

LITERATURE, CULTURE AND THE FANTASTIC:
CHALLENGES OF THE FIN DE SIÈCLE(S)

*Literature, Culture and the Fantastic:
Challenges of the Fin de Siècle(s)*

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CONTENTS

Introduction.	7
Plenary lectures	11
Conference papers	21
List of conference participants	102
Conference information	107

Introduction

Fantastic literature has been receiving increasing scholarly attention, very often in relation to various cultural and discursive practices. The international interdisciplinary conference *Literature, Culture and the Fantastic: Challenges of the Fin de Siècle(s)* hosted by the Department of English, Section for Literature, of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka, took place in Rijeka on 17th and 18th February 2012 and gathered more than fifty scholars coming from all across Europe (United Kingdom, Scotland UK, Ireland, France, Norway, Denmark, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Austria, Russia, Hungary, Czech Republic, Serbia, Slovenia and Croatia). The main discussion revolved around the concept of the fantastic and related issues in literature and culture, as well as various discourses the term itself generates.

The aim of the conference was to delineate relations between the fantastic and the fin de siècle(s) and to contextualize their historical and cultural significance. The conference abstracts collected in this book, therefore, encompass a wide range of approaches to the fantastic, in particular discussions of the fantastic in light of the development of the idea, challenging traditional historical contexts and offering new ones. They seek to explore how various fin-de-siècles reflect the fantastic and their relation to the genesis of aesthetic ideas, to the concept of terror/horror, the sublime, to Gothic and sensation fiction, to the Aesthetic Movement and Decadence, etc. They also raise the question: in what way does fantastic literature (as well as art) of various fin de siècles reflect the dynamic and all-too-often controversial development of these concepts? At the same time, most of them investigate a broader context of specific social, political and economic conditions along with the development of science and scientific discourses, including psychology and sexology. Some of them explore the fantastic as a realm of what Stephen Arata calls “the pathology of everyday life”¹, and address more private issues such as personal identity, body or sanity.

In view of the above mentioned the topics of the abstracts collected in this book include but are not limited to the following:

¹ Arata, Stephen. *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p.133.

- **The fantastic and various aspects of the fin-de-siècle(s) aesthetics**
- **The fantastic and the challenging of the fin-de-siècle(s) canon; genres and sub-genres, popular literature, intertextuality**
- **The fantastic and gender, body, corporeality**
- **The fantastic and narrative manipulations, supernatural, temporality, scientific development and progress, cultural anxiety and social crisis, cultural subversion**
- **The fantastic and identity, dualism, doppelganger, grotesque**
- **The philosophy of the fantastic**
- **The fantastic and memory, cultural memory**
- **The fantastic and visual in the fin-de-siècle(s); literary in relation to other modes of representation, visual and performance, film**
- **A single author/text: e.g. Oscar Wilde, Vernon Lee, George MacDonald, Bram Stoker, R. L. Stevenson, Arthur Machen, etc., as well as comparative analysis**
- **The fin-de-siècle fantastic as reflected cross-culturally in Scottish, Canadian, Australian, American, etc. writing, emphasising specific predominant cultural or generic aspect, the genesis of the fin-de-siècle fantastic in these cultures and literatures and their relations to wider historical and cultural framework, possible relation to the issue of postcolonialism**
- **Fantastic, imperialism, (post)colonialism, nationalism**
- **Some papers highlight the interaction of fin-de-siècle fantastic and gothic literature with other literary periods, both canonical and popular literature, in terms of the reception, intertextuality and their dialogic and cultural implications.**

The conference also discussed the legacy of the term in various fin de siècles, especially its application to literature and culture of the end of the 19th and 20th centuries, raising or challenging parallels and questioning the very idea of end (*fin*). It provided a stimulating platform for further rethinking of the concept of the fantastic, its theoretical, philosophical, generic, and other implications within a broader literary and cultural context.

Irena Grubica, conference organizer

PLENARY LECTURES

Ghostly Returns: Spectral Classicism in the English Fin de Siècle

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UDC 821.111.09”18”

This paper identifies spectral classicism as an influential, cosmopolitan sub-genre of nineteenth-century supernatural literature. The foundational documents of this tradition include Prosper Mérimée’s short story ‘Venus d’Ille’ (1837) and Heinrich Heine’s essay ‘The Gods in Exile’ (1853-54), in which mythological characters from the ancient world reappear in post-classical times as revenants or ‘exiles’, usually to take part in violent or traumatic episodes. According to Heine, the old Greek and Roman gods did not disappear with the demise of paganism, but rather went into hiding on the earth, among Christians, where they were forced to live in disguise in order to conceal their true identities. Apollo, for instance, made his living as a shepherd in the Austrian Alps but he was found out by a learned monk, condemned as a demon, and sentenced to death.

Towards the end of the century, these fantastic narratives were reworked by several English authors associated with aestheticism and Decadence: Walter Pater openly drew on Heine in his stories of the return of Apollo and Dionysus to the Middle Ages in *Imaginary Portraits* (1887); Vernon Lee, a friend and disciple of Pater, built on Mérimée in her collection of fantastic tales *Hauntings* (1890); and the influence of Mérimée was also crucial to Henry James’s short story ‘The Last of the Valerii’ (1874). These writers imaginatively transformed the recovery of the classical past operated by archaeology and classical studies into spectral encounters and narratives of possession and haunting. In so doing, they used the fantastic framework set up by Mérimée and Heine in order to explore difficult questions of cultural and moral relativism. The spirit

of classicism was for them, literally, a ghost that comes back to disrupt the present, questioning the social, religious and moral codes of modernity. In particular, the classically-inspired fantastic of the fin de siècle constitutes a psychological experiment that allows writers to explore, outside the representational confines of literary realism, the complex mechanisms of repression and displacement that regulate sexual desire in bourgeois society. The exiled god is at once an object of desire and fear, and the act of unearthing and recovering the shared classical past is a simultaneous, double excavation into the origins of the modern social contract and into the buried aspects of the self located in the individual past. This semantic richness of spectral classicism was not lost on Sigmund Freud, who used Wilhelm Jensen's short story 'Gradiva: A Pompeian Fantasy' (1903) to formulate one of the classic readings of psychoanalytic criticism. My paper will attempt to trace the development of spectral classicism from its mid-century foundational texts to the genesis of psychoanalysis.

STEFANO EVANGELISTA is a fellow of Trinity College and lecturer in the English Faculty of the University of Oxford. He is the author of *British Aestheticism and Ancient Greece* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) and the editor of *The Reception of Oscar Wilde in Europe* (Continuum, 2010). Together with Catherine Maxwell, he is the co-editor of a double issue of the *Yearbook of English Studies* devoted to the arts in Victorian literature (2010). He has published essays and articles on several aspects of English and comparative literature, including Aestheticism, Decadence, Anglo-German and Anglo-Italian relations, the classical tradition, visual culture, and gender and sexuality. A co-edited issue of *Comparative Critical Studies* on 1890s cosmopolitanism and a volume on Algernon Charles Swinburne are both due out next year. He is also working on a monograph on cosmopolitanism in nineteenth-century English literature.

Bram Stoker's *Dracula*: A Host of Reservations

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UDC 821.111.09 Stoker, B.-31

This paper presents a detailed study of the use of the motif of the consecrated Host in *Dracula* (1897). Stoker's positive use of the Host in combating vampires is an innovation in the tradition, although it is quickly adopted in other contemporary vampire stories. Despite the significance of the motif, there has been little critical discussion of it. Using the separate introductions to the 1983, 1996 and 2011 editions of *Dracula* in the Oxford World's Classics series, the critical debate over the novel in the past thirty years is surveyed. There is little consideration of the novel's religious dimension. Nevertheless, it can be shown that Catholic symbolism is over-determined in *Dracula* despite Stoker's Irish Protestant background. In attempting an explanation for this, the essay examines how Bram Stoker's imagination is stimulated by the interpenetration of science and legend in *The Snake's Pass* (1890) and *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903). Stoker's treatment in the latter novel of the Great Experiment, the physical resurrection of the ancient Egyptian Queen Tera, is particularly instructive. Stoker blends the findings of contemporary Egyptology concerning the Afterlife with late Victorian scientific discoveries. In a similar fashion, in *Dracula*, Stoker is happy to employ uncritically the Scholastic doctrine of Transubstantiation and to weave it into a narrative which also draws on contemporary Victorian science and technology.

The paper pursues the question of why the explicitly Catholic motif of the Host and its Reservation takes on a positive function in the imaginative economy of a novel in the Irish Protestant Gothic tradition.

It proffers an explanation by setting *Dracula* in the context of a shift of attitude towards Catholicism in British society at the *fin de siècle*. In particular, it refers to the political debacle of the 1908 Westminster Eucharistic Congress, when the Prime Minister, H.H. Asquith, was obliged, under pressure from extreme Protestant groups and indeed from the King, to prohibit a Eucharistic procession in the streets of Westminster. Two years later, however, in the Accession Declaration Act (1910), Asquith was able to assuage his embarrassment and that of liberal Britain by removing language offensive to Catholics from the Royal Declaration. The text of *Dracula* picks up on the linguistic and cultural confusion of the majority Protestant population of the time with regard to Transubstantiation and Eucharistic Reservation, and this enables Stoker to appropriate the Host motif to function positively within his novel.

PHILIP HEALY, Emeritus Fellow, Kellogg College, University of Oxford, He has postgraduate degrees from the University of Manchester and the University of York, with theses on Cardinal Newman and on Lord Byron. He has spent his career in teaching and academic administration, including a period of three years as a visiting lecturer in Japan in the 1980s. From 2000 until his retirement in 2010, he was Director of Public Programmes at Oxford University Department for Continuing Education. He was responsible for one of the largest programmes of university liberal adult education in the UK. He was a Governing Body Fellow of Kellogg College, one of Oxford University's newest colleges, which has a particular focus on part-time postgraduate students. His research interests are centred on the *fin de siècle*, and on the relationship between literature and religion and literature and sexuality. He has published on Frederick Rolfe, André Raffalovich, John Gray, Aubrey Beardsley, Lionel Johnson, Cardinal Newman and R.B. Cunninghame Graham. He is currently completing an edition of the correspondence between Frederick Rolfe and Canon Lonsdale Ragg (to be published by Rivendale Press) and is beginning work with collaborators on an edited translation of André Raffalovich's *Uranisme et Unisexualité* (1896) (to be published by Ohio State University Press). A longer term project is an edition of the correspondence of André Raffalovich and John Gray.

The Scottish Fin-de-Siècle: A Case Study in Comparative Aesthetics

Tom HUBBARD

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**UDC 821.152.2.09"18/19"
7.036(410.5)**

This paper examines relations between literature, painting, architecture, design and music in Scotland during the last years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth. Styles such as art nouveau / Jugendstil / Secession were not as prevalent nationwide as they would be in mainland Europe, but they did exist significantly, even though the culture (rather than the theology) of a native Protestantism was not obviously disposed towards a sensibility deemed to be ‘decadent’.

Deploying theoretical models such as those deriving from Tzvetan Todorov’s analysis of the ‘fantastic’, this paper will elucidate recurrent themes in the work of writers James Thomson (his long poem *The City of Dreadful Night* and other works which reflect his reading of French literature, notably Flaubert’s *La tentation de Saint Antoine* and Stendhal’s *De l’amour*); John Davidson’s satirical representations of the perverse and the decadent in *The Wonderful History of Earl Lavender, A Practical Novelist* and *The Great Men*; Robert Louis Stevenson’s early ‘camp’ tales such as *The Suicide Club* sequence and its one-man extravaganza in the person of Prince Florizel of Bohemia; George Douglas Brown’s short story “Gurrulug” and his novel *The House with the Green Shutters*; John MacDougall Hay’s apocalyptic novel set in the western Highlands,

Gillespie; visual artists such as Charles Rennie Mackintosh, notably his masterpiece the Glasgow School of Art and his deployment of art nouveau and orientalist imagery in his designs; composers such as William Wallace, whose oratorio *The Rose of Sharon* is a masterpiece of restrained sensuality, and who belongs somewhat to the Baudelairean-Paterian-Whistlerian tradition of “correspondences” between sounds and colours (he was married to a visual artist). The “Glasgow School” is examined as a phenomenon growing out of a prosperous bourgeois milieu, comparable, say, to the cultural economics of Austro-Hungarian centres at the same time: Mackintosh’s designs attracted much attention in Vienna and Budapest. It is very rare for such a variety of art forms in fin-de-siècle Scotland to be considered within the space of one lecture, but Professor Hubbard will pay tribute to those scholars who have gone before him and whose work has made it possible for him to arrive at such a synthesis.

During the 2011-12 TOM HUBBARD has been Lynn Wood Neag Distinguished Visiting Professor of Scottish Literature at the University of Connecticut and, successively, Professeur invité, CEMRA-Etudes Ecosaises, Université Stendhal – Grenoble 3. He is the author, editor or co-editor of numerous books. Authored books include *Seeking Mr Hyde* (1995), *The Integrative Vision: Poetry and the Visual Arts in Baudelaire, Rilke and MacDiarmid* (1997), the novel *Marie B.* (2008) which is based on the life of the painter Marie Bashkirtseff, and which was longlisted for a major Scottish book prize, and more recently a book-length collection of his poems and translations (into Scots), accompanied by a CD of the reading, *The Chagall Winnocks* (2011). From 2000 to 2005 he edited the online Bibliography of Scottish Literature in Translation (BOSLIT) from the University of Edinburgh and the National Library of Scotland, and from 2006 to 2010, after a period as a visiting professor at ELTE (Budapest), he edited the Bibliography of Irish Literary Criticism (BILC) at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth.

Sherlock Holmes and the Biopolitics of the Fantastic

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UDC 821.111.09 Doyle, A. C.-31

The Sherlock Holmes narratives seem to want to dispense with the fantastic – with what Conan Doyle, in his first Sherlock Holmes case, *A Study in Scarlet*, describes as necromancy. Or: they seem organized around the effort to revise the very condition of the fantastic by relegating it to the realm of phantasm, illusion or incomplete analysis. It is here already that Conan Doyle proposes in fact that his late Victorian detective fiction be approached from what at that point was only to form as psychoanalysis. Indeed, Sherlock Holmes emerges as downright fantastic himself precisely where he manages to expose the fantastic as the phantasmatic or else as the underanalyzed.

