

Tales of Terror: Gothic, Horror, and Weird Short Fiction

Welcome to the University of Warwick!

The University of Warwick campus may not seem to offer the traditional setting for Gothic, Horror, and Weird, but we do have some strong literary connections: Coventry (our closest town/city) was the home of George Eliot, whose realist novels are tinged with moments of the uncanny and the surreal, and whose short-story ‘The Lifted Veil’ (1859) deals with ideas of premonition and murder. Weird Fiction author China Miéville is an associate professor of the Creative Writing team and has held various horror-fiction events here in the past. And, well, what isn’t Gothic about the architecture and political landscape of the neoliberal University?

With the excellent papers on offer at *Tales of Terror*, and the generous sponsorship of the International Gothic Association, Warwick’s Humanities Research Centre, and the Department of English and Comparative Literature Studies, we hope to expand Warwick’s foray into the genre.



If you would like to live-tweet please use the **hashtag #TalesofTerror** and we are on twitter **@TerrorTalesOf**. In the author-bios and schedule overviews are the twitter handles of speakers happy to be tagged in. Please look out for any logos on slides which request you don’t tweet specific information.

ROOM SCHEDULING:

- ❖ **Registration** and the majority of **refreshment breaks/lunches** will take place in the **Foyer of Zeeman building** unless specified.
- ❖ **Please note** that over the course of the two days **all “A” panels will be in room MS.03** and **all “B” panels in MS.04**. You will notice these are large rooms, so for concurrent panels please sit toward the front and the middle to aid a friendlier discussion space.
- ❖ All **introductory talks, roundtables, and keynotes** will take place in **MS.03**.
- ❖ Throughout the event, there will be range of **publishers and book-sellers** on hand in the **foyer** to sell books and discuss their trades with delegates. Cash points are available at Rootes grocery store and in the Student’s Union. We assume no responsibility for how much you spend.

If you have any other questions, please ask the Tales of Terror Team at the Registration Desk.



DAY ONE: Thursday 21st March (Zeeman Building)

REGISTRATION 9.15 – 9.45am	Inc. Pastries and Refreshments WELCOME 9.45 – 10.00am	Introduction and information SESSION 1 10.00-11.30am	1A. PERIODICALS, PUBLISHING, & THE GOTHIC MARKET ROOM MS.03 CHAIR: Emily Bell A Club of 'Murder-Fanciers': Violence, Sensation and Readership in 'Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts' and the <i>Blackwood's Tales of Terror</i> <i>Sarah Sharp (@Sarah_natters)</i> 'Penny Packets of Poison': Disseminating Multimodal Sensationalism and Serialised Gothic in 1840s Penny Bloods <i>Manon Labrande</i> The Fin-de-siècle Weird Tale <i>James Machin</i>	1B. QUEERING GENDER AND SEXUALITY ROOM MS.04 CHAIR: Tracy Hayes Fragments of Masculinity: M. R. James's Broken Tales of Broken Scholars <i>Evan Hayles Gledhill (@GothicBodies)</i> 'We're <i>not</i> the queers': Sexuality and Gender (non)Conformity in the 1950s short fiction of Charles Beaumont. <i>Kevin Corstorphine (@kevcorstorphine)</i> Walkin', Talkin', Livin', (Killin') Doll: Monstrous Sexuality in Ramsey Campbell's <i>Scared Stuff</i> <i>Sandra Mills (@SandraMills89)</i>	11.30-11.45 Comfort break with refreshments [15 mins]	Outside MS03/04
SESSION 2 11.45 – 12.45 <small>(short panels)</small>	2A. TALES OF TERROR: FILM SHORTS ROOM MS.03 This session is a series of varied short filmic adaptations of Edgar Allan Poe tales and includes a pre-recorded critical reflection with gameplay by Adam Whijbray on his digital game <i>Evermore: A Choose Your Own Edgar Allan Poe Adventure.</i> (@al_gore_rhythm)	2B. CREATIVE & CRITICAL ADAPTATION: THEATRE ROOM MS.04 'Life is a Hideous Thing': A Discussion of <i>Providence: The Shadow Over Lovecraft</i> Catherine Pugh (@CatherinePugh86) in conversation with Simon Maeder and Dominic Allen (@providencecult) about their short play.				

12.45 – 13.30	LUNCH (provided) [45mins]	Foyer
PUBLISHING HOUSES, PRESERVATION, AND TRANSLATION		
ROUNDTABLE	CHAIR: Jen Baker	ROOM MS.03
13.30 – 14.25	We are joined by three representatives of independent publishers of Gothic/Horror/Weird fiction to discuss the publication of new works, the preservation of older works, and the translation of Anglophone works.	
	Peter Coleborn of <i>The Alchemu Press</i> ; Hannah Kate of <i>Hic Dragones</i> ; Maria Giakaniki of <i>Ars Nocturna</i>	
14.25 – 14.30	Quick Comfort Break [5 mins]	
	3A. CREATIVE & CRITICAL ADAPTATION: SHORT FICTION	3B. DISTURBED AND DISEASED IMAGINATIONS
SESSION 3	ROOM MS.03	ROOM MS.04
14.30 – 16.00	Three emerging writers from Warwick University seeking to combine the critical with the creation of new fiction. Topics and themes include vampires and child abuse, Islam and Victorian Gothic, and the Poesque detective story.	Der Struwwelpeter: Scaring Children to Educate them Since 1845 Camilla Schroeder (@cdcschroeder)
	Cheryll Powell (@chezzapowell), Vanwy Arif, Susannah Heffernan	The Cthulhu Mythos: Lovecraft's Diseased Fancy Oliver Rendle (@OMRendle)
	Disturbingly Alive and Living Cityscapes in China Miéville's Short Fiction Daria Denisova (@DariaD_Denisova)	
16.00 – 16.30	Refreshment break [30mins]	Foyer
	4A. REEVALUATING SHIRLEY JACKSON	4B. MONSTROUS FAIRYTALES
SESSION 4	ROOM MS.03	ROOM MS.04
16.30 – 17.30 (shorter panels)	See(ing) Spectres in Shirley Jackson Robert Lloyd (@lloyd_robert)	Terror is in the Eye of the Beholder: The Horror of Beauty in Fairy Tale Narratives Silvia Storti (@silviaelisa22)
	A Subtle Female Horror: Shirley Jackson's Weird Short Stories and the Disruption of Every Day Life Maria Giakaniki	Wolfish Affinity and Female Sexuality in Angela Carter's 'Wolf-Alice' Chantal Chien-hui Hsu

17.30-17.35	Quick comfort break [5 minutes]		
KEYNOTE ONE 17.35-19.00	Dr Melissa Edmundson (@MelissaMakala)	'Terra/Terror Incognita: Women Writers and the Colonial Gothic Short Story' ROOM MS.03	
			DAY TWO: Friday 21st March (Zeeman Building)
SESSION 5 9 -10.30am (please arrive for 8.50am)	5A. (DI)EMBODIMENT ROOM MS.03 SESSION 5 9 -10.30am (please arrive for 8.50am)	CHAIR: Jen Baker Male Fantasy, Male Nightmare: Disembodied Female Hands and the Victorian Ghost Story <i>Shona McEvoy</i> Hysterical Bodies and the Corporeal Grotesque in Rhoda Broughton's 'Ghost' Stories <i>Louise Benson-James</i> (@LoubreeJames)	5B. RE-EVALUATING THE WEIRD ROOM MS.04 Cosmic Horror or Racial Paranoia? Artistic Expression in H. P. Lovecraft <i>Neil Weaving</i> An Alternative Approach to Supernatural Manifestations: The Weird Fiction of Algernon Blackwood <i>Antonio Alcalá González</i> (@Tony_Alc77)
			The Weird Tale as Anthropocene Parable <i>Gry Ulstein</i>
			<i>*Please note this paper contains discussion of eating disorders and related medical research.</i>
10.30 - 11.00	Refreshment Break [30 minutes]	Foyer	

<p>SESSION 6 11.00 – 12.30</p> <p>6A. LIMINAL STATES ROOM MS.03 CHAIR: Tracy Hayes</p> <p>“A Shuggish, Hellish, Night-abomination”: Weirding Spectrality in M.R. James’s <i>Ghost Stories of an Antiquary</i> Henry Bartholomew (@HenryBatholom6)</p> <p>I AM STONE - Death and Undeath in the Works of R. Murray Gilchrist Daniel Pietersen (@pietersender)</p> <p><i>Opowieści bizarre</i> (Bizarre Stories) by Olga Tokarczuk Agnieszka Lowczanin</p>	<p>6B. GLOBAL GOTHIC: ADAPTATION/DECOLONISATION ROOM MS.04 CHAIR: Martha McGill</p> <p>Aspects of the Gothic and the Uncanny in <i>Les Vampires</i> (1915–16) Tim Major (@onasteamer)</p> <p>Chasing Sea Monsters: Dino Buzzati’s “Il Colombe” and Herman Melville’s <i>Moby Dick.</i> Andrea Brandino</p> <p>Latin American Gothic: Female Vampires and Modernity at the Turn of the 20th century Megan DeVirgilis</p>
<p>12.30 – 13.15</p> <p>LUNCH (provided) [45mins] Foyer</p>	<p>7A. REGIONAL HORRORS ROOM MS.04 CHAIR: Louise Benson James</p> <p>The Adaptation of Folk Tradition in Nineteenth-Century Scottish Ghost Fiction Martha McGill</p> <p>“Imagined ghosts on unfrequented roads”: The Cornish Ghost Story in the Long Nineteenth Century Joan Passey (@JoanPassey)</p> <p>The Lies of the Land: The Alluvial Formalities of Gothic East Anglia Helena Bacon and Adam Whybray (@al_gore_rhythm)</p>
<p>14.45-15.00</p> <p>Comfort break [15 minutes]:</p>	<p>7B. HAUNTED BIOGRAPHIES ROOM MS.04 CHAIR: James Machin</p> <p>Ghosts, Shadows and Dead-Alive Creatures in Dickens’s Short Stories Emily Bell (@EmilyJLB)</p> <p>‘Red Poppy Floods: Reflections on Aubrey Gunn’s Poetics of the Supernatural Tale’ Timothy Jarvis (@TimothyJJarvis)</p> <p>Looking for Buddy Oliver Belas</p>
	<p>outside MS.03/04</p>

<p>SESSION 8 15.00 – 16.30</p>	<p>8A. THE SOUNDS OF TERROR ROOM MS.03</p> <p>“And one by one dropped the revellers”; Dancing with the Devil in Poe, Hardy and M.R. James. <i>Tracy Hayes</i></p> <p>The <i>restaurateur</i> and the devil. Hiccups and satanic laughter in E. A. Poe’s ‘Bon-Bon’, <i>Maria Parrino</i></p> <p>‘Ha! ha! ha! – he! he! he! [...] He! he! he! – he! he! he!’; Laughter and Excellent Jests in American Gothic short fiction <i>Jimmy Packham</i></p>	<p>8B. GOTHIC EPHEMERA & THE DIGITAL AGE ROOM MS.04</p> <p>‘Good Gracious Witch, How Halloweeny?’ The Picture Postcard and the Gothic in the Twentieth Century and Onwards <i>Carys Crossen</i> (@Academic Wannabe)</p> <p>Indie Horror Video Games & Narrative Structure <i>Caitlin Jauncey</i> (@CajJauncey)</p> <p>I just saw my reflection blink – horror short fiction in the age of the Internet <i>Conny Lippert</i></p>	<p>DRINKS AND SNACKS Foyer</p> <p>KEYNOTE TWO 17.00-18.30</p> <p>‘On Incompleteness: The Fragment, the Dash, the Broken Form’ ROOM MS.03</p> <p>Prof. Roger Luckhurst @TheProfRog</p>
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FULL-SCHEDULE WITH ABSTRACTS AND BIOS: DAY ONE

9.15-9.45am **Registration** with drinks and pastries [Foyer]
9.45 - 10.00am **Welcome and Introduction** [Room MS.03]

SESSION 1 10.00 -11.30

1A - PERIODICALS, PUBLISHING, AND THE GOTHIC MARKET

A Club of ‘Murder-Fanciers’: Violence, Sensation and Readership in ‘Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts’ and the *Blackwood’s Tales of Terror* *Sarah Sharp (@Sarah_natters)*

This paper places *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*’s signature Tales of Terror and Thomas De Quincey’s 1827 and 1839 essays ‘On Murder’ within changing contemporary attitudes to crime writing. The *Blackwood’s* of the early decades of the nineteenth century, was a magazine characterised by an enduring interest in violent crime and punishment. In particular, narratives which featured murders and executions had furnished the magazine with some of its most memorable examples of terror fiction. However, these tales gained popularity against a backdrop where polite readers were increasingly unlikely to attend executions and were eschewing traditional crime writing like the Newgate Calendar.

