The Gothic and the Everyday

Living Gothic

Edited by
Lorna Piatti-Farnell and Maria Beville

The Gothic and the Everyday

The Palgrave Gothic Series

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Acknowledgements

This collection originated in a series of conversations between the editors about the reality of Gothic experience. Although it began as part of a trivial conversation about the nature of belief in the paranormal, super-stition, folklore, and the uncanny, it soon evolved into a tangible subject for our individual research projects, which focused on cultural practice and cultural memory, respectively. A number of conferences later, it emerged that we were not the only academics interested in the idea of 'Living Gothic', and prompted by the enthusiasm that we encountered in our fellow researchers, we decided to start working collaboratively towards publication.

For this collection we are really indebted to our contributors, whose work has allowed novel ideas about the place of the Gothic in contem-porary culture to combine and develop. We also extend our gratitude to our editors in Palgrave for their continuous support and interest in the project.

Notes on Contributors

Enrique Ajuria Ibarra teaches media, film, and cultural studies at Universidad de las Américas Puebla, Mexico. He has published journal articles and book chapters on Gothic and fantasy horror Mexican cinema, most particularly on the films of Guillermo del Toro. He is currently working on the notion of the monstrous foreigner in travel horror cinema and exploring Gothic manifestations in Mexican literature and film.

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Misha Kavka teaches film, television, and media studies at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. She is the author of two books on reality television, *Reality TV* in the Edinburgh UP 'TV Genres' series (2012) and *Reality Television, Affect, and Intimacy* (2008). She is also the co-editor, with Jennifer Lawn and Mary Paul, of *Gothic NZ: The Darker Side of Kiwi Culture* (2006) and, with Elisabeth Bronfen, of *Feminist Consequences: Theory for the New Century* (2001). She has published widely on gender, nationhood, and indigeneity in New Zealand film.

Tabish Khair is currently an associate professor at Aarhus University, Denmark. His studies include *Babu Fictions* (2001) and *The Gothic, Postcolonialism and Otherness* (2010). He is also an award-winning poet and novelist. His latest novel, *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position*, was published by Corsair in UK earlier in 2014.

Lorna Piatti-Farnell is Senior Lecturer in Communication Studies at Auckland University of Technology. Her research interests centre mainly on contemporary popular culture, and lie at the intersection of Gothic studies, cultural history, food studies, twenty-first century literature, and film. She is President of the Gothic Association of New Zealand and Australia, and Gothic Area Chair for the Popular Culture Association of Australia and New Zealand (PopCAANZ). She is also Editor in Chief of *Aeternum: The Journal of Contemporary Gothic Studies*. Her publications

to date include three monographs: *Food and Culture in Contemporary American Fiction* (2011), *Beef: A Global History* (2013), and *The Vampire in Contemporary Popular Literature* (2014). She is currently editing a collection on *The Lord of the Rings* and fan cultures, and working on a new monograph on food and horror in contemporary film.

Ashleigh Prosser is currently completing her PhD by research in English and Cultural Studies at the University of Western Australia. Her doctoral thesis is a study of the gothic in the London-based novels of contemporary British author Peter Ackroyd. Ashleigh's publications include '"His bachelor house": The Unhomely Home of the *Fin-de-Siècle's* Bourgeois Bachelor in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*' published in the *Journal of Stevenson Studies* (2014); and 'The Genius Detective: Poe and Doyle' published online in *Crimeculture* (2012). Her research interests are in the gothic, the uncanny, haunting, and spectrality, with a particular focus on late-Victorian and neo-Victorian literature. Ashleigh is also Reviews Editor of the online journal *Limina: A Journal of Historical and Cultural Studies*, based at the University of Western Australia.

David Punter is Professor of English at the University of Bristol, having previously held posts at the University of East Anglia, Fudan University, Shanghai, China, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and the University of Stirling. He has published extensively on the Gothic, from *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions* (1980, republished in two volumes 1996) to *Gothic Pathologies: The Text, the Body and the Law* (1998) and on to *The New Companion to the Gothic* (edited, 2012) and the *Encyclopaedia of the Gothic* (co-edited, 2013). He has also published monographs on metaphor, modernity, and on various aspects of the passions and emotions in literature; his most recent book, *The Literature of Pity*, has just been published by Edinburgh University Press. He is Chair of the Executive Committee of the International Gothic Association, and of the Board of the journal *Gothic Studies*. He has also published prize-winning short stories, and five small volumes of poetry.

