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Introduction

The dead travel fast and, in our contemporary globalised world, so too does the gothic. Since the 1990s critics around the world have increasingly begun to locate their own traditions of the strange and the supernatural, sometimes, but by no means always, traditions emerging out of earlier Anglo-European forms. But although the late twentieth century saw a growing number of articles and books appearing on new national and regional gothics, from Kiwi gothic to Florida gothic, Barcelona gothic to Japanese gothic, the wider context for this had not really been addressed. What were the conditions that had produced such a proliferation of gothics and what were the general implications of this proliferation for what the West had previously understood as 'Gothic'? There was also increasing evidence of the emergence of cross-cultural and transnational gothics that called out for attention and which suggested that, despite the emergence of so many national and regional forms, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries gothic was actually progressing far beyond being fixed in terms of any one geographically circumscribed mode. Most importantly, perhaps, it was clear that these developments in the increasingly diverse and problematic genre labelled gothic were intricately connected to historically specific conditions, to the development of an increasingly integrated global economy.[1]

The Global Gothic network, founded in 2008 and funded by the AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK) was formed in order to consider the issues and questions arising from these developments. Between January 2008 and September 2009, the network hosted three major international symposiums, a postgraduate conference and an International Horror film weekend in collaboration with the Macrobert Theatre in Stirling to celebrate Halloween and the Day of the Dead in late October, early November of 2008. The first symposium saw the gathering of over thirty of the top gothic scholars from around the world at the University of Stirling to initiate discussions, and, while funding restrictions made it impossible to maintain such an impressive international mix throughout, the network benefited immensely from the discussions initiated here.

In addition to contributing, in the broadest of terms, to a greater understanding of the effects of globalisation upon cultural products, the network initially had four primary objectives. Firstly, to consider the extent to which these new forms of gothic were the product of a neo-imperialist movement, with the homogenising of culture and the rewriting of local tradition as commodity. Secondly, to consider if, alternately, there was a more dynamic process of transnational exchange with new forms being produced or old forms revitalised. Thirdly, to examine specifically the role technology played in producing these new gothic forms. And, finally, to consider not only how the processes of globalisation were facilitating the cultural exchanges that were producing new forms of gothic but also whether globalisation itself was being represented in gothic terms, with traditional gothic tropes being reformulated to engage with the anxieties produced by the breakdown of national and cultural boundaries. The chapters in this book suggest some of the conclusions we reached – and, inevitably, we did not always completely agree – and some of the new directions in which our debates took us. As discussions progressed, our growing emphasis on the contemporary processes of globalisation meant that some of the work of the network members, valuable as it was, could not ultimately be included here, but, as the publication of such works as Abigail Lee Six's *Gothic Terrors in Spanish Narrative* (2010) suggests, these network members are nevertheless continuing to impact upon gothic studies today in many other ways.

While gothic is obviously not unique in registering the effects of globalisation, it does appear to have a particularly intimate relationship with its processes, offering a ready-made language to describe whatever anxieties might arise in an increasingly globalised world. From Appadurai's cannibal culture to Beck's zombie concepts to Hardt and Negri's golems and vampires, the discourses of globalisation repeatedly turn to gothic tropes in articulating the social, cultural and economic impacts of a new world order. This is a point more fully developed in the first chapter of this book, 'Theorising globalgothic', in which Fred Botting and Justin D. Edwards situate what we are calling the globalgothic within some of the existing theoretical paradigms of globalisation.

While globalisation discourse may call upon familiar gothic tropes, globalisation is nevertheless transforming and defamiliarising these tropes as the increased mobility and fluidity of culture leads to the emergence of new gothic forms. As many of the chapters in this book show, gothic has energetically participated in the cultural flows and deterritorialisations that characterise globalisation. It is no doubt significant that the majority of the chapters focus upon gothic representations produced within the first decade of the twenty-first century. Globalisation literature of the period from around 1980 until as late as 2000 often focused upon critiques of neo-liberalism, American hegemony and fears of cultural homogenisation. A greater number of essays looking at works of earlier periods may have led to a similar emphasis in this collection and offered more in the way of dystopian visions of a Mcglobal-Mcgothic monoculture. To the extent that such issues as neo-liberalism and American hegemony remain questions of concern, they no longer assume a dominant role. It is not impositions, however, whether American, European or otherwise, that are the central concern of these chapters, but flows. In the new phase of globalisation the narrative that once conflated globalisation with Americanisation or Westernisation has been replaced by a new emphasis on multidirectional exchanges. Demonstrating a greater focus upon and acceptance of such flows, we have moved from 'the West and the rest' to what a *Washington Post* reporter dubbed the 'Trend to Blend' (Weeks).

