the community of Berlevaag is an example of 'dark food', a recreation of narratives of violence experienced during the 1871 revolt.

alessandra.a.pino@gmail.com

Alessandra Pino is an expert on the edible and the Gothic. She is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Westminster, London, researching food and anxiety with roots in Gothic literature. Alessandra was born in Hampstead, London, to an Italian mother and Venezuelan diplomat father, and grew up in several different countries. She holds university degrees in English Literature from Naples "L'Orientale" and in Translation Studies from Westminster. Her previous experience includes working for ten years alongside Michelin Starred chef Giorgio Locatelli at Locanda Locatelli where she carried out research for publications and BBC programmes such as *Italy Unpacked* (2013- 2017).

Panel 7b

Claudia Sterbini

Durham University (UK)

'Wonderful as it seems in a sexual world': frigidity and blighted alien genitalia in *The War of the Worlds*

In *fin de siècle* Britain, surgical and anatomical studies of asexual men and women prompted a widespread concern with the non-reproductive and impenetrable genitalia of the frigid individual. This anxiety is expressed in Wells' *The War of the Worlds*, where the asexual Martians are presented as an ominous vision of the future evolution of the human body, if the Victorian emasculating civilisation were to continue annihilating man's carnal and emotional impulses.

Employing distorting Gothic lenses, Wells addresses deep-rooted Victorian anxieties regarding asexuality, writing a nightmarish novel that embodies the unconscious fear of his contemporaries. The description of the cooling Mars and of the overcivilised, brain-centred Martians participates in and is a response to the ongoing medical discourse surrounding frigidity. This is evident when analysing the language of the novel, that directly parallels the British and French scientific and pseudo-scientific sexological studies of writers such as Félix Roubaud and Sir James Young Simpson. The body of the Martians, with its throbbing movements and tentacular shape, concretises the *fin de siècle* concern with flaccid erections and blighted genitalia. Simultaneously, the metallic frames and untouchable machines that surround the alien Others hint at the impenetrability of the asexual body. Feeble but threatening, the

sexually deviant subject haunts the text, always present in the alien(ating) shape of the Martians.

The War of the Worlds challenges the confines between humans and Martians, providing the Victorian reader with a cathartic narrativization of the medical studies of the diseased, throbbing, and yet dangerously powerful anerotic body.

claudiang.sterbini@gmail.com

Claudia is a soon-to-be researcher in the field of the medical humanities. Her Ph.D. explores the reciprocal influence of nineteenth century medicine and literature in the construction and popularization of asexuality as a pathology. She is the Communication Executive of the Ruskin Society and is collaborating with various literature societies, exploring how Victorian anxieties regarding asexuality were reframed in fiction. She provided talks for the H. G. Wells society, her articles on asexual women in contemporary media will soon be available on *Notches*, *NursingClio* and *ISGW*. She holds an MA in Romantic and Victorian Literary Studies, where she wrote a dissertation on Thomas Hardy, time and typology.

Joana Rita Ramalho

University College London (UK)

The Tiger Lillies: Musical Journeys of Sin and Savagery

At once magical and macabre, the British punk cabaret trio The Tiger Lillies takes us on bawdy, brash, and blasphemous musical journeys that pull us into a world of atmospheric beauty and distasteful sacrilege. Haunting stages since 1989, they sing disquieting cautionary tales about the misfits that society discards: drug-addicted schoolboys, lowly streetwalkers, abused amputees, and serial killers are only some of the band's bizarre and eclectic thematic choices. With over 40 albums, which include classics such as *Farmyard Filth* (1997), *Urine Palace* (2007), *Lulu: A Murder Ballad* (2014), and, more recently, *Requiem for a Virus* (2021), their career is marked by a willingness to humorously sensationalise and vulgarise crime, violence, and tragedy. There is nothing innocent about their performances and the laughter that arises is not wholly joyful or escapist, but ultimately disturbing, for it carries with it the guilt of laughing at human misery. The trajectories of the Gothic are increasingly multimodal, interdisciplinary, intertextual, and intermedial. At a moment when the relationship between the margins and popular culture – or between the subversive fringe and the politically correct – is being widely debated, the role of controversial subcultural music demands reconsideration, particularly in light of the ethical questions it poses about the representation of those who operate on the edges of society.

My paper analyses the work of The Tiger Lillies in its deliberate breaching of the boundaries between high and low cultural capital, drawing on Perry Meisel's (2010) suggestion that low culture closely dialogues with high art. In doing so, it asks whether the Lillies shocking satires ultimately condone or condemn the timely (and timeless) issues they address. Specifically, it enquires whether their problematic repertoire trivialises sin, sadism, and savagery or if it can otherwise be understood as a postmodern mode of resistance to conformity and supra-imposed official norms.

joana.ramalho@ucl.ac.uk

Joana Rita Ramalho is Lecturer (Teaching) in Film Studies, Comparative Literature, and Portuguese at University College London, where she convenes modules on gothic film and literature, musical satire, Spanish cinema, Portuguese language, and Lusophone culture. She has published on topics as varied as sensationalist feminism in postmillennial gothic musicals, haptic motifs and sensory contagion in terror cinema, thing theory and creepy dolls, portraits in 1940s Romantic Gothic films, intermediality and radical humour in the work of Brechtian punk cabaret trio The Tiger Lillies, and the queer failure and mock heroism of King Ludwig II of Bavaria.