Susan Yi Sencindiver is an assistant lecturer at the Department of Aesthetics and Communication, Aarhus University. Her doctoral research centred on Anglo-American doubles in literature and film. She is a coordinator for the Centre for Studies on Otherness (www.otherness.dk) and associate editor of *Otherness: Essays and Studies*. She teaches and publishes in the fields of gender studies, psychoanalytic theory, Romanticism, Gothic studies, celebrity and fan cultures. Her current

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Dale Townshend is Senior Lecturer in Gothic and Romantic Studies at the University of Stirling. His most recent publications in the field of Gothic studies include: *The Gothic World* (with Glennis Byron, 2014), and *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism and the Gothic* (with Angela Wright, 2014).

Introduction: Living Gothic

Lorna Piatti-Farnell and Maria Beville

The Gothic has never been more alive than it is today. Like a contagion, of late, it has travelled across cultural and media landscapes to permeate even the most banal aspects of everyday living. While the Gothic has undoubtedly regained its popularity, it is also granted acknowledgement in 'higher' culture. From *haute couture* to *haute cuisine*, the Gothic aesthetic is widely recognised, and it would appear that it might be more appropriate these days to talk less about the popularity of the Gothic than the cultural *milieu* of the Gothic. The contemporary cultural environment that surrounds the Gothic reveals much about the nature of the Gothic itself and the legacies of a long history of representing the darker side of the human condition. As such, in seeking to learn more about the nature of contemporary Gothic, both in its living and literary formulations, we must examine the histories, practices, and legacies that have extended outward from a long literary tradition to permeate almost all facets of contemporary culture.

The Gothic as it has found embodiment in various cultural trends and behaviours, from fashion to the emergence of subcultures, has certainly been given an abundance of critical attention across the field of Gothic studies. However, the broader idea of 'Gothic', which we put forward here, as a term encompassing cultural manifestations, lived practices, and the interaction of the Gothic with the narratives of the past, has yet to find a coherent definition. As such, we offer the term 'living Gothic' as a means to envisioning the many ways in which the Gothic functions as a living culture in its own right, through its intersections with the everyday, and with the communication and expression of shared experience.

This volume has been compiled as a work that aims to regenerate interest in the Gothic in a broad, but equally, conventional, sense of the

term. We explore the Gothic in relation to our engagements with the living past, within the experiential contexts of lived practice, and the legacies that it leaves to the living narratives of folklore and tradition. Importantly, by using the term 'living' we recall a collective agglomerate of practices, both tangible and intangible, which construct the experience of the everyday in its social, cultural, and imaginary incarnations. In this sense, 'living' takes on multiple and multi-faceted connotations that on one hand moves the Gothic beyond the cultural parameters to which it has been previously ascribed, therein granting the aesthetics and narrative frameworks of the Gothic a new social relevance. On the other, it resonates with those characteristic 'gothic' feelings of finality and immortality, bygone experience and future fantasy. Furthermore, in denoting the manner in which we perceive the Gothic as a living entity, 'living Gothic' also points to the Gothic's obsessions with death and the mutability of the past. In seeking to offer this definition, we take a unique stance in granting agency to the Gothic, paying close attention to its influence not just on cultural production but the very experience of culture. With critical foundations in the disciplines of architecture, folklore, and cultural studies, they demonstrate how the Gothic has dynamically filtered both reality and our Western cultural imagination since the eighteenth century.

