

The Spaces and Places of Horror

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Series in Critical Media Studies



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Acknowledgments

This volume was inspired by two wildly successful panels at the 48th Northeast Modern Language Association Annual Convention in Baltimore, Maryland in 2017, which we co-chaired and partook in with two presentations that have been revised to become this volume's introduction and one of its chapters; well before that, however, this volume was inspired by our shared love for all things horror, old Italian *giallo* films, and jump scares accompanied by a good glass of wine. We would like to first and foremost thank each and every one of our contributors, whose work, research, rigor, and enthusiasm made this volume possible and also made it an enlightening contribution to the scholarship on horror film; we selected essays that cover a wide range of filmic and thematic concerns and films from different decades and subgenres, and we are incredibly pleased with the final result.

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Foreword

Bernadette Wegenstein

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The usual questions that arise when we think about horror are: why are we afraid, and why do we *want* to be afraid? While there are more answers to these questions than we have room for here, one answer we may advance is that we *want* to be afraid despite what would appear to be our own best interests. Perhaps this is because we know we are not “in” the space of horror but outside of it, in safety—a version of the appeal Kant ascribed to the sublime when he wrote that “the astonishment bordering on terror, the horror and the awesome shudder... is, in view of the safety in which he knows himself to be, not actual fear, but only an attempt to involve ourselves in it by means of the imagination, in order to feel the power of that very faculty” (*The Critique of Judgment*). In this sense the space of horror is first and foremost a mental space analogous to the reading practice ascribed by William Egginton to fiction (*The Man who Invented Fiction*), in which the reader’s self divides in two, existing outside a diegetic space while simultaneously represented within it.

Horror uses this division to explore the feeling of helplessness vis a vis the unknown, or to test the “thin line between the familiar and the unfamiliar,” as Pascuzzi and Waters point out in their introduction. Indeed, many subjects of horror have an unknown past, feel an alienation toward their own identity and are trying to work out such fundamental questions as *who am I?* or, *what is in me?* Such insecurity about one’s own identity points to the helplessness and innocence of a subject vis a vis the moment of her conception: “I wasn’t there and I could not contribute to it in any way.” Such feeling of powerlessness in the face of the “violence” of not being present at one’s conception and not being asked if one wanted to be a part of the human experience, and perhaps a consequent resentment toward one’s “creators,” is one that many horror films capitalize on. Further, horror spreads its tentacles toward an uncertain future: *what will become of me? Where will I go?* Or, more practically even, *where will I live?* as Pascuzzi and Waters identify in some horror films, such as *The Haunting in Connecticut*, that reflect the economic housing market crash in the U.S. Additionally, postcolonial and racial anxieties have long been the subject of horror films, a recent influential example being Jordan Peele’s

breakout film *Get Out*, about the fear of being eaten up or killed by whiteness. As the many horror film examples discussed in this book, both historical and contemporary, show so well, the genre of horror is above all *productive*. It is successful as a film genre. It varies culturally and historically. Thus it comes as no surprise that there are such things as a bimonthly “Sunday Blood Brunches” in New York where viewers are surprised with a horror movie from different time periods.

The Spaces and Places of Horror is a unique opportunity not just for academics but for anyone fascinated by this genre to immerse themselves in these questions in the most varied spaces and places of the world: outer space, inner space, and beyond, wherever horror might “take place” or be “imagined.”

Before I leave the viewer to their own experiences of immersive horror, from Korean zombie movies to the thalassophobia of the epic horror thriller *Jaws*, I would like to address the importance of this genre from a feminist perspective, namely, its ability to identify and empathize with the view-point and sensation of the *victim*. Surely, we are also experiencing the point of view of the villain in many horror movies, but this tends to be the exceptional point of view, as when Hitchcock activates the gaze of some yet unknown source of evil inside Norman Bates's house. But the very premise of horror, it seems to me, is embedded in the main dramaturgical idea of the viewer's identification with the position of victimhood, whether this be an actual victim in the storyline or a potential victim in the future, should we get past the shower scene. Horror is pitiless. It lets us feel how it is to be afraid, to be dominated, to be threatened, to be in the hands of the villain. According to the UN Women Facts and Figures page, it is estimated that “35 percent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or sexual violence by a non-partner (not including sexual harassment) at some point in their lives; and some national studies show that up to 70 per cent of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime.”¹ Given these numbers I think it is no surprise to find victimhood embodied by female characters but also many children to be one of the most dramatized subject positions in horror films.

The question thus arises of whether we would be better off not exploring such violence through the strategies of horror. Opinions about this question are often split. *The Nightingale* by Jennifer Kent, for instance, has been the subject of intense debate concerning whether such atrocity and violence as the brutal rape of an Irish woman in 19th-century Tasmania should be offered to an audience to see and swallow. One feminist response has been to point to the double standard in such a question, when we know that violence and rape by many male auteurs have been celebrated as artful. But there is even something more important than this response in my view. I think that the main

productive element of horror, no matter how unrealistic the subject may be, is the reality of fear. To be able to come close to the feeling of fear of death, rape, violence, or the aftermath of these, is the undenied accomplishment of cinema. Horror, in this sense, is also a feminist genre, because it is able to depict truthfully a state of mind of the victim, which more often than not are women.

