

Andrew Smith and William Hughes

Introduction: defining the ecoGothic

This volume is the first to explore the Gothic through theories of eco-criticism; its appearance might seem timely given current concerns about climate change which have helped shape an ecological awareness, but in fact the belated presence of this volume should be surprising when we consider the history of criticism on the Romantic Gothic. That the ecological has been hitherto overlooked in accounts of the Romantic Gothic is strange given the critical synergies that exist between accounts of Romanticism and the Gothic that go back to Mario Praz's *The Romantic Agony* (1933). This is not to suggest that the Gothic exists only as an offshoot of Romanticism, but to acknowledge that shared critical languages exist between the two. To that degree Jonathan Bate's seminal *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (1991) seems an odd omission from Gothic consideration and one which this Introduction will address by briefly sketching a point of origin for an ecologically aware Gothic that has its roots within the Romantic, and not just within recent environmental concerns.

Bate argues that a 'green reading of Wordsworth' moves the critic into a Romantic vision because:

if one historicizes the idea of an ecological viewpoint – a respect for the earth and a scepticism as to the orthodoxy that economic growth and material production are the be-all and end-all of human society – one finds oneself squarely in the Romantic tradition.¹

This, however, raises the question of whether the Gothic vision is a more troubling one. In part this is because of that key Gothic term:

ambivalence. The type of questioning posed by the Gothic has traditionally raised concerns about its political orientations. How the Gothic's representation of 'evil' can be used for radical or reactionary ends becomes an important consideration within this context. Certainly it poses a different order of problem than that encountered by Bate, who argues that Wordsworth's pastoral extols a life free from the dictates of capitalism which means (*pace* Coleridge) that 'pastoral life begets republicanism', due to its comparative political and economic freedoms.² The problem with the Gothic is that, at one level, 'nature' is a more contested term as it is one which (at least in its post-Radcliffean guise) appears to participate in a language of estrangement rather than belonging. For Bate, it is Ruskin (the inheritor of Wordsworth's model of nature) who identifies this problem of alienation as one which reflects the fragmented subject who is forced to work within the divided labour system of industrial capitalism. In his chapter 'The Nature of Gothic' from *The Stones of Venice* (1851–53), Ruskin argues that 'It is not, truly speaking, the labour that is divided, but the men: – Divided into segments of men – broken into small fragments and crumbs of life.'³ This contrasts with the more holistic approach to nature taken by the Romantics. However, it is the image of fragments which seems to persist in the Gothic and it meets its clearest expression in Victor Frankenstein's horror at his first sight of the patchwork creation that is his creature:

His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! – Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.⁴

This disjunction between the utopian idealism of the project and its dystopian aftermath is intended as a critique of a Romantic idealism which asserts that nature can be apprehended as natural rather than cultural. The creature's function is to challenge what is meant by nature and to erode Victor's sense that nature represents a transcendent category of experience. To that degree *Frankenstein* (1818; revised 1831) can be read as the dark shadow that critiques a Wordsworthian model of nature. This is also manifested in how the novel ends (and indeed begins), in the ecological dead zone of the polar ice cap. Nature fails to signify as anything other than a type of blankness which also demonstrates a crisis of representation. This means that the environment

is established as a semiotic problem, one which is addressed in this volume by Catherine Lanone in a chapter centring on Arctic voyages that have been shaped by Shelley's novel.