Meriem Rayen Lamara

The University of Northampton (UK)

The Supernatural Other as Saviour in Twenty-First Century Gothic Literature

From its inception, Gothic literature has always been concerned with aspects of Otherness and boundaries. Monsters, the ultimate 'other', are the personification of the uncanny in Gothic narratives, representing what endangers the individual's sense of security, stability, and purpose. Their continuous morphing and assimilation of new characteristics, however, shifts them from their traditional portrayal as objects to be feared and destroyed. This paper examines the portrayal of the supernatural Other in a selection of 21st century Young Adult (YA) and non-YA Gothic texts. The main argument of the paper is that while the supernatural Other is often portrayed as dangerous and as a threat destabilizing the set geographical and physiological boundaries as well as the prevalent cultural norms, values and morals of the time, it is also represented as sublime and desirable.

meriemR_Lamara@yahoo.fr

Meriem Rayen Lamara has earned her PhD in English Literature, specializing in Gothic Studies and Young Adult Literature at the University of Northampton. She holds a Master's degree in African, British, and American Cultural and Literary Studies, and a BA in English from the University of Constantine, Algeria. Her research focuses primarily on the supernatural Gothic, folklore, and mythology in Young Adult literature. Her adjacent research interests include cultural representation and diversity, Islamic mythology, and North African literature and folklore.

Panel 7c

David Kumler

University of Washington (USA)

Racism and Ontological Terror in Victor LaValle's *The Ballad of Black Tom*

While H. P. Lovecraft is known for pioneering the genre of cosmic horror and for his philosophy of cosmic pessimism, he is also remembered by many for his virulent racism. Contemporary writers of Lovecraftian fiction have often attempted to deal with this

mixed legacy by centring concerns about racism within their own work. It is common, however, for writers to treat racism as largely a matter of personal prejudice, which fails to account for the role of race in structuring reality itself and, as a result, misreads the role that racism plays in Lovecraft's work. This article takes up Victor LaValle's *The Ballad of Black Tom*, a work of contemporary Lovecraftian fiction that stands apart in its account of race. By treating racism as not simply a matter of prejudice but, rather, as a persistent structure grounding western rationality, LaValle reveals race to be, itself, a matter of cosmic horror. LaValle's approach to contemporary Lovecraftian fiction both subverts and extends the project of cosmic horror while delivering a profound critique of both Lovecraft's racism and the problem of racism more generally.

kumler@uw.edu

David Kumler teaches American literature and cultural studies at the University of Washington. He holds degrees in religious studies, creative writing, and literature. Broadly speaking, his research focuses on horror, the occult, popular dissent, and racial capitalism. Kumler's current project examines the intersections between the horror genre and Evangelical Christianity amid the Satanic Panic of the 1980s and 1990s and the rise of the religious right.

Christopher Weimer

Oklahoma State University (USA)

"Widdershins Knows Its Own": Lovecraftian Romance and the Single Sorcerer in Jordan L. Hawk's *Whyborne and Griffin*

The eleven novels and several shorter texts comprising Jordan L. Hawk's *Whyborne and Griffin* series (2012-2019) blend two seemingly incompatible genres: Lovecraftian weird fiction and male/male paranormal romance. In an ominously familiar 1890s New England setting, antiquarian scholar Percival Endicott Whyborne and ex-Pinkerton private detective Griffin Flaherty confront the obstacles to their prohibited relationship even as they contend with dark family secrets, deranged sorcerers, and re-emergent Old Ones. Queering Lovecraft's fictional world, however, is a more complex process than merely confronting a same-sex couple with Lovecraftian dangers. To achieve this generic hybrid, Hawk must rework Lovecraft's poetics of atmosphere, plot, and character to craft emotion-driven narratives leading to romance fiction's required "happily ever after" endings. Hawk deploys the port city of Widdershins, so reminiscent of Lovecraft's Arkham, Kingsport, Dunwich, and Innsmouth, as a Gothic "uncanny city" in which a spectrum of queer and taboo-breaking desires can be acknowledged and pursued – and in which Whyborne and Griffin can heal one another's emotional scars. Most important, Hawk rejects and redefines the conceptualizations and treatments of otherness that are both explicitly and implicitly fundamental to Lovecraft's weird tales and so revealing of his prejudices and obsessions. Sexual, magical, and racial differences must face ignorance, bigotry, and danger in Hawk's narratives, but the *Whyborne and Griffin* romances ultimately accept, include, and celebrate those differences in the relationships and in the community at the core of the stories.

christopher.weimer@okstate.edu

Christopher Weimer is Professor of Languages and Literatures at Oklahoma State University, where he teaches courses in interdisciplinary humanities and Spanish. He has co-edited two volumes devoted to early modern Spanish literature and he co-founded the online journal *Laberinto* (<https://www.acmrs.org/journals/laberinto/>). He has published journal articles and book chapters on topics ranging from *Don Quixote* and the seventeenth-century playwright-priest Tirso de Molina to postmodern film, superhero comics, and the musicals of Stephen Sondheim.

Antonio Alcalá González and Carl H. Sederholm

Tecnologico de Monterrey (Mexico) and Brigham Young University (USA)

Reading Lovecraft Now

Over the last twenty years, it has become increasingly difficult to think about contemporary Gothic texts without finding at least some connection to H. P. Lovecraft. The author's impact on contemporary culture is so strong that it has become increasingly commonplace to read his work in terms of contemporary concerns over what we can and cannot understand. This occurs because the experience of the author's protagonists regularly confirms humanity's ephemeral or negligible status, especially when contrasted with the vastness of time and space both on Earth and within the surrounding cosmos. The objective of this paper is thus to evaluate Lovecraft's place in the present by gathering reflections that can help us understand why he is so influential across a wide variety of media. Considering Lovecraft as a figure to reckon with, whether as someone who symbolizes offensive or frightening ideas or as someone who inspires a host of new writers, artists and video game designers, this paper proposes that Lovecraft has become an idea, a memory, something that we permanently have but are not sure about. We are not sure what to do because the author's revival is so vibrant and so alive that his legacy is constantly readapted and molded, providing an endless source of inspiration for multiple creative minds.