As academics we know that is never enough to just study a phenomenon from one cultural or even historical point of view. The richness of this volume lies in the fact that it shows the universality of horror as an anthropological principle. Horror is a basic function in the process of human communication, stemming from identification and empathy with those suffering a violence otherwise unimaginable to us. To go back to the earlier question of why we want to be afraid, we might say that it is a matter of *knowing the source of fear* as much as we can, so as to dominate and tame it.

But why film? Film gives us the pleasure of engaging with horror, in the deepest way, while knowing that a safe space remains there for us. If the basic function of engaging in fiction is indeed to divide the self, such that one experiences the world and perspective of another subject while still remaining in one's own world, horror is in some way the most extreme example of that division. By subjecting us to the abject, the depraved, the worst of our fears, all from the comfort of a cushy cineplex or cozy couch, horror can either reinforce the patterns and worldviews that permit such violence, or, ideally make us more attuned to it, and to the ways we ourselves may be perpetuating it.

Notes

¹ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>

Introduction

Francesco Pascuzzi and Sandra Waters

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“Where are we?” may arguably be the most commonly asked question in horror film tradition alongside, “Is anybody there?” On a purely somatic level – as it pertains to sheer physical on-screen presence – this uncertainty about displacement should appear antithetical to what cinema is. Perhaps more than any other narrative medium or form film activates and connects multiple modes of cognition, whereby meaning is predicated upon the staging of an action within a shot blocked to deliberately place a body in a defined, verifiable, dynamic, and resonant space: we understand everything in frame to be essential, whereas everything out of frame is of no consequence. Yet the tension between manifest space and implied space still informs the way in which a filmic text is decoded: according to Gilles Deleuze,

...the shot is not content to express the duration of a whole which changes, but constantly puts bodies, parts, aspects, dimensions, distances and the respective positions of the bodies which make up a set in the image into variation. The one comes about through the other. It is because pure movement varies the elements of the set by dividing them up into fractions with different denominators [...] that it also relates to a fundamentally open whole, whose essence is constantly to ‘become’ or to change, to endure; and vice versa.¹

Deleuze’s spatial philosophy of cinema converses productively with the distinction between space and place that this collection is poised to mobilize. Whereas by place, as we will see below, we wish to interrogate the depiction, coding, and use of location in horror film culture (discrete places that quite literally house horror and/or are reconfigured by it, in line with a tradition of Gothic topoi which will be discussed below), the notion of space aims to designate more closely the actual space created by the frame of a shot and the tension with the perceivable yet invisible infinity beyond it. Deleuze’s notes on space directly implicate Romantic notions of sublimity, which Edmund Burke first developed and explored in his 1757 treatise *A Philosophical En-*

quiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful.² According to Burke, the grounding principle of sublimity is terror, as in the single strongest passion anyone might experience; however, Burke furthers that such terror is inextricably linked to a sense of astonishment which contributes to making sublimity not exclusively unpleasant. Of particular interest in this context is Burke's note that astonishment is heightened when the subject must confront her fear of the unknown – uncertainty in one's mental capability and/or the absence of sight as well as what he calls infinity, or one's inability to perceive the bounds of something; this is the experience of the sublime in its truest, most exhilarating form. Film and in particular the horror genre have a way to play with the audience's fascination with the horrifying by exploiting this; the infinite unknown which surrounds the limits of the frame is reconfigured as sublime unto itself, its absence inherently a presence with which the spectator must contend as she explores the visual field of a shot and anticipates what may lie beyond it.

What makes the connection between horror film culture and space especially unorthodox is, then, predicated upon our experience as spectators in an inherently antagonistic relationship with the Deleuzian filmic open whole which continuously threatens the manifest space of the frame. This threat may be realized in a multitude of different ways that all variously exploit the possibilities of cinema: off-screen sounds, extra-diegetic scoring, light and color schemes, distortion of composition rules and cinematography guidelines, and other strategies meant to confound, startle, or terrify. In Wes Craven's *Scream* (1996), for example, the audience's mode of seeing/exploring the frame is at once enhanced and then denied in the scene in which the masked killer infiltrates a party, looking for drunk high school students to slash. Reporter Gail Weathers (Courteney Cox), steady on the killer's trail, has bugged the party house with hidden cameras and patiently parked herself in a van outside, hoping to film the killer for her latest scoop; the audience is thusly gifted with a secondary perspective on the party by way of the cameras recording the action inside the house, a mode of surveillance historically coded to foster a sense of safety; this feeling of security is however immediately undermined as soon as we learn that the footage is on a 30-second delay, making the audience not an active monitor of the action but rather a passive spectator of acts of violence that are being captured on camera as the movie cuts back and forth from the current events in the house to the recorded, delayed time of the feed in the van. As the killer approaches Jamie (Randy Meeks) from behind, his intentions becoming clearer by the second as he lifts his arm brandishing a knife, the frame begins tilting left and right at a 45-degree angle, replicating a feeling of motion sickness supposed to unsettle the viewer; at the same time, this oscillating technique methodically adds to and subtracts from the space of the frame itself making the killer's presence and movements

harder to track by effectively continuously creating and negating space for the audience in the theater.