Bate addresses the issue of naming as one which is rooted in the Bible and in *Paradise Lost* (1667). Bate sees Wordsworth's 'Poems on the Naming of Places' (1800) as a reworking of Adam's responsibility to name the animals in Milton's version of the biblical injunction in *Paradise Lost*. This gives Adam control over nature, but also symbolically represents Wordsworth's poetic mastery over nature. This means that for Bate, while images of rustic life might constitute 'idealizations' in Wordsworth, they are 'worth making in order to bring writer and reader back to nature'.⁵ Writing thus serves to make present a meaningful sense of the ecological by inserting both reader and writer into a realm in which meaning can be generated in an unmediated way. This leads Bate to argue that the sequence of poems in the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) begins with Schiller's conception of the Sentimental (in which the poet is self-conscious about their reflections) and progressively embraces the Naive (in which one confronts experience in a seemingly unmediated fashion).⁶ *Lyrical Ballads* thus represents an attempt to get back to nature and this is a journey which is, as this volume testifies, more problematically constructed in the Gothic. Victor Frankenstein's creature, an auditor of *Paradise Lost*, repeatedly refers to himself as a potential Adam (as a type of first man – one who sees Victor as his God), but his language is second-hand and he has no authority to name and so claim ownership over nature. Instead he is unable to discriminate between fact and fiction and he is excluded from the utopian vision of the De Lacey family and their warm cottage-life and propelled towards the dystopian cold blankness of the polar ice cap. *Frankenstein* thus reverses the tendency of the *Lyrical Ballads* as it heads towards death, alienation and emptiness. The Romantic Gothic, in other words, does the ecological in a different way to the Romantics, but its presumptive dystopianism (certainly in Mary Shelley's case) illustrates how nature becomes constituted in the Gothic as a space of crisis which conceptually creates a point of contact with the ecological. As in the creature's problem in *Frankenstein*, the key issue is how to find a language which 'owns' the ecological and so anchor it as a site of coherent meaning.

This very brief sketch of how *Frankenstein* can be read as repositioning the ecological beyond a Wordsworthian tradition is intended to give a flavour of how the Gothic approaches environmental factors.

This issue of meaning touched on above is central to the Gothic (at least in its more radical guises) as it variously questions, compromises and challenges the way in which the world has been understood. The Romantic context sketched here is one addressed in the opening chapter of this book by Lisa Kröger. However, debates about the environment are also nationally inflected and Bate acknowledges an alternative North American strand of ecological writing that was inaugurated by Thoreau's *Walden* (1854). The role of the wilderness and the frontier is a recurring motif in American fiction. Melville's *Moby-Dick* (1851) provides an interesting counterpoint to *Frankenstein*; it, too, is a voyage narrative and centres on a monomaniacal attempt to tame nature. The whiteness of the whale constitutes a blankness which cannot be read by 'unlettered Ishmael', and which echoes the whiteness of the polar cap.⁷ In some ways this appears to be a gloss on Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (1838) which concludes on a mysterious white figure that brings the voyage to an end, where Pym notes 'there arose in our pathway a shrouded human figure, very far larger in its proportions than any dweller among men. And the hue of the skin of the figure was of the perfect whiteness of the snow.'⁸ However, these images are surrounded by an aura of menace, whereas in *Frankenstein* there is a contrary feeling of fatigued, and so failed, revenge.⁹ The landscape in the North American context seems to invite mastery through images of the frontier and this dynamic is explored in a number of essays in this volume which address changing representations of the wilderness in American and Canadian Gothic writings and films. Such issues have been shaped by ecocriticism and this volume explores how current ideas about ecocriticism can be applied to Gothic narratives in order to help draw out their often dystopian ecological visions. Ecocriticism also acknowledges a number of theoretical paradigms that help to critically reinvigorate debate about the class, gender and national identities that inhere within representations of the landscape. To that end this volume also makes explicit these links in a chapter by Emily Carr which explores how ecocritical issues can be aligned with feminist praxis, illuminated by an analysis of Gothic texts by Joy Williams.

There are national variations in what might be termed the ecological. The British Romantic Gothic can be contrasted to a post-Thoreauvian North American tradition, for example. However, Sharae Deckard, in an innovative concluding essay on Rana Dasgupta, explores how far it might be possible to establish a global geopolitical context for an eco-critical engagement with the Gothic and images of the ecological. This

volume thus begins a debate on how we might examine the cultural and national diversity of the environment through a number of critical prisms that are linked to the ecocritical.

Debates about climate change and environmental damage have been key issues on most industrialized countries' political agendas for some time. These issues have helped shape the direction and application of ecocritical languages. The Gothic seems to be the form which is well placed to capture these anxieties and provides a culturally significant point of contact between literary criticism, ecocritical theory and political process. While the origins of this ecoGothic can be traced back to Romanticism the growth in environmental awareness has become a significant development. The political urgency of ecological issues is often self-consciously elaborated in many of the contemporary novels and films which are discussed here.