A Study in Scarlet provides also the position where such an approach to the fantastic hinges on the clinical, just as psychoanalysis depends on the point of contact of the critical and the clinical. It introduces Dr. Watson as the chronicler of the Holmes cases and the principal instance where the Holmes narratives are pieced together, so that Holmes comes into being always already contaminated with the knowledge and the practices of medicine. Further, Dr. Watson is shown to have met Holmes while recovering from a near-fatal wound he had sustained in the Afghan war, as if Holmes, with his analytic peculiarities, is himself integral to healing, precisely where healing depends on the point of contact of the critical and the clinical. The Holmes narratives,

in other words, correspond to the therapy premised on critical effort. Also, the wound, the healing and the critical are tied up for Watson with his account of the war in Afghanistan, which means that the very emergence of the narrative voice in Conan Doyle is implicated in biopolitics. (Not to mention Conan Doyle's lifelong interest in the study of warfare.) Consequently, if the main interest of the Holmes narratives is the reassignment of the fantastic which anticipates psychoanalysis, both the reassigned fantastic and the adumbrated psychoanalysis show in Conan Doyle as biopolitical concerns.

The positions that I would like to explore in my lecture are therefore the following: what happens to the narrative which imagines its voice as that of medical knowledge in search of psychotherapy? What happens to the literary fantastic once it gets mobilized as integral to this process? What if murder is the only crime adequate to the imaginary of detective fiction? Could it be that all other crimes, in detective fiction, are but inadequate substitutes for this originary biopolitical phantasm? Can detective fiction be taken up as the privileged position where the fantastic gets mobilized as the phantasmatic? Also: is not (late Victorian) detective fiction, for this reason, the privileged place from where to approach the biopolitical implications of the fantastic?

TATJANA JUKIĆ is Professor of English at the University of Zagreb. Author of two books, *Zazor, nadzor, svidanje. Dodiri književnog i vizualnog u britanskom 19. stoljeću* [Liking, Dislike, Supervision. Literature and the Visual in Victorian Britain] published in Zagreb in 2002, and *Revolucija i melankolija. Granice pamćenja hrvatske književnosti* [Revolution and Melancholia. Limits of Literary Memory] Zagreb, 2011. She has written articles on 19th and 20th century literature, genealogies of the cinematic, philosophy, psychoanalysis and literary theory, and is currently coordinating a research project on limits of literary memory.

CONFERENCE PAPERS

The ‘Spectral Presence’ of the Fantastic in Wells’s and Bellamy’s *Fugitive* Science Fiction

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UDC 821.111.09 Wells, H. G.-31
821.111(73).09 Bellamy, E.-31

The quoted phrase in my title is taken from Rosemary Jackson’s *Fantasy, The Literature of Subversion*, where she places the fantastic in-between the ‘real’ / ‘the mimetic’ and the ‘unreal’ / ‘the marvellous’. In my paper, though I take Jackson’s work as my starting point, I will refine her ideas, whereas my main concern is the specific presentation and intertwining of the ‘mimetic’ and the ‘marvellous’ of the fantastic in four novels: in Herbert George Wells’s *The Time Machine* (1895), *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899) and Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* (1885) and *Equality* (1897).

First, paying attention to the socio-economic and scientific context of the works, I will present the ‘mimetic’ side of the ‘spectral’ fantastic. The socio-critical tone is strongly emphasised since the authors display bright and nightmarish visions of England and the States in the far-distant future, which was highly inspired by their own *Zeitgeist*. Here I will rely on the principles of positivism, Darwinism and Nordau’s degeneration-theory in Wells’s, while socialism, the critique of capitalism and the psychiatric case of fugue (William James) in Bellamy’s novels.

The first person narrator, coming from the 19th century, should convincingly confront the new world of the ‘marvellous’ as its first reader. In *The Time Machine*, the main narrator is obsessed with clarity in his understanding of the future society; in Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* and *Equality*, the narrator awakes from a long mesmerizing sleep to a wonderful ‘vision’ of 2000, while to a nightmarish one of 2100 in Wells’s *When the Sleeper Wakes*. In the second part, I will present the ‘marvellous’ characteristics of the narrative, focusing on the expressions clustering

around light/clarity vs. darkness, visibility vs. obscurity, and being awake vs. dreaming.

In all novels the story-teller frequently feels as if his comprehension was tested; as if it was suspended between ‘the believable’ and ‘the unbelievable’ – in ‘double consciousness’ (Cf. William James). I claim that the escapist features and the uncertainties of the texts expressed in the narrators’ doubts, constant questioning and mental disorders present the experience of the fantastic oscillating between the ‘mimetic’ and the ‘marvellous’, while such a narrative is to “defamiliarize and restructure [the] experience of [the] present” (Cf. Jameson 2005:286). Being haunted by “the spectral presence of some alternative future” (Beaumont 2009:30), the fantastic narrative serves as a *textual time machine* between the fictional existence of the (past) present and the imagined not-yet-being of the future.

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EVA ANTAL is a college professor and currently the Head of the Department of English Studies at Eszterhazy Karoly College, Eger, Hungary. She obtained her M.A. degree in English Language and Literature and Philosophy from Debrecen University in 1996. In 2001 she defended her doctoral dissertation on the theories and conceptions of irony. Since then she has been teaching 18th and 19th century British literature, contemporary literary theory, and aesthetics at Eszterhazy Karoly College and the University of Debrecen. She has also published several articles in journals of literary criticism and theory, and has presented papers at international conferences in the United Kingdom, Austria, Lithuania, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Romania, Cyprus, and in Egypt. Her major research interest is literary theory (deconstruction), the theories of reading and the interpretation of the comic (satire, irony). In 2007 she published her book on irony in Hungarian and in 2008 she did research in London working on the completion of the English version of her book titled *Beyond Rhetoric. Rhetorical Figures of Reading* (published in 2009). In 2010 she was a Visiting Grant Scholar at NIAS (in the Netherlands), working on her third book *Impossible Singularities: Derrida, de Man, and J. H. Miller*. In November 2011 she successfully obtained the degree of ‘dr. habil’ in philosophy at the University of Debrecen. Presently she is on sabbatical and lives in Cyprus.

Ghosts in the Age of Spectrality: The Irrelevance of Ghosts and Late Victorian Ghost Stories

Tamás BÉNYEI

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UDC 821.111.09”18”-32

Dinah M. Mulock’s 1856 ghost story, “The Last House in C–Street”, opens with a fairly typical disclaimer in which the narrator duly assures us of his scepticism concerning supernatural apparitions: “I am not a believer in ghosts in general, I see no good in them. They come – that is, are reported to come – so irrelevantly, purposelessly – so ridiculously, in short – that one’s common sense as regards this world, and one’s supernatural sense of the other, are alike revolted”¹. What is interesting in this passage is the reference to ghosts’s “irrelevance” to our lives, which is surely an odd way to dismiss ghostly apparitions: traditionally, spectres are condensations of relevance and meaning. In my paper I will address the historical and the theoretical aspects of the irrelevance of ghosts and explore possible connections between them.

It seems that just as ghosts were going out of literary fashion, they started to make a spectacular theoretical comeback, beginning perhaps with Walter Benjamin’s meditations about photography and with Horkheimer and Adorno’s unfinished sketch about “The Theory of Ghosts,” and resulting in a theoretical climate in which there is hardly any aspect of modern existence and culture that has not been theorised as spectral. This theoretical comeback has been happening parallel with an increasing interest in the gothic themes

1 Mulock, Dinah M.. “The Last HOUSE in C--- Street”, Richard Dalby (ed.) *The Virago Book of Victorian Ghost Stories*. London: Virago, 1988, pp. 22-32, 22.

of Victorian literature from which, however, ghosts proper (and the ghost story) seem to have been left out, both apparently subsumed into a general concern with the gothic, the uncanny and an extended cultural sense of spectrality. The question, then, which is both historical and theoretical, could be formulated in the following manner: what happens to ghosts in the age of spectrality? If everything and everybody is a ghost, what is the fate of ghosts proper? The genre that specializes in ghosts seems to have shared the fate of its spectral protagonists. Rephrasing the question above, we might ask: if, as Julian Wolfreys claims, “all stories are, more or less, ghost stories”, what happens to ghost stories? In my paper, I shall look at the possible reasons (literary, cultural and theoretical) for the changing fortunes of ghosts and ghost stories, and read in some detail two fin-de-siècle ghost stories that address this issue themselves: Oscar Wilde’s “The Canterville Ghost” (1887) and a little known 1890 tale by Richard Marsh, “A Set of Chessmen.”

TAMÁS BÉNYEI is professor at the Department of British Studies, University of Debrecen, Hungary. His main fields are 20th-century British fiction, crime fiction, literary theory (mainly psychoanalysis, deconstruction and gender studies) and Latin-American fiction. He has published five books in Hungarian (including one on magic realism, another one on postmodern detective stories and another one on British fiction between 1945 and 1970). He has also published a monograph in English *Acts of Attention: Figure and Narrative in Postwar British Novels* (Peter Lang, 1999). His most recent book, about theoretical and colonial allegories of intersubjectivity (including analyses of texts by Kipling and Forster), was published in 2011. He has published essays in journals like *EJES* (on Iris Murdoch), *Commonwealth* (on Mordechai Richler), *British and American Studies* (on Bruce Chatwin), *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies* (on magic realism, Jeanette Winterson, John Fowles and Anthony Powell), *The AnaChronist* (on J. G. Ballard and William Golding) and in volumes by Continuum (on Peter Ackroyd), Polity Press (on Graham Swift), Palgrave (on Martin Amis) and Random House (on Kurt Vonnegut). He is currently working on two books: one on classical detective stories and another one on turn-of-the-century narratives.

To the Genesis of Late Nineteenth-Century Vampire Stories as a Specific Form of the Fantastic

Zdeněk BERAN

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UDC 821.09"18":392.28

The nineteenth century, and especially its later phase, abounds with novels, tales and poems in which the character of a vampire appears either as a central figure or is otherwise present. These traditional vampire stories are a specific form of the fantastic because in them the distinction between the natural and the supernatural appears to be blurred much more than in any other form. The vampire is and is not human, neither living nor dead, at home both in our world and in his or her more or less identifiable domain. Not only does he or she seem to be naturally human; to a great extent the vampire *is* a creature ontologically consisting of such ambiguities. Here Todorov's well-known definition of the fantastic, according to which "the text must oblige the reader to consider the world of the characters as a world of living persons and to hesitate between a natural and a supernatural explanation"¹, applies with special poignancy.

The broad spectrum of nineteenth-century vampire representations both in literature and art, ranging from simulated folk-tale narratives to stories of the "uncanny", makes it clear that to view this modern production as being merely continuous in the millennia-long tradition of legends featuring similar (but mostly daemonic) bloodthirsty creatures is absolutely insufficient. The present paper attempts to elucidate the coincidence between the attention paid to the "actual" cases of vampirism, reported mostly from the south-east

1 Todorov, Tzvetan. *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1975.

and central parts of Europe, and the changes of general perception of reality, including the position of man, that resulted from the radically changing knowledge of our world during the 17th and 18th centuries. The discoveries in the natural sciences in the time of “scientific revolution” destabilized the prevailing notion of a hierarchically structured model of nature and the universe and also the idea of centrality. Man confronted with what now seemed to be not only infinite space but also infinite chaos experienced, perhaps for the first time in history, a sense of intense estrangement from the surrounding reality. Burke’s theory of the sublime (1756) is a form of aesthetic reflection of this situation where infinitude is replaced by vastness. Yet it is also significant that according to Burke’s *Enquiry* the sublime is called forth not only by objects and prospects which by their magnitude diminish the status of man and leave him stand in awe when confronted with them, but that it also includes fear of death and experience of dying, lending the sublime obvious existential status. In nineteenth-century vampiric texts and pictures this modern sensibility seems to conflate with the traditional inspiration, addressing issues that correspond with the fatally changed perspective which science has bestowed on man.

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Personal Identity: *Star Trek* and *Solaris*

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1:791.43**

In science fiction there are a number of excellent examples that test our implicit or explicit metaphysical criteria. For instance, *spatiotemporal continuity* is often seen as a right criterion of identity, in common sense as well as in the metaphysical analysis: x is identical with y if there is a spatiotemporal continuity between x and y . However, cases of teleportation in *Star Trek* challenge our common-sense intuition that spatio-temporal continuity is the right criterion of personal identity. In the cases of teleportation spatiotemporal continuity seems to be broken but we do not question the identity of teleported characters. We see teleporter as a means of transportation, like bus, train, elevator, etc. We do not question the identity of captain Kirk, Mr Spock, and others.

In philosophical literature *Leibniz' Law* (identity of indiscernibles) is often taken as a criterion of identity: x is identical with y if x and y share all of their properties. However, cases of *doppelgangers* (clones, counterparts from parallel dimensions, etc) show that Leibniz' Law is not a sufficient condition for personal identity. These cases suggest that *origin* is essential for identity.

In the discussion about the personal identity *memory* is often taken as a criterion of identity: A and B are the same person if A and B have the same memory. However, a number of cases from fiction show

that we do not take memory as a sufficient criterion of identity. Case of Rea in *Solaris* shows that having the same memory is not a sufficient condition for personal identity. Although *Rea2* (came into existence on *Solaris*) has the same memory as *Rea1* (buried on Earth) we do not take *Rea2* to be the same person as *Rea1*.

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The Thing in the Mist: An Analysis of Fantastic Form in the Cinematic Representation of the Unnameable

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**UDC 821.111(73).09 King, S.-32
791.44.071 Darabont, F.**

This paper will examine the representation of the unrepresentable ‘Thing’ in Frank Darabont’s cinematic adaptation of Stephen King’s 1985 story, *The Mist*. It will read the ‘Thing’ as the monstrous unnameable; an artistic manifestation of the Kantian ‘thing-in-itself’ which evades attempts at categorisation and naming due to its sublime nature and its radical otherness. Given that the ‘Thing’ is an epistemological void in philosophical terms its representation in visual form requires an acute awareness of both the uncanny and the sublime. This discussion will investigate how this can be identified in Darabont’s film in relation to his fantastic use of cinematic form in the presentation of the mist and human responses to it. It will argue that in exploring *fin de siècle* themes such as apocalypse, hesitation and ambiguity, Darabont’s (2007) film evidences a developed trend in science-fiction/ horror which examines the fear aroused by that which is unknown and unnameable.