antonio.alcala@tec.mx

Antonio Alcalá González is founder of the *International Gothic Literature Congress*, and chair of the Humanities Department at Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico City. He has co-edited special issues on Nautical Gothic (*Gothic Studies*) and the legacy of H.P. Lovecraft in the twenty-first century (*Aeternum*). He also co-edited the critical collection *Doubles and Hybrids in Latin American Gothic* and is currently preparing a co-edited volume on the presence of Lovecraft's fiction in recent decades as well as a monographic study on Nautical Horror. He has published articles and book chapters on creators such as H. P. Lovecraft, Algernon Blackwood, J. R. R. Tolkien, Ivan Albright, Carlos Fuentes and Juan Rulfo as well as the connection between the Gothic tradition and the lyrics of Underground Metal music bands.

carl_sederholm@byu.edu

Carl H. Sederholm is professor of Interdisciplinary Humanities at Brigham Young University and chair of the Department of Comparative Arts and Letters. He is the editor of *The Journal of American Culture* and co-editor (with Jeffrey Weinstock) of *The Age of Lovecraft*. His other work includes the co-edited volume *Adapting Poe: Re-Imaginations in Popular Culture* (with Dennis Perry)

and the co-authored book (also with Dennis Perry) *Poe, the 'House of Usher,' and the American Gothic*. He has also published essays on authors such as Edgar Allan Poe, H. P. Lovecraft, Stephen King, Jonathan Edwards, Lydia Maria Child, and Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Session Eight

Panel 8a

Courtney Glass

Florida International University, Miami (USA)

Bringing the Skeletons out of the Closet: Reading Gothic as Queer in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Homosexual desire in Oscar Wilde's 1891 novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was brought forth into public consciousness when excerpts were read in courtrooms as evidence to condemn Wilde. The legal proceedings would help shape public and legal perceptions of homosexuality, and the homosexual himself would be understood as something like a Gothic monster that not only exists outside of the realm of normal society but seeks to harm those within it. In Wilde's trials, the transgressive sexuality is named. If one of the functions of Gothic literature is to allow readers to externalize their anxieties about unspeakable horror, then the trial and the definitions of sexuality coming out of it gave the monster a face that can be identified within society, the homosexual. Understanding Queer as Gothic requires a closer examination of how the Queer and Gothic tropes of the novel are conflated to produce a singular Queer monstrosity. "Queer," like Gothic to which it owes its origin, is a deviation from the established sense of order. Wilde's novel Queered Gothic by presenting a body haunted by a monstrous, transgressive sexuality that is forced to repress its secrets. Both the homosexual and the Gothic monster have a kind of supernatural influence over their victims that infects them and degrades them. The secret of homosexual desire and transgression is stowed away in the closet, attic, dungeon, or some other remote Gothicized space and haunts bodies physically, spiritually, and psychologically. Sexual transgression and the threat of "coming out of the closet" becomes the same as addressing the skeletons in the closet. When the queer, gothic monster emerges from his recesses and parades in embodied form, the angry villagers come with torches and pitchforks.

cglas004@fiu.edu

Courtney Glass, MA, is a graduate writing consultant and an adjunct lecturer of English at Florida International University in Miami, Florida. She teaches Writing and Rhetoric and has interest in film, 19th century literature, Queer and Feminist literature, and all things Gothic.

Rachel M. Friars

Queens University, Ontario (Canada)

“I say you do not have a name”: Queering Dracula’s Brides in S.T. Gibson’s *A Dowry of Blood*

This presentation will engage with the symposium theme of “Gothic Trajectories” through an analysis of S.T. Gibson’s *A Dowry of Blood*, a queer retelling of Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897). “They are devils of the Pit!” (83) Johnathan Harker exclaims his encounter with the “three young women” (58) whom he later finds out to be the licentious vampiric ‘brides’ of his demonic host. Relegated to the fringes of the narrative, the women serve as palimpsests of Victorian male anxiety over female sexuality, ultimately subject to Van Heelsing’s “butcher work” (597). In Gibson’s text, however, she invents a queer narrative of Dracula’s brides that elaborates on the implicit power imbalance of male/female, creator/created, and strong/weak that appear throughout Stoker’s text in a feminist addition to the *Dracula* canon.

George E. Haggerty (2006) writes that “a wide range of writers, dispersed historically and culturally, use ‘gothic’ to evoke a queer world that attempts to transgress the binaries of sexual decorum” (2); indeed, Gibson’s narrative elaborates on the implicit queerness of Stoker’s novel. Told from the perspective of Constanta, the first of Dracula’s brides, she narrates the bisexual/polyamorous relationship between Dracula, herself, Magdalena, and the male Alexi, queered as another ‘bride.’ Resisting the social and sexual mores of the age(s) they move through, the characters dismantle traditional heterosexual boundaries of bodies and pleasures that the vampire figure inherently disrupts.

Gibson’s retelling also casts the relationship between the brides and Dracula as one of abuse and confinement. Constanta’s narrative and her ability to self-fashion represent a repossession of power. In her refusal to name Dracula in the novel, she removes his identity of the power it holds while she bestows names and identities upon the three brides. As a novel of queer attachment, reclamation, and, ultimately, revenge, Gibson’s retelling centers the queerness of Stoker’s original novel while rendering Dracula’s brides more than “devils of the Pit.”

18rmf@queensu.ca

Rachel M. Friars is a doctoral candidate in the Department of English Language and Literature at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario. Her current work centers on neo-Victorianism and nineteenth-century lesbian literature and history, with secondary research interests in life writing, historical fiction, true crime, popular culture, and the Gothic. Her academic writing has recently appeared in *Neo-Victorian Madness: Rediagnosing Nineteenth-Century Mental Illness in Literature and Other Media* (Palgrave Macmillan 2020) and in *The Journal of Neo-Victorian Studies* (2020) and is forthcoming in *Gothic Mash-Ups: Hybridity, Appropriation, and Intertextuality in Gothic Storytelling* (Lexington Books 2021) and in *Crime Studies Journal* (2022).