The structure of the volume broadly follows national trends, beginning with a British tradition, moving through a Canadian context, and then through a specifically American model of the ecoGothic, before concluding with Deckard's discussion of a possible global context which could overcome national variations.

Lisa Kröger, in 'Panic, paranoia and pathos: ecocriticism in the eighteenth-century Gothic novel', argues that an overview of Gothic criticism would seem to suggest that the castle and the convent are the only spaces which the Gothic inhabits because critics often overlook the third space: the forest. Kröger's examination of these forested spaces reveals that the early Gothic novel foreshadows an ecologically aware society, one in which the heroines are often depicted as sympathetic to their surroundings. One example is Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794). Emily St Aubert is connected to nature – so much so that she is ignorant of any other way of life. Emily's experience of nature is feral, almost primitive, as she gleans both solace and inspiration from the natural world. The forest is not, however, an entirely idyllic space. The benevolent nature of the pastoral lands eventually gives way to a darker, more sublime environment. During his visit to the St Auberts, Monsieur Quesnel indicates that he wants to chop down the chestnut trees, an idea that horrifies Emily and her father. In most of these novels, the desecration of the natural world is met with psychological trauma and can usually be traced to an oppressive ruling power (a structure which mirrors modern conceptions of a feminized nature attacked by a patriarchy – technology, industry or even society itself). As the attack on nature progresses in these novels, the environments

become more frightening. Using the works of Ann Radcliffe, Matthew Lewis and the Marquis de Sade, Kröger's chapter explores the dual nature of the Gothic environment and how it foreshadows modern ecocriticism, particularly an awareness of wilderness preservation and the fear of an impending environmental catastrophe.

In 'Monsters on the ice and global warming: from Mary Shelley and Sir John Franklin to Margaret Atwood and Dan Simmons', Catherine Lanone argues that, from chilling Victorian panoramas to films such as *Frankenstein* or *The Thing* (1951) the Arctic looms large as a blank screen on which fantasies of Gothic entrapment may be projected. At a time when global warming turns the sheltering ice and starving bears into the victims of hubris rather than the monsters of yore, Lanone considers the evolving versions of ice monsters, beginning with Mary Shelley's paradigmatic hideous creature, drawing Victor farther and farther north and emblemizing Shelley's uneasiness about colonial conquest. Lanone argues that the fate of the 1845 Franklin expedition located the monster within the self, as the myth of British technological progress was inverted into a tale of disaster complete with rumours of cannibalism among the crew. The Franklin story haunts the twentieth century, from Margaret Atwood's 1991 short story 'The Age of Lead' (in which Franklin's spectacular disaster portrayed on TV becomes a metaphor for waste, pollution and the mysterious diseases both trigger) to Dan Simmons's loose, baggy monster of a novel, *The Terror* (2007). Rewriting the 1845 Franklin expedition, *The Terror* gives a Gothic twist to the tale, adding to the frozen ships a gigantic mysterious white Thing that plagues the crew, cunningly maiming, killing and wreaking havoc. Lanone thus explores how Gothic motifs are transposed and used to raise complex, urgent environmental issues, addressing global warming through the metaphor of the lost expedition.

David Punter, in 'Algernon Blackwood: nature and spirit', explores selected tales of Algernon Blackwood (1869–1951), who was regarded in his time as one of the great masters of the supernatural short story. The particular stories under discussion are 'The Man whom the Trees Loved' (1912), 'The Willows' (1907) and 'The Lost Valley' (1910). Punter's principal concern is to show some of the ways in which Blackwood blurs the distinctions between the human world and a wider natural and spiritual ecology. In his stories human beings are constantly shown as being at the mercy of larger forces of nature, such that, for example, Bittacy, the forest-ranger protagonist of 'The Man whom the Trees Loved', eventually becomes 'one with the trees',

being subsumed into a different life which is only barely comprehensible to the fellow humans whom he has left behind. In the course of the discussion, Punter examines the relations between nature and spirit in relation to similar concerns found in Hegel, principally in *The Phenomenology of Mind* (1807) and *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (1821–31). Punter draws attention to the possibilities which might be contained within this fiction of ‘writing like the forest’, or ‘writing as the forest’. These are an extension – before the fact – of the considerations offered by Deleuze and Guattari in their conceptualization of ‘becoming’: ‘becoming-animal’ or ‘becoming-woman’, for example, which are relevant to Blackwood’s version of ‘becoming-forest’, which he underpins with an eclectic mix of theology, philosophy and mythopoeia.¹⁰ Punter argues that, while it would be obviously terminologically incorrect to think of Blackwood directly in ‘ecological’ terms, the kinds of consciousness he is attempting to describe are eminently suited to responding to an ecological criticism, which enables the stories to yield a new life that places the concept of the ‘supernatural’ itself in a different light.