This type of shot, one which eschews its inherent tension towards an organized spatiality, implicitly resists any attempts to be readily understood and interpreted and instead invites us to interrogate the implied space that lies outside it. For a viewer nothing is quite as unsettling as the task of spectating a character who realizes she is lost within and beyond the cinematic frame: this type of anxiety is deployed not by a process of addition but by one of subtraction, creating a topography of absence or of unfamiliarity instead. This volume inserts itself in a tradition that is as suggestive as it is firmly entrenched: the scholarly literature on horror film has historically rested at the intersection between the genre and its social and cultural ramifications, its depictions of sex and gender, or its highly structured modes of narration. Robin Wood's 1979 anthology *The American Nightmare*, a 100-page volume first handed out to attendees of the Toronto Film Festival that year, is perhaps to be considered the first proper piece of academic research on horror film; in it, Wood argued that horror charted the conflux of sexual and social mores and that the genre allowed a pathway for the otherized repressed and oppressed (women, minorities, other cultures, alternative ideologies) to reclaim a measure of social visibility. Carol J. Clover's 1992 seminal *Men, Women, and Chainsaws* advanced a feminist reading of the slasher subgenre suggesting that the trope of the Final Girl and the tension between torturer and victim are intended to re-center the viewer's perspective on the plight of the female protagonist as she fights for her survival and to establish her own agency against her tormentor. In *The Philosophy of Horror* (1990), Noël Carroll adopted an aesthetic approach to first codify the diegetic structures of most horror narratives and the recursive ways in which fear is constructed in horror film, and then explore the reasons why audiences seek horror as a form of entertainment. The thriving and rich scholarship in Gothic studies³ has similarly broached this subject specifically as it pertains to the robust tradition of Gothic literature and the role played by Gothic Revival architecture popular in late 1740s England: vast open landscapes and decaying Gothic ruins, in particular, channeled Burke's theorization of the sublime as well as Romantic suggestions related to the process of construction and inevitable destruction of human life. These mansions, castles, villas, often secluded or altogether abandoned, did not simply serve as the setting for a horror plot but rather functioned as active narrative components meant to imply associations among setting, characters, and storylines: Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), regarded as the first proper Gothic novel, actively links the underground tunnels of the various different buildings to the secret movements of the plot surrounding the ownership of the eponymous castle, creating a model and mode of narration whose influence has extended from post-Victorian to modern and contempo-

rary culture, literature, and art. In other titles (Ann Radcliffe's 1791 *The Romance of the Forest*, Thomas Beckford's 1782 *The History of the Caliph Vathek*, for example) ruins and different architectural structures are employed to reflect the characters' personalities and modulate the tone of the narration as ambiguous locations of corruption and shelter and, in the case of female-centric narratives, dramatic concerns with urgent essentialist underpinnings (incest, rape, subjugation to patriarchal structures, disability both physical and mental). As the cornerstones of academic scholarship on horror as a genre and as a narrative mode, these contributions have greatly advanced our understanding of horror film culture; however, no dedicated study exists that comprehensively considers the coding of space and place within the tradition of the genre alongside its cultural, political, and formal underpinnings. This volume wants to address this very lack.

Carroll himself noted that the geography of horror mobilizes "the notion that what horrifies is that which lies outside cultural categories and is, perforce, unknown."⁴ This strategy is most commonly deployed in horror films or thrillers that introduce a central threat that may originate from or transport the protagonist to outer space, or an alternate reality, or a parallel universe. In discussing the connection between place and horror film culture, this volume will also interrogate the coding of locations – some iconic by now, others less frequently seen – to examine how they harbor, nurture, and sometimes even become horror themselves. *Cloverfield* (2008), *Hellraiser* (1987), and *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984), just to name a few, all variously appropriate similar diegetic structures as a means to confront the audience with the partaking in a feeling of powerlessness against a force that cannot be decoded by or measured against any familiar parameters, its humanity first and foremost. An enormous, seemingly indestructible alien creature attacking New York City on a random evening leaves civilians and US military powerless to sort out defense and counterattack measures; an interlocking puzzle cube conceals the power to summon terrifying, otherworldly humanoid creatures with mutilated or disfigured bodies who torture and dismember their summoner after conjuring sadomasochistic or fetishistic paraphernalia or draw their victims into their labyrinthine, Escheresque world; the mere act of sleeping precipitates a group of teens into Freddy Krueger's (Robert Englund) iconic lair, a steam-filled boiler room with no exit or logical layout and the setting of choice for most of the characters' final nightmares. This specific setting from the *A Nightmare on Elm Street* franchise is a particularly illuminating example of this trend: not only does the place make no sense as an inescapable maze with looping corridors, interconnected levels, dead ends, and spaces that continuously add to themselves, but Krueger draws his supernatural strength and power from it whereas his victims are rendered completely powerless to escape or face off against him instead. The regulating principle at play is fairly