Panel 8b

Angelique Nairn

Auckland University of Technology (New Zealand)

Monstrous Mother Gothel: Making sense of morality in Disney’s *Tangled*

Fairy tales perpetuate moral understandings by presenting certain behavioural norms as socially accepted courses of action (Bilandzic, 2011; Sandlowski, 1991), which regulate individual behaviours and permit self-condemnation and social sanction (Bandura, 2002; Turiel, 1963). The story of Rapunzel has been retold and repurposed over time variously highlighting the consequences of stealing and premarital relations, and therefore acting as a cautionary tale for those inclined towards excess and moral transgressions (Botting, 1996). Although diverging from some of the themes of its gothic predecessors, the 2010 release of *Tangled* by the Disney Corporation maintains the grittiness of the originals, despite the Disneyfication of stories often leading to their moral underpinnings being reduced to considerations of good versus evil and the pursuit of happily ever after (Hastings, 1993). Much like the Brothers Grimm story, *Tangled* explores the tendency towards excess through Mother Gothel's obsession with youth, and as her character becomes increasingly more monstrous, themes of selfishness, kidnapping, gaslighting, authoritarian parenting that subverts personal growth, coercion, and murder, are explored. In essence, the film responds to the gothic adage of depicting the "dark side of humankind" (Piatti-Farnell & Beville, 2014, p. 1). The contention of this paper, then, is that as one of the most 'human' villains in the Disney universe, Gothel, is among the most monstrous and her actions function as a commentary on troubling human practices of narcissism, appropriate parenting styles, the exploitation of children, and psychological manipulation. Therefore, *Tangled* is encoded with meanings that construct for audiences expected moral and immoral behavior in society and, in so doing, extols these behaviors as a type of unequivocal standard communicated by a commercially-drive, patriarchal powerhouse.

angelique.nairn@aut.ac.nz

Dr Angelique Nairn is a senior lecturer in the Public Relations Department within the School of Communication Studies for the Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. Angelique is currently working on multiple research projects from explorations of morality in television programming, to how organisations encourage identification in their external communications, to the experiences of work among creative people. She recently co-edited the book *Multidisciplinary perspectives on women, voice, and agency* (2021) and publishes in the fields of identity, morality, creative industries, popular culture and public relations.

Jack McCormack-Clark

Auckland University of Technology (New Zealand)

The Medi-Evil Disney Narrative: The Intersection of the Gothic Mode and Fantasy in the *Black Cauldron* and its Arthurian Echoes

Since the conception of Walt Disney Animation Studios in 1923 the world of animation has become incredibly diverse with the production of many films inspired by classic fairy tales, famous pieces of literature, mythology, and eras of history from all over the world. When we think of Walt Disney Studios and their product and brand we typically reflect on the sublime and fantastical animation of dreams, magic, fairies, and happily ever after, rather than themes of the macabre, the grotesque, and the Gothic. However, despite Disney's popular association with the sublime they also have produced an array of darker

films that implicitly engage with themes found in the mode of the Gothic. This paper will focus on the medieval narratives, specifically the film, *The Black Cauldron* (1985) and the clear intersection inherent in the film of the Gothic and fantasy. *The Black Cauldron* is a retelling of Lloyd Alexander's *Chronicles of Prydain* (1964-1968) and follows the adventures of Taran, and Hen Wen the magical pig in their struggle against the evil sorcerer, the Horned King who seeks the mythical black cauldron, a demonically possessed instrument used to raise the army of the dead called the Cauldron Born. The film connects with Welsh mythology with clear echoes of the film *The Sword in the Stone* (1963) through Arthurian themes. The intersection of the Gothic and fantasy themes within this particular film create a much darker narrative governed by prophecy, black magic, legendary weapons, witches, and the challenge to the dichotomy of life and death. I will examine these Gothic elements that are intertwined with the Arthurian themes that have created a uniquely mature and macabre aesthetic rarely seen in a Disney animation. The film represents a level of engagement with Gothic fantasy in animation that Disney has not attempted since.

jmccormack7@gmail.com

Jack McCormack-Clark is a Ph.D. student studying at AUT. He specialises in nineteenth century literature and history which is where his interest in the Gothic originated. Jack has always been passionate about popular culture, fantasy, and science fiction. Within his Doctoral research, Jack has been focused on the analysis and observation of the Frankenstein myth within contemporary cinematic franchises.

Blair Speakman

Auckland University of Technology (New Zealand)

Gorgeous, vicious and a "little bit mad": The Queer-Gothic and excessive desire in *Cruella* (2021)

Disney's films have long employed hallmarks of the Gothic, evident with the depiction of vainglorious, and "flamboyant" villains who often "push the boundaries of expectation and acceptability" (Piatti-Farnell, 2019, p. 42). These villains often exhibit a "monstrous" and "predatory" desire for power and fulfilment (Westengard, 2019, p. 4), willing to go to truly extreme lengths to sacrifice those around them in order to further their own goals (Piatti-Farnell, 2019). This 'predatory desire for power' arguably renders Disney villains as both Gothic and queer in that their behaviour disrupts or challenges "the social order" and "threatens the conventions and mores of the time" (Westengard, 2019, p. 4). Notably, *Cruella's* (2021) – an adaptation of Dodie Smith's children novel, *The Hundred and One Dalmatians* (1956) – titular character, Estella Miller/Cruella de Vil (Emma Stone), is an over-the-top Gothic figure who has a bloodlust for fashion and power. Estella's fashion ambitions lead her to work for Baroness von Hellman (Emma Thompson), a renowned haute couture designer who is an equally excessive but also selfish personality. At first a mentor-of sorts, and later a rival after discovering the Baroness' involvement in her mother's death, Estella suppresses her identity in order to completely embrace her alter-ego – Cruella – slipping "uncontrollably" into a "baser self" (Westengard, 2019, p. 4). This conference paper will critically examine how Cruella

can be read as a queer and transgressive figure who indulges and revels in pursuits considered lurid and perverse. Willing to jeopardise her relationship with her 'adoptive' brothers – Jasper (Joel Fry) and Horace (Paul Hauser) Badun and even risk her own life, Cruella displays a terrifying, overwhelming and consuming hunger for revenge.