The execution scene provided *Blackwood’s* authors with an opportunity to explore the tensions inherent in depicting acts of violence for a middle-class readership. Two *Blackwood’s* tales of terror, by Henry Thomson and Robert McNish, use public execution scenes to examine the troubled relationship between mass readership, spectacular violence and the periodical press in the early decades of the nineteenth century. In the ‘On Murder’ essays De Quincey reflects and expands upon the *Blackwood’s* fascination with the criminal; exploring the motivations and identities of the anonymous ‘murder fanciers’ who consumed *Blackwood’s* bloody narratives. In doing so he concocts texts which push *Blackwood’s* self-presentation as elite club to its most extreme conclusion.

Sarah Sharp is a current Irish Research Council Postdoctoral Fellow at University College Dublin. Having completed a PhD on *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* at the University of Edinburgh in 2016, she has subsequently spent time as a Leverhulme Postdoctoral Fellow in the Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies at the University of Otago in New Zealand and in 2018 was awarded a Fulbright Scottish Studies Scholar Award to undertake archival work at the University of South Carolina. Her current research project 'In Foreign Soil: Death Abroad in Scottish Literature and Travel Narratives 1790-1900' looks at the ways in which death abroad informs ideas of national identity in Scottish writing of the Romantic and Victorian periods.

“Penny Packets of Poison”: Disseminating Multimodal Sensationalism and Serialised Gothic in 1840s Penny Bloods *Manon Labrande*

Gothic, horror, and weird short fiction seems to provide an almost perfect genre definition of the Penny Bloods. Published in instalments and sold for a penny, this literary format quickly became the best-selling type of publication of the mid-nineteenth century as it allowed a growing readership to access literacy they had previously been excluded from. The gruesome sensational stories are also known to have been read aloud in gatherings, thus keeping a strong link to the tradition of oral

storytelling and circulating even faster through communities. This analysis will shed light on some of the aspects that were intricately linked to a broader circulation of 1840s Penny Bloods, relying on the examples of *The Adventures of Valentine Vaux; or, The Tricks of a Ventriloquist* (1840, by Timothy Portwine) and *The String of Pearls: A Romance* (1846-47, attributed to Thomas Peckett Prest). First, the multimodal qualities and the relationship with orality of these tales' gripping sensationalism will be explored thanks to concepts drawn from multimodality theory, in an attempt to define the Penny Bloods as a genre in itself. The circulation of the Gothic in the stories will also be analysed in the light of seriality theory, in order to address how Penny Bloods resorted to weave the appeal of the Gothic into their very fabric and their patterns of seriality. Finally, I will examine the reception of these "penny packets of poison" (Greenwood 1874) and the fear of the growing dissemination of such tales of terror.

Manon Labrande is currently a PhD student and university assistant at the University of Vienna, Austria. After completing an MA in English literature with honours at the Sorbonne Nouvelle University in Paris by examining the penny blood character of Varney as a pivotal vampire character, her research now focuses on the exploration of the concept of circulation in and of the Penny Bloods and the Penny Dreadfuls, through a literary and cultural analysis of their materiality, their literary content, and the discourses they triggered in 19th-century criticism.

The Fin-de-siècle Weird Tale

James Machin

Although weird fiction is a mode often closely associated with the writing of H. P. Lovecraft and his *Weird Tales* circle in the opening decades of the twentieth century, in this paper I will argue that to properly understand the weird tale we must examine the emergence of the form in the nineteenth century. I will pay particular attention to the intersections of publishing history, the Decadent movement, and the 1890s weird tales of Arthur Machen, M. P. Shiel, and others, to look at how a specific set of circumstances and contexts resulted in the vogue for brevity of form, and 'weirdness' of content. I will specifically focus on how Robert Louis Stevenson's portmanteau novels *New Arabian Nights* (1882) and its sequel *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter* (1885, co-written with Fanny van der Grift Stevenson) influenced the composition of Machen's similarly-constructed *The Great God Pan* (1894) and *The Three Impostors* (1895), and consider how the practical demands of the periodical market impacted on what has been called the 'high phase' of weird fiction.

James Machin is a visiting lecturer at the Royal College of Art, working in the Critical and Historical Studies department. His monograph, *Weird Fiction in Britain, 1880–1939*, was published by Palgrave in September 2018. He is the co-editor of *Faunus*, the journal of the Arthur Machen society.

PANEL 1B - QUEERING GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Fragments of Masculinity: M. R. James's Broken Tales of Broken Scholars

Evan Hayles Gledhill (@GothicBodies)

Many of M. R. James's short stories focus on characters acquiring dangerous knowledge or artefacts through scholarly pursuits; monsters are summoned by over-confident gentleman researchers and, though the encounter is rarely fatal, it provides a severe shock to the knowledge seeker. It is the reading of silent signs into spoken language, and the attempt to claim knowledge from partial information, that is the main source of fear in James's Gothic tales, linked to the revelation of the

abhuman body. Charles Darwin's confident claim for man's 'god-like' intelligence in the evolutionary scheme of life contrasts sharply with the broken scholars who encounter the bestial in James's stories. Perhaps, then, James is not so much reproducing Victorian science's 'assumption that history and civilisation are readable [and] human existence can be conceived of in levels of development', as Brian Cowlishaw claims.^[1] This would suggest that modern man should be able to parse, define, and defeat the atavistic horror, as in the adventure tales of Conan Doyle. Yet, in James's tales what releases the beast rarely works to re-contain it; there is rarely any permanent resolution to the monstrous infestation, or haunting. James's endless fragments provide only partial insights; his 'warning to the curious' thus uses the language of the fragment, of the tantalising glimpse, to attract as well as repel. I suggest that, in their fragmentary nature and fragmentary content, these tales suggest a profound ambivalence about dominant norms and espoused ideals of masculinity and scholarship. I suggest that James's stories of abnormativity are an engagement with the regulatory framework regarding what it meant to be a man at the turn of the twentieth century.

Evan Hayles Gledhill completed their PhD at Reading University in 2018, exploring monstrous bodies in the Gothic through the lens of queerness and disability. A sessional lecturer at Reading, in the Film, Theatre and Television Department, their most recent publication, 'Self-Made Monsters: Agency, Monstrosity, and Queerness in Poppy Z. Brite's Gothic Horror', is open access in *Studies in Gothic Fiction* 6.1.

'We're not the queers':

Sexuality and Gender (non)Conformity in the 1950s short fiction of Charles Beaumont.
Kevin Corstorphine (@kevcorstorphine)

Charles Beaumont (1929-1967) was a master of the short story form, specifically as it flourished in the magazine culture of 1950s America. He was the first fiction author to be published in *Playboy*, and wrote scripts for many classic *Twilight Zone* episodes. His legacy is currently being academically reassessed, and many of his stories are particularly revealing of US culture in his time, and how certain themes have developed. Not least of these are attitudes towards gender and sexuality. 'The Crooked Man' (1954) depicts one of the last few heterosexual men in a society where homosexuality has become the norm. 'Miss Gentilbelle' (1957) has a young boy being raised as a girl by his crazed mother. These themes are overt, and no doubt demonise non-heteronormativity, but are also nuanced and revealing of how these social norms have become enshrined and also challenged. Ray Bradbury claimed that Beaumont was adept at fleshing out a story from 'the merest dustfleck of notion', and this is what makes his of particular interest when discussing the short story form. This paper analyses the stories above, among others, putting Beaumont in the context of debates about gender and sexuality, including the fear of 'momism' expressed by writers like Philip Wylie, among others. This can be seen most famously in *Psycho* (1959), by Beaumont's friend Robert Bloch. The paper also tracks the development of 'geek culture' in Beaumont's writing, and its place in an ongoing debate about specific forms of masculine identity.

Kevin Corstorphine lectures in American literature at the University of Hull and has an interest in horror and Gothic fiction. His research interests are centred on representations of space and place, including haunted houses, tainted and abject spaces, thresholds and forbidden rooms. He is currently writing a cultural history of haunted house stories, and has published on authors of the weird and macabre such as Bram Stoker, Ambrose Bierce, H P Lovecraft, Robert Bloch, Richard Matheson, Shirley Jackson, Stephen King, and Clive Barker. Together with Laura Kremmel, he is the editor of *The Palgrave Handbook to Horror Literature* (2018).

Monstrous Sexuality in Ramsey Campbell's *Scared Stiff*

Sandra Mills (@SandraMills89)

Clive Barker in his introduction to Ramsey Campbell's 1987 short story collection *Scared Stiff: Tales of Sex and Death*, declared that the tales within presented the reader with 'flesh in all its sensuality, then reveal the bone beneath ... takes us into the wildest realms of perversion, and into the fever of obsession.' Focusing upon stories from this collection, this paper will analyse Campbell's use of the 'living' doll motif and study how these provocative stories deftly marry the monstrous with the sexual. An evident embrace of this motif is to be found in 'Dolls' which explores the intertwined relationship between fanatical religion, black magic, and monstrous sexuality. Similarly, 'Lilith's' is concerned with the nature of the non/human relationship, and describes in macabre depth one man's obsession with his sex doll Lilith and the horrors that ensue when she takes on a life of her own. In these stories Campbell utilises the 'living' doll motif as a source of both literal and figurative horror, blurring the boundaries between non/human monstrosities and in doing so successfully highlighting aspects of the uncanny and the macabre inherent in the everyday. Dolls alongside puppets, mannequins, and similar human-like figures proliferate Campbell's vast opus and as this paper will show his use of the animate doll trope is noteworthy and chilling; he draws on the uncanny nature of the doll's seemingly infinitely malleable form in a calculated and horrifying manner to great effect.

Sandra Mills is a PhD candidate based in the School of Arts at the University of Hull. Her thesis examines representations of the 'living' doll in contemporary horror literature and film. She has published on the work of Angela Carter, Carlo Collodi, Ramsey Campbell, and Robert Coover. Her wider research interests include; children's literature, Gothic studies, adaptation, contemporary science fiction and film.

11.30 – 11.45am Short Comfort Break [Outside MS03/04]

SESSION 2 11.45 – 12.45 (short panels)

PANEL 2A - THE TELL-TALES of TERROR: POE ADAPTED

This session will feature some short filmic adaptations of Edgar Allan Poe tales "The Tell-Tale Heart" narrated by James Mason (1953), Jan Švankmajer's "The Pit, the Pendulum and Hope" (1963), The Simpson's Tree-House of Horror take on "The Raven" (1990) and, very excitingly, this session features a pre-recorded game-play of an interactive digital reimagining of Poe's works with critical voice-over commentary from its creator.