The prevalence of the Gothic in popular culture in recent years has led to many new and interesting directions in the academic study of the mode. Significantly, these new directions flow, for the most part, in what appears to be a narrowing stream of analysis dealing with theoretical approaches to contemporary popular Gothic and the future of Gothic forms. This is apparent in contemporary Gothic studies in which contemporary cultural fascination with technological advancement, mediatisation, and 'the new', brought about with the beginning of this new century seems to diverge from the study of past formulations of the Gothic. Forward-thinking conceptualisations of the Gothic, which consider advancing technology and bio-science, new social media trends, and the Gothic in the twenty-first century are very much in vogue, as was clear from the theme of the most recent International Gothic Association Conference, which convened 5–8 August 2013, under the theme of 'Gothic Technologies/Gothic Techniques'. While this focus on the future of the Gothic is important, the relationship of the Gothic to history and tradition is perhaps more important to our discussions here. Responding to the gravitation of critical discourse on the Gothic towards new media and technology – the future of the Gothic, as it were – we combine our research in an effort to form collective insight

into the relationship between the Gothic and the past, not only in the traditional sense of the past as history, but also in relation to the lived and living practices and legacies of the mode.

An increase in interdisciplinarity in current literary and cultural criticism has allowed for the renegotiation of traditional perspectives on the Gothic. The last 30 years has seen a forceful direction of critical analysis on the Gothic in all its forms, and this has opened up a wide range of critical approaches that, according to Jerold Hogle and Andrew Smith, has 'collectively made the Gothic come alive (like Frankenstein's creature) as an important, multi-layered, and profoundly symbolic scheme for dealing with Western culture's most fundamental fears and concerns' (2009, 1). Hogle and Smith have underscored the importance of the 'cross-generic dynamism in the Gothic that has made it so transformable to suit changing times' (ibid). Acknowledging this, the chapters in this volume consciously consider the ways in which the Gothic can be theorised and tested objectively. Collectively they work to offer overlapping reflections on this dynamism to conclude that the Gothic, slippery concept that it is, can act in an agent in its own right in shaping and moulding modern culture and experience.

Our main contention in proposing this collection is that in terms of literary and cultural criticism, we cannot truly engage with the future of the Gothic until we have fully dealt with its histories and its legacies. While it is, of course, extremely valuable to consider the potential of the Gothic in expressing new cultural formations that emerge in the contemporary and potential contexts of technoculture, neo-liberalism, financial crisis, global terror, changing global demographics, digitisation, and developments in bio- and cognitive sciences, it is arguable that we cannot fully grapple with the relevance of the Gothic to these issues until we consider it as part of lived experience. Far more than being a genre in literature and film, or a mode of art practice, the Gothic is frequently a perspective on the world that shapes our sense of experience and identity. In response to the manner in which contemporary and popular culture has, in recent years, come to be saturated by the Gothic, the language and imagery of the Gothic are now ubiquitous. Certain events and realities have become 'Gothicised'. From basic experiences of the uncanny, to political terrors, to national festivals and traditions, the Gothic can be seen to form a unique part of personal and cultural expression. Responding to this in this volume, we seek to trace the delicate line that delineates the Gothic as it pertains to everyday realities, outside of formal literary structures, asking how we might move towards a more comprehensive definition of the Gothic today.

In this collection, we examine and discuss the manner in which it operates as a frame and a filter, not only for fictional worlds, but for the world of the reader. Acknowledging the literary foundations of the Gothic as the core of its relevance to the popular imagination, we move outward to examine those aspects of the Gothic that have seeped into texts that are distinctively non-literary. As such, we view the Gothic much like David Punter and Glennis Byron as a 'textual body', oftentimes 'a staggering, limping, lurching form akin to the monsters it frequently describes' (Punter and Byron 2007, xix). In this way the Gothic signifies and represents culture in forms of its own, but it can also be recognised for its function as a linguistic paradigm through which we can interpret experience and culture.

Our approach to the Gothic as a living thing, and as an agent of culture, may seem slightly unconventional in academic terms. However, it responds to similar approaches in cultural and even scientific analysis of the form, which have granted a comparable subjectivity to the Gothic. Since its earliest beginnings as a coherent literary form, the Gothic has been reproved as a mode of expression that warrants direct responsibility for cultural change. The general fear of the Gothic as 'a bad influence' on the morality of young readers in the early nineteenth century is still mirrored in contemporary debates about the negative impact of horror film and video games on younger audiences today. These discussions have inspired communications research into the cognitive, affective (or emotional), and behavioural effects of the Gothic and horror cinema on its audiences (see Rosenbaum 1979). Such studies arguably position the Gothic as a subject in its own right and as an agent of influence. While conclusions about the negative and corruptive influences of the Gothic are not relevant to our research here in this forum, the methodology driving these studies is important given that what they do is effectively reverse the direction of influence so that rather than look at the impact of cultural change on the Gothic, they consider the impact of the Gothic on culture.