Not only has Western gothic travelled but one of the effects of the increasing mobility and fluidity of people and products in the globalised world has been a growing awareness that the tropes and strategies Western critics have associated with the gothic, such as the ghost, the vampire and the zombie, have their counterparts in other cultures, however differently these may be inflected by specific histories and belief systems. Consequently, the flows have by no means been one-directional. This is part of our reason for coining the term *globalgothic*. Binding the words together is a way of attempting to signal a disconnection between the contemporary global manifestations we are examining and the 'Gothic' in its traditional Western sense as the shadow side of Enlightenment modernity. These forms are gothic in that we recognise their use of specific tropes and conventions. Nevertheless, they are produced and read in new temporal, geographical and political contexts. By using globalgothic as opposed to Global Gothic or Global-Gothic or any other possible permutation we hope to decentre notions of 'Gothic', tacitly placing the term under erasure and marking the confluence, in globalised space, between divergent cultural traditions. At the very least we want to register a sense of a gothic inextricable from the broader global context in which it circulates rather than a gothic tied to past notions of Enlightenment modernity.

One other point may suggest a need to decentre the West when considering globalgothic. I noted above that in the majority of chapters here the examples of globalgothic offered are twenty-first-century forms. The exceptions to this rule may be of even more significance than the general rule itself: interestingly, the globalgothic manifestations discussed from earlier periods are primarily Japanese. This may well have something to do with the profound growth in Japan's postwar economy and Japan's early participation in developing contemporary globalisation and advanced technologies. In terms of the emergence of what we are calling globalgothic, Japan, it might well be argued on a number of levels, led the way.

It is also significant that there is a predominance of chapters considering film and other visual cultural products. These are necessarily best suited for thinking about the globalgothic because they – obviously – move more easily than literary texts beyond linguistic boundaries and lend themselves to the marketing of a popular culture that can be easily commoditised, sold and consumed. The more visual forms of cultural production have therefore inevitably become more multidirectional than others.

One of the most striking features of Western gothic has always been its propensity to prey upon itself, to delight in consuming and recycling certain persistent motifs: those ubiquitous vampires, for example, or the continual returns to the monstrous potential of science or technology. This would also seem to be true of many other traditions of the strange and the supernatural throughout the world. One might think, for example, of the constant recycling and development of the pontianak in Malaysia, of Nang Nak in Thailand, and the *onryō* in Japan. The transnational flows that characterise globalisation have functioned both to reinvigorate and to intensify this tendency by opening up multiple new fields of play, and gothic has taken up what has been dubbed the 'Trend to Blend' with notable enthusiasm.

At the same time as it takes full advantage of the transnational flows, however, globalgothic frequently exploits the flows precisely in order to give form to anxieties attendant upon the processes of globalisation: anxieties about such issues as the stability of local or national identities and cultures, about the impact of transnational capitalism or the workings of technology. And so, as many of these chapters demonstrate, while the *products* made available through globalisation are eagerly appropriated, they are frequently exploited in order to articulate the *processes* of globalisation as monstrous, spectral, cannibalistic: as objects of anxiety and suspicion. Globalisation itself, then, becomes a gothic manifestation, a material and psychic invasion, a force of contamination and dominance. It is, above all, the combination of these two responses to globalisation – the exploitation of what globalisation enables and produces combined with the frequent demonisation of its processes – that characterises what we are here calling globalgothic. The conjunction of the two terms, then, enacts a kind of reversal and transvaluation in which, as Botting and Edwards point out, gothic is globalised – reproduced, consumed, recycled – and globalisation is gothicked – made monstrous, spectral, vampiric.

The chapters that follow Botting and Edward's 'Theorising globalgothic' are test cases that we hope will open up the field for further debate. We begin with three chapters considering manifestations of transnational and/or cross-cultural gothic. Steven Bruhm's 'Butoh: The dance of global darkness' offers one of the earliest examples of globalgothic with an analysis of a global dance practice, 'Ankoku butoh' ('dance of utter darkness'), first performed in Japan by Tatsumi Hijikata in 1959, on the eve of Japan's signing of the US–Japan Mutual Defense Treaty. Butoh, Bruhm points out, is a dance devised in such a way that it is not delimited by a particular nationality or subjectivity while using its globalism to resist the mechanics of globalisation. Using a familiar gothic semiotics of dying, haunting and suffering, butoh can, for Bruhm, nevertheless function as globalgothic only if we move from considerations of the politico-geographical to the politico-corporeal, to the universal and gothicised butoh body: a body in crisis, one that both suffers and causes suffering (31).