William Hughes, in “‘A strange kind of evil’: superficial paganism and false ecology in *The Wicker Man*”, argues that *The Wicker Man* (1973) has not yet attracted a significant body of criticism from a specifically Gothic perspective. This is surprising, given the film’s extensive depiction of pagan spirituality, rampant sexuality and blood sacrifice. These, though, are intimate to a plot explicitly related to both a looming environmental crisis and a consequent economic collapse. Bearing these latter in mind, it is equally surprising that *The Wicker Man* has been overlooked by ecocriticism. Hughes considers how the man-made ecology which supports the island community of *The Wicker Man* interfaces with a meticulously detailed – and equally artificial – neo-pagan earth religion. Far from being a utopian alternative to the spiritually orthodox and rule-bound world represented by Police Sergeant Howie, Lord Summerisle’s ostensibly feudal domain retains at its heart a capitalist ruthlessness ironically more akin to the secular mainland from which the Christian policeman travels. The violence that concludes the film represents a clash of cultures – secular and spiritual, modern and feudal, metropolitan and provincial – although the boundaries between these, as Howie discovers, are by no means clear or even consistent. Hughes demonstrates how the Gothic script of *The Wicker Man* embraces the classic preoccupations of the Gothic while rescheduling them in a manner wholly appropriate to the troubled

years that succeeded the idealism of the 1960s. *The Wicker Man* is a film that anticipates many aspects of current ecocritical and green concern – and it embodies, equally, a chilling reminder that idealistic alternatives may carry, occluded within them, traces of the repressive orthodoxies that they claim to resist.

In 'Bodies on earth: exploring sites of the Canadian ecoGothic', Alanna F. Bondar examines a Canadian post-pastoral or ecological literature which is currently emerging through and in response to the ecofeminist movement of the 1980s and 1990s, which suggests ways in which the human–nature paradigm might be redirected through positive identifications with the body in nature and the natural body. Through the contemporary and cultural lens of postmodern pastiche which includes elements of Gothic and magical realism, literary texts respond to a Canadian cultural fear of nature and a 'garrison mentality' as a means of exploring ecological shifts in spiritual and intellectual consciousness. Authors such as Camilla Gibb (*Sweetness in the Belly*, 2006), Michael Ondaatje (*Anil's Ghost*, 2000), Nancy Huston (*Instruments of Darkness*, 1997) and Lola Lemire Tostevin (*Frog Moon*, 1994) embrace ideologies in their writings that seek resolution of the geopsyche (as defined by Gregory Cajete and explored by American ecocritic Patrick Murphy); this 'geopsyche' is that which moves past the 'us *versus* them' or 'human *versus* wilderness' paradigm into a more encompassing 'anotherness' which reconsiders binary oppositions that remain contained and conditioned within gender differences, the individual body, community and culture.¹¹ These authors explore how the body as site of Gothic fear – sexual, injured, dismembered and celebrated – can be seen and positively re-membered in a literary landscape. This chapter explores this process of 'informed recentring' of ecological literature and examines and recognizes the articulate responsibility of the biotic community.

Shoshannah Ganz, in 'Margaret Atwood's monsters in the Canadian ecoGothic', argues that Margaret Atwood has created a sub-genre of Gothic and Canadian fiction known as Southern Ontario Gothic. The Atwood *oeuvre* of Gothic works includes most famously *The Handmaid's Tale* (1986), *Surfacing* (1972) and *Lady Oracle* (1976). To these can be added *Oryx and Crake* (2003) and *The Year of the Flood* (2009). Ever a timely writer, Atwood's most recent fiction explores what she terms in the final pages of *Oryx and Crake* the 'end game' for the human race. Ganz explores the possibility of Gothic literature serving as a form to critique environmental destruction and advocate restoration.