This book has been inspired by approaches taken in a number of important texts in recent years. John C. Tibbets' recent study, *The Gothic Imagination*, examined the 'Gothic tradition' as it is relevant to current popular culture trends, in particular to television series and popular science fiction. Engaging directly with authors and producers of these contemporary Gothic works, Tibbets offers interviews conducted with these writers to engage with the wider scope of the Gothic and its current popularity. Tibbett also reinforces the close relationship between the Gothic and the everyday, claiming that 'the blurring of lines between the

terror sublime and the uncanny, the rational and the irrational, science and art – and indeed, between the living and the dead – is central to the workings and effects of the Gothic … past and present' (2011, 5). We take this view of the relationship between past and present, imaginary and historical, tangible and intangible, to be an important coordinate in outlining the critical direction of our book.

Similarly, Clive Bloom's *Gothic Histories: The Taste for Terror, 1764 to the Present* (2010), focuses on the historical development of the Gothic in the eighteenth century, and traces the presence of morbid fantasies and monstrous creatures through centuries of German, French, and American authors. While placing a particular emphasis on literature, Bloom's study also surveys Gothic phenomena such as 'ghost seeing' and spirit photography, taking an important historical perspective on the Gothic and its relationship to legend and folklore. Like Bloom, we look to how the Gothic has structured the past, but we do so with a particular focus on cultural iconography and retold lived experience. Constructing a critical relationship between cultural practice, the imaginary, and the historical everyday, we push forward to examine how these intersect with Gothic narratives through the symbolism, spiritual belief, and uncanny experiences that underpin much social practice.

On the topic of parallel studies and influences, Stephen Shapiro's special issue of *Gothic Studies*, entitled 'Material Gothic', provides an important backdrop for this volume. Presenting important theoretical approaches to the Gothic, which imagine its political potential and its relevance to non-literary contexts, this issue acknowledges the wide scope of Gothic studies in socio-cultural and politico-historical areas, and opens up new directions for the study of the Gothic. Exploring the Gothic in similar historical and theoretical texts in the past, the contributors to 'Material Gothic' pay particular attention to the Gothic in politics. The recognition of the Gothic in various political paradigms is critical to our understanding of the ways in which the Gothic has fluidly interacted with modern culture since the eighteenth century, and in particular, the political dimensions of the Gothic as highlighted by the aforementioned critics has illuminated the relevance of Gothic politics to the interpretation and understanding of the Gothic more broadly. Significantly, this group of critics, who came together in an issue of *Gothic Studies* under the epithet 'Material Gothic', reconsidered the Gothic with an outwardly directed focus. Instead of asking how modern culture can help us to understand the Gothic as a literary and cultural mode, they enquired into the manner in which the Gothic 'can inform and reshape cultural and historical materialism' (Shapiro 2008, 3).

Regarding the Gothic in relation to texts and contexts such as those explored by Shapiro, Bloom, and Tibbets, in this volume we explore the Gothic as a lens through which we experience, and a voice through which we express, contemporary terrors. This perspective allows us to open up a much wider multidisciplinary space for the study of the Gothic. The amalgamation of different disciplinary approaches to the Gothic in this collection has raised numerous questions about the nature of the Gothic. These include: How has the Gothic taken on a life of its own outside of literature? How is the Gothic relevant to human experience separate to our engagement with its literary presences? How can we validate the new term 'living Gothic' through discussions of the Gothic in folklore, tradition, and cultural practice? How has the Gothic shaped and in turn been shaped by modern concepts of history and narrative? What are the tangible, physical and real, remains of the Gothic in culture and identities today? In undertaking to engage with the above questions and to discuss the Gothic with a strong focus on its living texts and contexts, the authors brought together in this collection work to reformulate the Gothic as it pertains to lived experience and to the past. The chosen essays work, in their combination, to offer a plurivocal consideration of the Gothic across the disciplines of folklore and cultural studies, literature, architecture, and historiography. These areas intersect not only in terms of subject matter, but also in their ability to channel the relationship between the ordinary and the extraordinary, the sacred and the profane, the spiritual and the secular.