A Hypertext of Horrors: A Post-Mortem of *Evermore*:
A Choose Your Own Edgar Allan Poe Adventure
Edgar Allan Poe and Adam Whybray (@al_gore_rhythm)

Evermore: A Choose Your Own Edgar Allan Poe Adventure was submitted to the 22nd Annual Interactive Fiction Competition in October 2016, where it was awarded 34th place. The game, produced in Twine, attempted to adapt, truncate and disfigure over sixty of Poe's short stories into a branching hypertext form. As such, while Sion Clark provided illustrations for the project, and large section of pastiche were written by Adam Whybray, the game must be considered partially authored by Poe, from whose writings the majority of the game was directly adapted. The theoretical ideas of Michael Joyce (1996) and Astrid Ensslin (2007) will undergird an argument that hypertexts like *Evermore* are only truly authored in the process of their reading, dramatising the difficulty

inherent in "adapting" a canonical literary author to this uniquely interactive medium. From this critical position, a post-mortem analysis of *Evermore*'s construction will be provided by Adam as both creator and reader in the form of a video essay.

Some reviewers of the game, such as Jenni Polodna (2016), argued *Evermore*'s pastiche was not significantly differentiated from the patriarchal and colonialist ideologies underpinning Poe's work, leading the piece to replicate the oppressive dynamics of the material it sought to deconstruct. In 2018, Adam collaborated with Polodna upon the large-scale *Anchorhead* (1998) tribute game and Lovecraft parody *Cragne Manor*, which has raised the question for the author of how to learn from the mistakes of *Evermore* in order to interrogate Lovecraft's racism in a more thoroughgoing way, an endeavour which he hopes he has, to some extent, succeeded in.

Adam Whybray currently lectures in Film Studies at the University of Suffolk. He gained his PhD in the Philosophy of Film from the University of Exeter in 2015. His book *The Art of Czech Animation: A History of Political Dissent and Allegory* is due to be published with I.B. Tauris in 2019/2020. In 2016 Adam released the interactive fiction game *Evermore: A Choose Your Own Edgar Allan Poe Adventure*, which was awarded 34th Place in the 22nd Annual Interactive Fiction Competition. Adam has previously given conference papers on the fairytale games of Stephen Lavelle and Emily Short, the 2010 London student protests, drag in Monty Python and Kids in the Hall and eyeball-headed avant-garde band The Residents. His favourite horror authors are Edgar Allan Poe, M.R. James, Shirley Jackson, Robert Aickman and Porpentine Charity Heartscape.

PANEL 2B – CREATIVE & CRITICAL ADAPTATION: LOVECRAFT AT THE THEATRE

‘Life is a Hideous Thing’: A Discussion of *Providence: The Shadow Over Lovecraft*

*Catherine Pugh (@CatherinePugh86) in conversation
with Simon Maeder and Dominic Allen (@providencecult)*

In 2018, Simon Maeder and Dominic Allen devised the short play *Providence: The Shadow Over Lovecraft*, performing at the VAULTS, the Edinburgh Fringe and the London Horror Festival. Using an intriguing blend of physical theatre, comedy and a chilling score by William Pethbridge, the play explores the often controversial life of H.P. Lovecraft (led by Lovecraft himself and the ghost of Edgar Allan Poe) through the development of several of his short stories. A key part of the show involves the staging of these short stories, including *Shadow Over Innsmouth*, *The Call of Cthulu* and *Herbert West-Reanimator*. The play therefore not only navigates the challenge of presenting these stories to a theatrical audience, but also integrating them with the main narrative. The actors must (re)craft these stories with only two actors, a virtually blank stage and minimal props, relying on their acting skills, an effective sound palette and the horror of the stories themselves to create terror, unease and disgust. Without the aid of special effects, how is this terror created? What is it about the chosen stories that makes them effective in a theatrical setting? Why did the company choose such well-known narratives and how did they transform them into these short vignettes of terror as well as using them to form the main action? This presentation explores the challenges of adapting the stories for the stage and the techniques used in order to maintain the essential horror of these influential texts.

Catherine Pugh completed her PhD at the University of Essex and is now a writer and independent scholar. Working with horror and science fiction in all their forms, she is particularly fascinated by ideas of monstrosity and mental illness versus literary madness. Her research interests concern disability, mental illness/madness, metamorphic monsters and horror landscapes. She has

contributed to books and journals on television, film and theatre, including *The Walking Dead*, *Game of Thrones* and the works of Joss Whedon.

Simon Maeder has been creating theatre professionally since 2011. He is a Lecoq-trained, physical comedian who is best known for his work with his award winning company, Superbolt Theatre (creators of 'The Jurassic Parks' and 'Mars Actually'). Outside of Superbolt he created the hiphop musical 'Licensed To Ill' which received 3 'Offie Award' nominations and a Theatre & Technology Award. He also creates outdoor theatre with Wet Picnic. Currently he is working for Punchdrunk as part of their enrichment team, performing shows for children in schools.

Dominic Allen is an Artistic Director of Belt Up Theatre and is the creator of 'A Common Man', his critically acclaimed solo show about Thomas Paine. He trained at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School and went on to win the prestigious Peter O'Toole Prize. He has worked as an actor with Sally Cookson, Tom Morris and Les Enfants Terribles, and as a puppeteer with Finn Caldwell. His writing has been performed in the UK, USA and Australia.

12.45 – 13.30pm **LUNCH [FOYER]**

ROUNDTABLE 13.30 – 14.25 (short panel)

PUBLISHING HOUSES, PRESERVATION, AND TRANSLATION

We are joined by three representatives of independent publishers of Gothic/Horror/Weird fiction to discuss the publication of new works, the preservation of older works, and the translation of Anglophone works, and open up dialogue with the audience on these issues.

Peter Coleborn of *The Alchemy Press*; <https://alchemypress.wordpress.com/>
Hannah Kate of *Hic Dragones*; <https://www.hic-dragones.co.uk/> @HicDragones
Maria Giakaniki of *Ars Nocturna* <https://arsnocturna.eu/>

14.25 – 14.30pm **VERY QUICK COMFORT BREAK**

SESSION 3 14.30 – 16.00

3A - CREATIVE & CRITICAL: SHORT FICITON

A pre-formed panel of three emerging writers seeking to combine the critical with the creation of new fiction.

"Evie" by Cheryl Powell (@chezzapowell): How do vampires reflect the angst of society around child abuse/child protection? Is parental love always positive? When does parental love become obsessive or even perverse? These are some of the critical questions which will be raised by Cheryl Powell before a reading of *Evie*, a new gothic short story casting the vampire as a teenage girl and exploring what this means for Evie's parents - how far would a parent go to protect a child, even though she is a monster?

Cheryl Powell writes dark stories and weird fiction about the flawed and the grotesque; and about transgressive angst. She has an MA with Warwick Writing Programme and her short stories have appeared in *The Mechanics Institute Review 2018*, *Litro*, *Everyday Fiction*, *Spelk*, *Rattles Tales*, *Breaking the Surface*, *Kamena*, *Flash Fiction Magazine* and in the *Disturbing the Beast Anthology* published by Boudicca Press. The Liars' League, Hong Kong will perform her work later this year.

“*Green Fire*” by *Vanwy Arif*: The tradition of the colonial as ‘other’ is sadly well established within Victorian Gothic Literature. Can re-telling of the Islamic Jinn story establish Islamic story telling as part of the British Gothic tradition? This is something Vanwy Arif will seek to investigate critically and creatively in her piece, which seeks to explore the other in her gothic short story focused on the world of the Jinn.

Vanwy Arif is a writer of Gothic short stories. A member of the Warwick Writing Programme, Vanwy was long-listed for *The Room* story competition in 2017. She has read her work in London and Warwickshire. Vanwy has an interest in Islamic tradition and has attended the Islamic Studies PGA at Warwick University.

“The Legend of Bluedog” by *Susannah Heffernan*: Edgar Allan Poe, serialising his stories in *Blackwood’s Magazine*, is credited as the inventor of the first-person detective story, with its maniacally verbal narrator who is almost clever enough to get away with murder but who can’t stop himself from confessing his crimes. Susannah Heffernan will read and discuss her gothic short story, *The Legend of Bluedog*, a tale about the mysterious death of an urban legend, and the woman investigating the crime: a new imagining of Poe’s unreliable narrator.

Susannah Heffernan is an emerging author of speculative fiction. Having gained her MA from the Warwick Writing Programme, she is currently a PhD candidate in Literary Practice. She has performed her work in London and the West Midlands, and appears in Open Pen magazine and the anthology, Singularity50, which awarded her ‘Most Outstanding Original Voice’.

3B - DISTURBED AND DISEASED IMAGINATIONS

Der Struwwelpeter: Scaring Children to Educate them Since 1845

Camilla Schroeder (@cdcschroeder)

Since 1845, Heinrich Hoffmann’s *Der Struwwelpeter* has educated German children on various issues, such as animal cruelty, judging someone by their skin colour and adhering to societal norms. While in other countries violence was turned down in children’s books, this volume depicted graphic caricatural examples of what happens to children who misbehave.

This paper will explore how through the use of horror, Hoffmann not only scared children into behaving properly, but he used the stories and illustrations to give children an outlet to confront their fears. Therefore, the focus is on three tales and their appeal and reception: ‘Die Geschichte vom Daumenlutscher’ [The Story of the Thumb-Sucker], who has his thumbs cut off by a tailor because he refused to stop sucking his thumb; ‘Die gar traurige Geschichte mit dem Feuerzeug’ [The Sad Tale of the Match-Box] about a girl who plays with matches and burns to death; and ‘Die Geschichte vom Suppen-Kaspar’ [The Tale of Soup-Kaspar] about a boy who refuses to eat his soup and wastes away and dies.

The stories included in *Der Struwwelpeter*, have not only influenced German literature, but are referenced in various international works, such as Astrid Lindgren's *Pippi Longstocking* (1945), Agatha Christie's *Curtain* (1975), Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* (1984), as well as in TV-shows, including *Doctor Who*, *Family Guy* and the US-version of *The Office* (2006). Through the exploration of its influence, this paper will consider what creates the ongoing fascination with *Der Struwwelpeter*, that even after 173 years the tales still intrigue and terrify us.

Camilla Schroeder recently finished writing her PhD thesis on the English-language translations of Grimms' fairy tales at Kingston University. She has given several papers at conferences, including: 'E.T.A. Hoffmann and the Brothers Grimm: The Sandman-motif in modern German Gothic fiction', 'Animalising the Male and Silencing the Female: Cursing in Grimms' fairy tales', 'The Genrefication of 'Cinderella'', and 'Dorothea Viehmann – framing the narrative of the Grimms' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*'.

The Cthulhu Mythos: Lovecraft's Diseased Fancy

Oliver Rendle (@OMRendle)

Is there more to the universe than what science can currently explain? And would we regret finding out? This paper will align two seemingly opposed literary genres; the cosmic horror made popular by H.P Lovecraft and fairytales, "one of the most obvious and (to some) outrageous forms of 'escapist' literature" (Tolkien). The enduring popularity of Lovecraft's Cthulhu mythos stands testament to a timeless ontological anxiety, one that has become increasingly examined, creatively and critically, since the beginning of the twentieth century. The focal point at the heart of Lovecraft's cosmic horror is the revelation of humanity's cosmic insignificance, a crisis of self-worth resulting in outright horror according to Lovecraft's aggressively atheistic beliefs. Indifference and insignificance are also themes of faerie stories as defined by J.R.R Tolkien in his essay 'On Fairy-Stories', a systematic defence and appraisal of escapism. My paper argues that the characteristics that Tolkien identifies within fairytales can also be recognised, albeit in a perverted way, within Lovecraft's horror fiction, suggesting an alternate interpretation of the same ontological source material. By analysing a select number of Lovecraftian short tales, my paper will show how this writer corrupts elements of plot, setting, and theme to pervert the literary characteristics of the fairytale tradition—thereby twisting what Lovecraft considered a naive religious hope into ontological dread.