The chapter explores in particular the monsters in the texts – Jimmy/Snowman, the monstrous human survivor who cares for the Crakers; the humanoid Crakers, manufactured by the real Frankenstein of the text, Crake, who deliberately and sadistically attempts to destroy all human life forms (except one); the various monstrous manufactured and mutated creatures that prey on the surviving humans; and the sexual predators, among others. Atwood plays with all the stock characteristics of the Gothic genre, but with an eye to a world ravaged by climate change – empty warehouses become the decrepit mansions of survivors hiding from manufactured animals and crazed monsters; incestuous love triangles play across and between the two books, and between monsters and humans. Atwood clearly uses the markers of the Gothic genre to advocate environmental awareness and change before the crazed monsters at the centre of the text destroy all life forms. Ganz also argues that *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood* help to demarcate the characteristics of the ecoGothic, and she demonstrates how other Canadian environmental works, and the monsters therein, can be usefully explored as part of the emergent Canadian ecoGothic genre.

Tom J. Hillard, in 'From Salem witch to *Blair Witch*: the Puritan influence on American Gothic nature', examines the seventeenth-century New England Puritan influence on later Gothic representations of the natural world in North America. Hillard argues that a 'pre-Gothic' symbolic structure can be found in experiences with 'wilderness' described by New England Puritan settlers throughout the 1600s. This Gothic symbolism, while at first rooted deeply in Puritan theology, has changed and evolved over the centuries, but its basic characteristics can still be located in nearly all Gothicized representations of nature. Hillard examines texts by several Puritan writers – including William Bradford and Cotton Mather – in order to reveal their typological reading of the natural world (and 'wilderness' in particular) as a fallen one, made so when Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden. For many of the New England saints, entering the wilderness of Massachusetts was tantamount to confronting the nightmarish landscape of Original Sin. Images of a desolate wilderness function as a precursor to the dark dungeon or haunted castle of later Gothic fictions – a fearful space inhabited by threatening characters (or creatures) and marked by deep-seated secrets or past transgressions that threaten the status quo. This concept of nature as haunted house (to borrow a phrase from Emily Dickinson) has persisted in American culture, and Hillard

frames the chapter with an analysis of the 1999 film *The Blair Witch Project*, looking specifically at its (anti-)environmental subtexts. There has been recent ecocritical interest in ‘ecophobia’, and Hillard argues that *The Blair Witch Project* stands as just one manifestation of a widespread contemporary cultural anxiety about nature.

In “‘The blank darkness outside’: Ambrose Bierce and wilderness Gothic at the end of the frontier’, Kevin Corstorphine provides an overview of recent studies on the American Gothic which have drawn attention to the notion of the wilderness as an ideological lens through which early settlers viewed the strange and vast landscape they found themselves in. This chapter examines the importance of the wilderness in the American social and political imagination, focusing on the late nineteenth-century end of the frontier as described by Frederick Jackson Turner in his 1893 lecture.¹² It identifies an ambivalent relationship with the environment and situates this in the context of the legacy of Puritanism as well as Emersonian transcendentalism. The first part of the chapter discusses the development of these ideas in relation to authors such as Charles Brockden Brown, Robert Montgomery Bird and Nathaniel Hawthorne, and offers an overview of critical perspectives, arguing that the Gothic tradition in the United States is predicated on a flawed appeal to a utopian origin myth. The second part is a close examination of Ambrose Bierce’s short stories ‘The Damned Thing’ (1893), ‘The Eyes of the Panther’ (1897) and ‘The Boarded Window’ (1891), all contemporary with the twilight of the frontier period. They are examined in their historical context which includes the development of photography, the sentimentalization of the Native American and the mass extermination of the buffalo. Corstorphine also reads them in the light of recent developments in ecocriticism and examines to what extent these theories and Bierce’s writing can comment on each other and make sense of the contentious relationship between human and nature that is expressed in each. He argues that the concept of nature gains importance only through human perspective, and that a critical examination of the representation of nature in fiction is crucial to an understanding of our relationship with it.