The chapters in this volume combine to form the first sustained scholarly engagement with concept of 'living Gothic'. They engage with current directions in Gothic studies that pay attention to the Gothic as a mode in flux that demands research perspectives that adapt to its diverse incarnations and its ever-widening scope. Examining the relationship between the Gothic and 'lived experiences', they forward an understanding of a culturally inscribed notion of 'Gothic historicity' and expand our capacity to engage with the Gothic, beyond literature and film, in its lived contexts. The volume brings together established scholars as well as new and dynamic voices in Gothic studies. Together, we offer original yet interrelated perspectives on the Gothic and its relevance to past, contemporary, and future cultures. By offering a multilateral focus on the Gothic beyond the literary, we consider how literary narratives and their lived contexts intersect through images and symbols that form a distinctly Gothic imaginary. This interest in the relationship of the Gothic to the imaginary, psychic, and social dimensions of human experience also draws attention to the impact of

the Gothic on not only textual frameworks, but also in the sphere of historical and cultural process.

Logical beginnings for the volume work from the theoretical underpinnings that connect the Gothic to narrative, and the concepts of history and memory. The collection then progresses to reflect upon those important connections between the Gothic and legend, folklore, and tradition, and then concludes with an important focus on Gothic 'remains'. Each of the three sections focuses on a particular aspect of the interaction of the Gothic with its lived contexts. The opening part, 'Uncanny Histories', offers Chapters 1–4, which deal with the Gothic and alternative, often haunted, understandings of the concept of history. David Punter's opening essay 'Trauma, Gothic, Revolution' examines the Gothic in relation to the conventional paradigms of fear, terror, and the supernatural. In considering the Gothic as a mode of history, and specifically as a mode of British, or in some cases Northern European, history, Punter suggests that the Gothic claimed a tradition that was organic as opposed to formalised, democratic as opposed to feudal; and it has had a profound impact on the self-conceptions of the British state. The concept of 'Gothic nationalism', Punter suggests, is profoundly intertwined with issues of trauma and narcissism. When considering the emergence and evolution of the nation state, one must also go to the heart of what it means for a nation to found itself – as perhaps almost all European nations have – on a legendary past.

In a similar vein, Kristy Butler argues, in the Chapter 2, that empire is frequently a layered Gothic narrative, one that requires recalling, retelling, and recreating its ideologies. In an attempt to harness the unknown and unfamiliar, the imperial projects of the eighteenth and nineteenth century succeeded in fashioning uncanny communities that were both familiar and strange. While communities act as microcosms of the imperial centre who are taught to mimic its philosophies, values, and traditions, this state of symbiosis often proves unsustainable and transforms sublime power into fear of what can no longer be controlled or contained. With this in mind, Butler's chapter explores how 'the Empire' attempts to safeguard itself against its uncanny Other through acts of ceremony, repetitions of created histories, and, most powerfully, ideologies of fear. In their chapters, both Punter and Butler examine the Gothic and trauma in its political contexts, Imperial and other.

While Butler examines the modalities of the uncanny, Maria Beville discusses the uncanny nature of memory in Chapter 3. For Beville, the most dominant feature of the Gothic is its management of the unspeakable, and thus she explores the Gothic as it has been co-opted in narratives

of past events that linger as sites of political contention. Beville firstly evaluates the significance of silence to commemorative practice, with a particular focus on the Northern Irish context. Subsequently, she offers a reading of Steve McQueen's *Hunger* as an event in Gothic commemorative practice in order to provide an index for a discussion of the idea of Gothic memory more broadly.