Oliver Rendle recently graduated with a MLitt in Fantasy literature from Glasgow University, where he specialised in Horror, Humour and Pessimistic Philosophy. He has presented at Glasgow International Fantasy Conversations and Lancaster's Fantastika Conference, and looks forward to starting his PhD on the Philosophy of Art-Horror at Glasgow University in 2019.

Disturbingly Alive and Living Cityscapes in China Miéville's Short Weird Fiction

Daria Denisova (@DariaD_Denisova)

In an acute remark on China Miéville's writing, Abigail Nussbaum points out the paramount importance of cities to the stories he creates (2009). Not only do cities form a background to the narrated events, but also become their active participants. It is particularly the case with Miéville's short stories which foreground the secret and terrifyingly robust life of cities and their material parts. In line with the weird fiction tradition of placing agency into non-human hands, Miéville endows cities with powers of physical action and malicious intent towards city dwellers. Starting out with establishing the connection between classic weird fiction stories and China Miéville's writing, this

paper aims to explore how Miéville reworks weird fiction tropes to express anxiety over “the alienation of the commodified architecture which surrounds us” (Miéville, 1998).

Daria Denisova is a PhD Student at Shevchenko Institute of Literature of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. Her PhD project focuses on China Miéville’s writing in relation to the weird fiction tradition. Daria presented some of her research findings concerning anxiety and non-human agency in weird fiction at international conferences in Belgrade, Serbia (May 18-19, 2018) and Düsseldorf, Germany (November 15-17, 2018).

16.00-16.30 Refreshment Break [Foyer]

SESSION 4 16.30 – 17.30

4A – RE-EVALUATING SHIRLEY JACKSON

Missing Women and Spectral ‘Presence’ in Shirley Jackson’s ‘The Missing Girl’ and ‘The Good Wife’
Robert Lloyd (@lloyd_robert)

In both the popular and critical imagination, Shirley Jackson is principally associated with two texts: her 1959 ghost story *The Haunting of Hill House*, and her short story ‘The Lottery’. The latter is widely recognised as one of the most famous and unsettling tales in American literature. However, Jackson wrote close to 200 short stories throughout her career, many of which have been obscured by The Lottery’s impressive reputation. Although valuable critical work has been done on Jackson’s writing, from scholars such as Joan Wylie Hall, S. T. Joshi and Darryl Hattenhauer, an important thematic strain in her short stories has been almost completely overlooked – spectrality. This paper argues for the importance of this modality for understanding Jackson’s presentation of women’s lives and experiences in mid-century sub/urban America, and looks in particular at the phenomenon of the ‘missing’ woman in two short stories - ‘The Missing Girl’ and ‘The Good Wife’. I argue that the configuration of spectral femininity in these texts is bound up with the attempt to (re)establish women’s ‘place’ in the postwar world and to define the categorical boundaries of ‘acceptable’ femininity. In both stories, a perceived failure to act in accordance with these imperatives results in the enforced erasure of the female protagonists. The paper traces the different ways in which these disappearances (both literal and figurative) can be interpreted as an instantiation of spectrality, and argues that a recurrent concern with the desubstantialization of femininity animates Jackson’s short fiction, and, crucially, our understanding of her writing more generally.

Rob Lloyd is a postgraduate research student in English Literature at Cardiff University, currently in the 4th year of a part-time PhD. His thesis, supervised by Dr Becky Munford, examines how the conceptualisation of female identity is articulated through the conventions and practices of spectrality/the spectral in the writing(s) of Shirley Jackson. This paper draws upon research for the fourth chapter, which looks at the different representations of spectral subjectivity across a selection of Jackson’s short stories.

**A Subtle Female Horror:
Shirley Jackson’s Weird Short Stories and the Disruption of Everyday Life**
Maria Giakaniki

Shirley Jackson has been broadly recognized for her seminal Gothic horror novel *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959) and the short horror story ‘The Lottery’ (1948). Nonetheless, Jackson has also

penned some other excellent novels, such as *We Have always Lived in the Castle*, *The Sundial* and *The Bird's Nest*, as well as a great variety of lesser known, weird/uncanny short stories, which, during the last decade, have started to be re-evaluated by scholars and enjoyed by a greater number of readers.

Jackson's short stories, at first sight, seem to be realistic narratives of ordinary people's lives; yet, soon the safe and familiar reality which the central characters experience, is unexpectedly disrupted by weird -almost uncanny- occurrences (which can be the projection of inner hauntings), provoking certain feelings within the protagonists, which range from simple discomfort to profound destabilization. Moreover, the reader also experiences the same unsettling emotions, through this ingenious combination of the mundane with the strange and the bizarre, which often verges on the fantastic, yet it always maintain a sense of ambivalence. At the same time, Jackson's tales can be seen as metaphors for such complex psychological and social issues as fragmented identity, mental instability, domestic fragility and urban/suburban paranoia.

Such tales include 'Pillar of Salt', 'Nightmare' and 'Paranoia', which refer to lurking mental instability triggered by a stressful urban landscape; 'The Tooth' and 'Beautiful Stranger' where inner imbalance and psychic dislocation are projected on the familiar environment; 'Louisa Please Come Home' and 'The Missing Girl', narratives of inexplicable disappearances that disclose the crevices in suburban regularity; 'The Dummy' and 'Charles' which depict the fragmentation of the self through the absurd; 'The Intoxicated' and 'Colloquy', which highlight the fear of chaos and collapse of reality; 'The Honeymoon of Mrs Smith' and 'What a Thought', tales of domestic horror where sanity and normality are at serious stake; 'The Bus' and 'The Story we used to Tell' where the female protagonists are trapped within a 'twilight zone' possibly of their own invention.

In this respect, my purpose is to discuss a number of short stories written by Shirley Jackson throughout her career -tales that allude to the uncanniness and ambivalence lurking beneath the surface of American urban and suburban normality and commonality- in order to present her as a writer of first class weird short fiction with strong psychological subtext, of the middle 20th century.

Maria Giakaniki has a degree in English Language and Literature (National University of Athens) and a Mlitt in Gothic Imagination (University of Stirling). She is an independent scholar and co-owner/editor in chief of Ars Nocturna, a small publishing house in Athens that focuses on Gothic fiction. Her Greek translations include J.S. Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (2008) and R.L. Stevenson's *Olalla* (2016); she has compiled and co-translated the anthologies *Gothic Tales by Victorian Women Writers* and *Gothic Tales by Modern Women Writers*. She has written reviews and articles for literary journals such as The Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies and The Green Book and she has co-edited the short story anthology *Bending to Earth: Strange Stories by Irish Women* by Swan River Press.

4B - MONSTROUS FAIRYTALES

Terror is in the Eye of the Beholder: The Horror of Beauty in Fairy Tale Narratives *Silvia Storti (@silviaelisa22)*

Beauty is ubiquitous in fairy tales; in particular, feminine beauty has been recognised as a recurring theme, and the message in the tales is often consistent with other messages women are exposed to about the importance of feminine beauty. From *Sleeping Beauty* and *Snow White* to *Beauty & the Beast* and *Donkeyskin*, it is inevitable that the subject would be tackled by fairy tale retellings. Originally told at fireside gatherings or in spinning circles, folk and fairy tales were created by adults for adult audiences, and retellings, reworkings, and adaptations have looked back at the past of these stories and brought it to the fore. In these newly fashioned narratives, the very real dangers the "original" fireside tales might have been warning people about are transformed into metaphors for

the dangers of today. I look at examples drawn from the oeuvre of Angela Carter, Sarah Pinborough, Emma Donoghue, and Robin McKinley to explore how, thus refashioned, these new narratives may come across as the darker cousins or sequels to the tales they take inspiration from. In folklore as in horror, what Barbara Creed calls the “monstrous-feminine” wears many faces, and modern fairy-tale narratives can go deeper and darker, exploring with gusto the potential for horror that many tales offer. What I aim to show is how, in the hands of women writers, the discourse on beauty has been challenged and problematised to expose the horror of beauty, to talk about femininity and sexuality, monstrosity and alterity.

Silvia Storti is a doctoral researcher in the School of Arts, Culture, and Communication at Kingston University London and a member of the Angela Carter Society. Her research is a socio-cultural contextual analysis of villainy through the concept of the Other, in the form this takes as orientalism, gender roles, and the monstrous feminine. Currently working on the fairy tales of “Bluebeard”, “Little Red Riding Hood”, and “Sleeping Beauty”, in particular as retold by Anne Thackeray Ritchie and Angela Carter, her thesis looks at villains as figures of memetic transformation. It focuses on what impact cultural changes have had on the representation of villainy and alterity, and how literary and cinematic retellings have adapted to reflect those changes.

Wolfish Affinity and Female Sexuality in Angela Carter’s “Wolf-Alice” *Chantal Chien-hui Hsu*

This study examines Angela Carter’s gothic reimagining of “Little Red Riding Hood” in her short story “Wolf-Alice” and excavates its espousal of non-normative representations of female sexuality. Tracing the medieval folkloric origins of the werewolf, the project undertakes a non-anthropocentric reading of “Wolf-Alice” and shows how its treatment of the human-wolf relationship deviates from that of “Little Red Riding Hood”, both in the matriarchy-oriented oral tradition and Charles Perrault’s later canonized, didactic adaptation. While the archetype of lupine shape-shifter permeates in folklore and Gothic fictions as personification of sinful sexuality, few have considered it in light of feminine power and animal agency. Specifically, this paper juxtaposes the animality of the Duke and Wolf-Alice to construct non-human ways of bonding and empathy. It is noticeable that a scene where Wolf-Alice recognizes herself in a specular image echoes the Lacanian premise of the mirror stage. Nevertheless, without valorizing human speech or dichotomizing nature and civilization, this reimagined tale celebrates her wolfishness and liminality as a non-speaking subject. Read in tandem with her menstruation cycle which is frequently deemed to represent sexual awakening, Wolf-Alice’s rediscovery of herself through fragmented consciousness comes to embody a liminal subjectivity that does not presuppose the repudiation of femininity or animal instincts. Overall, this paper demonstrates how Carter plays with the negative portrayal of female sexuality in the fairy tale tradition and deconstructs the Cartesian subject of “*cogito ergo sum*” by granting her heroine an animalistic “voice” that has been marginalized from both the convention of fairy tales and the theoretical framework of psychoanalysis.

Chien-hui Hsu holds an MA in English and American Literature from National Chengchi University, Taiwan. Her research interests focus on queer theory, affect studies, horror films and Gothic fictions. Her thesis examines the affective dynamics in Edgar Allan Poe’s works with the aim of contextualizing masculinity and same-sex desire in antebellum sensation fictions. She presented her paper “A Kantian Reinterpretation: Supernal Beauty in ‘Ligeia’” in the Fourth International Edgar Allan Poe Conference and has worked as a TEFL teacher and freelance translator since 2012.

17.30-17.35 Very Quick comfort break

KEYNOTE 17.35 – 19.00

Dr Melissa Edmundson @MelissaMakala

‘Terra/Terror Incognita: Women Writers and the Colonial Gothic Short Story’

Dr Melissa Edmundson is a lecturer at Clemson University in South Carolina and received her PhD at the University of South Carolina. She is a literary historian with interests in 19th and 20th-century British women writers, ghost stories, the Gothic, and Anglo-Indian popular fiction, and particular interests in representations of empire and gender in British literature and print culture. Much of Dr Edmundson’s work centres on (re)discovering forgotten women writers who excelled in the areas of supernatural literature and popular fiction, as, for instance, in her editorial work on and critical introductions for Alice Perrin’s *East of Suez* with Victorian Secrets Publishing in 2011 and Dinah Mulock Craik’s *The Half-Caste: An Old Governess’s Tale* with Broadview Press in 2016. Her first monograph, *Women’s Ghost Literature in Nineteenth-Century Britain* was published by University of Wales Press in 2013, and surveyed social elements in supernatural stories and poems from nineteenth-century British women writers. Her most recent book, *Women’s Colonial Gothic Writing, 1850-1930: Haunted Empire* published with Palgrave last year, allowed for a deeper exploration into British women’s involvement with colonialism that had emerged in earlier research. *Women’s Colonial Gothic Writing* spans the British Empire (Canada, the Caribbean, Africa, India, Australia, and New Zealand) and includes works by Susanna Moodie, Isabella Valancy Crawford, Florence Marryat, Mary Kingsley, Margery Lawrence, Bithia Mary Croker, Alice Perrin, Barbara Baynton, Mary Fortune, and Katherine Mansfield, and it is this material, and some of these writers that inform the subject of our first keynote “Terra/Terror Incognita: Women Writers and the Colonial Gothic Short Story”.