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blair.speakman@aut.ac.nz

Blair Speakman is a popular culture scholar who is particularly fascinated with the representation of folklore and queerness in contemporary Gothic-Horror television series. This interest led Blair to start his Doctorate of Philosophy at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) in July 2017, focusing on Queer characters in contemporary Gothic television shows. Blair is highly involved in University extra-curricular activities, including being a member of the Popular Culture Research Centre as well as a committee member for Out@AUT, the University's student LGBTIQA club.

Panel 8c

Ali Fraser

Trent University (Canada)

The Death of Nightclubs: Gothic Nostalgia and the Right to the City

Vancouver, BC and Toronto, ON should conjure images of vibrant cityscapes offering local cuisine, artisanal coffee, and active night time activities. But for people in the goth/industrial subculture, cities are envisioned as havens for the weird, eccentric, and diverse. However, Vancouver and Toronto are also sites of rapid change and gentrification. And, as of August 2018, the last goth nightclubs in Vancouver and Toronto closed their doors forever.

The Hindenburg (Vancouver) and Nocturne (Toronto) were nightclubs with long connections to the goth/industrial subculture in each city. Both nightclubs were the places for post-punk bands, goth/industrial DJs, and experimental music; they were places where weird people could be themselves. While the names of each venue have changed over the years, each had been in operation for over 20 years. Their closure is a significant loss, especially in the context of the Hindenburg being redeveloped into condos and Nocturne becoming a boutique lounge (in the true spirit of Canadian gentrification).

I will examine the roles the Hindenburg and Nocturne played in the goth/industrial communities of Vancouver and Toronto. How did the goth/industrial community use space as a part of being goth? How did a space—a nightclub—become goth? And, now that there are no goth nightclubs remaining in Vancouver or Toronto, what happens to

the goth/industrial community? To answer these questions, I will examine the history of the subculture in Vancouver and Toronto, including the history of the Hindenburg and Nocturne. Then I will use discussions on goth Facebook groups to understand how the closure of the nightclubs affected individuals and the larger community. Losing the Hindenburg and Nocturne represents a break between the past and present city that can be understood through the experiences of the goth/industrial subculture.

alfraser@trentu.ca

Ali Fraser (they/them) is a Ph.D. candidate in Cultural Studies at Trent University. Their research involves analyzing Canadian urbanism through subcultural experiences. Their MA examined public space at the intersection of illegal (neo)graffiti and sanctioned public art, which revealed the hidden ideological exclusions present in public urban spaces. Currently, Ali is returning to their subcultural roots as a long-time goth to research the ways in which the goth subculture interacts with urban spaces. Goth provides a nuanced approach to understanding the subtle and unintended effects of gentrification on small, over-looked urban communities.

David Hollands

Trent University (Canada)

Grindhouse Gothic: The Frenzied Ballyhoo Of James Wan's *Malignant* (2021)

Director James Wan describes his film *Malignant* (2021) as a "genre-blender" of influences (Pacis) as varied as Italian gialli to 1970s exploitation movies. While *Malignant* is a frenzied pastiche of these influences, the film coheres narratively due to its particular aesthetic: grindhouse Gothic. Grindhouse signifies a grungy cinematic aesthetic attributed nostalgically to exploitation films of the 1980s and earlier that "mediates a craving for an age of exploitation cinema [...] presumed lost," despite originally meaning a type of defunct American movie theater (Ward 14). Grindhouse, then, is a recent term applied in retrospect to earlier exploitation films with a particular and identifiable aesthetic: a tactile grittiness in the films' image quality due to their low budgets and "low-rent, independent" exhibition venues, and their deliberately "risqué" subject matter and themes (20). For certain cinephiles, the infamous 42nd Street, a synecdoche of Manhattan, is the "paradigm of grindhouse cinema" because of its "notoriety as a red-light district" and "accumulation of neon signs and garish billboards" promising "metropolitan decadence" (20). These grindhouse films are evolutions of Fritz Leiber's urban Gothic stories, where the city itself is "a dangerous space of grime and waste and soot, which seep[s] into and foul[s] the hearts and minds of people" (Goho 181). *Malignant*, set in Seattle, transforms its city into another 42nd Street, with an emphasis on grindhouse Gothic imagery made palpably gritty by a heavily saturated colour palette and deliberately murky cinematography. Gothic narrative elements--a double, a haunted house, secret chambers, outlandish violence--are present, but heightened to the level of the excessive ballyhoo of earlier exploitation films. Therefore, *Malignant* demonstrates how the grindhouse Gothic aesthetic can be repurposed in various contexts. Ultimately, *Malignant* offers a promising initial examination of the histories and explicit/implicit meanings of grindhouse Gothic and its many potential iterations.

davidhollands@trentu.ca

David Hollands holds degrees in Film Studies from York University and the University of Toronto. He is currently completing his Ph.D. in Cultural Studies at Trent University. David studies cinematic narratives, cinematic technologies, and genre. His dissertation charts the history of the concept of cinematic "attraction" from its initial appearance in Russian film theory of the 1920s to its reimagining by film historian Tom Gunning in the 1980s. David explores how the concept of attraction can still be applied in the digital era, a time when filmmaking is accomplished digitally rather than photochemically.