straightforward: if we do not understand how something or someone is alive and how it interacts with its surroundings, then we cannot understand what will kill it; if we do not understand how to interact with our surroundings ourselves, then we cannot understand how to stay alive.

Even more interesting, in that sense, is the genre's appropriation of the known and of the familiar, be they liminal or more recondite places as aforementioned – abandoned mansions, underground lairs, or cemeteries, among others – or mundane, everyday settings like a school, or one's neighborhood, or one's home. This setup is all the more distressing and terrifying because it displaces the victim within a verifiable locus or even worse, within her own personal, intimate realm. The home invasion horror subgenre (*Wait Until Dark*, *Funny Games*, *The Strangers*, *À l'intérieur*, just to name a few) presents narratives of dispossession in which the protagonist's home is first threatened and subsequently taken over by an antagonist whose presence, oftentimes not justified or altogether unexplained, otherizes the domestic by rendering it alien and unsafe. Beyond immediate capitalist concerns related to the role and significance of private property and its execution and defense, these films mobilize a more intimate and personal fear related to the violation of someone's intimacy by blurring the line between public and private and by questioning the nature of the very boundaries we hold as certain and as regulating principles of our everyday lives or of our identities. This rhetorical use of space hews closely to Sigmund Freud's theorization of the uncanny,⁵ as it is centered on recognizable locations cast outside of the Lacanian symbolic order:⁶ therefore, these two genres walk a thin line between familiar and unfamiliar and absorb both to make them other. According to Nicholas Royle, this process fundamentally exploits the inexplicable as it “generates uncanny feelings concerned with the liminal [and] with the distinction between the homely and unhomely, or the ‘ordinary’ and the ‘weird’”:⁷ the sudden inability to explain away what we hold as certain or self-evident or to understand how to function in a conventional place breaks down not only our understanding of place but that of ourselves in it.

The first section of the volume, *Spaces*, considers different instances of tension among the literal and abstract space of the filmic frame, bodies, and structures, often placed in antagonistic opposition. In “This is a Sacred Place(lessness): The Horrific Untetherings of *Martyrs* (2008),” Katherine A. Troyer analyzes the concepts of placelessness and transcendence which, on the surface, may seem more oppositional than complementary. Placelessness is often described as the pervasive and unavoidable disconnect from and loss of a sense of place, a frequent effect of mass communication and mass consumption. Transcendence, on the other hand, is often defined as a cumulative religious experience, a rare sense of connection with something sacred or

beyond that requires a dedicated effort to achieve and maintain. Yet beyond these basic definitions are larger, often shared philosophical and cultural questions about identity, relationships, and meaning. *Martyrs*, in its exploration of placelessness and transcendence, ultimately reveals how these two concepts are not in conflict but rather are like two sets of train tracks, which visit many of the same destinations even if they do not always arrive at a shared final terminus. As it juxtaposes themes of abuse and martyrdom alongside images of horror and religious/spiritual iconography, *Martyrs* offers the truly horrifying conclusion that perhaps what many cultures have reverently called transcendence is but, by another name, a devastating and permanent sense of placelessness, one that ensures a total untethering from our identities and our worlds.

In “Violent Viscera and Fetid Wombs: Wicked Architecture and the Female Body in Dario Argento’s Mothers Trilogy,” Brenda S. Gardenour Walter examines the 2007 release of Dario Argento’s *Mother of Tears*, which signaled the completion of a witchcraft trilogy that began with *Suspiria* in 1977 and continued with *Inferno* in 1980. In constructing the “Mothers Trilogy,” Argento was inspired by the works of Romantics such as Thomas de Quincey, whose opium-soaked *Suspiria de Profundis* provided the foundation for the Three Mothers myth woven throughout the films, and Edgar Allan Poe, whose “Tell-Tale Heart” offered a thread into the terrifying dream-worlds hidden just beneath perceived reality. Argento not only drew upon the conventions of gothic and supernatural horror, but also used the culturally-constructed body of the wicked female witch as the organizing principle for the architectural spaces that dominate each film. In *Suspiria*, *Inferno*, and *Mother of Tears*, the viewer is led through living body-buildings, lit in pulsing red and blue, with vein-like hallways, undulating stairways, and deep visceral catacombs where human intruders are violently digested and absorbed. The true source of evil in each of Argento’s body-buildings is a hidden chamber, a fetid womb-within-a-womb that provides the foundation for Argento’s barren mother-witches and the toxic female architecture that they inhabit. In constructing his maleficent architectural bodies – for these buildings are his witches – Argento draws upon late-medieval male clerical constructions of the womb as a witchy source of corruptive evil. Like his medieval forbears, Argento invites his audience to penetrate the objectified female body through his unflinching and authoritative male gaze – to bear witness as his hungry and wicked body-buildings drag their abjected victims down into the moist darkness, drowning them in blood, and returning them to the maternal abyss.