CONFERENCE DINNER:

The pre-booked dinner will take place at Xananas on central campus (opposite the Arts Centre, and above the post-office/rootes grocery store)

Other Options: Warwick is a campus university meaning it is not located within a town or city. If you are staying in Coventry there are lots of places to eat, but if you are staying near Warwick University then there are a couple of cheap options on campus such as **The Dirty Duck**; which is a Student Union pub serving food, **Fusion**; open until 9pm which serves a range of food fairly quickly, but is also shows Sky Sports and BT Sport live games every week so be aware it could be busy and noisy.

DAY TWO

SESSION 5 9.00 – 10.30am

PANEL 5A - (DIS)EMBODIMENT

Male Fantasy, Male Nightmare: Disembodied Female Hands and the Victorian Ghost Story *Shona McEvoy*

This paper will explore the trope of the disembodied female hand in the Victorian ghost story, and its relationship to the aestheticized, fetishized object of the white, upper-class female hand, a popular motif in the period's sculpture and jewellery. Drawing on the contemporary belief that bodily remains retained individual agency, and the documented emergence of increasingly active, powerful ghostly hands in spiritualist seances, these spectral females hands are both terrifying and highly erotic, with the presence of a body and controlling intelligence at the end of the hand always implied. The paper will explore why these vengeful female hands are overwhelming written about by men, and will posit that these stories are explorations of male guilt and perceived impotence, as signalled by the lack of living women characters. Indeed, such female hands are primarily depicted as turning on the male protagonists who jilted them in life, thereby enacting their revenge, although Jennifer Bann argues that the idea of female agency in such ghost stories changes over the course of the nineteenth century, from active power to a more general sense of freedom. However, I would propose that male writers, in increasingly focusing on the sentimental ghost and the labouring female hand, are attempting to return these hands to the domestic space, thus figuring ghostly life as another form of entrapment. Thus I argue that such stories do not express radical notions of female agency, but are in fact at heart deeply conservative.

Shona McEvoy is a Master's student at Magdalen College, Oxford, studying English Literature (1830-1914). Her research interests lie in the Victorian supernatural, and she is currently working on papers examining the emergence of the psychologically complex vampire in nineteenth-century fiction, and parody and the fin-de-siècle ghost story. This research builds on work completed during her undergraduate degree at Clare College, Cambridge, including dissertations exploring spectrality in Dickens's fiction, and the Southern Gothic in the short stories of Flannery O'Connor.

Hysterical Bodies and the Corporeal Grotesque in Rhoda Broughton's 'Ghost' Stories *Louise Benson James - @LoubreeJames*

Rhoda Broughton's supernatural tales are regularly referred to by literary critics as 'ghost stories', yet very few of them contain any ghosts. Instead they involve prophetic visions, physical antagonists such as murderers and thieves, ambiguous threats, unspecified "presences". Broughton self-consciously subverts the conventions and clichés of the ghost story form, manipulating the readerly motivation for thrills in order to reset expectations of genre and theme. By misleading the reader to expect ghosts, Broughton renders her female characters – obstinately realistic and physical women – starkly present and solid. She satirises a medical use of ghostliness-as-metaphor, troubling the equation of spiritual insight with symptoms of female psychological disorder, and employs visceral,

grotesque horror. Her stories go against the grain of much contemporary criticism on the female-authored ghost story, which focuses on the spectrality of women's place in Victorian society. Broughton's corporeality and materiality leads to a description of female bodies which is unusual in Victorian fiction. Her characters resist the limits imposed on women by medical and cultural narratives about their natures, social roles, and biology. Vanessa D. Dickerson's assertion that women's ghost stories 'provided a counter to the scientism, scepticism, and materialism of the age' disallows a space in which women can write from a position of science, scepticism and materialism, and that can itself be a radical action. Broughton lays claim to a progressive space in which women can think about, and speak about, female bodies scientifically. For Broughton the ghost story becomes, counterintuitively, a space in which to interrogate materialism.

Louise Benson James is a doctoral candidate and teaching assistant at the University of Bristol. Her thesis "Hysteria and the Gothic in Women's Fiction" examines the intersections of medical hysteria and gothic language in fiction by women and medical texts in the long nineteenth-century. She is the co-editor of the Postgraduate Journal of Medical Humanities, and coordinates the University of Bristol seminar series 'Literary and Visual Landscapes'.

Revolting Bodies:

Uncanny Excess and Illness Narratives in Michel Faber's 'Miss Fatt and Miss Thinne'*

Heather Ballantyne (@_H_Ballantyne)

Building on Arthur Frank's 1995 taxonomy of illness narratives, this paper argues that Michel Faber's fictional representation of the uncanny anorexic body exploits our cultural uneasiness towards narratives of illness that prioritize mortality (or "chaos") over recovery (or "restitution"). Fredrik Svenaeus and Drew Leder have outlined some of the ways in which the anorexic illness experience interacts with the Freudian conception of the uncanny (2013). Faber's 'Miss Fatt and Miss Thinne' can be seen to engage thematically with several of these same gothic tropes through the construction of the chaotic bodies presented in this short story (1998). A sense of predestination haunts Faber's text as both characters lose their bodily autonomy in diametrically opposed ways: one woman gorging herself into ill health, and the other deteriorating through starvation. This uncanniness is further compounded by Faber's manipulation of the short story form, which situates the reader in the same liminal zone that snares the titular characters.

Having established how Faber's use of form and structure aligns the reader with these two out-of-control bodies, this paper demonstrates how the reading experience contrasts against the normative perspective of the medical practitioners within the text who are unable to inhabit the subjective position of the chaotic body. Faber dramatizes a metamorphosis from "normal" to "abnormal" through the development of this jarring communicative gap, presenting the anorexic body as a monstrous figure, the focus of a normative anxiety towards the materialization of mortality (Shildrick 1999).

***CONTENT WARNING** Please note this paper contains discussion of eating disorders and related medical research.

Heather Ballantyne is a PhD English Literature candidate and a Research Events Coordinator at the University of Surrey's School of Literature and Languages. She is affiliated with the Techne AHRC Doctoral Training Partnership, and her thesis 'Revolting Reflections' explores the presence of gothic motifs within fictional portrayals of eating disorders produced in the twenty-first century. Her interdisciplinary approach synthesizes medical anthropology and gothic literary criticism in order to contextualize our cultural perception of the anorexic body as haunted by its own mortality.

5B - RE-EVALUATING THE WEIRD

Cosmic Horror or Racial Paranoia? Artistic Expression in H. P. Lovecraft *Neil Weaving*

Art is an object of fear and fascination in H. P. Lovecraft's work. In 'The Music of Erich Zann', 'Pickman's Model', and 'The Call of Cthulhu' art is depicted as dangerous and beguiling, a direct conduit by which Outside agencies can seep into mundane reality and threaten its very existence. However, the racialised presentation of art in his work suggests that for Lovecraft the capacity of art to influence the white social core on behalf of the ethnically marginalised is equally deserving of our horror as its connection to the Weird—and lines between the two are consistently made blurry. As we grapple with Lovecraft's monumental legacy, his attitude towards art therefore provides a lever by which to get at one of the most troubling questions his work raises: the extent to which the existential implications of his fiction can ever be disentangled from its latent or explicit white supremacy, particularly in the context of American paranoias about jazz and the anti-Semitic revulsion to literary and artistic modernism typified by Nazi Germany's Degenerate Art Exhibition of 1937.

Contrasting postcolonial theories of artistic transmission with the Weird ontologies of critics such as Eugene Thacker, this paper interrogates the entangled racial and existential anxieties surrounding art in Lovecraft's writing, as well as the implications this has for his own aesthetic choices: his archaic style that nevertheless carries with it innovations that can sometimes appear to destabilise the text from within.

Neil Weaving is completing an MA in English Literature at the University of Warwick and previously studied at the University of Glasgow. When he's not writing about pulp horror, his research interests include William Blake, ecocriticism, and the capacity for literature to enact radical change.

An Alternative Approach to Supernatural Manifestations: The Weird Fiction of Algernon Blackwood *Antonio Alcalá González (@Tony_Alc77)*

Inside the Gothic tradition of Gothic Horror, the presence of supernatural elements brings about doubts regarding the frames around what humanity has historically labelled as "the real". Following this tradition, Weird Tale authors from the beginning of the twentieth century usually rendered the irruption of the supernatural as a cause of an extreme fear that paralyzes the rationality of their protagonists. They survive the confrontation, but with a firm conviction about the necessity to keep undisturbed the veil bordering the limited knowledge humanity has about nature. If civilization is to continue, that border is not to be crossed by any others. However, in the specific case of Algernon Blackwood, a writer from the referred time, his works present a different perspective regarding the arrival of the supernatural. In his stories "The old man of visions", "The Touch of Pan", and "The Valley of the Beasts", the protagonists' encounters with unknown forces reveals to them the existence of a much wider nature than what civilization has taught them to consider. The purpose of this paper is to explore how, though their first reaction to the encounter is an extreme fear that threatens reasoning, these protagonists come out from their experiences with an expanded comprehension of a nature that has revealed to them as something not to be contested but just accepted as the larger force it is.

Antonio Alcalá González is researcher and professor of contemporary literature at Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico City, and lecturer on Gothic Literature at UNAM. One of the pioneers in the recent raise of interest for the Gothic in Mexico, he is founder of the *International Gothic Literature Congress* which has been held biennially at UNAM since 2008. His work includes having published in journals of Mexican universities and edited the Gothic Studies special issue *Nautical Gothic*. He has also contributed to the volumes *A Companion to American Gothic*, *Tropical Gothic in Literature and Culture*, and *Oscuras latitudes: Una cartografía de los estudios góticos*.

The Weird Tale as Anthropocene Parable

Gry Ulstein

The last decade has seen increased scholarly attention towards the ecocritical potential of the weird. Gerry Canavan and Andrew Hageman suggest that the upsurge in such scholarship can be attributed to how “the awful and ambiguous worlds of weird fiction feel eerily similar to our rising ecological awareness” (2016). This eerie similarity has been picked up by a variety of contemporary critics, as can be observed in for instance Timothy Morton’s ecological “weird knowing” (2016) and “Cthulhulike” hyperobjects (2013), or in Donna Haraway’s “Chthulucene” (2016). The weird’s ecocritical potential can be tied to its fundamental destabilisation of human knowledge, significance, and agency: weird tales confront their characters and readers with events or objects that appear instinctively and empirically “wrong” (Fisher 2016), yet exist and persist in the weird storyworld. Similarly, my point of departure in this paper is that the weird’s intrusion of the unfathomable into the perceivable, of the global into the local, of monstrosity into normality subverts the human sense of mastery over the lived environment and challenges readers to resituate themselves in the increasingly weirded time of the Anthropocene. The new weird echoes the traditional weird’s monstrous intrusions and explorations of “unnerving edgelands” (Luckhurst 2017), but it also displays a more explicit interest in the weird’s potential as an aesthetic platform where environmental anxieties can be dissected, challenged, and metabolised. By comparing the ecological outlook of older (Lovecraft, Blackwood) and more recent (Miéville, Kíernan, VanderMeer) weird short fiction, this paper seeks to explore the usefulness in reading the weird tale as Anthropocene parable.