Session Nine

Panel 9a

Kerry Dean Carso

State University of New York (USA)

Washington Allston's *Monaldi*: The Painterly Gothic

Washington Allston (1779-1843) is primarily known as a Grand Manner history painter. He was among the earliest American artists to achieve acclaim both in Great Britain and the United States. Allston indulged in Gothic novel reading throughout his life, and Gothic themes permeated his artistic output, a subject I explore in my chapter on Allston in my book *American Gothic Art and Architecture in the Age of Romantic Literature*. In 1841, Allston published his own Gothic novel, *Monaldi: A Tale*. I am currently preparing a scholarly edition of *Monaldi*, under contract with the University of Wales Press as part of its "Gothic Originals" series.

Set in Italy, the novel contains numerous Gothic elements, beginning with the frame narrator's encounter with a bandit, a clear reference to two of Allston's main sources for *Monaldi*: the Italian painter Salvator Rosa and the novels of Ann Radcliffe. While *Monaldi* features common Gothic elements such as sexual transgression and attempted murder, Allston's novel is unusual in the tradition of early American Gothic literature in that its main character is an artist, like Allston himself. Allston scholar Nathalia Wright has argued that *Monaldi* is autobiographical, as the story of a painter in Italy resonates with Allston's life experiences.

As an art historian, I am interested in the artistic nature of this Gothic novel, with its frequent references to Old Master painters as well as *Monaldi*'s paintings. Additionally, *Monaldi* prefigures Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun* (1860), as a Romance about American artists in Italy. This paper will contextualize Allston's novel by examining it alongside other depictions of artists in Gothic novels, especially the work of Hawthorne. Indeed, *Monaldi* allows us to take an unusually interdisciplinary look at the nineteenth-century Gothic novel and its painterly context.

carsok@newpaltz.edu

Kerry Dean Carso is Chair and Professor of Art History at the State University of New York at New Paltz, where she teaches courses on American art and architecture. Her research focuses on interconnections between the arts and literature in the nineteenth-century United States. She is the author of *Follies in America: A History of Garden and Park Architecture* (Cornell University Press, 2021) and *American Gothic Art and Architecture in the Age of Romantic Literature* (University of Wales Press, 2014), winner of the 2015 Henry-Russell Hitchcock Award from the Victorian Society in America.

Emma Doolan and Ella Jeffery

Southern Cross University and Queensland University of Technology (Australia)

“Dead space”: Beach Houses, Building, and Aspiration in Amanda Lohrey’s *The Labyrinth*

The Gothic genre has an enduring relationship with the seaside house: a number of iconic Gothic structures, including Walpole’s Castle of Otranto, Radcliffe’s Castle of Athlin and du Maurier’s Manderley, are situated by the sea. In Australia, the beach and its coastal houses are frequently associated with holidaymaking, leisure and middle-class aspiration, but the beach has also been read as a site of danger, a “badland” (Ellison 2016) space where the legacies of colonial violence mingle with the dark underbelly of Australian culture. In several recent novels the Australian beach house emerges as a site of haunting, mystery, and buried legacies, including Kathy George’s *Sargasso* (2020), Charlotte Wood’s *The Weekend* (2019) and Lisa Gorton’s *The Life of Houses* (2015). Amanda Lohrey’s *The Labyrinth* (2020) joins this body of literature to interrogate the idyllic imagery of coastal life that dominates Australia’s cultural imagination, presenting instead a coast rife with dilapidated shacks that house gendered violence, social decay and environmental degradation.

The Labyrinth inverts narratives of middle-class aspiration in which urbanites relocate to the coast for a life of simplicity and leisure. After buying a fibro beach shack to be closer to her son, who is imprisoned in a nearby maximum-security gaol, Erica Marsden plans to build a labyrinth in the “dead space” surrounding the property. The project, a replica of the labyrinth she remembers from her traumatic childhood, functions as a dark double that reflects not the idyllic freedom of coastal life but institutions of domination, surveillance, and confinement such as the asylum, the prison, and the home. This paper argues that in Lohrey’s novel the Australian beach house and its attached labyrinth connects with a lineage of Gothic seaside dwellings, and becomes a site for nuanced problematisations of popular narratives about leisure and aspiration embedded in Australia’s beach culture.

emma.doolan@scu.edu.au

Dr **Emma Doolan** is a Lecturer in Creative Writing at Southern Cross University. Her research explores Gothic representations of space and place, particularly in literature emerging from Australian hinterland regions. Her other research interests include creative writing practice and practice-led research methodologies.

e.jeffery@qut.edu.au

Dr **Ella Jeffery** is a Lecturer in Creative Writing at Queensland University of Technology. She researches intersections between contemporary literature, television, and renovation culture, and is particularly interested in conceptions and representations of unstable or insecure dwelling in twenty-first century Australia.