In ‘Locating the self in the post-apocalypse: the American Gothic journeys of Jack Kerouac, Cormac McCarthy and Jim Crace’, Andrew Smith takes as his starting point a moment from Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road* (1957) when the narrator recalls an incident when he awoke in a motel room and conceived of himself as a ghost. The scene suggests that this was not because he had forgotten where he was but because he had

forgotten *who* he was. This troubling moment of self-assessment is later reflected in characters that similarly see themselves as ghosts during their pursuit of post-war pleasures revolving around music, drink, sex and the freedom of physical movement that America could ostensibly provide. The book's superficial suggestion that the way out is also the way in (an inner life and its desires now met) is compromised in these moments which suggest that in reality they involve the *loss* of self. The journey across America underpins this sense of loss as America appears as a Gothic space of potential danger. How to maintain a sense of self in explicitly post-apocalyptic terrains is the subject matter of later, more obviously Gothic texts such as Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (2006) and Jim Crace's *The Pesthouse* (2007). Like *On the Road* they too are focused on how to maintain the self when the environment which produced that self no longer exists. McCarthy's and Crace's texts thus directly explore how environmental issues underpin models of subjectivity which have their roots in Kerouac's model of being on the road, as a journey about an eroded sense of self. How these ideas relate to a Gothic ecology and theories of ecocriticism and notions of the home are the principal issues addressed in this chapter.

Susan J. Tyburski, in 'A Gothic apocalypse: encountering the monstrous in American cinema', discusses a growing number of apocalyptic films from the United States, such as Larry Fessenden's *The Last Winter* (2007), M. Night Shyamalan's *The Happening* (2008), Roland Emmerich's *2012* (2009) and John Hillcoat's *The Road* (2009), which depict humans encountering monstrous versions of nature. Nature becomes an avenging force – or, even more monstrous, an alien entity utterly indifferent to the fate of humanity. Just as our modern societies have appeared to disavow any necessary connection to nature, the natural world seems to reject humanity as expendable. Humans are cast adrift in an alien, hostile environment, encountering monsters unleashed by the destructive force of a consumerist, solipsistic society. Tyburski argues that these recent films reflect a growing trend in 'eco-horror' cinema which taps into this growing current of eco-anxiety, creating monstrous visions mirroring our fears about the fate of our civilization and the planet we call home. The various depictions of the monstrous in these films, and the way such monstrosity is encountered by the characters, determine whether or not these cinematic narratives qualify as 'Gothic'. Tyburski explores the following questions: How have traditional Gothic tropes been transformed to explore modern crises and fears in recent apocalyptic films? And what can we learn

about the Gothic, and about our relationship with the natural world by exploring these modern apocalyptic narratives?

In ‘The riddle was the angel in the house: towards an American ecofeminist Gothic’, Emily Carr argues that, from its origins, women’s Gothic fiction has undermined fictions of the human and the nonhuman, the natural and the unnatural by creating worlds in which the everyday is collapsed with the nightmarish. Distortion, dislocation and disruption become the norm, and the domestic and the grotesque, the alluring and the terrible coexist. Because of its obsession with the role of place in subject formation and in the destabilization of the ‘home’ as a foundation of myths of domesticity, the Gothic is a particularly appropriate genre in which to explore new possibilities for ecofeminism. The very useful intersections of the genre of the Gothic and the theory of the ecofeminist teach strategies for dislocating our anthropocentric assumptions about, for example, who speaks and for whom; what it means to suffer; the logical fallacies and cultural blind spots that lead to the supremacy of the ‘sentient’; the linguistic sleight of hand that turns bodies into commodities; and the deep-rooted (however we might try to deny it) assumption that our obligations to our home, the earth, and the creatures that inhabit it are economic rather than ecological. Carr explores five strands of the contemporary ecofeminist Gothic: beauty (as agency) versus the beautiful (as thing), desire (how it looks) versus love (what it means), the problem of becoming a person you did not intend to become, the myth of marriage, and the links between questions of autonomy and of living well. Through a close reading of Joy Williams’s *The Changeling* (1978), Carr carves out a distinctly American space for the ecofeminist Gothic that is maverick, alarming, animalized, sexualized, without mediation or exception, with a propensity for exaggeration, for the fabulous, for the colloquial, for the melancholy, the obscene, the forbidden and the unspeakable. It is in this space, Carr argues, that we can begin again – ethically and ecoethically – to celebrate the often terrifying consequences of re-articulating what should have gone unsaid, the mysterious and sometimes sinister underbelly behind the clean white porch of normal American life.