This view of the Gothic in relation to contested narratives of the past is further expanded in Chapter 4. Sharing a similar sense of the Gothic as it relates to the writing of history, Ashleigh Prosser here investigates the relevance of the Gothic to the communication of both place and the past. In 'The Abhuman City: Peter Ackroyd's Gothic Historiography of London', Prosser explores the ways in which Peter Ackroyd's writing of history as a Gothic palimpsest of narratives. Prosser's analysis uncovers how Ackroyd's historiography accounts of the city of London are based on an 'imagined' vision of the city. Ackroyd's urban tales, Prosser argues, are constructed of subjective montages of narratives, so that the city's history becomes imbued, through intermittent plays of biography, autobiography, and lost consciousness, with the Gothic and its modes of representation. All the essays in Part One propose a historically based view on 'living Gothic', drawing out connections to politicised shared contexts of trauma, commemoration, and community.

In a similar vein, the central part of the volume, Part II, entitled 'Legends, Folklore, and Tradition', alerts us to the relevance of cultural artefacts and transnational symbolism as lived-in structures intersecting with the Gothic, providing a framework for analysis that joins folklore, legend, tradition, history, and the uncanny. In pursuing multiple manifestations of the Gothic mode within lived experiences and practices, Part II draws attention to the transnational nature of that connection, providing a conceptual filament that ties local practices to wider systems of cultural and social identification. As Lorna Piatti-Farnell makes clear in Chapter 5, 'Spectral Pumpkins: Cultural Icons and the Gothic Everyday', in the contexts of history, legend, and folklore, Gothic iconography has delimited paradigms of cultural interchange and transition. The carved pumpkin, she claims, operates as a cultural site exchange where Old World folklore and New World re-imaginings collide, clash, mingle, and merge. Piatti-Farnell uncovers how the anthropomorphic complexity of the jack-o'-lantern contributes to its presence as part of a Gothic narrative; that narrative, however, is reliant on the intersecting dimension of ritual, folklore, representation and the everyday, so that what is uncanny about the carved pumpkin reveals the essential 'canny' nature of Hallowe'en festivities, and the place they occupy in the collective unconscious.

In line with envisioning cultural artefacts as living exponents of the Gothic, Susan Yi Sencindiver's consideration in Chapter 6 of uncanniness of the doll across a wide range of cultural contexts follows Piatti-Farnell's study with an analysis of the connection of the animate doll to its cultural historiography, therein echoing the ideas discussed by Punter and Prosser. Examining religious belief in spiritual beings, and most importantly to the historically contingent affective responses to sacrality, this chapter also points to later discussions of the same in the final part led by Tabish Khair and Misha Kavka. As Sencindiver argues, in terms of psychoanalysis, gender studies, and other forms of cultural analysis, the uncanny dualities of the Gothic have long been at the forefront of engagements with the fearful aspects of subjectivity.

Enrique Ajuria Ibarra further broaches these aspects of identity in Chapter 7: 'Ghosting the Nation: La Llorona, Popular Culture and the Spectral Anxiety of Mexican Identity'. Ajuria Ibarra explores the figure of La Llorona (The Wailing Woman) as a popular, uncanny image in Mexican culture. La Llorona, Ajuria Ibarra contends, unearths a national identity that is constantly in crisis, unavoidably opening up distinctive issues related to its historical past, issues that have equally determined the relationship between the feminine and the masculine in Mexican social discourses.

Paralleling the anthropological methods in Ajuria Ibarra's chapter, Tracy Fahey considers in Chapter 8 contemporary images of domestic space as manifestations of an older legacy of domestic representations in Irish folklore. Attending to the paradox of national versions of the Gothic as defined by considerations of folklore and practice, Fahey enquires into the importance of various manifestations of the '*Unheimlich* Irish house' in the work of contemporary artists such as Aideen Barry and Alice Maher. In placing an emphasis on the relationship between folklore, storytelling, and art, Fahey re-evaluates the question of Irish Gothic by delving deep into Ireland's past cultures. While Piatti-Farnell and Sencindiver draw attention to the importance of cultural artefacts as belonging to Gothic narratives of the uncanny, Ajuria Ibarra and Fahey uncover the relationship between national folklore, the *Unheimlich*, and the construction of a 'common past'. Each of the essays in the Part II pivot on tradition and public everyday occurrences as 'living Gothic', exploring the many ways in which these fit into wider narratives of the uncanny within both communal and individual storytelling.