In the next chapter, 'Maori tales of the unexpected: The New Zealand television series *Mataku* as an Indigenous gothic form', Ian Conrich reflects upon *Mataku* as an active engagement between non-Western and Western cultural practices. Beginning with a survey of the ways in which Indigenous cultures have been appropriated for gothic screen fictions, Conrich then turns to forms of Indigenous gothic. As Conrich points out, it would be inappropriate to label Maori beliefs, superstitions and legends as gothic. 'They are distinctly removed from the emergence of the gothic in the West', and 'Maori culture in this context is not manufactured or the result of a commercial enterprise; instead its values are ingrained within the relationship this Indigenous culture has to *whenua* (the land) and the surrounding natural environment' (41). For Conrich it is when Maori values, beliefs and mythologies are combined with Western narratives of horror fiction that there is the production of an Indigenous gothic that can be considered a manifestation of globalgothic.

As national and regional myths and folklore are increasingly appropriated, recycled and commodified for a global audience, there a growing need to reassess the relationship of these forms with the gothic in today's globalised world. The question of how traditional folklore and myths are transformed in globalgothic narratives is also considered in the next chapter, '"She saw a soucouyant": Locating the globalgothic', in which Justin D. Edwards discusses a Canadian-Caribbean narrative, David Chariandy's *Soucouyant* (2007). Noting how *Soucouyant* draws upon and yet differs from Caribbean works that represent spectrality and possession 'without invoking the language of monstrosity or terror' (51), Edwards examines the ways in which the soucouyant is reframed in order to articulate a sense of fractured identity. Edwards considers globalgothic in terms of the migrations or displacements that engender social dislocations and cultural changes, and *Soucouyant*, he demonstrates, exemplifies the ways in which gothic tropes and narratives travel with the movements of people and the flows of cultural production, becoming dislocated from specific regions or places and yet at the same time connecting with new narratives, forming new transregional or transnational alliances.

Representations of mobility in contemporary globalgothic texts are linked to the fluidity of a space-time continuum whereby vast spaces are not always separated by distance or dislocation. Drawing on a history of gothic depictions of the Arctic (Shelley, Coleridge, Poe), Sue Zlosnik's reading of Michel Faber's 'Fahrenheit Twins' examines a text that is set, quite literally, on top of the globe. Here the uncanny cartography of the now charted Arctic terrain is simultaneously familiarised and defamiliarised through the conflations of time and space: the categories of habitable and uninhabitable, here and there, north and south are ruptured in the wake of rapid global movements and the new technologies of travel. The unlocated 'vagabonds' of Faber's text, Zlosnik suggests, are not only doubles (twins) of a gothic trajectory; they are also globalgothic figures of environmental change, hyper-modernity and what it means to be unhomed in the multivalent contexts of globalisation.

Rapid flows in the globalised world mean that globalgothic is as likely to focus upon such figures as soucouyants, La Llorona, pontianaks and *onryō* as upon the ghosts, doubles and so on familiar to readers of Western gothic, but the vampire nevertheless continues to hold its own and to demonstrate what might appear to be an unnerving global reach. In the next chapter Aspasia Stephanou approaches the question of cultural exchanges with specific reference to virtual networks and online vampire communities. More particularly, in 'Online vampire communities: Towards a globalised notion of vampire identity' Stephanou considers the degree to which these vampire communities reveal cultural homogenisation and the imposition of Western forms and the degree to which there is hybridisation and a productive melange of cultures. While demonstrating that there are indeed multidirectional flows, as she shows most notably with respect to Eastern spiritualities, ultimately Stephanou remains unconvinced that these produce a global community. The experience of blending, she suggests, is both superficial and fleeting, following the dictates of a Western consumerist logic; vampirism remains a predominantly Western phenomenon, whether in cyberspace or offline, and limited to a global mobile elite.

Isabella van Elferen's 'Globalgoth? Unlocatedness in the musical home', also interrogates questions of communities and location. Like Stephanou on vampire groups, van Elferen acknowledges that Goth is a predominantly Western affair, and the internet frequently not as global as it would seem, often functioning primarily to strengthen location-based communities. At the same time, however, van Elferen suggests that Goth nevertheless 'negates the possibility of geographical location: it is *unlocated*'. The 'gothic glance is a nostalgic one', (94) with Goth residing 'there' and 'then', never 'here' and 'now', and van Elferen shows how this not belonging, this nostalgia and evasive subjectivity which characterise the subculture, are expressed in the music of Sol Invictus and Sopor Æternus, with musical inversion turning globalised media into sites of gothic unlocation.

Barry Murnane next looks at Michael Haneke's *Funny Games* (1997) and his remake *Funny Games U.S.* (2008), to ask where the uncanny may be located today. In the first film the space of the home/the local, the Alpine setting, is overwritten with foreign cultural signification:

the signifiers of Hollywood slashers. Global culture, as Murnane puts it, 'has created a signature phantasmagoric spatial experience which is uncanny' (114). The remake, as he shows, then goes on to reproduce this process on the material level of production, distribution and reception.