The Mist is reminiscent of John Carpenter’s *The Fog* (1980), which serves, among other texts, as an inter-textual prelude to Darabont’s filmic narrative. Bearing this in mind, this paper will contend that the mist

is part of a literary play upon the otherness of fog, which is a recurrent element in fantastic narratives. Importantly, the mist takes on a unique role in the generation of visual obscurity in the film. It provides a view of the natural sublime, an atmosphere of advancing fear and the threat of possible danger from that which remains hidden in the depths of the vaporous mass. In its obscurity it also recreates the uncanny space that is the gap in the interaction of the cognitive and imaginative faculties of the subject when encountering the sublime. The mist, therefore, can be read as an integral part of the fantastic cinematic representation of the sublime effacement of aesthetic sensibility.

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The Fantastic as a Means of Fin-de-Siècle Aesthetic Expression and Inquiry: Theorizing the ‘Aesthetic Fantastic’

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UDC 821.111.09”18”

In British *fin de siècle* the proliferation of fantastic literature intersects with an urgency to redefine the nature and role of art and the artist that specifically pertains to the Aesthetic Movement. My contention is that it is possible to identify a submode of fantastic literature associated with the poetics of Aestheticism. I have decided to call this submode ‘aesthetic fantastic’ and in my paper I formulate ideas about its nature and scopes which are applied to the analysis of a few late-Victorian texts. I also attempt to show how these features have possibly evolved in a late example of aesthetic fantastic text. The aim is trying to set up a tentative theory and delineate an initial corpus of aesthetic fantastic fiction that may lead to further research.

My hypothesis is that the *fin-de-siècle* fantastic takes on (meta-) aesthetic functions connected to what Rosemary Jackson has called its “social” and “subversive” potential. The fantastic’s perturbation of normativity may have encouraged its adoption as a channel for messages and queries that were typical of the Aesthetic Movement and would have appeared inappropriate for more normative Victorian modes and genres. The outcome was the aesthetic fantastic, in which the codified devices of the fantastic mode become primary vehicles for aesthetic ideas.

Examples of the aesthetic fantastic I analyse are the imaginary portraits “Denys l’Auxerrois” (1887) by Walter Pater and “Dionea” (1890) by Vernon Lee as well as Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), all of which employ the fantastic mode to express aestheticist ideas that must have appeared radical for the time. John Meade Falkner’s novella *The Lost Stradivarius* (1895) is another text I take as paradigmatic of the aesthetic fantastic and of its role in *fin-de-siècle* poetics. The last text I consider is Aubrey Beardsley’s *Under the Hill* (1896), in which even more crucial issues of Aestheticism are conveyed through the fantastic. On the other hand, *Under the Hill* parodies the whims and inconsistencies of the Aesthetic Movement and belongs to the aesthetic fantastic only with some reserve. The novel is in fact more correctly regarded as a grotesque variation of the fantastic which undermines the basis of the mode itself. At the same time, this grotesqueness revitalizes the aesthetic fantastic and makes it greatly efficacious as a medium for aesthetic engagement.

ELISA BIZZOTTO (PhD University of Florence) is Lecturer in English Literature at the Faculty of Design and Arts of IUAV University in Venice. Her interests mainly focus on Pre-Raphaelitism, British Aestheticism, and the fin de siècle. She has published a number of essays on D. G. Rossetti, Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde, Vernon Lee, Aubrey Beardsley and other late-Victorian authors by privileging genre, gender, myth, interart, comparatist and reception studies approaches. She is the author of the book *La mano e l’anima Il ritratto immaginario fin de siècle* (2001), and has co-edited a volume on Walter Pater *Le forme della Modernità* [The Forms of Modernity] published in 1996 and a volume on Vernon Lee *Dalla stanza accanto: Vernon Lee e Firenze settant’anni dopo* published in 2006. She has also co-edited the first Italian edition of the Pre-Raphaelite magazine *The Germ. Thoughts towards nature in Poetry, Literature and Art* (2008) and has contributed essays to *The Reception of Walter Pater in Europe* (2005) and *The Reception of Oscar Wilde in Europe* (2010).

Women's Brands of Fairy Tales Around 1800: Benedikte Naubert's *New German Tales* (1789–1792)

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UDC 821.112.2.09-34
821.112.2.09 Naubert, C. B. E.-34

The period around 1800 is a more neutral label for what entered into literary history as Enlightenment, Romanticism, or transition period between the two. Regardless of the signifier, we are undoubtedly dealing with the first modern movement in the history of literature, and poetologically a very complex one: it treasures literature as much as natural sciences, fragments as well as full-fledged novels, and recognizes the overall implications of both philosophical essays and fantasy literature.

Fairy tales are among the favourite genres of what I will refer to as the first *fin de siècle*. While folktales were collected to articulate the social and cultural identities in the project of romantic nationalism, literary fairy tales were expressions of individual creativity and a powerful narrative platform. With regards to both subgenres, the Western canon has again shown its male-dominated and non-universal face: collection of folktales by the Brothers Grimm, Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano as well as literary fairy tales by Goethe and E. T. A. Hoffman are safely nestled under its wing, while fairy tales of women authors written in the same period have long been forgotten.

Benedikte Naubert (1752-1819) was a prolific writer of historical novels, short stories, and fairy tales. As one of the first professional

women authors, she creatively adapted German fairy tales, largely in dialogue with the English tradition. I will try to highlight the importance of her texts in transnational Anglo-German context and present alternative readings of the fairy tales from the collection *New German Tales*, published anonymously in the period between 1789 and 1792, before the famous Grimm collection. With respect to the topics which have been in the centre of attention of women's literature studies for almost three decades now, I will try to answer the following questions: Why are the non-canonical genres more attractive for women authors of the period? To what extent can fairy tales be interpreted as platforms for discussion of contemporary issues? And last but not least, how is the controversial concept of women's authorship around 1800 developed on the fantastic platform? The notion of brand from the title will be developed through three different meanings of the word: brand as a recognizable kind of genre which is then subverted; brand as identification by mark of socially and gender relevant topics; and brand as related to construction of women's authorship as something new and unseen before.

ANDA BUKVIĆ studied German language and literature and English Language and literature at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, where she also enrolled in postgraduate studies in literature. In the course of her studies she attended courses and conducted research at Heidelberg, Konstanz and Berlin universities. From 2006-2010 she worked as a lector at the Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, teaching contemporary English language and translation. She has worked as translator, interpreter, proof-reader and contributor to various Croatian magazines and literature journals, covering the topics such as popular culture, language, literature, media, technology and social networks. Her areas of research and interest are women's writing, diaries and letters as literary forms, autobiographical writing, new technologies/new media platforms and literature, as well as theory and practice of literature translation. She lives in Zagreb and is currently working on her dissertation with the title *Diaries of German Women Authors from the Period Around 1800*.

My Angry Selves: Ellen Glasgow's *The Past*, Gothic Doublings and Women's Sense of Otherness

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UDC 821.111(73).09 Glasgow, E. A. G.-32

According to several scholarly reflections on the female Gothic, the incoherent language of the madwoman voices female rebellion against the hegemonic discourse of reason, anticipating the concept of *écriture féminine*. More specifically, it prefigures Kristevan theories about the revolutionary effects of the Semiotic within the Symbolic order, thus disrupting what Lacan terms as “the Law of the Father”. The confusion of the boundaries of ordinary reality — self/other, past/present, reality/fantasy — reveal a looking-glass world where assumptions of the female as the persistent “other” are reversed and the patriarchal principles of unity and chronology give way to a multiplicity of voices that would otherwise have been silenced.

The Virginia writer Ellen Glasgow (1873-1945) probably felt at ease in a genre which was popular among women and feminised in a number of ways: its popularity and its association with female readers and writers mimicked Victorian gender and class hierarchies, and thus it was commonly regarded as “other”, subversive and marginal. Glasgow's stories follow the basic Gothic plot: the house as an almost suffocating prison, the female protagonist trapped within its walls, the threatening male, and a mystery which most of the time surrounds a supernatural

figure or event. The house represents the imprisoning and the silencing of women within a name and a space which is not their own, but in which they are supposed to reign as angels of purity and innocence. In her Gothic stories, Glasgow denounces and challenges the nightmarish reality women of her time were disciplined to assume every day as desirable and proper, while she emphasizes the power of female solidarity to transform stories of oppression into expressions of assertiveness where cooperative rather than competitive relationships among women are highlighted. Among all of Glasgow's Gothic stories, "The Past" (1920) deserves special attention because the traditional Gothic doubling of the self here includes a third doubling. Most remarkable in this story is the interpretation of the doubling between the female protagonist and the apparently threatening *doppelgänger*, the ghost of her husband's first wife. Glasgow seems to suggest a projection of the second wife's fears into the figure of an uncanny Other, much in the fashion of Jane Eyre's disruptive double, Bertha Mason, perhaps revealing the author's awareness that relationships among women may become destructive if they accept a 'self' that has been defined by patriarchal definitions of women.

EMMA DOMÍNGUEZ-RUÉ graduated in English at the University of Lleida (Catalunya, Spain) and studied an MA in English Literature at Swansea University (United Kingdom). She specialised in female invalidism in the fiction of Ellen Glasgow and read her PhD dissertation at the University of Lleida (Spain) in 2005. Her dissertation was published in 2011 with the title *Of Lovely Tyrants and Invisible Women: Invalidism as Metaphor in the Fiction of Ellen Glasgow*. Aside from American Studies, she has also worked on Victorian and Gothic fiction under a feminist perspective. She is currently teaching in the Department of English at the University of Lleida and she is member of ENAS (European Network in Aging Studies), a research group working on perspectives of ageing in literature and culture.

Finding Sanctuary Amongst the Sidhe and Symbolism: W.B. Yeats and the Irish Fin de Siècle

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UDC 821.111.09 Yeats, W. B.

In an early review of *The Wind among the Reeds* (1899), Arthur Symons argues that ‘symbolism extends to the cover, where reeds are woven into a net to catch the wandering sounds [...] Mr Yeats has chosen his symbolism out of Irish mythology.’¹ In the dedication to his *Symbolist Movement in Literature* (1899) Symons venerates his Irish friend as ‘the chief representative of that movement.’² As such it becomes evident that Yeats’s early works and his essay, ‘The Symbolism of Poetry’ (1900), cemented his position as a leading figure of the Symbolist movement, although he possessed only a little understanding of the works of the French Symbolists; Paul Verlaine and Stéphane Mallarmé.

Yeats’s utilisation of Symbolism and his necromantic resurrection of a variety of Irish folkloric figures exemplify Nationalist/Revivalist nostalgia and propaganda; while simultaneously illustrating the Fin de Siècle vogue and obsession with the abnormal, the fantastic and the supernatural. As Yeats commented ‘once a symbolism has possessed the imagination of large numbers of men, it becomes [...] an embodiment of disembodied powers, and repeats itself in dreams

1 Symons, Arthur (reviews) *The Saturday Review*, May, 1899, in A. Norman Jeffares (ed.) *W.B. Yeats*. London: Routledge, 1997, p. 109.

2 Symons, Arthur. *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*. London: Routledge, 1899. (dedication).

and visions, age after age.³ By exploiting the vogue for the fantastic, Yeats invited his readers to ‘suspend disbelief since [in the] force that compels the poetic imagination,’ as Michael O’Neill’s notes. O’Neill further comments ‘With vivid economy Yeats conveys the power of the Sidhe.’⁴ From *Fairy and Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (1888) to *The Land of Hearts Desire* (1894) to *The Celtic Twilight* (1896); the Sidhe, and their realm became symbolic embodiments of both the bright and distant past; and the dark and sinister present.

With this in mind it is my intention to examine the Symbolism offered by Yeats’s poetic renderings of the fantastic figure of the Sidhe and their realm. In doing so I will consider and compare the depictions of the Sidhe offered by Douglas Hyde in his *An Tincear agus an tSidheog* (1902) and George Fitzmaurice in his *The Linnaun Shee* (1924) in order to demonstrate that Yeats, by invoking Symbolism and Homi Bhabha’s notion of the ‘metonym of presence’, offered a sanctuary safe from encroaching power of the degeneration, modernity and the horrors of a fallen world were kept at bay.

ROBERT FINNIGAN is a PhD student at the University of Sunderland. At the present moment in time he is researching Ireland and Irish literature of the Fin de Siècle period. His primary research interests lie in Irish literature, both in English and Gaelige, particularly Irish drama and prose from the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. The works of Oscar Wilde, W.B. Yeats, George Moore and Douglas Hyde are of particular interest. For several years he has been involved in N.E.I.C.N (North East Irish Culture Network) activities and events; such as helping promote and encourage research into the various characteristics of Irish culture and society.

3 Yeats, William Butler, in A. Norman Jeffares (ed.) *A New Commentary on the Poems of W.B. Yeats*. London: MacMillan Press LTD, 1983, p. 61.

4 O’Neil, Michael (ed.), *A Routledge Literary Sourcebook on The Poems of W.B. Yeats*. London: Routledge, 2004, p. 104.

**‘A fiery pulse of sin, a splendid shame’:
Aesthetic aspects and troublesome
relationships in Wilde’s tales**

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UDC 821.111.09 Wilde, O.-32

Oscar Wilde explored many genres in order to express his aesthetic and social convictions. In addition to his celebrated plays, he wrote poetry, essays, a novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, a famous letter ‘De Profundis’, and many journalistic articles and reviews. However, because of the censorship and the critics, the only literary form which allowed him to deal freely with some of the thorniest aspects of his aesthetic beliefs, those which are more associated with the influence of the Decadent movement, was the fairy tale.

Wilde’s tales have been considered a minor part of his work, and often dismissed as literary exercises or little gifts to please his wife. Moreover, people as a rule consider fairy tales to be addressed to children. But the fact is that most of Wilde’s fairy tales, which are said to be written versions of some of the several stories that he spontaneously told to his friends, reveal some aspects of Wilde’s thinking and interests which are either absent or subtly concealed in the rest of his writings.