With a focus on the expansive and global perception of the Gothic, the tangible remains of the Gothic as a literary phenomenon are

examined in Part III, the final section of the volume. Discussing the idea of 'Gothic Remains', the chapters in this part explore textual legacies that also have a bearing on ethnography and cultural narratives of the shared everyday where the uncanny imagination becomes intertwined with spiritual belief of several kinds. The connection between iconography and lived experience is firstly explored by Dale Townshend who delves into the Gothic remains that are to be found in the eighteenth-century writings of the architect, John Carter, in Chapter 9. This chapter offers an evaluation of the architecture that drives and is subsequently driven by the Gothic text. Taking Carter's sub-Radcliffean interest in the beauties of ancient Gothic-architectural facades as a point of departure, Townshend addresses the various attitudes to the 'remains' of the Gothic that persist in Carter's work, the one, a conscious celebration of a very particular historical vision of the medieval period, the other, an unwitting recourse to the dark imaginings of Gothic romance.

Focusing on practices specific to a space very much determined by Gothic architecture – the prison – Donna Lee Brien's 'Morbid Dining: Writing the Haunted History of Last Meals' (Chapter 10) develops on the relationship between cultural remains, Gothic imagery, and culinary habits. Brien provides the first detailed study of the cookbooks and other food narratives that describe in Gothic terms, and otherwise engage with, the last meals of condemned prisoners. Focusing on the personal, professional, commercial, and institutional narratives that occupy this liminal, often transnational space, an analysis of these texts not only reveals what meals condemned prisoners request and what is consumed, but also how these requests are treated and where these final meals are prepared and served.

The relationship between ritual and Gothic imagery and symbolism is then further explored the penultimate chapter, Tabish Khair's 'Gothic Remains in South Asian English Fiction' (Chapter 11). Starting with an examination of some of the Gothic tropes used to narrate India in colonial literature (fiction and non-fiction), Khair looks at some highly visible postcolonial narratives of/about India and trace the 'remains' of the Gothic therein.

Keeping with Tabish's points on the colonial Other, the final chapter of this part and the book itself – Misha Kavka's 'Haunting and the (Im)possibility of Māori Gothic' (Chapter 12) – centres on the indigenous cultures of New Zealand (national versions of Gothic). Kavka discusses the conditions of possibility for a media form that could be called 'Māori Gothic'. Kavka takes an important step back from some of the key (Western) presumptions about the Gothic in order to critically investigate

the conditions of haunting in order to interrogate what we might (after Jacques Rancière) call the 'distribution' of the spiritual world. Examining a number of recent art and media productions that have focused on Māori ghosts and ghostliness, she argues that the way that spiritual relations are distributed across the lived world is a culturally specific condition. While uncovering different aspects of the relationship between imaginary narratives and cultural practices, and its own subsequent relation to the uncanny, the essays in the Part III explore atypical dimensions of the Gothic as they can be seen in practices that are very much alive today, such as funerary traditions, and the textual bearings that these intrinsically cultural and spiritual practices continue to enact in relation to the Gothic. The 'living Gothic' emerges as a dimension based on textual legacies, as much as on ritual systems of practical re-enactment.

As a collective, the chapters in this book uncover a shared critical awareness of the Gothic, seeing it as a living thing; as a mode of both cultural expression and experience. In Gothic studies today, we are ever aware of the saturation of the term Gothic with all kinds of meanings, popular and other. The sense of the Gothic that once compelled, and in turn was driven by the Romantic imagination, may look as though it is being replaced by the mania of progress in the technological age. However, the everyday practices that form and are formed by the Gothic imagination today remain pivotal to matters of culture, belief, creativity, and tradition, and the manner in which these intersect in the wider historical framework. Horace Walpole's long-standing injunction that the Gothic mode blends imagination with the realism of common life is at the core of the chapters that follow here, all of which demonstrate that the Gothic continues to have a rich engagement with living and lived experience. We hope that this collective effort in research and discussion of the lived and living Gothic can enliven current critical approaches to the Gothic and broaden our scope of definition when it comes to analysing the Gothic, which is today very much part of the fabric of contemporary culture.