Gry Ulstein is a PhD researcher at Ghent University, Belgium, where she is a member of the ERC-funded project “Narrating the Mesh” (NARMESH) led by prof. Marco Caracciolo. Gry’s main focus is on weird fiction, comparing earlier and more recent forms of weird and investigating the weird’s ecocritical potential as “catastrophic” climate fiction.

10.30 - 11.00 Refreshment Break [Foyer]

SESSION 6 11.00-12.30

6A – LIMINAL STATES

**“A Sluggish, Hellish, Night-Abomination”:
Weirding Spectrality in M.R. James’s *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary***
Henry Bartholomew (@HenryBartholom6)

“Quis est iste qui venit?” (Who is this who is coming?). This eerie, ambiguous inscription - found on the reverse of an ancient bronze whistle by the unfortunate Professor Parkins in James’s “Oh, Whistle, and I’ll Come to You, My Lad” - is the essential dictum of the Jamesian ghost story; the promise of a blood-curdling invasion from something otherwise than human, something *outside* the

natural order. For the poststructuralist, this inscription also captures the sense in which the ghost flickers between the “always-already” and the “to come” (*l’avenir*); appearing as both an uncanny return *and* an unstable futurity. In Jacques Derrida’s influential study, *Specters of Marx* (1993), the ghostly and the spectral signify a disarticulation of the metaphysics of presence. However, as numerous readers of James’s fiction have noted, from H.P. Lovecraft to China Miéville, James’s ghosts are terrifying precisely because they are all too present - groping, stalking, touching and clawing their victims. They are, almost without exception, weirdly corporeal and embodied. Taking its cue from the points of contact between spectrality and object-oriented ontology, this paper examines how the “ghosts” James summons in *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary* (1904) presage a *weird spectrality*; one that can help to reassess how we think about (and with) the ghost and the ghostly.

Henry Bartholomew is an AHRC DTP-funded PhD student at the University of Exeter and Bath Spa University. His research examines the overlap between the recent “speculative turn” in philosophy and the study of the Gothic. His work focuses primarily on the writings of M.R. James, Algernon Blackwood, Florence Marryat, and Vernon Lee.

I no longer live in this house - The Liminality of Undeath in the Works of R Murray Gilchrist*

Daniel Pietersen (@pietersender)

Born in 1867, R Murray Gilchrist was a celebrated author of gothic short fiction, with work published in *The Yellow Book* and the likes of Hugh Walpole and HG Wells counted amongst his friends. Today, however, he is largely unknown with the two main collections of his work now out of print.

In his work, Gilchrist blended Poe’s gothic themes with the decadence of Baudelaire to create tales that discussed, albeit obliquely, the subtleties of class, gender and sexuality. In this paper I will investigate how Gilchrist creates this blurring of traditional views through his use of death and the possibility of undeath. For Gilchrist, death is not a binary state, nor even a state to always be feared, but more a liminal transition which can fluctuate between multiple phase states, either by allowing the dead agency in the living world or by blending disparate times so the long-dead live once more.

Through this investigation, I will show how Gilchrist’s writings not only form a canon of proto-weird tales that leads into the fantastical works of authors like Clark Ashton Smith but also how he uses the liminality of undeath to speak about his experience of the world.

***CONTENT WARNING** *Suicide, mental illness*

Daniel Pietersen is an independent scholar, interested in the gothic repetitions of horror theory. His weird fiction has been published in *The Audient Void* and *Mycelia* and non-fiction works on the liminality of folk horror and the limit experience in Clive Barker’s work are pending publication in *Revenant* and *Thinking Horror* respectively. Daniel lives in Edinburgh with his wife, who is a necromancer, and dog, who isn’t a necromancer but still really likes bones.

Opowiadania bizarre (Bizarre Stories) by Olga Tokarczuk Agnieszka Łowczanin

The Polish writer, Olga Tokarczuk, became a recognisable literary name in the English-speaking countries when in 2018 she received The Man Booker International Prize for her 2007 novel *Bieguni*, translated into English by Jennifer Croft as *Flights*. Tokarczuk has been an important and established literary voice in Poland for the past two decades, admired for her highly poetic prose,

which is imaginistically vivid, historically conscious, and deeply rooted in local rhythms and flavours. At the same time, the world she recreates in her novels and stories is one that knows no boundaries, not only between now and then, but also between here and there. Her prose demonstrates how languages and, through them, cultures and ideas coexist and filter through political divisions. Tokarczuk's most recently published collection of short stories, *Opowiadania bizarre* (2018), *Bizarre Stories*, aptly illustrates her ability to capture the fluidity of existence, as the spirits of the past persistently refuse to be confined to the afterlife. This imagistic opening up to the world of the spirits of the natural world and the world of the dead allows her to explore the sensation of bizarreness. The bizarre is for her both terrifying and comic, familiar and inexplicable. The condensed form of a short story enhances its effects on the readers, as each of the stories concludes in a surprising, and almost epigrammatic way.

Agnieszka Łowczanin lectures in the Department of British Literature and Culture at the University of Łódź, Poland. Her research interests focus on early Gothic fiction, and most recently on its dissemination in central Europe. Her book publications include a monograph *A Dark Transfusion: The Polish Literary Response to Early English Gothic. Anna Mostowska Reads Ann Radcliffe* (2018), and two co-edited volumes *All that Gothic* (2014) and *Gothic Peregrinations: the Unexplored and Re-explored Gothic Territories* (2019).

6B - GLOBAL GOTHIC: ADAPTATION/ DECOLONISATION

Aspects of the Gothic and the Uncanny in *Les Vampires* (1915–16)

Tim Major @onasteamer

Louis Feuillade's 1915–16 film serial, *Les Vampires*, was profoundly influenced by Gothic imagery in stories by authors such as E. T. A. Hoffmann and Edgar Allan Poe. Other factors contributing to the eerie tone of the ten-episode serial were real-life horrors experienced by Parisians during the Great War, from the 'Siege of Paris' to trench warfare, as well as folkloric tales and societal concerns about the 'Nouvelle Femme'. This paper also demonstrates that the serial influenced the Surrealists in their attempts to understand the subjective horrors within dreams, and analyses the ways in which Feuillade drew upon the developing field of psychoanalysis to establish an atmosphere of paranoia and the 'uncanny'.

Tim Major's monograph about Louis Feuillade's 1915 serial, *Les Vampires*, was published in 2018, incorporating analysis of the film alongside ten pieces of weird fiction. His novel about spontaneous clones, *Snakeskins*, will be published by Titan Books in May 2019, followed by a short story collection, *And the House Lights Dim*. His fiction has appeared in *Interzone*, *Not One of Us* and *Shoreline of Infinity* and his stories have been selected for *Best of British Science Fiction* and *The Best Horror of the Year*. He is co-editor of the British Fantasy Society's fiction journal, *BFS Horizons*. www.cosycatastrophes.com

Chasing Sea Monsters:

Dino Buzzati's "Il Colombre" and Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*.

Andrea Brondino

Dino Buzzati's (1906 – 1972) weird short stories have been widely read and critically appreciated in the Italian context since the '70s. Many of his works have been now translated into English, and, in the last two decades especially, they started to raise the attention of scholars in the Anglo –Saxon world too.

My paper analyses one of Buzzati's short stories, "The Colomber: an untrue story" (1966). In this work, a young sailor thinks that he is destined to be eaten by 'the colomber', a legendary shark that is only visible by his prey and his close relatives; he therefore spends his life at sea in the desperate attempt to avoid the monster. This paper starts with a short introduction on Buzzati's reception, and takes into account considerations made by the author himself on this short story in interviews and letters. It then compares the tale to Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, by focusing on thematic aspects (the symbolic nature of the animals, the elements of wait, quest, and the abyss), as well as on metaliterary features (the uncanny endings that emphasize the fictionality of the story) of these literary works. This case study shows how literary practices such as re-writing and intertextuality can redefine symbols and topics already established in the Western tradition.

Andrea Brondino is a PhD candidate in Italian Studies at the University of Warwick. He is working on the post-postmodern uses of irony in contemporary Italian literature. He is a former student of the Turinese institution for academic excellence Scuola degli Studi Superiori "Ferdinando Rossi". He presented his research at the University of St. Andrews, and will soon present papers in conferences at the Universities of Padua, Bergamo, Orvieto, and Kassel. His entries on "Italian Postmodernism" and "Umberto Eco" are being published in the Literary Encyclopedia. His article on apocalyptic themes in Pynchon and Eco will be soon published in a collective volume. He writes reviews of North-American novels for Italian journals such as "doppiozero" and "L'indice dei Libri del mese".

**Latin American Gothic:
Female Vampires and Modernity at the Turn of the 20th Century**
Megan DeVirgilis

Only recently has scholarship begun to entertain the idea of a Latin American Gothic tradition. Previously, the concept of the Gothic was either ignored or contested. This gap is partially based on the erroneous idea that the Gothic could not have appeared in Latin American letters when the Enlightenment itself did not appear. Granted, the transition from feudalism to capitalism, which motivated the formation of bourgeois ideological institutions, was not typical in Latin America given its colonial history, but that is not to say that newly-formed Latin American nations did not inherit and produce the necessary dialectics to cultivate their own Gothic literature, albeit at a different rate and at a later time in history.

This paper takes a close look at one particular Gothic trope present in Latin American letters at the turn of the 20th century, that of the female vampire. By exploring, specifically, Leopoldo Lugones' "La vampira" (1899) and Clemente Palma's "Vampiras" (1906), this paper argues that while the Latin American female vampire was a response to anxieties over the rise of the New Woman and the first wave of feminism, as it was in English Gothic fiction, it broke with European models through the use of parody and complex, subversive representations of female characters. Ultimately, it is suggested that in directly challenging European models, Latin American authors carved out an important space for themselves in the modern literary landscape, one that deserves recognition and reflection.

Megan DeVirgilis received her PhD in Spanish from Temple University in Philadelphia in 2018. Her research focuses on the relationship between ideology and cultural production, with a special focus on Gothic literature and horror cinema. She has published articles on Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer and Leopoldo Lugones, and, at the moment, is focusing her research on the fantastic mode in contemporary Cuban-American literature written by women. Megan currently teaches in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Temple University.

12.30 – 13.15pm LUNCH [FOYER]

7A - REGIONAL HORRORS

The Adaptation of Folk Tradition in Nineteenth-Century Scottish Ghost Fiction

Martha McGill

With the development of Scottish gothic, ghost stories became newly fashionable. Writers including Walter Scott, James Hogg and Robert Louis Stevenson explored the dramatic potential of the returning dead, and within the pages of *Blackwood's Magazine*, educated men ruminated on the curious pleasures of 'superstitious apprehension'. In some ways, gothic reinvented ghosts: it placed fresh emphasis on aesthetic qualities, and developed the familiar stereotype of the lonely spectre condemned to wander graveyards or castle ramparts. But writers also drew inspiration from folk tradition. This paper will explore how and why popular beliefs about ghosts were adapted within nineteenth-century Scottish short fiction.

Some nineteenth-century fiction was based directly on community legends. Stevenson's 'Thrawn Janet' (1881) was modelled on a late seventeenth-century account recorded by the natural philosopher George Sinclair. Stevenson faithfully reproduced many of the revenant beliefs of the original story, but made the heroine more uncanny, foregrounding the themes of madness and monstrosity. In other cases, we must take a broader view to appreciate how folk tradition was reshaped. Across various stories, songs and fragments, Scott developed the model of a bloodthirsty Highland ghost. This spectre bore only passing similarity to the apparitions that appear in traditional Highland stories, but it did suit the contemporary taste for romanticised visions of a violent Scottish past. In analysing how popular legends were altered to appeal to a nineteenth-century market, this paper will reflect more broadly on the cultural function of short ghost fiction.