In this paper we are going to talk about the expression of these aesthetic elements in three collections of short stories written by Wilde, namely, *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*, *A House of Pomegranates*, and *The Crime of Lord Arthur Savile and Other Stories*. After some brief considerations concerning Wilde’s view about children as receptors of his fairy tales, we are also going to analyse the way Wilde used the fairy tale to study the nature of love and friendship, to treat such issues as the importance of humane and committed relationships

or love beyond race, gender, substance, and even life or death; and to transmit a sympathetic view towards forbidden attachments, especially, homosexual relationships, which otherwise could not have been even treated in the repressive society of his time.

Although the short stories are the focus of our interest, we will also pay attention to some of the discussed issues as they appear in other writings, especially some of his poems, *The Portrait of Dorian Gray*, and *Salomé*.

RODRIGO FONTES TORRES received his degree in English Studies from the University of Málaga, UMA, in 2009. After a M.Ed. in 2010, he is writing his dissertation, concerning the influence of Oscar Wilde upon the society of his time, particularly with regard to the perception of women and women's rights, as well as his connection with the Suffragette movements and the Dress Reform Movement. His other research interests include also interactions between Cinema and Literature, the relationship between writers and illustrators (especially in the late nineteenth century), the evolution of the Arthurian myth, and the works of J. R. R. Tolkien.

**The Wordscape of the Devil and the Vampire:
The Fantastic, Cultural Memory and Identity
in *Fear and Servant* by Mirjana Novaković and
Constantine's Crossing by Dejan Stojiljković**

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**UDC 821.163.41.09 Novaković, M.-31
821.163.41.09 Stojiljković, D.-31**

Postmodernist writers rewrite history, recreate memory and reconstruct identities, turning the historical background into a chimera, or supplying historical or fictional character with new perspectives. Fictional characters need not be authentic in order to construct fiction's landscape and wordscape: such diverse critics as Boris Tomashevsky and Roland Barthes "seem to imply that a character is nothing but verbal scapes (physical appearance, thoughts, statements, feelings) held loosely together by a proper name"¹. The paper will discuss representations of aestheticized wordscapes of the Devil in Mirjana Novaković's novel *Fear and Servant* (1999) and the Vampire, in Dejan Stojiljković's *Constantin's Crossing* (2010).

Written at the turn of the century, *Fear and Servant* unites a multilayered narrative with fictitious characters and archetypal figures. Using a conventional gothic plot about a princess and the Devil searching for vampires in the 18th century Serbia, *Fear and Servant* tells of political traps and a struggle for power. *Constantine's Crossing* investigates murders of local peasants and German soldiers by an unidentified eerie force which takes the plot back to the rich history of the Naissus, the birthplace of Constantine the Great. In a manner resembling Stephen Greenblatt's strategies of fashioning histories and identities, Novaković uses a

¹ Wallace, Martin. *Recent Theories of Narrative*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press. 1986, p. 118.

trivial anecdote about the 1725 arrival of the commission from Vienna to investigate vampires in Serbia, as well as to weave a rich narrative which connects the eighteenth century Serbia with reminiscences of the contemporary literature, history and pop culture. Stojiljković juggles with the eventful history of Niš, Serbian equivalent of New Orleans, using the vampire(s) as a form of punishment and atonement for the motley crew of characters. Novaković subverts the stereotypes of a fairy tale about the beauty and the beast: the princess is far from living happily ever after, whereas the Devil fails to embody a fearless monster, displaying a lack of either courage or authority; he is an inverted parallel to the demonic figures ranging from Milton's Satan to Bronte's Heathcliff, but with a wild adoration of sensuous pleasure. On the other hand, Stojiljković's vampires display a regal dignity, serving the role of an indifferent judge between the high and the low.

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VLADISLAVA GORDIĆ PETKOVIĆ is Full Professor of English and American Literature at the University of Novi Sad, Serbia. She has written widely on the contemporary fiction, women's writing, Shakespearean tragedy, media and technology, and has published nine books so far: the book-length studies on the contemporary short story, *The Syntax of Silence* (1995) and *Hemingway* (2000), the collections of scholarly articles *Correspondence: The Currents and Characters of Postmodern Fiction* (2000), *On the Female Continent* (2007) and *Mysticism and Mechanisms* (2010). Vladislava writes on literature and technology in *Virtual Literature* (2004) and *Virtual Literature 2: Literature, Technology, Ideology* (2007). Her books of short essays *The Literature and the Quotidian* (2007) and *Formatting* (2009) collect newspaper articles on the variety of writers across ages and cultures.

Financial Capital and the Fantastic: an Americanist Perspective

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As a first step I want to indicate that my intention is not to explore the fantastic as such but to illustrate how the concept of the fantastic can help us to focus and conceptualise phenomena that I contend marked both the end of the nineteenth century and the present state of the United States. The phenomena I am referring to are the mutations of capitalism during these two periods of American history, mutations that have persuaded some to speak of both epochs as Gilded Ages.

I proceed from the assumption that the concept of the fantastic always presupposes an epistemological problematic, more concretely, our inability to conceptualise and account for an entity, an event or a process. After speaking of this epistemological crisis, to use a term which has been applied in accounting for the distinctive nature of the present financial crisis, the central part of my presentation will attempt to show how the economic sphere, a sphere which tends to be elided from the agenda of the humanities and the social sciences, during certain historical conjunctures assumes a chimerical character. To substantiate the claim that the economic can be referenced using designations that are usually deployed to describe the fantastic I will rely on Fredric Jameson's book *Representing Capital*.

As a rule, one can say that the economic field of human experience accrues to itself a fantastical or chimerical nature at moments of crisis, particularly during that mutation of capitalism which we can designate as the ascendance of finance. In the presentation I will dwell upon the diagnosis of the contemporary moment as evincing the culmination of a process of financialization that has been the salient feature of the latest mutation of capitalism in the United States. Drawing on this evidence I propose to show how the contemporary moment of crisis is accompanied by the inability to represent either the bulk of financial transactions, their mechanisms or their operational logic. Here I will focus on extant pronouncements deriving from scholarly well as well as newspaper clips or similar sources. In bringing together the strands of my argument, I will supplement these sources by resorting to the works of Thomas Pynchon and Don DeLillo in order to show how literature registers the present conjuncture and how it is precisely here that the American novelists still have something of import to address to their society.

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Contested Pasts and the Politics of Memory: Irish Gothic Fiction Revisited

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At least two major critical approaches to Irish Gothic fiction can be delineated and they, nonetheless, tend to converge. Psychoanalytic readings of the Irish Gothic fiction as «a return of the repressed» often put emphasis on the release of dark, unconscious forces, and point beyond the existing social order by transgressing and subverting it. On the other hand, socio-political and cultural readings (Deane, Gibbons, Eagleton) insist on the essentially historical nature of the genre. An analysis of Irish Gothic fiction raises also the complex issues of Protestant ethic, modernity and capitalism within the context of a wider Victorian crisis of Christian belief.

Departing from Eve Kosofsky Sedwick's comment in the introduction to her book *The Coherence of Gothic Convention* about the necessity to differentiate the critical function of Gothic form from «the Gothic novel proper» my paper seeks to examine the role of memory in Irish Gothic fiction bearing in mind the fact that this literary genre in Ireland demonstrates its persistent attachment to history and politics, as well as an overt tendency to blur the distinction between past history and present politics. The Gothic mode in Irish literature seems suitable not only for fostering national narratives related to ruin and destruction, but also for registering major cultural, social and historical shifts, which accounts for its endurance within the Irish literary canon.

Multiple relations to the past are enacted in various modes of mnemonic transmission. Nostalgia is the most recurrent mnemonic mode in Irish Gothic fiction related to the process of cultural self-analysis and re-enactment of the contested pasts, often through remediation and embodiment. The cultural interaction of nostalgia as, basically, a mode of looking to the past for a stability lacking in the present, pertaining to Irish postco-

lonial experience, is enacted through the motifs of the soil, dispossession, language and exile. It forges various interactions between personal and collective memory. Fred Botting describes Gothic nostalgia as the yearning for a romanticized past. On the other hand, Linda Hutcheon points out that: «It is the very pastness of the past, its inaccessibility, that likely accounts for a large part of nostalgia's power.» Once dismissed as merely a glorification of the past, nostalgia has come to be read by a range of scholars in the humanities in a more complex way as a filter through which memories of the past are ordered and shaped by forces of the present (Hemming 2008: 6). My paper will, therefore, explore various mnemonic modes encoded in Irish Gothic texts, in particular nostalgia, and discuss how they transmit moments of cultural and historical cognition.

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W. J. McCormack (ed.) «Irish Gothic and After (1820-1945)», in Seamus Deane (ed.) *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Literature* (1991), Vol. II, pp. 831-854.

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Supernatural Beings: Angels, Ghosts and Demons in Children's Books of the 19th Century (with particular consideration of George MacDonald's *At the back of the North Wind*)

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**UDC 821.09-93"18"
821.111.09 MacDonald, G.-93-34**

Mythical, shadowy, intangible figures like angels, ghosts and demons may have different forms and functions, but they exist in every culture in some form or guise. As supernatural beings, they are intermediaries between the perceived reality of our world, and the "other", the unknown, the mysterious, uncanny world parallel to it. Clearly they are linked to all the other familiar figures of myth, legend and fairy tale that have been merged and blended into our own canon of stories from cultures prior to ours. Children can still, in their imagination, inhabit an "in-between" world populated by such figures. Not only does this imagined world stimulate their fancy, it can also help them to find some kind of moral order in the real world. Angels (imagined beings) are for them clearly delineated (real) creatures existing for the purpose of comforting, accompanying and guiding them through life. They are also a useful construct for teaching children about spirituality.

In reaction to the ideologies of realism and utilitarianism stemming from the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, Romanticism and the Gothic rekindled the fire of the imagination and the possibility of wonderment. The 19th century also saw a change in attitudes towards children and childhood and the kind of fiction appropriate for them. Instead

of being primarily moralistic and didactic, authors turned to encouraging children's capacity for imagination, their wonderment and their receptivity to belief. Thus there was a renewed interest in traditional fairy tales. In many literary fairy tales there was a search for an ideal "good place", even if there was always a price to pay for attaining it. Mortality rates and particularly those of children were extremely high, which might explain why the Victorians made a cult out of death. As a result angel figures, whether in poetry, prose, paintings or stone statues were ubiquitous.

George MacDonald, a clergyman for part of his life, wrote many fairy tales for children, having made use of the Scottish story-telling tradition and the wealth of Celtic tales at his disposal. In his fairy tale *At the back of the North Wind* the angel-like figure of North Wind is a complex but interesting one; she is a beautiful woman, comforting mother figure, commanding, all-knowing omnipresent being, both benevolent and mysteriously cruel, and at the end an angel of death. Diamond is the small boy she takes on a voyage to "another land beyond", a kind of almost idyllic waiting place not unlike purgatory, who lives increasingly on another level of consciousness until he departs from the world altogether. My paper will explore the different threads indicated above.

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Fantastic Realism in Mikhail Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita*: a Method of Struggle Against the Totalitarian State

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UDC 821.161.1.09 Bulgakov, M. A.-31

In this paper I will analyse Mikhail Bulgakov's novel *Master and Margarita*, the most famous example of fantastic realism in the twentieth century Russian literature. Written in the darkest period of Russian history, marked by Stalin's terror, this subversive and blasphemous novel challenged the tyranny of unitary ideology of the soviet regime. There is no doubt that Bulgakov created his carnivalesque, fantastic narrative as a protest against the severe oppression of the Soviet state under Stalinism and reflected the evils of Stalin's Russia.

Following the tradition of Nikolay Gogol, Bulgakov revived fantastic realism and used it for the purpose of social criticism. As a result, though finished in 1945, the novel remained banned until 1966. Written in the tradition of the Menippean satire, Bulgakov's narrative mocks sacred realm (the Soviet state) through the profane, lending itself to a Bakhtinian interpretation of the carnival as a temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order. In the novel fantastic elements are fused with the ordinary, involving the direct and physical intervention of the divine or the demonic in an otherwise unexceptional flow of events. Like many great works of Russian literature, the novel has a complex plot, woven from two strands that unfold in different temporal dimensions, the time of the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, and the time of early Soviet rule in modern Moscow. One of the subplots is an apocryphal account of the trial, death and burial of Jesus Christ which takes place in the imagined town of Yershalaim. Another plot concerns Satan's visit to Moscow in the

1930s and includes a series of fantastic events, such as the intervention of the supernatural characters into the lives of Muscovites, mysterious disappearance and transformations, witchcraft, black magic rituals, and carnivalesque death and abuse, culminating in a Great Satan's Ball. It turns out that Satan, the traditional incarnation of evil, becomes the Minister of justice and the only source of divine law in the corrupted Moscow of the 1930s, the city which refuses to believe in either God or Satan but believes only in the state's authority.

I will base my analysis on the theory of intertextuality as presented in Mark Juvan's (2000) and Natalia Fateeva's (2000) researches and define intertextual figures (quotes, allusions, titles, names and functions of the main protagonists) used by Bulgakov to establish parallels between his own text and numerous biblical, apocryphal, magical and mythological sources. Intertextual devices, recognizable only by an experienced reader, allowed Bulgakov to avoid Soviet censorship. I will use the analysis of numerous intertextual figures to decipher Bulgakov's message and to demonstrate how at times of extreme censorship fantastic in Bulgakov's novel is used to attack secular ideology of abuse and politics of the totalitarian regime of oppression.

Dr NATALIA KALOH VID is an assistant professor of English literature. She holds a PhD degree in English literature and translation studies from the University of Maribor (Slovenia). Her thesis focused on ideological influence on literary translations in the Soviet Union. She also holds another PhD degree in Modern Russian Literature from the University of Ljubljana (Slovenia). Her second thesis focused on the intertextual analysis of Mikhail Bulgakov's works. Kaloh Vid presented the results of her researches at more than thirty international conferences in Austria, Germany, Montenegro, Hungary, Chile, Canada, Croatia, Romania, Czech Republic, Scotland and Wales. List of her publications includes articles on Mikhail Bulgakov, ideological influence on literature in the Soviet Union, as well as on different aspects of Russian and Canadian literature. Among her research fields are ideological influence on literary translations, literature in the Soviet Union and Mikhail Bulgakov. She is also the author of the book *Ideological translations of Robert Burns's poetry in Russia and in the Soviet Union* published in 2011.