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Part I
Uncanny Histories

1
Trauma, Gothic, Revolution

David Punter

If there is one thing I would like to demonstrate in this chapter, it is the force of the truism that nationalism – a sense of living, and lived, history – exists only insofar as it is defined by its other. Perhaps we can see this most obviously in the multitude of acts of othering that constitutes the history of place names, which are regularly conferred by the other. There is a village near where I live in the UK called Chew Magna. 'Chew' is the name of a river, but it is not as though the villagers of this settlement near the river woke up one morning and thought, yes, we are bigger than the other villages along this river, and even if they had they would not have then thought, I know, let us add a nice, if rather grandiose, Latin suffix: the name was imposed from outside, in a non-native language, in order to fix the place on a map. Or, more grandly, we might think of the process by which the area including the island of Manhattan found its name changed from 'New Amsterdam' to 'New York'. That was the consequence of a transaction of what might be called 'commercial colonialism': a new imperial master required a new imperial name, reflective of the change of dominion. And these acts of naming and renaming are all around. States of Australia called 'New South Wales' and 'Victoria'; states of the USA called 'New Hampshire' and, rather more complexly, 'New Mexico'. The list would be endless as we survey the effects of colonisation and what we now tend to call 'global flows'.

There are similarly numerous attempts to rename in order to reverse namings that have come to be seen as overtly violent. The renaming of 'German Southwest Africa' as 'Namibia', of 'The Gold Coast' as 'Ghana': merely within Africa, this list too is long. In India the city until recently known as 'Calcutta' is now referred to as 'Kolkata': this is an unusual example, because the issue is that when other Indian cities were trying to throw off colonial naming, they searched for names that might

reflect previous indigenous communities, but for Calcutta that was a problem, because there was no previous indigenous community; until European traders arrived, nobody had thought that a swamp on the banks of the Hooghly was a habitable place of any kind, and so the city fathers had to resort to making 'Calcutta' sound a little more local.

There are a number of processes at work here: colonial settlement; imperial domination; the need to impose order on what would otherwise be seen as chaos. One of the most resonant literary works to reflect, and reflect upon, this situation is Brian Friel's famous play, *Translations* (1980). The scenario concerns the attempt, in 1833, to provide an intelligible cartography of Donegal in Ireland; here 'intelligible', of course, means 'intelligible' in the English language, and thus all the place names need to be literally 're-placed'. It is an added irony of the play, which Friel himself has pointed out, that in order to be intelligible to an international audience, the play had itself to be written largely in English (Friel, 1981).

This is only one small part of a wider process through which, in three distinct stages, English has taken over as what, following HSBC's canny advertising campaign as 'the world's local bank', we might call 'the world's local language': the first stage was imperial domination; the second was the Americanisation of capitalism; the third, still ongoing, is the reduction of the functioning internet to the norm of a single language. HSBC, incidentally, is itself a further interesting example: I am not sure that many of its 'local' customers in England, while perhaps occasionally aware of its malfunctions and frauds, are similarly aware of what HSBC actually stands for: the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, a relic of colonialist opportunism if ever there was one.

I want to begin by moving through a number of literary examples of the connections between othering and nationalism, and then to move on specifically to the Gothic, because the Gothic, in its engagements with European national differentiations and its powerful, if sometimes displaced, accounts of national trauma, offers a particularly apt repertoire of images of nationalism of many kinds. If we were to doubt for a moment that this remains a relevant vocabulary for the expression of national identification in Britain, we would need only to look at the television news, and the continuing focus on the Palace of Westminster, that great neo-Gothic pile, which still figures as the home of what is sometimes referred to as 'the mother of Parliaments'.

But I begin further back, in the 1650s, when Andrew Marvell wrote his poem 'Bermudas':

> Where the remote Bermudas ride
> In th'ocean's bosom unespied,