Sandra Waters examines the subgenre of surveillance horror in “Surveillance, Narrative, and Spectatorship in Recent American Horror Films.” Whereas late-twentieth-century American horror film (1970s-90s) placed only

the viewer in an omniscient position, creating anxiety for her, more recent films also make surveillance available to its own characters, complicating the relationship between spectator and protagonist, as the distinction between the two grows faint. Waters uses wide-release films (*Oculus*, *Don't Breathe*, *It Follows*, *The Cabin in the Woods*) as well as independent ones (*Followed*, *Resolution*) to illustrate how the use of new technology, specifically normalized video surveillance, creates an atmosphere of paranoia and anxiety that accentuates the uncanny. Cynthia Freeland's adjusted model of the uncanny speaks more to the feeling of dread induced by an overwhelming supernatural evil and moves away from Noël Carroll's explanation of the monster, which is something more tangible and imaginable, and away from Freud's uncanny, which is based on the fear of the castrating woman, who must be seen as having a lack. In this chapter, Waters examines how the role of surveillance in contemporary American horror film signifies a shift in the genre from the old to a new paradigm by developing a new gaze that fetishizes narrative and narrative modes, and displacing both the audience and the films' protagonists and sometimes antagonists, as the surveillant becomes the surveilled, creating a new, shared, previously incomprehensible and theoretically unrecognized space that the viewer and the characters cohabit which also upends existing narrative paradigms complicated by the use of contemporary technology not available when Carroll, Carol J. Clover, Mary Ann Doane, Freeland, et alia were developing their theories.

In her chapter "Human Trespass, Inhuman Space: Monstrous Vegetality in Carter Smith's *The Ruins*," Brittany Roberts considers the figure of the monster plant in horror cinema and its ramifications for conventional Western thought regarding plant life. Focusing specifically on Carter Smith's 2008 eco-horror film *The Ruins*, Roberts explores how the monster plant narrative challenges the traditional passivity of landscapes and backgrounds within fiction and cinema. As the author demonstrates throughout her chapter, the film's plant-filled landscape is an essential aspect of its horror, for as *The Ruins* invites viewers to see with new eyes the obscure vegetal beings that comprise their landscapes, it also compels them to perceive the tenuous and always porous boundaries between human and non-human, self and world. Examining key scenes from the film alongside contemporary "critical plant studies," environmental, and horror theorists such as Matthew Hall, Michael Marder, Dawn Keetley, Timothy Morton, and Catriona Sandilands, Roberts argues that *The Ruins* reveals the inadequacies of traditional Western humanist discourses surrounding vegetal life. In doing so, she suggests that the film contributes a more ecologically-minded perspective on plant life and the environment to the contemporary popular culture landscape: one that views the human as co-extensive with the multiple networks of human, animal, plant, mineral, and planet within which we are always inscribed.

In “When Orientalism Raises Hell: Puzzling Through the Postcolonial Anxieties and Usages of Space in Clive Barker’s *Hellraiser*,” Matthew Sautman examines the 1987 film *Hellraiser*, which centers around the Cotton family and a race of extradimensional creatures known as the Cenobites, which the film describes as “angels to some and demons to others.” Most of the horror within the film takes place within a singular space, a house that once belonged to central antagonist Frank Cotton before entering his brother Larry’s possession. This house places the horror that occurs in the film within an occidental geography that inverts the traditional tropes associated with a hegemonic understanding of home, but the house serves as a space wherein postcolonial anxieties are expressed through a three-part encounter that serves as metaphors of the Occident’s hegemonic relationship with what Edward Said calls Orientalism: the Moroccan puzzle box that brings the Cenobites from their extradimensional homeland, Frank Cotton’s return from the dead, and the Cenobites’ colonization of spaces within the house. In this chapter, Sautman investigates this first encounter as a metaphor of “the Orient’s riches,” with the second and third as the ramifications of the Occident hegemony exploiting those riches. More specifically, this study investigates Frank Cotton’s return from the dead as representative of a colonizer’s rise to power and the destructiveness that inherently accompanies that colonizer’s rise to power as he asserts his dominion over the house. Sautman also explores how this tripartite encounter follows a postcolonial script that transcribes horrors endemic to Orientalism to an Occidental context and how this transcription suggests that the horror present in the film is rooted in postcolonial anxieties present in the United States and Great Britain during the concurrent Reagan and Thatcher administrations. Through this investigation, Sautman illustrates how spatial representations of horror that take place upon domestic soil within the Occident communicate postcolonial anxieties when the sources of that horror are extraterrestrial in nature. For the hegemonic Occident, the West is the World, and through investigating how films like *Hellraiser* stage conflict with representations of the Orient, the chapter extrapolates how these horror films reveal hidden metaphorical borders present within contemporary political discourse through a combination of what Jack (Judith) Halberstam calls “queer temporality” and what Katherine McKittrick calls “demonic grounds.” Through these theoretical lenses, Sautman argues we may identify how we can transform the postcolonial anxieties within films like *Hellraiser* into a productive political discourse that restructures how hegemony constructs spaces.