“Beauties but Faintly Visible:” Cryptographic Fantasies of James de Mille

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UDC 821.111(71).09 De Mille, J.-31

Canadian novelist James de Mille is typically regarded as one of the misplaced literary treasures of early Canadian writing, and Canada’s forgotten classic. During his lifetime de Mille was appreciated for the intricate plots of his suspense and mystery novels, gift for writing a natural-sounding dialogue, and for his flair for comedy and irony. However, a closer scrutiny of his fantastic literary musings suggests that there is more in de Mille’s talent for which he might deserve some of his fame back. De Mille was not a mere imitator of mystery and fantasy – his interest focused on the meta-textual characteristics of (his own) literary compositions, and thus on the process of writing itself.

While interpreting de Mille as an early precursor of postmodernism may sound somewhat simplifying, this paper argues that this interpretation should not be completely dismissed. Linda Hutcheon, a Canadian literary critic, points out the difference between “the modernist search for order in the face of moral and social chaos” and the “postmodern urge to trouble, to question, to make both problematic and provisional any such desire for order or truth through the powers of the human imagination.”¹ If we accept the difference between the modern and the postmodern as proposed by Hutcheon, then perhaps we can argue that Canadian literature had a

¹ Hutcheon, Linda. *The Canadian Postmodern. A Study of Contemporary English-Canadian Fiction*. Toronto: Oxford University Press. 1988, p. 2.

nineteenth-century forerunner of postmodernism, whose work may help us to reconsider Canadian overall contribution to world literature.

This paper, therefore, proposes to analyse several examples of James de Mille's fictional works, namely his fantastic novels *The Cryptogram* (1871), *The Living Link* (1874), and his masterpiece, a late nineteenth-century Canadian dystopia, *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder* (1888), which is considered the first Canadian sci-fi novel. It seeks to reconsider their literary relevance and their position within the canon of Canadian national literature. It focuses on intertextuality, irony, introspection, multiplicity of narrative points of view, and unreliability of the narrative perspective in de Mille's works. The paper also argues that in addition to being the author of the sensational, skilfully crafted fantastic stories, de Mille is also a sophisticated thinker and refined rhetorician, who relied on the genre of the fantastic novel to mock and parody the very act of literary analysis itself.

KLÁRA KOLINSKÁ received an M.A. in English and Czech from Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic, and an M.A. in Comparative Literature from the University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada. She completed her PhD at Charles University, where she defended her dissertation on Canadian author Thomas King's Trickster narratives. Klára Kolinská teaches at the Department of Anglophone Studies of Metropolitan University, Prague, Czech Republic, and at the Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures of Charles University, Prague. Her main areas of teaching and research include early, as well as contemporary Canadian fiction, theatre and drama, multiculturalism, and Aboriginal literature and theatre. She has published mainly on Canadian Aboriginal literature and theatre, Canadian prose fiction, and theory and practice of narrative and storytelling. Her main publications and co-editions include *Women in Dialogue: (M)Uses of Culture* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), *Waiting for Coyote. Contemporary Canadian Aboriginal Drama and Theatre* (Větrné mlýny, 2007), *Contemporary Aboriginal Literature in North America*, a special issue of *Litteraria Pragensia: Studies in Literature and Culture* (Charles University, Prague, 2005), *Shakespeare and His Collaborators Over the Centuries* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008).

Dorothy L. Sayers
Anthologer of Fantastic Literature

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UDC 821.111.09 Sayers, D. L.-32

Dorothy L. Sayers is best remembered as the author of a successful series of Golden Age detective novels featuring Lord Peter Wimsey, her aristocratic sleuth. Her keenest readers may also find their way to the three anthologies of short stories that were selected and edited by Sayers, *Great Short Stories of Detection, Mystery and Horror* Volumes 1, 2 and 3 (1928, 1931 and 1934). Each anthology is divided into a section on detection and a section on mystery and horror. Not surprisingly, perhaps, studies of Sayers generally pay more attention to her choice of detective stories. Only her admiration of Sheridan Le Fanu is usually acknowledged in relation to the mystery and horror aspect.

At times, however, Sayers turned to the fantastic in her own fiction writing, particularly in her plotting of short stories. An early Wimsey story “The Abominable History of the Man with Copper Fingers” involves a villain, Loder, who murders his victims by electro-plating them in copper and turning them into works of art. Peter Wimsey combines humour and horror in condemning Loder as a madman who “means to make you into a hatstand or an electric light-fitting, or something of that sort.” The Wimsey story “Striding Folly” begins with an eerily accurate prophetic dream and is inspired by Lewis Carroll’s *Through the Looking Glass*. Sayers’ non-series story “The Cyprian Cat” features a character that can transform herself from a beautiful woman to a cat at will.

In choosing stories or selections from longer texts for her anthologies, Sayers pays attention to “that delicious nausea we look for in

a horror yarn”¹. She also shows a distinct taste for fantastic literature. Her selections include fin de siècle texts such as Arthur Machen’s “The Novel of the Black Seal” (from *The Three Imposters*, 1895) alongside earlier fiction such as Le Fanu’s “Green Tea.”

This paper discusses the contents of Sayers’ anthologies and her foresight in choosing the late nineteenth century authors of fantastic fiction who have only recently become the focus of critical attention. It also considers the influence that this literature had on Sayers’ own fiction. Even Sayers’ apparently straightforward detective novels include elements of other popular genres of fiction, including romance, science-fiction and the fantastic. Her short stories are more experimental and some fall clearly into the category of fantastic fiction.

Dr AOIFE LEAHY is the Book Reviews Editor (Literature and Cultural Studies) for *The European English Messenger*, the official bulletin of The European Society for the Study of English. She is President of the National Association of English Studies, the Irish national association within ESSE, and sits on the ESSE board. Her PhD was awarded by University College Dublin in 2003 and her dissertation was entitled *The Raphaelesque versus the Pre-Raphaelite in Victorian Fiction 1850-1900*. This interdisciplinary dissertation examines issues in visual art as they are represented in a broad range of nineteenth century fiction. Her monograph *The Victorian Approach to Modernism in the Fiction of Dorothy L. Sayers* was published in 2009 by Cambridge Scholars Publishing. This book explores Sayers’ use of Victorian literature as a foundation for understanding the despairing tone of modernist literature. Dr Leahy has also published essays and articles on Wilkie Collins, Lewis Carroll, the Victorian artist Noel Paton and Oscar Wilde and is a contributor to The Oscholars, the website dedicated to Oscar Wilde. Dr Leahy has taught English Literature and Visual Culture modules in a variety of universities and institutes of technology and specialises in teaching Victorian literature and art.

¹ Sayers, Dorothy L. *Great Short Stories of Detection, Mystery and Horror*. Volume 1. London: Victor Gollancz, 1928, p. 46.

**Magical Realism in Postcolonial Fiction:
Examples of David Dabydeen,
Salman Rushdie and Peter Carey**

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**UDC 821.111.09 Dabydeen, D.
821.111.09 Rushdie, S.
821.111(94).09 Carey, P.**

As “the literary language of the emergent post-colonial world” (Bhabha 1990: 7), the narrative mode of magical realism is prominently featured in both postcolonial theory and practice. The very association of this particular narrative mode with post colonialism is based on the efforts to be recognized in both domains: magical realism, as well as postcolonial literature, strives to identify, question and ultimately undermine various established authorities that are, but need not necessarily be, the trademark of the postcolonial world. In this regard, the blurring of magical and realist elements in the practice of magical realism and the consequential treatment of temporal and spatial relations, facts and fiction, truth and illusion, is analysed within the context of postcolonial fiction as the juxtaposing of two separate yet related systems of belief, such as those pertaining to the colonizer and the colonized, the centre and the margin. Through its strategies of subversion and transgression, as well as through its association with Bakhtin’s concepts of the carnivalesque and the grotesque as domains of ex-centricity, magical realism in postcolonial fiction tackles the issues of “cultural dominants” (Hutcheon 1995: 131) and, “pressing economic, political, and cultural inequalities” (Quayson 1995: 87) in a fin-de-siècle world. As a form of rebellion directed towards the “massive imperial centre and its totalising system” (Slemon 1995: 409), magical realism in the works of Guyanese author David Dabydeen, Australian author Peter Carey and Indo-Anglian author Salman Rushdie enters the dialogue with history per-

herent to postcolonialism. The relationship with the past (damaged, erased or changed due to the burden brought on by the process of colonization, colonial history or the forceful erasure of the autochthon) is thus ultimately reconstructed in the works of these authors, while their narrators and focalizers, as representatives of the Other, are given voice. The aim of the paper, thus, is to tackle the issue of magical realism as a strategy for subverting and transgressing authoritative and prescriptive attitudes in heterogeneous fictional worlds of these three authors, placing the chosen narrative strategy within a wider context of authors' social engagement, yet without reducing their fiction to the mere level of programmatic function.

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Faces of Fear – Aesthetics of Horror and the Representation of the Monstrous

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When discussing the issue of the horror genre, together with the notion of fear, numerous interpretations and constructs become available as tools through which we can access the vivid sub-layers that inevitably accompany this complex genre. Similarly, the issue of the monstrous carries within itself an analogous complexity. It offers the readers/viewers both a fearful as well as an explicit experience, something mediated or metaphoric, while at the same time providing a social or cultural critique. It is precisely this context that the presentation will focus on, presenting and analysing three different cases, from three different cultural and artistic backgrounds. The first case presents the concept of *onryou* or *yuri*, the image of the Japanese female ghost, whose identity and gender function as a catalyst for the anxieties of the male dominated Japanese society. This image of a demon seeking revenge (narratives such as *Ringu* and *Ju on*) captures the viewers (and readers) through the feminine and subversive nature of the ghost.

The second part of the presentations offers an analysis of the idea of the serial killer as a product of the postmodern American society. Drawing

from rudimental examples such as Leatherface (from the *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* series) to more complex (or “blank”) literary constructs such as Patrick Bateman (from Bret Easton Ellis’s novel *American Psycho*), the notion of the serial killer encompasses the fears and anxieties of a constantly changing and ever more secular society. By largely shedding the “inert” Gothic narrative dynamics of the previous centuries, the serial killer appears as both a real life monster and a fictional creation, a product of a contemporary age. The final segment revolves around the analysis of the work of Francesca Woodman – a photographer whose art, although it does not belong to either the literary or movie tradition achieves an *uncanny* effect by combining everyday objects with portraits of unidentified women placed within specific non-descriptive spaces. Although belonging to something that could be defined as *High(er) Art*, Woodman’s work still achieves an elevated sense of uneasiness embodied in the image of the represented women, implying that the idea of fear transcends and defies genre issues as well as art forms. The aim of the presentation is therefore to identify the representation of the monstrous, and its aesthetic subtext, within seemingly disconnected forms of art.

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The City and the Highway: The Spatialization of the Double in the *Fin de siècle(s)*

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UDC 821.111.09 Stevenson, R. L.-31
791.44.071 Lynch, D.

The paper proposes to show how the city, which in most works of the fin de siècle fantastic literature was presented as a metaphorical locus of human dual identity, is subtly being exchanged by the highway in postmodern fantastic works of the end of the twentieth century. To exemplify the close connection between space and human identity, the paper explores two end-of-the-century works of art: Stevenson's novella *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), and David Lynch's film *The Lost Highway* (1997), each of which presents a different kind of space as the basis for exploration and understanding of the instability of human identity.

The paper aims to show how the concept of double identity situated in and provoked by the appearance of a metropolis, mutated into a more fluid conceptualisation of self as ultimately ambiguous and unknowable, which is represented by the transient space of a highway. As Augè proposes, the erasure of frontiers caused by globalisation also erases the boundaries between the individual and his or her environment, through the multiplication of the spaces of circulation, consumption and communication, that is highways of different kinds, or, more specifically, *non-places*.

While London served as the city of darkness and crime at the end of the nineteenth century, Los Angeles, as an automobile-oriented, fragmented city, and the typical setting of film noir, became the “terrain of apprehension and despair” (Silver and Ursini) in the twentieth century. Lynch’s film proposes a worldview typical of the end of the twentieth century; namely, that there are no fixed interpretations or clear-cut meanings. While Stevenson proposed the idea that there are two sides to every person and expressed the dangers arising from the possibility that scientific methods be used to unleash the “lower” side, in Lynch identity is no longer identifiable or graspable at all, but open to various contested perspectives, none of which can ever prevail. The fluidity or instability of the subject is different than the one expressed in Stevenson, because it is ever-changing and incomprehensible. At the end of the twentieth century, marked by constant mobility on the physical or virtual highway, the assumption of an identity, fluid yet explainable in terms proposed by the *fin de siècle* science and worldview, no longer exists.

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“Sacraments of evil”: Arthur Machen’s Supernatural Tales of the Nineties

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UDC 821.111.09 Machen, A.-32

Although he insisted that he did not belong to the decadent movement, Arthur Machen was undeniably influenced by the cultural climate of the “Naughty Nineties”. Indeed, in her book about *fin-de-siècle* fantastic literature *Fantastique et Décadence en Angleterre (1890-1914)*, French critic Catherine Rancy repeatedly refers to Machen’s supernatural tales of the Nineties to illustrate her thesis that there was such a thing as a “fantastique décadent” [decadent fantastic]¹, a type of fantastic with its own characteristics, among which an obsession with decomposition, a fascination with the past, and a focus on horrifying revelations.

One of the major reasons why Arthur Machen is often associated with Decadence is the pervasiveness of the theme of Evil and the thread of diabolism in his works. Attention is bound to be caught by the lurid and sensational elements of the tales, such as dark rituals or decomposing bodies, which invite association with Decadence, but the aim of this paper is to de-emphasize this aspect in order to show the broader picture, that is, in order to relate those elements to Machen’s view of the world as a sacrament. To the Anglo-Catholic writer, the world is made up of hieroglyphics, or symbols, that simultaneously

¹ Rancy, Catherine. *Fantastique et décadence en Angleterre 1890-1914*. Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1982.

hide and reveal higher, spiritual realities. Another recurrent image is that of the veil, a veil that hides the “real” world and which it may be dangerous to lift or rend, be it unwittingly. One may sometimes feel the ecstasy provoked by the intimation of the other world but words can hardly translate this experience, which ultimately raises the question of the representational power of language. In Machen’s view, the writer’s task is to transmit the ecstasy he has felt to his readers, but the written text is but another hieroglyph hinting at what lies beyond the veil of appearances. This mystical bent helps account for the centrality of the motif of deciphering in Machen’s work. Most of his supernatural tales stage amateur sleuths who come across puzzling signs, cryptograms or codes, the deciphering of which may give a glimpse of the ineffable mysteries. In short, the main element that links the Welsh author to the cultural movement of decadence is the mystical vision expressed throughout his work, a vision that is one of the forms taken by the quest for transcendence that marked the *fin de siècle*.