Panel 9b

Nancy Johnson-Hunt

Auckland University of Technology (New Zealand)

Liberating the Grotesque: The Transmogrification of Racial Identities on Lovecraft Country

The resurgence of Lovecraftian style horror in contemporary texts provokes timely discourses on the constructions of racial identities. Set within a post-colonial Gothic framework, the literary adaptation and HBO show *Lovecraft Country* contextualises cosmic horror by exposing deep-seated conflicts within America's racially segregated New England milieu. The show accentuates contemporary cultural expressions of racial anxieties and traumas through the lens of Black protagonists. *Lovecraft Country* interlaces H.P. Lovecraft's fear of miscegenation in America's Jim Crow era with Gothic themes of the grotesque and corporeal monstrosity (Frye, 2006; Paz, 2012). These themes are exemplified and embodied through characters Ruby Baptiste and Ji-Ah who, by way of transmogrification, are rendered monstrous, quite literally through their flesh, making their bodies a central narrative in the *Lovecraft Country* story arc. Here, the body is presented "at the centre of divisions between 'right' and 'wrong'," and as the characters go on to experience a radical metamorphosis of sorts, they have to confront "the regulations of behaviour that go with it," (Piatti-Farnell, 2017, p.134). Through their grotesque or monstrous transformations and lust-filled relationships, both Ruby and Ji-Ah navigate the horrors of their racialised existence by making sense of how their bodies are (ab)used and therefore its performance in order to accommodate these binaries of right and wrong. In addition, by representing Ruby and Ji-Ah in their various states of bodily transformation, we better understand how such transformations can be deemed a liberation from the social forces that govern their corporeal existence. Ultimately, this paper examines how the intersections of such Gothic themes like the grotesque and corporeal monstrosity are created in effect to display the true atrocities and horrors of racism.

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nancyjohnsonhunt@gmail.com

Nancy Johnson-Hunt (she/her) is a former advertising strategist turned doctoral candidate at Auckland University of Technology. After a decade-long career within the Advertising and Marketing Industry, both in New Zealand and North America, she returns to AUT, undertaking

her Ph.D. within the Popular Culture Research Centre. Her doctoral thesis explores the representation of ethnicity and race in popular reality television dating shows and how these portrayals conform to, or challenge stereotypes historically constructed to amplify racialised bodies, spaces, and issues. Her research interests include the diffusion of advertising culture, construction of ethnic and racial identities across popular media and culture, and the influence of celebrity in shaping everyday lives.

Louise Pitcher

University of Western Australia

Reimagining Charlotte's Gothic Agency in *Pride Prejudice and Zombies*

Charlotte Lucas' story is a doubly gothic one in Seth Grahame-Smith's reimagining of *Pride and Prejudice*: not only does it emphasise the gothic elements of the original regarding the tense gendered power dynamics of early 19th century marriage, the added element of Charlotte's zombification firmly cements the presence of the gothic in the novel. *Pride Prejudice and Zombies* is a novel rewrite with the added presence of a Zombie outbreak, where Charlotte's choice to marry Mr Collins is justified by her zombification and desire for care in the face of her impending death. This paper is a version of Pitcher's in-progress honours dissertation that is an adaptations case study looking into the effects of the adaptational choices regarding Charlotte's marriage, including on genre. In reimagining the gothic of *Pride and Prejudice*—not a classically gothic text—Grahame-Smith brings to the fore the gothic doubling between the othering of Charlotte's choice and the humanised emotion-driven decisions of Elizabeth.

Charlotte and Elizabeth reflect different brands of agency in both the original and this zombified reimagining. Grahame-Smith's Elizabeth trains to physically combat the zombies whereas his version of Charlotte falls victim to infection through her lack of ability to withstand the physical threat the zombie represents. However, through Charlotte's choices, she goes on to achieve social and monstrous success within the limits of her restricted social status and newly restricted life expectancy, both marrying well and spreading the zombie plague to her new husband Mr Collins. The fear and violence associated with the zombies in the story are used to revisit the gothic elements of Charlotte's narrative and expand her motivations beyond the social to the monstrous.

louise.pitcher@outlook.com

Louise Pitcher is an academic currently working on her Honours in English and Cultural Studies at the University of Western Australia. Her research explores how adaptational choices are crafted to challenge or conform to previous versions of the text, and how that influences genre, narrative parallels, and the relationship between text and audience. She is fascinated with adaptations' intertextual and non-hierarchical relations. This interest in adaptations has centred around the process of adapting historical fiction for modern audiences including written-to-written modernised rewrites and translations, as well as written-to-visual film and stage adaptations.

Hannah Lamarre

Independent Scholar (USA)

“What Death Can(not) Join Together”: Asexuality as Frustration of Destiny and the Devil in *Penny Dreadful*

Throughout the TV series *Penny Dreadful*, protagonist Vanessa Ives suffers relentless spiritual and sexual pursuit by a demon who believes her to be the legendary Mother of Evil. In order to unleash darkness upon the world, the Demon must seduce Vanessa into an eternal sexual union – an event that Vanessa vehemently, and unsuccessfully, seeks to prevent. *Penny Dreadful* constructs Vanessa, a medium, in the Gothic tradition of the “monstrous other,” but her particular efforts to escape the Demon’s sexual interest also resonate with queer theory’s emerging “asexual other” in her anxiety as an object of unwanted desire within the alloheteronormative system. This paper thus proposes a reading of Vanessa as an asexual character per Ela Pryzbylo’s method of “asexual resonances” and considers her asexuality as the apparatus by which she frustrates and ultimately foils the Demon’s (con)quest. Vanessa’s persistent rejection of the Demon’s sexual advances and her strategic gamification of other sexual encounters expose the narrative’s governing ideology as not the Catholicism it claims, but (allo)heterosexuality. Her repeated imitations and manipulations of alloheteronormative conventions betray this framework’s fragility by allowing Vanessa to enact alternative, often queer productions of desire under the guise of performing heterosexuality. Drawing on Jack Halberstam’s framework of queer failure, I argue that Vanessa’s failure to wholly avoid or eternally sustain her Demonic union marks not only her triumphant failure to assimilate into the alloheteronormative system, but a significant, recognizable asexual experience. Her elective death, per Anna Kurowicka’s theory of the asexual as embodiment of queer anti-futurity, frustrates the narrative’s heterosexual status quo and complicates the Gothic image of the obese woman-in-death; in choosing to die rather than “live forever violated,” Vanessa liberates herself not only from her position as an object of unwanted sexual desire and pursuit, but from the alloheteronormative system altogether.

hannahklamarre@gmail.com

Hannah Lamarre (she/her) is a queer Boston-based writer of contemporary and paranormal fiction. She holds an MFA in Writing for Children from Simmons University and was a 2020 St. Botolph Club Foundation Emerging Artist Award in Literature nominee. Her work has appeared in several local publications, most recently Issue 7 of *Wizards in Space Literary Magazine*. When she isn’t writing, she can be found drinking inadvisable amounts of iced coffee, performing rituals at Jamaica Pond, and practicing – but never perfecting! – the art of queer failure. Follow her adventures in free association on Twitter at @alluringskull.