Sharae Deckard, in “‘Uncanny states’: global ecoGothic and the world-ecology in Rana Dasgupta’s *Tokyo Cancelled*”, argues that the world-system is a thoroughly differentiated physical environment divided between zones of production, in which peripheral environments suffer heightened resource extraction and environmental

degradation in an age of accelerating climate crisis. This means that developing a methodology attentive to the systemic nature of combined and uneven development across the world-ecology is an urgent task for environmental literary studies. Adapting Fredric Jameson's theory of the political unconscious, film critic Adrian Ivakhiv has called for a 'global-meteorological reading practice' of the 'geopolitical unconscious' in order to reverse 'ecological unconscionization', the ideological mystification of ecological destruction.¹³ Ivakhiv argues that the Cartesian project has 'repressed the entire network of biological interdependencies and corporeal confraternities that shape and structure our material existence'.¹⁴ Environmental historian Jason Moore has developed a world-systems-inflected theory of the capitalist world-ecology as comprised of ecological regimes and revolutions, in which financialization has produced new forms of social-nature relations.¹⁵ Deckard draws on Moore and Ivakhiv to elaborate a praxis for reading the capitalist world-ecology in Gothic literature, exploring how literary form can embed the social-ecological contradictions of capitalism. Deckard offers a case study of 'global ecoGothic', reading the viral excrescences and monstrous transformations of human bodies into vegetable matter in Rana Dasgupta's *Tokyo Cancelled* (2005) as Gothic apparitions that register the world-ecology, particularly the ecological regimes corresponding to neoliberalism and financialization. In British-Asian Dasgupta's thirteen-story cycle, the process of ecological unconscionization is deliberately reversed through stagings of uncanny states that dramatize the traumatic impact of abstract economic systems on local ecologies and subjects in multiple world cities from Delhi, to Paris, to Istanbul.

All of the chapters in this book have been specially commissioned for it. They represent a new way of thinking about the Gothic because they indicate the way in which it engages with a major pressing political issue that confronts the world today. We hope that it provides a starting point for future discussion on these points of contact.

Notes

- 1 Jonathan Bate, *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environment Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 9.
- 2 Bate, *Romantic Ecology*, p. 25.
- 3 John Ruskin, 'The Nature of Gothic', in *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. I, xvi in *The Complete Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London: Library Edition, 1903–12), cited in Bate, *Romantic Ecology*, p. 58.

- 4 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: The 1818 Text*, ed. Marilyn Butler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 39.
- 5 Bate, *Romantic Ecology*, p. 105.
- 6 Friedrich Schiller, *On the Sublime & Naïve and Sentimental Poetry*, trans. J. A. Elias (New York: Ungar, 1975).
- 7 Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (London: Collector's Library, 2004), p. 474.
- 8 Edgar Allan Poe, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket in The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), pp. 748–883, at p. 882.
- 9 Ahab's descent into 'madness' also represents a failed act of revenge, but the novel as a whole is also about how other characters feel about the nature of the quest and so is arguably more interrogative about such matters than *Frankenstein*.
- 10 See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).
- 11 Patrick D. Murphy, *Literature, Nature and Other: Ecofeminist Critiques* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 4–5.
- 12 Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt, 1947).
- 13 Adrian Ivakhiv, 'Stirring the Geopolitical Unconscious', *New Formations: Earthographies: Ecocriticism and Culture* 64 (2008): 98–109.
- 14 Ivakhiv, 'Stirring the Geopolitical Unconscious', p. 107.
- 15 See Jason Moore, 'Wall Street is a Way of Organizing Nature', *Upping the Anti: A Journal of Theory and Action* 12 (2011): 39–53, and his 'The End of the Road? Agricultural Revolutions in the Capitalist World-Ecology, 1450–2010', *Journal of Agrarian Change* 10/3 (2010): 389–413.