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Incident of the Letter:
**The Double in Maupassant's *Horla* and
Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and
Mr Hyde***

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UDC 821.111.09 Stevenson, R. L.-31
821.133.1.09 Maupassant, G. de-32

In Maupassant's short story *Horla* (1887) the protagonist is unable to see his reflection in the mirror so he believes that he sees an uncanny creature imposed between himself and the mirror. In the famous article *Das Unheimliche* (1919) Freud recounts how he as train passenger suddenly saw "an elderly gentleman in a dressing-gown and travelling cap" coming into his wagon-lit. While standing up to put the gentleman into right wagon-lit Freud realized that "the intruder was nothing but his own reflection in the looking-glass of the open door". Since the unknown intruder is himself the uncanny is not related to something strange, but to something which is already known. The protagonist in Maupassant's short story is not haunted by an unknown creature but with his own self and nothingness that he sees is himself becoming neutrality between the self and the other.

In contrast to *Horla* the effect of *dédoublement* in Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) is induced with the letters. The terrifying metamorphosis of Dr Jekyll into Mr Hyde is never *directly*

presented to the reader through the discourse of the narrator, but only *indirectly* through the letters left to Utterson by Dr Jekyll and Dr Lanyon. In his “full statement of the case” Dr Jekyll writes that *as*, or in the guise of, Mr Hyde his „original character“ is remembered as Jekyll’s handwriting. On the other hand, Jekyll also writes that in his „second character“ his “faculties seemed sharpened”. But then, Dr Jekyll is the sharpened side of Mr Hyde. Therefore, is not the second character in fact the original one? Can ‘bad’ and ‘good’, savage and cultivated, primitive and civilized sides of humanity be separated? As Maupassant in *Horla*, Stevenson in *Strange Case* subversively engages with the scientific discourses of *fin de siècle* – criminology, anthropology, evolutionist psychiatry, and sexology. Therefore, Mr Hyde is not *the other* of Dr Jekyll; rather Dr Jekyll *is* Mr Hyde.

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**The Sublimity of Terror,
the Terror of the Sublime:
J.R.R. Tolkien and H.P. Lovecraft
as Two Poles of the 20th - century Fantasy**

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**UDC 821.111.09 Tolkien, J. R. R.
821.111(73).09 Lovecraft, H. P.**

J.R.R. Tolkien and H.P. Lovecraft are two major figures of the twentieth century fantasy and each has deep roots in the Victorian era: the former in the romances of George MacDonald and William Morris, the latter in the tradition of the gothic novel. Each adopted and reworked elements of the philosophically turbulent 19th century and formed their own subgenre of modern fantasy. Comparison of the two seemingly disparate authors shows the unity of their deep structures, which is the heroic quest as described by Carl Gustav Jung and Northrop Frye. The way they treat that basic mythic plot reveals two opposed approaches to the notions of the sublime and numinous: while Tolkien creates a secondary world with a transcendent purpose, Lovecraft demonstrates the devastating effect of encounter with the sublime which awakes in the individual a feeling of “cosmic terror”. He demonstrates the futility of heroic efforts by parodying the conventions of heroic fantasy and each step of the heroic quest as described in myth and high fantasy – memory, vastness, the threshold, the return, the numinous – finds its “demonic” counterpart in the work of

Lovecraft and other writers of “weird fiction” (C. A. Smith, A. Machen, R. E. Howard). Comparison of their writings with narrative strategies of high fantasy authors like Ursula Le Guin and J. R. R. Tolkien, highlights a deep division in the contemporary fantasy which can be traced back to the roots of modern fantasy in the 19th century. Borrowing the terms from Northrop Frye’s *Anatomy of Criticism*, high fantasy can be termed “romantic”, whereas Lovecraftian fantasy can be labelled “ironic”. The romantic fantasy is always affirmative: it embraces transcendence and rewards its hero’s valiant efforts by repeating the death-rebirth pattern found in mythology and folklore. The ironic fantasy depends on being a dark parody of romantic conventions and presents its hero’s efforts as ultimately doomed because at the end of the quest there is no reward, only the leering face of the existential void. The same rift is also felt in the 20th century theory of fantasy: while authors like Northrop Frye insist on the affirmative interpretation, other authors like Rosemary Jackson expect fantasy to be subversive, stressing cognitive uncertainty, paradox, and absurdity.

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**A Walk on the Wilde Side:
Dorian Gray a Faustian Flâneur for the *Fin de Siècle***

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UDC 821.111.09 Wilde, O.-31

In a provocative letter to *Scot's Observer* dated 5th July, 1899, Oscar Wilde asserted that 'each man sees his own sins in Dorian Gray. What Dorian Gray's sins are no one knows. He who finds them has brought them'. In short, the writer offered a hermeneutic quest to those who attempt to decipher or decode his work.

Wilde's cryptic comments are appropriate to his aesthetic stance, summarised in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, that 'the way of paradoxes is the way of truth'. Such a statement is equally appropriate to the extraordinarily idiosyncratic nature of the novel: a generic hybrid of Gothic, the Fantastic and the French decadent novels of Gautier and Huysmans. Added to this, Wilde's book could almost be described as a portrait of the *fin de siècle*, reflecting, as it does the uncertainty and instability of a zeitgeist characterised in general by shifting boundaries and cultural crises and, as this paper will argue, the unstoppable momentum of consumerism, commodity culture and the phantasmagoria associated with a late-Victorian society dominated by Debordian spectacle and the Veblen effect.

As Rachael Bowlby has noted, *fin de siècle* novels are 'always mediated, explicitly or not by the thorough commodification which characterises urban society at the turn of the century'¹. As I will suggest, this is peculiarly apt for Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray*: a text which was initially published in serial form for 'Lippincott's magazine' – a periodical which employed mass-marketing for mass-circulation. With this in mind I will locate the text within cycles of commodity production, distribution and consumption, arguing that as commodity culture encroached upon the city it became equally pervasive in the publishing industry.

I will also suggest that in his persiflage, posturing and outré, often preposterous attire Oscar Wilde was no stranger to spectacle and self-advertisement: as Jon Stratton observes: 'Wilde thought of himself as a

¹ Bowlby, Rachael. *Just Looking: Consumer Culture in Dreiser, Gissing and Zola*. New York: Methuen, 1985, p. 151.

commodity, transformed himself into a spectacle and sold it². Like his fictional dandy Dorian, Wilde was a voracious and conspicuous consumer; a Paterian new Hedonist, driven by insatiable desires and propelled towards instant and immediate gratification. Both consumer and consumed, Dorian Gray becomes a degenerate flâneur, desiring to amass a knowledge of the metropolis but unable to withstand its subterranean lures. Mesmerised by the Mephistophelian Lord Henry he moves from insatiable consumer to vendor; sacrificing himself on the altar of the marketplace as he barter his soul for eternal youth and beauty.

In sum, I will argue that *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is an apt metaphor for the dangers of commodity fetishism and conspicuous consumption which beset England at the *fin de siècle*. From the lavish salons, the contents of which we are invited to consume vicariously, to the opium dens of Whitechapel the novel is driven by a consumerist logic wrapped in the trappings of Gothic and couched in the rhetoric of the Fantastic. The text, itself a commodity is a repository for further commodities which offer access to the repressed underworld of the unrestrained self, incarnated in the ultimate luxury commodity and voracious consumer: Dorian Gray. Combined, these factors make the novel an example *avant la lettre* of The Fantastic in the *fin de siècle*.

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2 Stratton, Jon. *The Desirable Body*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996, p. 139.

R. L. Stevenson and the Fin-de-siècle Pre-modernist Narrative Mosaic

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UDC 821.111.09 Stevenson, R. L.-32

The fantastic literature of the end of the 19th century could be regarded as a pre-modern literature.¹ It anticipated some of the formal and narrative experiments of modernism as a result of its intrinsic development, as well as its response to the changing social, political, cultural and aesthetic paradigms and the developing concepts of the real and the unreal.

In his *New Arabian Nights* and *The Dynamiter* R. L. Stevenson explored new possibilities of the fantastic in the play of chance and invented a new narrative technique, *a narrative mosaic*. By a narrative mosaic I understand a series of relatively autonomous but at the same interconnected tales told from different narrative perspectives. These tales are independent in the sense that each of them can stand on its own and be printed or reprinted separately because they are not episodes of a serial novel. Even though there are some forerunners of a narrative mosaic in English and American literature, to my knowledge, none of them went so far as Stevenson. One can recall the series of three detective tales² by Edgar Allan Poe but in fact each tale is a closed semantic and syntactic unit with a clear-cut resolution and leaves no loose narrative threads. In Stevenson's case the resolution of the plot is not complete; some narrative

¹ During his discussion of the whole context of decadence in Britain David Weir argues that decadent literature had "an active, dynamic role in the transition from romantic to modernist literature." (Weir, David. *Decadence and the Making of Modernism*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995, XVII.)

² "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Mystery of Mary Roget," "The Purloined Letter."

threads remain loose and are developed in a sequel.

With this narrative technique Stevenson helped to extend the experiments of fantastic literature and he also broke new ground for future applications of this special kind of episodic method, which keeps a fragile balance between the autonomy and completeness of an episode in a series and the open-ended incompleteness and sequential plot of the serial. While these features are shared with the serial or series, the narrative mosaic maintains one important distinctive feature, as the analysis of Stevenson's writing revealed, an initial illusion of discontinuity, achieved by a change in the setting and focal protagonists and by belated reintroductions of the protagonists from the previous part and their being cast in minor roles. These features become important elements in the new relationship between the writer and the reader, which is no longer perceived in mimetic terms as a portrayal of life and the mind but as a game involving the reader in the deceptive play of the imagination, during which new links are discovered and new relations configured.

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What We Talk About When We Talk About the Fantastic? Reconsidering Genealogical Distinctions

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Genre differentiation seems key to understanding fantastic literature, especially when we raise the question what type of “reality” fantastic fiction presents, what “truth” it conveys and whether its semiotic potential is seen as escapist or transgressive. However, the answers to these questions are often contradictory because they rely on differently postulated definitions of the genre, i.e. narrative modes. This paper sets out to delineate a distinction between fantastic literature in the narrower sense of the word and other “fantastic” genres such as science fiction and fantasy by taking into consideration different functions these three genres, sub-genres or narrative modes perform. Its arguments are grounded in the general assumption that genre differentiation is essential and must not be overlooked in the discussion of the fantastic because, as a literary category, genre provides a connection not only between single literary texts but also between a particular literary text and literature as a whole.

Postmodernist tendency to mix genres in literary discourse and in other discursive areas (academic, political, philosophical, etc.) as well as deconstructivist marked aversion towards genealogical classification made discussion about forms, types and genres very unpopular. However, one can still argue that it was precisely postmodernist aesthetics based on the eroded distinction between high and low art and recycling of traditional

genres, that brought the discussion of genealogical issues into the limelight. Current theoretical approaches oscillate between several assumptions: that a text resists genre as a law imposed on it (Blanchot, Derrida), that no text is unframed (Frow) and that a text is necessarily affiliated with a genre. When discussing the genre of the fantastic, this paper proposes to shift away from traditional theory, ‘in which texts are thought to use or perform the genres by which they are shaped’, to a more reflexive model that sees the relations between text and genre as unstable (Frow). Furthermore, if we understand genres not merely as stylistic devices, but also as tools that create effects of reality and truth, and as being central to different ways we understand the world (Frow), tools that operate at a level of semiosis, i.e. of meaning-making, we can easily argue that it is possible to adopt such a non-reductionist approach to genres in general and, to the fantastic and other similar genres in particular. Therefore, the approach proposed in this paper seeks to avoid the excessive inclusivism of some theoretical works (Hume), as well as the structuralistic reduction of the fantastic genre to a few “uncontaminated samples” (Todorov).

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Faustian Motifs and Transformations of the Modern Myths in the Fictions of Oscar Wilde and Vernon Lee

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**UDC 821.111.09 Wilde, O.-31
821.111.09 Lee, V.-32**

The present paper gives a comparative analyses of Oscar Wilde's "The Picture of Dorian Gray" (1891) and Vernon Lee's "The Virgin of the Seven Daggers" (published in 1927) in light of Fin de Siècle ethical anxieties and its obsession with aestheticism, with emphasis being laid on the relations between the reworking of the forms and contents of the modern myths and the deployment of the Faustian theme in its connection with the cult of beauty. In incorporating Faust and Don Juan as the two mythic figures of the modern time both Oscar Wilde and Vernon Lee associate them with the challenges of individualism in the modern society, since they incarnate in their protagonists narcissism, self-centeredness and solitude as the most significant social tendencies. If interpreted in this way, the protagonists' sinful deeds as well as their search for pleasure not only can be interpreted in light of the society's burdens they reflect, but also reveal the authors' narrative strategies in their exuberant manipulations with the modern myths that are no longer perceived as punitive tales brimmed with the originally adopted moral and philosophical implications.

Both Faust and Don Juan have very much in common: in attempting to achieve their aims they concentrate all their psychological resources

only on one basic line of their characters' distinction, whether it is sexual trickery or insatiable greed for knowledge. Oscar Wilde and Vernon Lee combine the two mythic figures of Faust and Don Juan into one image, since their protagonists are blessed with the mixture of the most typical features attributed to their original referents: they search for sexual pleasure and collaborate either with the pseudo-divine or diabolic forces.

The conclusion argues that Vernon Lee emphasizes her protagonist's brutality for feminist purposes, while Oscar Wilde's interpretation of Dorian Gray's impulses reveals his heroes' homosexual preferences. Moreover, both writers make even more ironical use of Faust as the second mythic figure of the modern time. Unlike their original referent Dr. Faustus (an accepted synonym for "Promethean") who sold his soul to the devil for power over the physical world, Oscar Wilde's hero makes a Faustian Pact to preserve his unfading beauty. On the other hand, Vernon Lee's Don Juan, when proclaiming the Madonna's beauty, tries to save himself from the Inquisition and accumulate extra wealth. Therefore, they can be interpreted as highly ironical clones, or the simulacra of the great hero's original myth.