Panel 9c

Katarzyna Ancuta

Chulalongkorn University (Thailand)

Asian Gothic: Asian Folklore and Globalgothic

Given that the global sustains itself by constantly reproducing, commodifying, and marketing the local, Glennis Byron (2012, 2013) has noted that one of the characteristic features of *globalgothic* is its increasing reliance on the appropriation of local and regional folklore and fusing it with the already established Gothic conventions, themes, and forms. This is certainly the case with Asian Gothic, which, since its scholarly recognition as a 'local' brand of Gothic in early 2000s, has been driven by a consistent flow of productions repackaging Asian folklore and urban legends for the global market. This article discusses three major media forms that drive the globalisation of Asian Gothic: literature originally written in English, film, and original television series created specifically for global SVOD platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime or HBO Go. The article focuses in more detail on three texts: a novel *Ponti* (2018) written by a Singaporean author Sharlene Teo, discussed in a larger context of texts featuring a Malay monster known as the *pontianak*; a Taiwanese film *The Tag-Along* (Cheng 2015) examined in relation to other East Asian films that feature forest-dwelling child-like spirits/demons that imitate human voice and lure their victims into the wilderness; and an Indonesian mini-series *Halfworlds* (2015) produced by HBO Asia and directed by Joko Anwar, which will be situated in the context of the director's overall engagement with folk horror. The article will also address potential consequences the inclusion of Asian Gothic may have for the globalisation of Gothic.

kancuta@gmail.com

Katarzyna Ancuta is a lecturer at the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand. Her research interests oscillate around the interdisciplinary contexts of contemporary Gothic/Horror, currently with a strong Asian focus. Her recent publications include contributions to *Neoliberal Gothic* (2017), *The Routledge Handbook to the Ghost Story* (2017), *B-Movie Gothic* (2018), *Twenty-first-century Gothic* (2019), *Gothic and the Arts* (2019), and *The New Urban Gothic* (2020). She also co-edited three special journal issues on Thai (2014) and Southeast Asian (2015) horror film, and *Tropical Gothic* (2019), and two collections on *Thai Cinema: The Complete Guide* (2018) and *South Asian Gothic* (2021).

Kay Hearn

Edith Cowan University (Australia)

Ghost Brides, Demons, and the Dichotomy of Passive and Active Bodies

China's rich mythology and its intersection with daily life stretches back millennia and serves as a rich source of material for film and television. The practice of ghost marriages goes back some 3000 years, when the son of an emperor died unmarried and was in need of a wife in the afterlife. To address this problem the emperor had his son married to a dead girl in a ceremony before the funeral. This has been a practice in China and among the diaspora of South East Asia on and off ever since, and recently has given rise to several texts that examine the practice. These texts vary from romance to detective stories with tales of long lost love or of fathers killing daughters to marry off to pay for gambling debt where the female body lies passive in death without agency. The novel, *The Ghost Bride*, by Yangze Choo, and the television series set in Malaysia, serves as an interesting conception of the female body that is both active and passive. Where the main female

character is caught between life and death and embodies the passivity of traditional female characters in the physical world, while actively defies that passivity in the liminal space of the afterlife.

k.hearn@ecu.edu.au

Dr Kay Hearn lectures in Humanities and Politics at Edith Cowan University. Her main research is on the ways in which the Chinese government manages the Internet and how it has responded to the challenges the technology has presented the regime and the way in which that technology has been subsumed to the demands of the state. Currently her work focuses on the ways in which disasters and accidents are managed with a blending of propaganda and public relations spin.

Aparajita Hazra

Diamond Harbour University (India)

The Ghostly Women in Bollyfilm: Exploring the Woman Question in Bollywood Cinema

Cinema came to India through the short films of the Lumiere Brothers in 1896. Horror crept into the repertoire of cinematic plots around the 1930s. Bollywood – as the Hindi film industry is lovingly called in India in a droll tribute to Hollywood – made its foray into the realm of the Gothic with classic films like *Mahal*, *Khooni*, *Bees Saal Baad*, *Kohra* and *Who Kaun Thi*. Most of these films had a woman whose ghostly presence made the pivotal leit motif of the haunting come alive. In contemporary Bollywood too, the love for the supernatural is continually and increasingly making itself felt through films like *Bulbbul*, *Pari*, *Stree*, *Bhoot Police* and *Roohi*. Here too there are ghostly women. But the modalities of treating horror have changed. Horror in these movies from the 21st century acts as vehicle for a severe critique of a society that seems to be diseased with the ills of female foeticide, dowry deaths, child marriage, rape and gender marginalisation. This paper intends to make a study of the changes that Bollywood horror has registered down the ages with regard to gender and its performativity.

dr.aparajitahazra@gmail.com

Dr. **Aparajita Hazra** is a Professor in the Department of English in Diamond Harbour Women's University, West Bengal, India. She has served as Dean of the Faculty of Arts and the Head of the Department of English in SKB University, India. She has five books to her credit: *The Terrible Beauty, Her Hideous Progeny: Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, *The Brontes: A Sorority of Passion*, *Marlowe, the Muse's Darling* and *The Art of Articulation* from Macmillan Publishers.

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