In “Between Hell and Earth: Rhetorical Appropriation of Religious Space within *Hellraiser*,” Gavin F. Hurley expands the analysis of Clive Barker’s work by analyzing the spatial interrelationship between Hell and Earth presented in the director’s first two *Hellraiser* films (*Hellraiser* and *Hellbound*). Specifically, Hurley argues that the *Hellraiser* films steer clear of Christian references while ap-

appropriating a fundamental Christian location: Hell. Barker's appropriation of place – which pivots upon the “Labyrinth” and “Leviathan” (rather than “Hell” and “Satan”) while avoiding discussions of God and holiness—opens up the horror fiction as a more inclusive rhetoric. The film purposes a Christian location and balances a Christian ethic while moving beyond the traditional Christian ontological framework. Ultimately, this chapter examines *Hellraiser's* unique intelligibility of Hell as well as the films' distinctive humanness of Hell. The films' “intelligibility of place” highlights nuanced *logoi* of both Earthly and religious / metaphysical domains. Barker's approach allows reason to serve a rhetorical role, providing a thread whereby the audience, regardless of religious or nonreligious convictions, can suspend their disbelief and connect to the fiction. Barker's overlap of Christian and Post-Christian spaces offers a representation of how the secular and religious spaces cooperate via rational intelligibility. As symbiotic ecosystems, these spaces can foster personal reflection in viewers rather than demand ideological distance. In sum, Hurley posits that *Hellraiser's* rhetorical unity of place can adhere to a variety of audiences, which helps the general success of the horror franchise.

The second section of the volume, *Places*, considers geographical and geopolitical instances of horror as it pertains to a nation, a city, a body politic, or a confined location. In “Understanding the Biblical Horror in *Gomorra*,” R. Shelton Bellew analyzes the biblical horror in the film version of *Gomorra* (2008) directed by Matteo Garrone. Interpreting Roberto Saviano's apocalyptic novel by the same name (2006), Garrone expands events into cinematic parables that parody the New Testament: his vignettes construct a world of ghastly disaster converging into a cohesive narrative of hopeless lives and the ‘end times’ that await them. The director says his film bears a universal message: crime lords and drug dealers are everywhere. However, the monster is difficult to spot as it lurks among its victims, and in each grotesque parable, we ultimately uncover these false prophets serving their beastly master (the Camorra). Continuing Saviano's apocalyptic narrative, Garrone perverts New Testament allegories; each cinematic vignette summons our hidden fears, often in a terrifying finale, while captivating us at the same time in a cathartic experience. Bellew argues that the apocalyptic genre is a bizarre and wonderful dominion of fantasy and dreams that have long captured our imaginations; it scares us with beasts, horsemen, fire, giants, and omens, and its often-frenetic descriptions of coming woes sound like the product of deranged minds. Rooted in the fog of antiquity, this narrative style is the original horror story seducing us with disturbing allure. Influenced by the Book of Revelation, *Gomorra* provides the setting for a cosmic battle between Good and Evil which is both real and imaginary. In Garrone's film, the narration is simplified to pure dialogue and depiction of landscape. In *Gomorra*, we find the ultimate fantasy of Doomsday terror where monsters of prophetic tradition are incarnations of

the fallen state of being. The final scene of Garrone's film closes with two dead characters loaded into the bucket of a hungry bulldozer: the eschatological narrative ends with the wasted boys. The viewer is left with another void and the sound of water, polluted by the dead bodies, lapping on the shore: the ending is quiet. Nevertheless, there is an eerie sense of impending doom that shrilly alarms.