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19th-Century Lemurian Fantasies in the Australian Outback

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UDC 821.111(94).09”18”

Appearing as a hypothesized continent *Terra Australis Incognita*, Australia existed in the European mind much before it was “discovered” by the Europeans. Following the 18th-century colonization and settlement of Australia, the continent was mythologized again by two opposing literary strands that became more distinct in the closing decades of the 19th century. The more famous literary movement propelled by the *Bulletin* magazine, became the source of the nationalist mythology. Embedded in documentary realism, such writing mapped Australia as the land of egalitarianism, stoicism and humanism, where Australian ethos is set against “the spell of the bush”.

The second, usually neglected literary strand appearing at the same time inscribed the very same bush with stories of lost civilizations, alien invasions and utopian societies relying on the conventions of the late 19th-century scientific romances that appeared in England and France. Less scientific than, for instance, Jules Verne’s and G. H. Wells’ writing, Australian scientific romances were influenced by scientific records of the period, i.e. numerous journals and travelogues written by early explorers of the Australian hinterland, which tended to depict local flora and fauna in quasi-scientific, almost mythological terms. Furthermore, the then scarcely mapped Australian hinterland became the site of disappearances

of famous expeditions (e.g. Leichard's expedition in 1848) due to vastness and "indistinctiveness" of the landscape which incited imagination that the interior rather than being empty hid a secret. One of these alleged secrets was the mytheme of the "lost land" and "ancient civilization" of Lemuria which triggered the genre of the "Lemurian" or "lost race novels", the most famous of which is G. Firth Scott's *The Last Lemurian* (1898).

Hence, the paper discusses why the early Australian SF novelists do not construct Australian hinterland as "Bush all around – bush with no horizon" as the famous opening of H. Lawson's "The Drover's Wife" (1892) reads¹, but rather inhabit the same hinterland with a "race which was on a higher plane of civilisation and culture than our own,"² and whether this apparent difference echoes the same white masculine story which exposes colonial endeavour as well as offers a sense of promise and modernity to which the country could aspire.

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1 Lawson, H. "The Drover's Wife" [1892]. *The Penguin Henry Lawson. Short Stories*. Ringwood: Penguin Books, 1986, p. 19.

2 Scott, G. Firth. *The Last Lemurian. A Westralian Romance*. James Bowden: London, 1898, p. 128.

Madness and the Fantastic in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" and Sheridan Le Fanu's "Green Tea"

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**UDC 821.111(73).09 Gilman, C. P.-32
821.152.1.09 Le Fanu, J. S.-32**

The paper will analyse the overlaps in the uses of madness and the fantastic in fin de siècle short stories, with particular focus on Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892) and with reference to their earlier uses as exemplified by Sheridan Le Fanu's short story "Green Tea" (1872). The analysis will point to the ways in which the medical discourse of the late nineteenth century that produces the female protagonist's madness ("temporary nervous depression – a slight hysterical tendency") in "The Yellow Wallpaper" is put under question within the text by the progress of her first person narrative.

Keeping in mind the specific late nineteenth-century socio-cultural context of the text's production, defined by Bram Dijkstra as "the male creation of (and many women's compliance with) the principles of the cult of invalidism, the physicians' encouragement of the cult, and the increasing incidence of madness in women"¹, the analysis of Gilman's

¹ Dijkstra, Bram. *Idols of Perversity. Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

short story will highlight its use of the fantastic as a strategy that questions the contemporary gendered medical authority and the fin de siècle gender roles. While the medical and social authority in Gilman's story takes writing to be the cause of the female protagonist's disorder, the text suggests that writing is the chief means of asserting her autonomy and writing her own subjectivity into existence. The liberating effect of writing and of fantastic visions of the 'mad woman' in "The Yellow Wallpaper" will be contrasted with the stultifying effect of the fantastic visions of the male protagonist, vicar Jennings, in Le Fanu's "Green Tea". The latter story, narrated from the authoritative point of view of a doctor Hesselius, also connects the cause of the protagonist's madness – his fantastic visions – with his interest in reading and writing, using both science and metaphysics to reason out the fantastic and expel it. Confronted with the inability to rid himself of the fantastic and what it comes to symbolise – the repressed aspects of his personality that he is trying to drive out – the protagonist in "Green Tea" is driven to suicide.

In conclusion, the paper will show how, despite the differing outcomes, in both stories the fantastic opens up the space within the text inside which the protagonist can confront his or her repression and his or her alienated gendered self, using the fantastic in order to voice an implicit rebellion against the contemporary socio-cultural norms.

Dr ANTONIJA PRIMORAC teaches English 19th century literature and culture and Neo-Victorian literature and film at the Department of English, University of Split. She was a Chevening Scholar at the University of Oxford, a Teacher-fellow at the University College London, and a Fulbright Researcher at New York University. Her research focuses on the contemporary adaptations of nineteenth century literature and on neo-Victorian appropriations of Victorian heritage in recent literature, graphic novels and film.

JELENA MIJATOVIĆ defended her MA thesis "The Construction of Female Subjectivity in Women Writers of the *Fin de siècle*" (co-mentors: Professor Boris Škvorc and Dr Antonija Primorac) on the 27th of October 2011 at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Split, graduating in English and Croatian.

**De-Constructing Late Victorian Identity:
Supernatural Elements Voicing and Exorcising the
Crisis in Kipling's 'The Mark on The Beast',
Conan Doyle's "Lot no. 409",
Wells' "The Truth about Peycraft"**

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**UDC 821.111.09 Kipling, R.-32
821.111.09 Doyle, A. C.-32
821.111.09 Wells, H. G.-32**

Featured by its shortness and the representation of a unique experience, a discursive phenomenon able to deautomatize the thinking process, the late Victorian Gothic short story serves to confront a period of huge economic, political, social and cultural crisis such as the late XIX century. As a literary canon different from the novel it had a special significance both for writers and readers, for being a textual area of great formal and thematic experimentation and identity *de*-construction. "The Mark on the Beast", "Lot No. 249" and "The Truth about Peycraft" exemplify the combination of a seemingly scientific, progressive Darwinian ideology of imperialism with an antithetical interest in the supernatural, symptomatic of the anxieties that mark the climax of the late British Empire. They epitomize the discursive *de-construction* of late Victorian identity. The authors focused on the short story as a genre distinct from the novel instrumental for the singleness of its effect, and the necessity to arouse and hold the attention of the reader by raising possibilities of behaviour or mental states which expressly question accepted norms and

beliefs.

The main themes of Imperial Gothic are textualised: individual regression or going native; an invasion of civilization by forces of barbarism or demonism; the diminution of opportunities for adventure and heroism in the modern world, the divided self. Also the insistence on the fluidity of the barrier between the unreal and the imaginary, the natural and the supernatural, the human and the abhuman is emphasised. Instead of a solid comfortable universe, a world in which all is known and assured one is faced with a vague order of being in which nothing is fixed or final or certain. Late Victorian England itself becomes a space ready to be appropriated by the periphery and the myth of race superiority is problematized. Both the spread of the short story and the revitalization of the Gothic paradigm are instrumental for voicing and exorcising the crisis, by articulating questions in ways considered inappropriate in realistic kind of literature because in fantasy the desire which haunts the forbidden can be fully expressed. They produce monsters of threatened subjectivity, bodies and psyches permeable by otherness of many forms. Kipling's, Conan Doyle's and Wells' protagonists explore a new discursive space which involves the collapse of the borders between self and other, colonizers and colonized.

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Searching for the Fantastic in Australia

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Fantasy is the ability of the imagination to visualize and textualize non-existent worlds as real. It is an escape to an imaginary present or past which helps to define contemporary circumstances or moral issues, but it also expresses criticism of these, and creates utopian and dystopian worlds. This article will discuss some theoretical aspects of what we mean by fantasy literature in a historical perspective. Is it the strange and unknown, and what is its purpose? A discussion of the relation between fantasy literature and myth, the fairy tale and legends will highlight the complexity of this term. Is it only imaginary worlds that can be defined as fantasy and what is the role of the reader/listener in interpreting these texts as fantasy? Traditionally, thinking of the late nineteenth century, fantasy literature has been seen as a characteristic feature of the fin-de-siècle period, but can the same be also said of the late twentieth century?

In relation to postcolonial literatures this is a salient question. A recent book by Dann and Strakan (2010) *Legends of Australian Fantasy* raises a problematic issue by suggesting that fantasy literature in Australia is a new and contemporary phenomenon. Is the argument that it is first in the last decade of the twentieth century that Australia and other settler and postcolonial countries write fantasy a result of the fact that the need for social-realism and historical texts have exhausted

their purpose? This article will analyse some of the stories in this anthology seeking to illustrate to what extent they express traditional or non-traditional aspects of the fantasy genre.

One characteristic feature of this anthology is that none of the texts have any particular relation to Australia neither in content nor context. This raises several issues. Is fantasy literature primarily European, and the setting thereby predetermined? And what role do social media and film have in influencing modern fantasy? Another sensitive issue I pose is to what extent indigenous texts which take up moral and political issues can be termed fantasy, especially if we define fantasy as the power of the imagination to find ways of describing cultural phenomena and practice without stating it specifically and clearly to all.

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Native American *Tracks* of the Fantastic

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UDC 821.111(73).09 Erdrich, L.-31

The paper examines the relation between the fantastic and the (post)colonial character of Louise Erdrich's novel *Tracks*. Employing the fantastic through magical realism, the discourse of madness and the grotesque, Erdrich devised a polyphonic text that effectively questions and destabilizes the consistency of colonial symbols and identity constructs. This narrative technique is observable in the characterization of Pauline Puyat, one of the main protagonists and narrators in the novel, whose assimilation in the Western culture results in her complete renouncement and hatred of her indigenous heritage and identity. Yet, Pauline's identification with the dominant worldview, her obsession with Christianity and racial purity, manifests itself as mental illness and (self) destructive behaviour that includes bizarre acts of penance, neglect of hygiene and a morbid wish to kill her unborn baby to save it from sin.

Ironically, through her attempt to cleanse herself of her paganism, Pauline becomes spiritually, physically and morally the most unclean character in the novel. Mortifying and terrorizing her body to protect herself from the evils of nature and the temptations of instincts – sources of shame, corruption and barbarity, Pauline attests to the fact that the body is a construct “imprinted by history” and “disciplinary discursive practices”¹, the “‘text’ on which colonisation has written some of its most graphic and scrutable messages”². Yet, Pauline's rigid understanding of faith leads her not only to insanity but also to sin. Despite of her Christian creed and her

¹ Hall, Stuart, Paul Du Gay. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage Publications, 2000, p. 11.

² Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (eds.) *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995, p. 322.

sharp detachment from her heathen roots, she manifests occult tendencies and supernatural abilities that she regularly uses for evil purposes - to commit murder, adultery, deception, and various malicious acts. Possessed by magic and visions, she uses satanic methods to serve Christ's purpose, thus exhibiting the very traits that she claims to defy. Conflating Ojibwa and Judeo-Christian cosmologies by blurring the boundaries between the real, mythic, magical and supernatural, Erdrich exposes the inconsistency of Pauline's missionary pursuit, and highlights wickedness, selfishness, and immorality as its main features. Thereupon, using magical elements, she disturbs the coherence of the imperial dogma and its evangelical tools. This narrative effect concurs with Homi Bhabha's definition of hybridity – the reversal of “the effects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other ‘denied’ knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority - its rules of recognition”³. Drawing upon Bhabha's hybridity theory and Mikhail Bakhtin's conceptualisation of the grotesque, the analysis additionally juxtaposes the use of the fantastic in Erdrich's text to its commitment to epistemological translation, historical revisionism, cultural memory and emancipation.

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³ Bhabha, Homi K.. *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge, 2002, p. 114.

(Mis)match-Making: Gothic Horror, Science Fiction, Fantasy and Family Romance in Violet Hunt's 'The Prayer'

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UDC 821.111.09 Hunt, V.-32

Although a short story of less than twenty pages, Violet Hunt's 'The Prayer' encapsulates several aspects of all the genres and modes of speech enumerated in the title, no matter how mismatched and irreconcilable some of them look. Symptomatically, the short story appears in various thematic volumes, categorised either as a horror story, a Gothic tale or as science fiction. As the history of female Gothic proves, these genres are not unrelated in that they develop an alternative mode of speech, discourse or language that both reveals and veils anxieties hidden under and by the dominant social structures and repressed by the individuals' self-defensive psychic mechanisms. But whereas previous Gothic texts usually problematise the hardly disguised hierarchical gender relations that still pass unnoted and the violence potentially erupting any time as a result of this gender organisation, 'The Prayer' seems to go a step further destabilising the heterosexual romance of the nuclear family, and in this sense offers a recontextualisation of the genre in the context of the gender shifts that have taken place at the turn of the nineteenth century.

The short story's pivotal statement is a prayer repeating the wedding vow and as a result enacting the fantasy of the nuclear family's heterosexual romance by turning the figurative into literal meaning. Namely, on the death of the young husband, the devoted wife resuscitates the dead beloved, praying that God should give him back to her: "As you were—as I loved you—as I adored you".¹ What can be also read as a

¹ Hunt, Violet. "The Prayer". Richard Dalby (ed.). *The Virago Book of Victorian Ghost Stories*. London: Virago, pp. 263-85, 265.

cause (“as” meaning “because” as a kind of *ultima ratio*) is turned by the text into a literal meaning (“in the way” you were, which ultimately also functions as a reason), launching a chain of events that result in the nightmare of a claustrophobic world in which the couple are engaged in a self-destructive self-enclosure where there is no development—only stasis, stagnation and consequently death. In this way, what seems at first sight a rescue from death with the power of (marital) love, as against even science, becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy of a fantasy in the style of the classic Gothic horror, though not due to a hierarchised power structure but based on the myth of the heterosexual romance that can be victorious over everything—apart from its own inevitable script if followed literally and closely.