Martha McGill researches the history of supernatural beliefs. She completed a PhD in History at the University of Edinburgh in 2016, and subsequently held postdoctoral fellowships at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, University of Edinburgh, and the Warburg Institute, University of London. In 2018 she took up a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Warwick, working on a project entitled 'Bodies, Selves and the Supernatural in Early Modern Britain'. Her monograph *Ghosts in Enlightenment Scotland* was published by Boydell and Brewer in 2018.

**"Imagined ghosts on unfrequented roads":
The Cornish Ghost Story in the Long Nineteenth Century**
Joan Passey (@JoanPassey)

This paper looks at the proliferation of ghost stories set in Cornwall throughout the long nineteenth century as a means of exploring the ways in which the county became a subject of such fear and fascination in this period. Victorian Cornwall became a microcosm for anxieties surrounding the dissolution of history and tradition in the face of modernity, attracting hordes of antiquarians eager to preserve the county's seemingly vanishing history. This was motivated by the death of the Cornish language and the subsequent fetishisation of the last native speaker of Cornish, as well as by the Cornish Celtic revivalist movement, which focused on preserving the county's sense of ancient superiority. So much of the representation of the county in this period was retrospective which resulted to a sense of confused or blurred temporality. Travelling to Cornwall was seen as an act of travelling back in time, and this re-emergence of Cornwall's history into the present day manifested in the proliferation of dozens of ghost stories across the latter part of the century. This paper will

focus on ancestral memory and regionality in a number of Cornish ghost narratives, including Robert Stephen Hawker's "The Botathen Ghost" (1867), Clara Venn's "Christmas Eve at a Cornish Manorhouse" (1878), Arthur Quiller-Couch's "A Pair of Hands" (1900) and Margery Williams' "The Last Mitchell" (1905) to demonstrate the ways in which Cornwall was seen as a place where the past was preserved in aspic, and where the perpetual re-animation of histories could manifest in frightening ways.

Joan Passey is a PhD researcher between the universities of Exeter, Bristol, and Bath Spa under the South, West, and Wales Doctoral Training Partnership and the Cornwall Heritage Trust. She is a Visiting Doctoral Fellow at Wolfson College, Oxford, and the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography and Oxford Centre for Life Writing Visiting Fellow for this academic year. Her wider interests include the blue humanities, the history of science, and travel writing as life writing.

The Lies of the Land: The Alluvial Formalities of Gothic East Anglia

Helena Bacon and Adam Whybray (@al_gore_rhythm)

Susan Owens suggests that the ‘idea of something not quite human, lurking malevolently out there in the darkness is buried within our collective imagination and has a long history.’ [2017, p.18] Significantly, it is often short forms that most intensively depict the swell of time that connects past and present, and compact this temporality into truncated narratives. The short story, precisely because it is shifting, momentary, a singularity, seems particularly suited to an area whose Gothic potential is still relatively critically untended – East Anglia. If, as Richard Hines states, ‘Gothic is an evasive genre’, then the East is an evasive region; with its stretches of grey shingle that give way to silt and water, isolated marshes, and great, flat panoramas that meet, and in many cases, fall into the sea, the planes of this un-landscape, that erode and dematerialise day by day, have been captured in the oral folklore of Wicken Fen, Black Shuck, and Oxburgh Hall, and most famously by the short ghostly tales of M. R. James [1998, p.7]. More recently, Matthew Holness’s terse, tightly-wound feature film, *Possum* (2018), which sees puppeteer Phillip return to his squalid Norfolk family home and struggle with horrors that both are and aren’t of his own making, explores the dark culverts of this ambiguous and amphibious rural location. This paper will explore the specificities of the East Anglia landscape as Gothic, and analyse how these stories have depicted this formally, often through ephemeral, enervated or compressed means that nevertheless unearth from the littoral edges of the East what lies just below the illusory surface: as M.R. James suggests in ‘Oh, Whistle’, ‘there is absolutely nothing material about it.’

Helena Bacon is in the final stages of completing a PhD in Creative and Critical Writing at the University of East Anglia, focussing on the intersection between the Gothic and Western Genres and American visual culture more generally. She has a First Class degree in English and Creative Writing from Manchester Metropolitan University and an MA in English Literature and Modern Culture from UCL. She has extensive experience conducting Outreach work within schools in East Anglia, introducing pupils to different Humanities disciplines (with Gothic fiction and local folklore always a firm favourite among participants), and has published scholarly articles and presented conference papers on contemporary art and film, histories and fictional depictions of American freak shows, nuclear Gothic and Gothic Westerns. Her first novel, *Tarnished*, was long-listed for the Mslexia unpublished novel award in 2017.

Adam Whybray currently lectures in Film Studies at the University of Suffolk. His book *The Art of Czech Animation: A History of Political Dissent and Allegory* is due to be published with I.B. Tauris in 2019/2020. In 2016 Adam released the interactive fiction game *Evermore: A Choose Your Own Edgar Allan Poe Adventure*, which was awarded 34th Place in the 22nd Annual Interactive

Fiction Competition. Adam has previously given conference papers on the fairytale games of Stephen Lavelle and Emily Short, the 2010 London student protests, drag in Monty Python and Kids in the Hall and eyeball-headed avant-garde band The Residents. His favourite horror authors are Edgar Allan Poe, M.R. James, Shirley Jackson, Robert Aickman and Porpentine Charity Heartscape.

7B - HAUNTED BIOGRAPHIES

Ghosts, Shadows and Dead-Alive Creatures in Dickens's Short Stories

Emily Bell (@EmilyJLB)

In 1849 Charles Dickens wrote to John Forster about his enigmatic idea for a periodical titled *The Shadow*. Forster did not see the shadow, commenting on others' lives, in as benevolent a light as Dickens. The notion would become inextricably tied to biography, reflected in the "Shadows" articles about the lives of writers he commissioned for *Household Words*; and although the periodical title was not used, the idea also stalked Dickens's short stories. However, the short fiction is often dismissed as trivial (when discussed at all), occupying a liminal, shadowy space also in that many were first published in America rather than Britain, and that Dickens's work is occasionally difficult to disentangle from his collaborators' (see, for example, the ghost stories of the Dickens-Collins work "The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices"). In the stories themselves, the benevolent shadow becomes infused with the Gothic: in "To Be Read at Dusk" Clara succumbs to a Signor Dellombra, whose shadowy mesmeric influence reflects Dickens's experiences with Madame de la Rue; "Hunted Down", inspired by poisoner Thomas Griffiths Wainewright, sees an ominous "shadow" follow Margaret Niner to protect her; and in "George Silverman's Explanation", Silverman watches from the shadows to protect others from his supposed illness (much as Forster tells us a young, sickly Dickens was content to observe other boys), but frames himself as a "young vampire", imagining "dead-alive creatures" also watching (an appellation echoed in Wilkie Collins's 1874 novella, *The Dead Alive*). This positions Silverman's own watching as a sinister transformation of Dickens's initial idea. I will explore Dickens's ambivalent invocation of the shadows and the Gothic in his short stories, focusing particularly on the uncertain presence of auto/biography.

Emily Bell is Research Associate in Digital Humanities at Loughborough University on the 'Oceanic Exchanges: Tracing Global Information Networks in Historical Newspaper Repositories, 1840-1914' project. In addition to her work on the spread of nineteenth-century news, she has published on literary biography, Wilkie Collins's autobiographical writings, and commemoration of Dickens. Her edited volume, *Dickens After Dickens*, is forthcoming in 2019 (White Rose University Press) and offers multidisciplinary perspectives on Dickens's legacy, while her paper stems from her work as co-editor (with Professor Michael Slater) of the Clarendon Dickens edition of Dickens's later short fiction, 1851-1868 for Oxford University press.

'Red Poppy Floods': Reflections on Aubrey Gunn's Poetics of the Supernatural Tale

Timothy Jarvis (@TimothyJJarvis)

This history of the supernatural tale is often closely entwined with the lived uncanny. But perhaps no life associated with the ghost story has been quite as strange as that of Bertha Aubrey Gunn. Little is known of her biography. We do know she was born in 1880, and began writing supernatural tales in the mid-1890s, influenced by copies of *The Yellow Book* and *Blackwood's Magazine* her parents passed to her to read. In 1904 and '05 she had two supernatural tales published in *Horlicks Magazine*, as Aubrey Gunn, when it was under the editorship of esoterist, A.E. Waite.

Later, Bertha turns up in Flanders serving as a volunteer nurse, where, in April 1918, she was killed by an artillery shell striking a field hospital where she was tending the wounded.

Then, in the 1920s, rumours began circulating of a number of short stories, submitted to editors under the name Aubrey Gunn, stories supposedly so horrifying that those to whom they were sent were moved to burn them straight after reading.

In 2014, while working through an archive, I came across a letter from Bertha Aubrey Gunn to a literary friend, dated 1907. In it she discusses her disappointment with her two earlier stories and outlines a new poetics of the supernatural tale which she plans to use in the writing of a different kind of ghost story.

This paper will use Bertha Aubrey Gunn's life and the approach she outlines in that letter to reflect on the nature, form, and affect of the supernatural tale.

Timothy Jarvis is a writer and a lecturer in Creative Writing at the University of Bedfordshire. He has research interests, as a practitioner and critic, in the fields of the Gothic, experimental and innovative fiction, contemporary literature, and Creative Writing pedagogy. He is the co-editor of *Faunus*, the journal of the Friends of Arthur Machen. His debut novel, *The Wanderer*, a portmanteau collection of supernatural tales, was published in summer 2014.

Looking for Buddy Oliver Belas

A young man, carrying a trumpet case, steps off a Cunard liner, lately arrived from Liverpool, onto Pier 92, North River, New York City, and walks: through Hell's Kitchen, through the Village by way of 8th Avenue, to the Five Spot Cafe, Cooper's Square. That evening, he watches and listens to the Thelonious Monk Quartet's first set and joins them on stage for their second. It is 1958. August of that year, Monk's group will record, at the Five Spot, the album Misterioso. There are no known recordings of an impromptu Monk Quintet – Monk, Griffin, Malik, Haynes, augmented by an unheard trumpeter.

Professor Parker Nevinson, of the University of Bedfordshire, left behind a considerable archive – the innumerable fragments, from which the passage above is taken, of an unfinished biography – on Buddy 'Dix' Dickson, one of jazz's most important, never-recorded artists. When Parker and I met, he knew he was sick – had known for some time – and that his study of Dix would, almost certainly, be left incomplete. The more ill Parker became, the more steadfast was his belief that something of Dix's story must be told.

Here, then, is a true tale of hauntings: of Parker's (and, indeed, jazz history's) by the ghost of Buddy Dickson; of mine by the memory of Parker. Their intertwined stories are strange, each, it seems to me, dependent on the other, and both ending in unexplained disappearances.

My presentation is an attempt to do justice to the memory of a lost friend, and, perhaps, to exorcise the ghosts of his past.

Oliver Belas has been an educator – working first in HE, then moving to secondary education – since 2005. After nearly a decade in secondary education, working as an SEND classroom assistant and teacher of English (Literature and Language), Creative Writing, and the EPQ, he returned to HE in January 2018, joining Bedfordshire's School of Education and English Language (SEEL). His research interests are in philosophy and education (especially issues of identity, democracy, justice, and morality [broadly construed]), Subject English (and its educational significance) and creative writing (especially creative non-fiction and ficto-critical writing).