In "Thalassophobia: *Jaws* (1975) and the Nautical Spaces of Horror," Mark Fryers utilizes *Jaws* as the basis from which to examine film's relationship with the sea as a space of primal horror. As one of the most successful films of all time, *Jaws* gives popular and powerful expression to humanity's historical association and fear of the unfathomable deep and the monsters, both literal and metaphorical, that it conceals. *Jaws* thematically intersects with deep cultural conceptions of the sea, across many cultures, as a place of death and catastrophe, from its religious and literary associations with Lucifer's fall and mythological monsters such as the Kraken, to shipwrecks and cartographical nightmares – the 'Here be Monsters' phenomenon. This chapter demonstrates how *Jaws* and the nautical horror film enact primal fears of the sea as a cultural demon, to evoke a collective cultural thalassophobia; in doing so, it also demonstrates how there is a consistency in its presentational paradigms (camera positioning, musical cues), and thematic concerns, across a range of films from different periods and film producing cultures, considering its thematic and semiotic similarity with historic examples of sea terror in such Hollywood films as *The Sea Beast* (1925), *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1916, 1954) and *The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms* (1953) and global cinematic horror such as the Japanese *Ring* films (1998-2000), the Spanish horror film *The Orphanage* (2007) and the British film *Neither the Sea Nor the Sand* (1972). Fryers considers especially how these latter examples, much like *Jaws* does, position the human who returns from the sea as being horrifically altered and an affront to the established boundaries of living and dead, human and inhuman and how, in the spaces of the sea, the human is often forced to face his dark, unnatural or 'other' self. This chapter considers film's relationship with the sea as a place of fear in several different contexts, from the fear of the vast, uncharted ocean and the terror of being lost and overwhelmed, to the liminal spaces of the beach, shoreline and other marginal spaces that signal a place somewhere between the land and the sea, between chaos and civilization, between life and death. Binary oppositions and dramatic juxtapositions function in these texts to evoke fear and disembodiment. Fryers also suggests that nautical horror shares commonality with the horror film in general in that the vagaries of the sea, in collision with civilization, elicits a crisis of epistemology, as enacted in *Jaws*, as the certainties of the modern, scientific and technological age are rendered impotent in the face of the primordial power of the sea and its monsters. Lastly, this chapter considers *Jaws* as part of a wider corpus

of films that hint at nautical terror as being unconfined by generic boundaries, showing fluidity across genres of science fiction, the thriller, the disaster film and texts that deal with themes of humanity, philosophy and religion.

Henry Kamerling, in “Zombies and the City,” argues that the urban world represents a unique space of horror in contemporary zombie films. Drawing on urban theorists like Loretta Lees, Gyan Prakash and Rem Koolhaas, Kamerling examines how the “spatial imaginaries” of the modern and post-modern city find expression in post-1960s, post-Romero zombie cinema. Throughout this zombie cinematic universe, the author contends that the city functions as its own cultural artifact, an emblem of the liberal, pluralistic world born of the Enlightenment. Two broadly structured political orientations find expression in these post-1960s zombie films: a politically conservative tale where the city is imagined as a trap and a politically leftist expression where the urban world is imagined as a safe haven. Kamerling explains that in conservative inflected zombie tales such as *Omega Man* (1971), *I Am Legend* (2007) and *28 Days Later* (2002), society is presented as irredeemably corrupt because of modernity’s adherence to cosmopolitan, urban values. It is not by accident that large urban centers in these narratives are depicted in ruins. The fear of the city as a contaminated wasteland reveals not only an anxiety about the cosmopolitan nature of society but also a dread of modernity’s increasingly global interconnectedness. This panic over infection operates as a metaphor for the contagion of foreign ideas and peoples. Kamerling argues that in conservative zombie narratives, then, cities are presented as a trap for the remaining humans. The zombie horde’s annihilation of the world is often specifically imagined as an obliteration of the city. Such imaginative destruction of the urban landscape presents an opportunity, cinematically, to enact a long-held right-wing fantasy. In contrast to these tales, Kamerling details how leftist zombie films, like *Land of the Dead* (2005), *Zombieland* (2009), and *Warm Bodies* (2013) among others, tend to offer a more hopeful vision of modernity, one that is tied the central experience of urban life. Instead of being a trap created by the coercive experience of modernity, the urban world is presented as the smart place to ride out the apocalypse. “Zombies and the City” details how, in left-leaning zombie narratives, the ills of modernity are not fatal, and the zombie apocalypse often proves to be temporary. These leftist zombie tales also embrace the liberal pluralistic values that form an essential component of the city as a cultural artifact. The zombies in *Land of the Dead* and *Warm Bodies* possess distinctly human attributes. These monsters are presented as potential citizens of the body politic, city dwellers who have the same purchase on the utopian dream of urban life as their human counterparts.