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Houses, Hauntings and the Supernatural in Charlotte Riddell's Short Stories

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UDC 821.111.09 Riddell, C.-32

It is commonly assumed that the last twenty years of the nineteenth century produced some of the most significant masterpieces of the fantastic and Gothic fiction in Britain. However, the nineteenth-century fin de siècle was also the period in which the boundaries between high culture and popular culture began to be blurred as well as a time when scientists began to redefine gender differences. Also, women writers began to impose themselves on the literary scene, although most of the times they were considered as “second-degree” writers. Amongst the most industrious and prolific women writers of the period, Mrs J. H. Riddell was a master of the ghost and mystery story in the tradition of Sheridan Le Fanu, Dickens, E. Gaskell and M. E. Braddon, a tradition that she attempted to develop and renew. Charlotte Elizabeth Lawson Cowan (1832-1906), later Mrs Riddell, wrote some of the most startling and original ghost stories of the late nineteenth century. Her first success was a novel, *George Geith of Fen Court* (1864), but her ghost stories were published later (*Weird Stories*, 1884, *Idle Tales*, 1888, *Princess Sunshine, and Other Stories*, 1890, *The Banshee's Warning, and Other Tales*, 1894, *Handsome Phil, and Other Stories*, 1899).

In my paper I will investigate Riddell's ability to take the gothic/supernatural genre beyond the conventions so far established. Through the close reading of some of Riddell's short stories, I will demonstrate how

the writer uses all the conventions typical of this genre in order to read and describe the ongoing changes in contemporary society and family. By introducing the supernatural elements into a realistic setting, Riddell does more than offer an exploration of the mid-Victorian interest in the uncanny. She sets up a range of topics from the subversion and perversity of social/familial roles to the representation of hauntings, secrets and horrors told with an unexpected freshness and originality. In particular, Riddell uses the connection between the settings (mainly private houses) and the characters that live in them to comment on property, class and economic issues from a strongly female point of view. The houses featured in these stories are configured as something more than mere settings where the supernatural resides. They are the places where psychological dilemmas are resolved, where the individual self-awareness is possible, and the social juxtapositions are overcome. In so doing, Mrs Riddell gives us an original instance of the representation of Arata's "pathology of everyday life" connected with the controversial epistemic context of the late decades of the century.

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Representation of the Fantastic: A Study of *The Passion* and *Sexing the Cherry*

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UDC 821.111.09 Winterson, J.-31

Looking at the last decades of the 19th and 20th century from our vantage point encourages parallels to be drawn between the two periods, as some critics have done. In fact, both are affected by a process of cultural fragmentation, social and epistemological transformations and crises that permeate the whole civil society. In the specific field of English literature, the genre of the fantastic *is* undoubtedly a common presence.

In *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (1981) Rosemary Jackson notes the re-emergence of the fantastic as a transgressive force at moments of cultural stress and repression. Patricia Waugh holds a similar view in *The Harvest of the Sixties* (1995), where she maintains that in the 1980s the fantastic burgeoned as “a means of talking about what has not yet been named [...] and challenging normative assumptions about the constitution of the real” (Waugh 1995: 85). At the end of the 20th century, in its postmodernist shape, fantastic literature becomes one of the favourite genres of a number of feminist writers, among them Jeanette Winterson, who transforms it into a truly transgressive genre.

This paper examines Winterson’s *The Passion* (1987) and *Sexing the Cherry* (1989) in the light of Jackson’s theory of the fantastic, as a narrative that establishes an oppositional dialogic relationship with the ‘real’, to interrogate it and flaunt the traditional distinction between the normative and the ‘other’. In *The Passion*, the real is signified by the dominant ideological discourse, exemplified by Napoleon; the fantastic by Villanelle’s webbed feet and her ability to walk on water. In *Sexing the Cherry*, the real is represented by the Puritans with their bigoted and hypocritical morality; the fantastic by the huge Dog Woman and her foundling son, Jordan.

Besides, in both novels the female body is metamorphosed to

challenge the view of a 'normal', acceptable femininity; what emerges is a monstrous and sublime body that collapses distinctions between gender boundaries. In *Sexing the Cherry* Winterson creates the grotesque, gigantic body of the Dog Woman, a figure of Kristevan 'abjection'. In *The Passion* she gives life to the hybrid body of Villanelle, an oxymoronic combination of the terrible beautiful.

The conclusion of the paper argues that Winterson's use of the fantastic is neither escapist nor cathartic. She deploys it to deconstruct the gendered subject of the dominant signifying order and create a dislocated world outside commercial culture, where new voices can be heard, uttering contestatory discourses and speaking for unheard, neglected groups, particularly women.

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_____, *Sexing the Cherry*. London: Vintage, 1989.

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Gilman's Fantastic Cryptonymy: The Case of "The Giant Wistaria"

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UDC 821.111(73).09 Gilman, C. P.-32

The proposed essay seeks to examine Charlotte Perkins Gilman's little known short story, "The Giant Wistaria" (1891), which uncannily prefigures its widely acclaimed and canonized offshoot, "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892). While the latter has merited much critical attention—spanning a host of readings that have been inspired with its gothic, gender, socio-political, and psychological concerns—the former deserves apposite critical consideration which would carve it a place in the literary canon.

The essay explores how Gilman's "Wistaria" story employs the gothic-fantastic genre to ponder gender politics of the American colonial and the fin de siècle periods which the story's two times (the 18th century opening vignette which thematically and narratively haunts its 19th century present) display. It argues how the gothic, with its roots in the uncanny (Freud's *unheimlich*, semantically bound to the notions of "homely" as well as to its opposite—"mysterious" and "cryptic"), is an apposite format to examine gender relations: consequently, the story eschews generic encapsulation as much as the protagonist resists predetermined gender roles. The story's resistance to the law of the genre (Derrida 1992; Todorov 1975) by way of morphing into other narrative formats finds a parallel in the protagonist's defiance of the

Law of the Father, which leads to her demise. The culture/nature and law/ insubordination dichotomies are embodied in the house/wistaria binary of which the latter turns out to be the unprecedented winner. The story's oblique narrative procedure makes the narrative cryptic, while its signifying practices in general and Gilman's lexicon in particular reveal its politics of textuality as *cryptonymy* (Abraham and Torok 1986). With its origin in the crypt as topos (theme and place), death, and code, cryptonymy, or "a theory of reading" (Rand 1986), provides an analytical lever for investigating the text.

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Beautiful and the Sublime in Gothic and Fantastic Literature: A Kantian Perspective

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UDC 82.0-3
111.852 Kant, I.

Within Kant's aesthetic theory, the judgment of sublime is characterized by a certain uneasiness, frustration and even fear or horror that a subject experiences when observing nature. On the other hand, nature can also trigger judgments of beauty and it is precisely this interest for the beauty in nature that is the sign of our moral agency. Judgment of beauty, unlike judgments of the sublime, can also be triggered by beautiful art. Beautiful art is art created by genius and a genius is someone who is endowed with the gift of nature, the gift which enables the genius to express aesthetic ideas, mostly through aesthetic attributes. However, there are certain genres of literature, such as fantastic literature and Gothic literature, including science fiction, which could be better explained by appeal to the sublime than to beauty, i.e. to aesthetic ideas. Taking into consideration examples from fantastic and gothic literature this paper sets out to explore the notion of sublime as developed by Kant and seeks to reply to the following questions: can we talk about the *ideas* of sublime and, if we can, what is their relation to aesthetic ideas?

Aesthetic ideas can be seen as giving substance or expression (through aesthetic attributes) to rational ideas. Referring to Kant's claim in his analysis of the sublime that "... what is properly sublime cannot be contained in any sensible form, but concerns only ideas of reason, which,

though no presentation adequate to them is possible, are provoked and called to mind precisely by this inadequacy, which does allow of sensible presentation”¹, this paper attempts to elaborate on the connection between aesthetic ideas and the sublime. While aesthetic ideas are counterparts to rational ideas, which have an important cognitive role, it appears that the sublime is more related to certain feelings and emotions, or states of mind than to cognition. This also raises the crucial question whether the distinctive feature of aesthetic experience generated by gothic and fantastic literature is, indeed, equivalent to the experience that Kant characterizes as the sublime.

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¹ Guyer, Paul (ed. and trans.), *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant, Critique of The Power of Judgment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 129.

The Fantastic Novel as a Mirror of Scientific Thought: Bram Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars*

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This paper sets out to explore new and revolutionary scientific theories that emerged in the Fantastic Novel during the Fin de Siècle. These theories were associated with anxieties related to the stability of social and domestic order and the effects of scientific rationality on everyday life. Therefore, I would like to analyse the impact that new emerging theories, such as physiognomy and Nordau's theory of degeneration, had on the novel and explain how the novel reflects the doubts and uncertainties that were created by this new point of view. The paper is focused on Bram Stoker's novel *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, which deals with all major scientific discoveries of the time. Supernatural occurrences in this novel are always explained by scientific methods and the world is depicted from a scientific point of view. In addition, the mystery case is a matter of medical and criminal investigation, which is based on scientific methods, such as the use of magnifying glasses, a rudimentary form of ballistics and forensic science. All supernatural manifestations are scientifically analysed, but in the end these phenomena have to be reluctantly traced back to forces and energies coming from another dimension and situated beyond the mere limits of rationality and empiricism.

The main character in the novel, Malcolm Ross, is a lawyer who relies on physiognomy to describe other characters in order to infer a

person's personality from his or her exterior appearance, in his attempt to discover the ultimate root of evil. Even if everyone in the novel accepts physiognomy as true and indisputable, in the end, Stoker's use of physiognomy has a destabilizing effect. Abjection features under the guise of Margaret, a figure that seems to be harmonic and almost perfect. This proves that our own senses can be misleading and that sometimes we can't recognize evil, in particular when it disguises itself as good. Even science based on the method of direct observation can, therefore, be erroneous. The writer skilfully points to the fact that excessive confidence in science can lead to destruction.

Therefore, after the annihilation of his entire entourage, the protagonist has to face the failure of scientific rational laws, which are the safeguards of conservative attitudes and assumptions. With the total collapse of Malcolm's perfectly regulated world Stoker demonstrates that the anxieties of the Fin de Siècle are strictly linked to misconceptions about science and the possibilities it can offer to the mankind.

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From fiendish bloodsuckers to sparkling heart-throbs: vampires then and now

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Of all the creatures that haunt human imagination, vampires might just be the most compelling ones. From their mythical beginnings in Eastern-European folklore, to today's status as teen idols, they have travelled far and wide, never ceasing to inspire interest and fascination. Whatever their incarnation – a bloated, stench-spreading corpse of Balkan folktales; a bored, Byronic aristocrat of Polidori's story; a sexually charged beauty of Le Fanu's imagination; a diabolical foreigner of Stoker's legacy; a tortured soul of Rice's fiction; a campy, Postmodern *Lost Boy* of Schumacher's film; a demon struggling with identity of Whedon's series; or a shimmering, abstinence-propagating teenager of Meyer's dreams – they never fail to capture that elusive *something* in human imagination and hold onto it; even as the fads surrounding them evolve and change.

The evolution of the vampire legend is a fascinating one; with the more gruesome folkloric details of revenant corpses fat and gorged on blood gradually giving way to stories of highly sexualised, awe-inspiring heroes who never wanted to be cursed with eternal unrest. Both literature and film arts, in both their high-culture and pop-culture

incarnations, tackle the themes surrounding the vampire legend and adopt these unfortunate creatures as metaphors of life, death, sex, love, childhood, adulthood and all the other crucial elements that make human life.

During the last two centuries, many authors have tried to capture the spirit of the vampire, or vampire-like creatures like Keats' *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* or Coleridge's *Christabel*. The canon of vampire literature, film and television is a long, rich and diverse one. I will, however, focus on two periods of vampire production: the turn of the century and the turn of the millennium. The first period dealt with the fear of The Other – the foreign, the female. It also commented on the parasitic lifestyle led by the nobility, and made their metaphorical bloodsucking a literal diet. This is the birthplace of the most famous vampire of them all, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. The latter period's vampire lore is mostly concerned with women's sexual maturation, thus using the vampire as a metaphor for sexuality. The best examples of these are the two diametrically opposite texts, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Twilight* – one of them feminist, the other anything but.

By analysing these representative texts, I will try to map the journey of the literary vampire.

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The pure child of the New Age: Revisiting the New Woman in the Postfeminist Era

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“Who is this New Woman, this epicene creature, this Gorgon set up by the snarly who impute to her the faults of both sexes while denying her the charm of either—where is she to be found if she exists at all?” wonders Sarah Grand in 1898. A product of the nineteenth century, the New Woman emerged as the antipode to the Victorian ideal of the Angel in the House. Intelligent and emancipated, educated and self-reliant, this polymorphous cultural icon of the fin de siècle marked a departure from Victorian perceptions of femininity. Informed by social and political change, intellectual and scientific advancement, the existence as well as the reality of the New Woman has been contested by and within its contemporary sociocultural context as well as in later years. From “New Woman” novelists in whose work she emerged in a number of conflicting guises to Ibsen’s and Shaw’s influential, if controversial, representations of her, to her Twentieth Century reincarnations, the New Woman has been oscillating between fiction and fact.

Such is also the case in Angela Carter’s 1984 novel *Nights at the Circus* which directly engages with the notion of the New Woman from a postfeminist perspective. Fevvers, the protagonist, is a self-proclaimed New Woman in the 1900s who puts herself forward as an emblem of the

new century. An aerialist who oscillates between reality and fiction by profession, she transcends the limitations of her cultural context with the same audacity she defies gravity, for Fevvers is a winged woman, hatched from an egg and raised in a brothel, a performer who goes by the slogan ‘Is she fact or is she fiction?’.

By drawing on fin de siècle texts such as Sarah Grand’s essay “The New Aspect of the Woman Question”, this paper argues that Twentieth Century feminist fiction engages in a reassessment of feminist politics and ideas by revisiting the New Woman idea/l as that was conceived at the turn of the century, in order to answer the Woman Question. It is this paper’s thesis that *Nights at the Circus* critically engages with fin de siècle models of femininity by subverting both the Angel in the House and the New Woman idea/l, in order to problematise feminist ideas and embodiments of gender which are informed by Victorianism.

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***Literature, Culture and the Fantastic:
Challenges of the Fin de Siècle(s)***

International Interdisciplinary Conference
Rijeka, 17th and 18th February 2012

**Conference hosting institutions:
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka
English Department, Section for Literature**

Conference organizer: Irena Grubica
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During the conference the editorial meeting for the book *The Fantastic in the Fin de Siècle*, ed. by I. Grubica & Z. Beran, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, took place. A few selected papers from the conference not included in the book will be published in a special journal issue of *Literaria Pragensia*, ed. by I. Grubica & Z. Beran.

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