Questions of the global and the local are central to the following three chapters, all of which identify the instability of these concepts in the contemporary world. Colette Balmain focuses upon the Japanese *Kwaidan* and the South Korean *A Tale of Two Sisters* (2003) to consider the merging of the global with the local in the construction of 'Pan-Asian gothic'. Myth and folklore again become a key issue, with the return to premodern and oral traditions showing a resistance to the global at the level of the local. Looking specifically at the self-Orientalism of the two films, 'the holding up of visuality both as resistance to the logic of domination and an acquiescence to its "to-be-looked-at-ness"', Balmain argues, necessitates a new way of thinking about the gothic on a global scale.

In 'Cannibal culture', I turn to Fruit Chan's *Dumplings,* to cannibalism and to those rather odd bedfellows, China and Hong Kong. Beginning with a reading of the ways in which difference has been exploited to demonise the supposedly 'primitive' local associated with China and to celebrate a progressive global city with Hong Kong, I offer a close reading of the relationship between Mrs Li and Aunt Mei to show how distinctions between the local and the global collapse with a merging of two worlds, equally driven by consumption, the prevailing imperative of the global economy.

In 'Ghost skins: Globalising the supernatural in contemporary Thai horror film', Katarzyna Ancuta argues that the increasing globalisation of the Thai economy has had a strong impact upon Thai horror films, affecting not only their production and distribution but also their themes, tropes and narrative structures. As she demonstrates with specific reference to the *phi tai hong,* the spirit of the violently dead, and Sophon Sukdapisit's 2008 debut feature *Coming Soon,* this does not reveal a process of Western imperialism but rather a conscious negotiation of values. The figure of horror produced is neither local nor global but simultaneously both. Nevertheless, for Ancuta, it is localities that 'have the last word, shaping and transforming foreign influences to fit their specific contexts' (154).

Next are two chapters that, in quite different ways, engage with globalgothic and the question of the nation with particular reference to the United States. Looking at two canonical antebellum texts and one contemporary, James Campbell traces the development, rise and decline of American gothic and the transition to a globalgothic in which America is just a part, concluding with *Silent Hill*, exemplifying a globalgothic America made in Japan that has nothing to do with what is generally considered 'American gothic'. Each of the texts Campbell considers shows the American nation state to be built upon unstable foundations, leading effectively into Avril Horner's chapter on *The Dark Knight*. For Horner what this film most chillingly illustrates are the threats and uncertainties that result from what Zygmunt Bauman has termed 'liquid modernity'. In particular *The Dark Knight* engages with anxiety over a sense of growing impotence, a concern with America's changing status after the attack on the World Trade Center and the so-called 'War on Terror', with 'American economic, scientific and political power' seen to be 'rendered ineffectual through global movements and phenomena' (184).

Fred Botting then turns to what has been one of the central gothic figures of the twenty-first century: the zombie. In 'Globalzombie', Botting traces changes in this figure from *White Zombie* onwards. In particular he considers Max Brooks's *World War Z* with its depiction of the emergence and defeat of global swarms of living dead, swarms which are both reactionary images of Western fears of immigrants and manifestations of the excessive and destructive effects of global capital. Myths and their transformations have provided an underlying connection for many – indeed in one sense or another for perhaps all – of these chapters, and Botting's conclusion takes us to what may be the greatest myth of all. By returning to 'human values and community, recentring the human figure in a global world that thought it had passed beyond humanity', *World War Z* ultimately returns, Botting suggests, to 'a basic humanist fantasy': 'that there is an idea of person that transcends myth, culture, ideology' (200).

In the final chapter Charles Inouye begins by directing our attention to Japan, a dominant source, as he points out, of globalised popular culture. His main concern, however, is to offer some account of why we have been seeing a proliferation of gothic, and the emergence of a globalgothic. Considering the global reach of J-Horror and the relentless monstrosity of anime, manga and video games, Inouye suggests that the postwar period has seen the movement away from a rationalism associated with modernity, and a resurgence and proliferation of monster-friendly expression, a resurgence of 'animism', the reanimation of the world through a globally shared, highly visual semiotic field. For Inouye, therefore, what we are calling the globalgothic is a contemporary revival of non-realistic expression, something ‘sustained by high figurality and nourished by numerous cross-cultural flows’ (212).

Note

1 In the mid-1990s David Punter and I met with much bemusement from publishers when we proposed a series on the topic of the Global Gothic. Such a series was simply not considered feasible in financial terms. It is a sign of how much interest has grown, therefore, that Manchester University Press is now launching a series on the International Gothic.

Reference

Linton Weeks, ‘Frappe society: the trend to blend’. *The Washington Post*, 31 January 2002. C1–C2.