“National Cinema, Trauma, and Melodrama in the Korean Zombie Film *Train to Busan* (2016)” by Luisa Hyojin Koo, analyzes Korea’s first feature-

length zombie film, which was a global success. Koo argues that although *Train to Busan* is a zombie film, the narrative mode of the film is a melodrama that conveys a specific historical trauma of the Sewol Ferry incident through the space of the train. On April 16, 2014, the Sewol Ferry carrying mostly high school students on a school trip sank, leaving the majority of the passengers trapped and killed. The incident remains a traumatic event that cannot be forgotten; news on sunken wreckage and the affected families still dominate the nation. Media coverage and popular opinion both blamed government incompetence. Through the lens of melodrama and space, *Train to Busan* focuses on the trauma of failing management. Through melodrama that is a familiar narrative mode in Korean cinema, *Train to Busan* addresses a trauma which is specifically Korean and which speaks to its domestic viewers. In this paper, Koo employs two larger frameworks to situate *Train to Busan* in the Korean melodramatic narrative: Linda Williams' definition of melodrama as an art of suffering victims and Kathleen McHugh and Nancy Abelmann's work on identifying melodrama as a form of national trauma. The tragedy of the Sewol Ferry is not an isolated occurrence but a part of a long history of the lack of sufficient initial response measures in the face of calamity. For instance, the lack of basic evacuation drills and ready access to the accident site resulted in 192 deaths in the Daegu subway fire in 2003. Korean social and political history, with its relatively recent transition to democracy in the late '80s, is one of anti-government sentiment: in the case of the Sewol Ferry incident, most of the anger is directed towards the government's insufficient rescue measures. *Train to Busan's* opening alludes to the general mistrust of the government as the pig farmer passes the checkpoint saying, "As if I can trust what [the government officials] say." The film represents a direct address to a modern-day Korean tragedy, an attempt to make sense of the trauma and mistrust that haunt the nation. Koo furthers that to adapt a genre is to incorporate cultural specificity; location and its cultural implications shape the narrative. In addition to the geographic setting of Korea, *Train to Busan* is set on a moving train for most the film. The government-operated Korea Train eXpress (KTX) featured in the film fits the Korean time-crunch lifestyle, with a speed of up to 200 mph. Using the space of the train, Koo emphasizes the disconnection between ideal management and the chaos of reality. The train in the film represents Korea as a nation in which the government promotes an ambitious and functional vehicle while disregarding the problems that occur from within. *Train to Busan* is, according to the author, a collective attempt to understand the trauma of the Sewol Ferry sinking and the resulting mistrust in the government.

The following chapter, "They Are Still Here: Possession and Dispossession in the 21st Century American Horror Film" by Mikal J. Gaines, advances the notion that, while the American housing market crisis and subsequent economic

crash appear to have largely abated, the specter of dispossession that these catastrophes present remains. It seems of little surprise, then, that the horror genre has been especially preoccupied with narratives of guilty occupation and haunted inhabitation – with the sense that the acquisition of property in America comes with a high cost. The popularity of films released in the years immediately preceding and following the housing crisis, such as *The Amityville Horror* (2005), *The Haunting in Connecticut* (2009), *Sinister* (2012), *Paranormal Activity* (2007), *Insidious* (2010), *The Conjuring* (2013), as well as their sequels and spin-offs, points toward a deeper concern with what it means to claim space in a nation whose history cannot be separated from colonial conquest, the institution of chattel slavery, or other legacies of systemic violence. Time and time again, these stories seem to insist that the atrocities of the past cannot be escaped but, instead, must be confronted. This chapter considers how the resurgence and hybridization of the haunted house film with the supernatural possession film speaks to ongoing American anxieties about the instability of ownership and tenuousness of occupation under late capitalism. Building on the work of Carol J. Clover, Michael Rogin, and others, Gaines argues that these narratives are the genre's latest attempt to deal with the nation's highly fraught legacy of violent displacement. This study contributes directly to horror and gothic studies yet prompts further consideration on how these may offer new insight into the political, cultural, social, and economic realities of dispossession in the 21st century.

In “The Haunt Found Them: The Layers of Performativity, Reality and Illusion in *The Houses October Built*,” Madelon Hoedt mobilizes the notion that the horror genre, at its essence, is performative. The role and actions of the bodies that inhabit the novels, films, videogames and stage plays are at the center of these experiences. Perhaps, as a result, several horror films have used ideas on and spaces of performance as an underpinning for their narrative. The Shakespearean plot of humiliation and revenge of *Theatre of Blood* (1973) and the monster in the dark ride of *The Funhouse* (1981) and *Dark Ride* (2006) are but a few examples of this. Indeed, the release of *The Houses October Built* in 2014 shows that this choice of setting is not yet dead. Following five friends who set out on a road trip through the United States to find the most extreme scare attraction, *The Houses October Built* uses the now familiar found footage aesthetic to document their journey and the fate that befalls them. By blending cinematic and performative spaces, the filmmakers create an interesting tension between reality and illusion as the ‘fakery’ of the theatre and the ‘authenticity’ of found footage collide. A remake of the 2011 documentary of the same name, and made by the same team, *The Houses October Built* is as much an investigation of the industry and culture surrounding scare attractions as it is a work of horror fiction. What is of particular interest here is the role of the scare attractions within the film. Rather than designing

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