14.45 – 15.00 Comfort break [Outside MS.03/MS.04]

8A - THE SOUNDS OF TERROR

**“And one by one dropped the revellers”:
Dancing with the Devil in Poe, Hardy and M.R. James.**
Tracy Hayes

The *Danse Macabre*, an allegory on the universality of death dating from the 15th century and widely popularized by the woodcuts of Albrecht Durer, saw a tremendous resurgence during the nineteenth century. Stories of dancing manias enabled Victorian doctors to forge pseudo-scientific links between diseases of the body and diseases of the brain – so-called 'brain fever' and mass hysteria exhibiting the same intestinal, respiratory and pulmonary symptoms as those evidenced by victims of St. Vitus' Dance. Lunatic balls, patronized by the likes of Charles Dickens among other leading social commentators, were immensely popular as demonstrations of the relationship between insanity and licentiousness. The instrument of choice in artistic depictions of the dance of death is the fiddle, and it can be no coincidence that the virtuoso Niccolo Paganini was nicknamed 'the devil's violinist', famously proclaiming that "I am not handsome, but when women hear me play, they come crawling to my feet". The Gothic short story is the perfect vehicle for tales that create sudden swift impressions of terror; Edgar Allan Poe, Thomas Hardy and M.R. James combine music, mesmerism and immorality in order to conjure the Uncanny and highlight the perverse. In 'The Masque of the Red Death' (1842), 'The Fiddler of the Reels' (1893), and 'Number 13' (1899) Poe's ideas of the 'arabesque' and the 'grotesque' combine in the forms of repellent characters and diabolical music in order to question moral worth when it is threatened by the sins of pride, lust and covetousness.

Tracy Hayes is an early career researcher, having obtained her PhD in 2017 with a thesis investigating masculinity in the novels of Hardy. Her new research seeks to establish new forms of Gothic masculinity in the short stories of Hardy, Poe and M.R. James, and to ascertain how they impinged upon social and psychological constructions of nineteenth century manliness. She is on the Academic Board of the Thomas Hardy Society (U.K), and a vice-president of the Thomas Hardy Association (U.S.).

**The restaurateur and the devil.
Hiccups and satanic laughter in E. A. Poe's 'Bon-Bon'**
Maria Parrino

This paper analyses the issue of voice in Edgar Allan Poe's short story 'Bon-Bon' (1832), a narrative of the early years of the writer's career. The tale of a French *restaurateur* who meets the devil and tries to bargain away his soul is a Gothicized burlesque representation of metaphysical speculation. By looking at the characters' verbal interaction, I argue that the discourse of the voice challenges the cook's professional and intellectual role and converts the devil into the true philosophical and material gastronome.

The story devotes a considerable amount of attention to sound effects, in particular the cook's hiccups and the devil's laughter. Whereas the excessive ingestion of alcohol leads the cook into a loss of control of his speech interrupted by uncontrollable hiccups, the devil shows command of his vocal manifestations, and especially of his laughter. By displaying an unusual structured sequence of sounds within the devil's laughter, what emerges is a subversion of laughter itself (M. Dolar).

Furthermore, the devil literally gives voice to an otherwise silent and solitary life-story and performs a wide range of speech acts: criticism, conversation, eloquence, phonetic speculations, laughing. Whereas most of the (scares) criticism on Bon-Bon has focused on its satiric features, some readings have concentrated on its ‘diabolical humour’, developing the Faustian theme and its reversal. More recently, critics have looked at ‘Bon-Bon’ as a parody of contemporary literary commerce and American fascination with French cuisine (A. Hammond).

Maria Parrino obtained her PhD at the University of Bristol in 2014 with a thesis on nineteenth-century English Gothic Literature. She has published textbooks on short stories and Gothic Literature. She has written essays and articles which include “‘Lorrida magnificenza del luogo.’ Gothic Aesthetics in Antonio Fogazzaro’s *Malombra*,” (2014), “‘Signs for Speech.’ Language Learning in *Frankenstein*” (2015); ‘Crossing the Borders: Hospitality in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* and Florence Marryat’s *The Blood of the Vampire*’ (2017). In February 2018 she co-organized the International Bicentenary Conference on Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* which was held at the University of Venice, Italy. She is currently a full-time teacher of English Language and Literature in a Secondary School in Vicenza, Italy.

**‘Ha! ha! ha! – he! he! he! [...] He! he! he! – he! he! he!’:
Laughter and excellent jests in American Gothic short fiction**
Jimmy Packham

As Edgar Allan Poe’s Montresor bricks up the less-than-fortunate Fortunato at the delightfully morbid conclusion of ‘The Cask of Amontillado’, Fortunato begins giggling, claiming the whole scenario is ‘a very good joke, indeed—an excellent jest.’ In Mary E. Wilkins Freeman’s ‘The Lost Ghost’, more terrible than the sight of the ghost of the young girl at the heart of the tale is her laughter, ‘the most awful and the saddest thing [...] ever heard.’ Ambrose Bierce’s tormented protagonists, too, fall victim to an unsettling disembodied laughter; this is a particularly prominent feature of Bierce’s Civil War fiction, where his doomed soldiers seem to find themselves the butt of some terrible cosmic joke.

The peculiar signifying power of laughter is a familiar concept: it is an invitation to share communally in something pleasurable, and, simultaneously, fraught with alienating or disquieting potential. Laughter ‘exceed[s] language’, according to Mladen Dolar; it is ‘a highly cultural product which looks like regression into animality.’ This paper explores the prominent role laughter plays in American Gothic short fiction. It looks in particular at the use of laughter as a bridge between the living and the (literal and symbolically) dead, exploring the unsolicited empathy the laughter of the dead prompts. This paper also considers the structural value of laughter, as something that may be considered a Gothic ‘micro-narrative’, instantiating (micro) moments of terror. Such a notion exceeds the purely literary, as seen in early 2018, when Amazon’s Alexa devices began, with unwelcome autonomy, to chuckle.

Jimmy Packham is a lecturer in North American Literature at the University of Birmingham. His research looks at Gothic fiction and maritime writing, both as separate and overlapping areas of study. He has published work on the Gothic poetry of the deep sea, the voice of the whaler in *Moby-Dick*, the role of the coast in contemporary British Gothic fiction, and is currently completing his first monograph: *Gothic Utterance: Death and the Voice in Nineteenth-Century American Gothic*.

8B - GOTHIC EPHEMERA & THE DIGITAL AGE

'Good Gracious Witch, How Halloweeny!'
The Picture Postcard and the Gothic in the Twentieth Century and Onwards
Carys Crossen @AcademicWannabe

The picture postcard was created in the 19th century, with the earliest known picture postcard made in 1840. With the improvement of printing technology, the postcard entered a golden age in the early 20th century, with millions of cards being sold every year in Europe and North America. Virtually no subject was off-limits, from the saucy seaside postcards of British holiday resorts, to the Communist fairy tale postcards produced in Russia.

Accordingly, it is not difficult to find postcards with a Gothic aesthetic. 'Night-scene' postcards abounded in America during the 20s and 30s, while vintage Halloween postcards are now collector's items. The postcard is both a means of communication and an artwork to viewed, yet can never represent more than a single moment or event, while the writing on the card is equally restricted and fragmentary. The Gothic has always embraced the fragmentary, the subjective viewpoint and arguably this fragmentary form of communication has tremendous Gothic potential.

Yet Jacques Derrida observed that the postcard, whilst ostensibly a private communication, once mailed becomes public. 'Any postcard, then, can always be read, deciphered, purloined, appropriated, even destroyed by someone for whom it was not originally intended.' [i] This openness, the public nature of its communication and art, runs counter to the Gothic conventions of claustrophobia and secrecy. Can a postcard ever be considered a truly Gothic creation? And where do they fit into the history of the Gothic?

Carys Crossen was awarded her PhD from the University of Manchester and since then has focused her research on the Gothic, horror, feminist theory and monsters (especially werewolves). Her first monograph, *The Nature of the Beast: Transformations of the Werewolf from the 1970s to the Twenty-First Century*, is forthcoming from University of Wales Press. She also writes fiction and her short stories and flash fiction have been published by a variety of small presses and magazines.

'But then, there was the Bite of '87...'
- Fragmented Narrative and DIY Storytelling in Indie Horror Gaming
Caitlin Jauncey (@CaiJauncey)

While corporate giants dominate the video game stage on console with epic, ultra-res, fully voiced action thriller sagas, the PC market of horror gaming is still the home of short, 'indie', survival horror. Short indie games such as *Amnesia: The Dark Descent*, *Slender: The Eight Pages*, and the internet-breaking *Five Nights at Freddy's* rely on unstable, fragmentary narrative styles that force the player to make their own sense of the story, tailored to their preferred style of play. These 'DIY' narratives not only prioritise the immediate experience of horror above an established 'story', but turn the concept of the 'story' into its own separate quest in a way entirely unique to the digital game format. This paper aims to demonstrate that DIY narrative in indie horror has revolutionised the ways in which both the internet audience experiences horror, and the academic audience experiences gaming.

Caitlin Jauncey is an MA student at Manchester Metropolitan University, working within the Manchester Centre for Gothic Studies. Her research interests change with the weather, but currently focus on horror ludology, technical production in horror media, and the Gothic stage. She is currently working on her MA thesis, a study on interacting with mental illness in psychological horror digital games.

I just saw my reflection blink – horror short fiction in the age of the Internet

Conny Lippert

One of today's primary firesides at which scary stories are shared, perpetuated, and cemented into our collective consciousness is the Internet. In this paper I will investigate contemporary versions of the gothic fragment, emerging from the ever-evolving environment of the Web, and touch upon how they influence commercial genre mainstays.

The openness and accessibility of online spaces invite innovation into the horror genre. From the synthetic urban legends and horror nanofiction created in subreddits to the short horror films into which they occasionally turn, we see content creeping into what is still considered "mainstream" genre fare, such as feature-length films and video games, with notable frequency.

Creepypasta-spawns like Slenderman echo the journey Lovecraftian creations such as the *Necronomicon* have undergone, as skilful mythopoeia and sustained intertextuality cause literary fiction not only to spill over into other media, but to transform into the supposedly real. Popular horror tales are emerging from social media, such as the viral *Dear David* thread which popularised Twitter's shaky-cam equivalent of a purportedly true supernatural story. The verisimilitude aspired to seems reminiscent of the *Blair Witch Project*'s original marketing campaign – one of the most well-known early adapters of the Internet as horror myth-making machine.

By discussing a number of examples, taken from different online genres of the short horror variety, I will illustrate the fertility of these virtual grounds in which weird things grow so exceptionally well.

Conny Lippert received a doctorate from the University of Bristol for her thesis focusing on topographies in Stephen King's and H.P. Lovecraft's gothic works. She holds a Master's degree from the University of Nottingham and a Bachelor's degree from the University of Bayreuth. She is an independent scholar whose research interests include gothic and horror fiction, American literature, and popular culture.

16.30 – 17.00 Drinks and snacks [Foyer]

KEYNOTE 17.00 – 18.30

Prof. Roger Luckhurst @TheProfRog
'On Incompleteness: The Fragment, the Dash, the Broken Form'

Roger Luckhurst is Professor in Modern Literature in the Department of English and Humanities at Birkbeck College, University of London. Among his many publications there is a keen interest in the Gothic, the Weird, and the strange. He has edited Stevenson, Stoker, Haggard, Lovecraft, Wells and Henry James for Oxford World's Classics and M. R. James for the British Library. Recent books include *The Mummy's Curse: The True Story of a Dark Fantasy* and *Zombies: A Cultural History*. He co-edited the 'Weird Fiction' special edition of *Textual Practice* journal with two of our speakers at the conference, Timothy Jarvis and James Machin, in 2017. He has just published **Corridors: Passages of Modernity** with Reaktion Press last week (and his discussion with Laurie Taylor on corridic modernity is on Thinking Allowed is still on BBC Sounds). He is currently working on a new book, ***The Shape of the Gothic***, for Thames & Hudson, and doing a scholarly edition of Arthur Conan Doyle's short story collection, ***Round the Red Lamp***.