

Núria Rodríguez Bernal

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain

Abstract

The Unlimited Pleasure(s) of Being Terrified: Horror Cinema Shows Our Limits

Despite having been disregarded or undervalued by the ‘serious’ academy for a long time, labeled as ‘secondary,’ and accused of being consumed only by a minority with specific and extravagant tastes, Horror Cinema has been gaining recognition among intellectuals as a valuable source from which to learn about the cultures/societies that produce it. The field of Cultural Studies has paid much attention to this and other ‘non-conventional’ types of cultural production, aiming to prove, for example, that a zombie movie can help us understand the contemporary western fear of death as much as a medieval *Danse Macabre* tells us about the impact of the Black Plague in 15th century Europe.

Considering the idea of limits and borders more from a cultural/sociological/psychological perspective rather than a geographical one, I will argue how horror cinema today can be used to better comprehend our fears, the limits of our thought, and our capacities for tolerance. To do so, I will rely on five ideas that are common place in our relationship with horror fiction and which provide a wide range of discussion topics: 1.- what scares us and why; 2.- what we cannot even look at; 3.- abominations & intolerable behaviors; 4.- fear of our own bodies; 5.- fear of death.

Ultimately, by interrogating the cultural roots of fear and investigating what stirs societal anxieties, we can discern their underlying impact on cultural identity and individual and collective roles. Cultural and social comparisons of their expression will allow us to distinguish the existence universal borders (even if only in horror).

Biographical Note

Núria is currently a professor with more than ten years of experience in the Study Abroad field in Barcelona. She works mainly with the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) teaching courses on Spanish history, politics and culture to students from all over the world. She holds a History degree from the UAB and a PhD in Early Modern History and Thought from the Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF). In terms of research, she has leaned towards the Cultural Studies perspective, specializing in Western Europe. Apart from her academic life, Núria is also the founder & co-owner of the cellphone app ‘Rambling Barcelona.’ She collaborates frequently with diverse local radio stations and participates in shows about cinema, history, or general culture and she also has years of experience as a translator in several languages.

Mónica Cantero

Drew University, Madison, NJ, US

Abstract

Images of a Social Movement: How “Tourism kills” Embodied Ethos and Social Awareness

“El turismo mata” and its English version ‘Tourism kills,’ a sentence written on the walls of buildings, seen on yellow stickers pasted throughout the city, written on banners during demonstrations, went viral on the streets of Barcelona in the summer of 2017 and had also national and international echoes. From this perspective, a discourse of discomfort and intolerance was being codified in the fabric of the Barcelona social context with antagonistic characteristics: mass tourism versus local inhabitants of the same urban space.

This presentation examines how this utterance gave voice to a message of political and social discord in the public sphere, materializing itself in the urban landscape. This feeling of discomfort went viral because it resonated with an audience that could acknowledge this message and, consequently, could easily be transposed to other cities that were experiencing the same symptoms of mass tourism (Basque Country and other European cities). In this analysis, the act of becoming aware is defined as a shared social ethos that built and defended a community under the umbrella/slogan "tourism kills." Furthermore, this type of message allows for a study of how social justice is perceived or talk about issues that politicians do not discuss in governmental debates. This presentation also takes into account how the analysis of these graffiti-like utterances and their explicit discourse of discomfort about tourism / tourist reveals a growing relationship with a politically motivated youth sector (Arràn) and its fight to define notions of social justice, subverting the official discourse. The urban space is taken and used for a democratic practice that forms identity and ethos. The data used in this analysis comes in the form of pictures taken in Barcelona during 2017 and earlier years, newspaper photos as well as social media images.

The contextual theoretical framework proposed by L. Rojo in *Occupy: The Spatial Dynamics of Discourse in Global Protest Movements* (2016) provides the linguistic-cultural framework that serves for the basis of this preliminary analysis of urban graffiti-utterances. In this context, Rojo explores the interaction between space and communicative practices in recent global social movements. Rojo's proposal invites us to reconceptualize the political and democratic practices in contemporary politics, especially in the media that serve to create social awareness of protest movements.

Biographical Note

Mónica Cantero-Exojo is a Professor of Spanish and a Language Coordinator at Drew University, Madison, New Jersey, USA. She has written on Spanish cinema and Spanish linguistics. Her articles have appeared in *Film-History*; *Filología y Lingüística*; *Developmental Science*; and *Journal of Comparative Psychology* among others. She has also book chapters in *Research on Spanish in the US*, *Història & Cinema*, *Visions of Struggle in Women's Filmmaking in the Mediterranean*. She is interested in research that examines the intersections between images, metaphors and linguistic representation of horror and ideology. Her most recent work is using mapping to examine how social movements construct narratives of social justice using graffiti (images/words) in the urban space.

Robyn Carruthers

Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada

Abstract

Mnemonic Travel Writing and Relational Culture

Both travel and memory are mediums of relation: they bring things—objects, people, contexts, geographies, histories, and subjectivities—into association according to various modes of articulation. I propose that a particular subset of contemporary travel writing, which I term *mnemonic travel writing*, explicitly and self-reflexively engages with the ways in which the modalities of mobility and memory interact to articulate cultural relations. While travel writing has been correctly accused of historic and ongoing complicity with the projects of Empire, my paper belongs to a recent scholarly trend that examines the *diversity* in travel texts—in terms of what forms of movement might be considered travel and thus who might be thought of as a traveler—and their potential to challenge neo-colonial systems of knowledge and power. I suggest it may do so through the articulation of new and productive mnemonic relations between and within mobile cultures, and in so doing, re-imagine the boundaries and relationality of culture itself. I speak to the examples of Pico Iyer's *Sun After Dark: Flights into the Foreign* and Raja Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks: Forays into a Vanishing Landscape* as flip sides of the globalization coin—the former presenting the privileged jet-setting cosmopolitan who is a foreigner-at-home and at-home-in-the-foreign, and the latter depicting the dispossessed hill-walker who has been unsettled in his own homeland.

Biographical Note

Robyn Carruthers is a doctoral candidate at Queen's University in Kingston, Canada. Her current dissertation project, *Foreign Relations: Contemporary Travel Writing as Relational Memory Work* explores how literary travel texts often engage explicitly and reflexively with the ways in which the modalities of mobility and memory together articulate spatiotemporal cultural relations in a global order. It brings together an exploration of contemporary travel writing's potential to subvert colonial and neo-colonial systems of knowledge and memory studies' consideration of how collective memory serves to instantiate the animated interchange of past and present in the public sphere. Her other research interests include life writing, literature and the sacred, and *bookish* internet content.

Zlatan Filipovic

Jönköping University, Jönköping, Sweden

Abstract

The Roots of My Shame: Place and Diasporic Identity

The notion of roots, of place and belonging, is always charged with significant emotional investment in diasporic identity. The mythogeny of body, birth, origin, nation, faith and all the other tropological reinscriptions of “place” are usually seen as closures of identity that produce fixed economies of meaning. Indeed, the exoticism and charisma of authenticity associated with “place” that has today become the neoliberal mainstay of cultural difference only testifies to its irrevocable demise. And yet, “place” still retains its power as the primary trope of identity and the difficulty of distinguishing between the two is nowhere more visceral than in the experience of the culturally displaced subject where both the possibility of revealing the constructed nature of “place” and the impossibility of looking beyond it are equally present. One could say that it is in the process of deconstruction of “place” that the impossibility of relinquishing its claim on the displaced subject becomes apparent, which is precisely what produces the affective experience of shame in the diasporic subject. This paper will consider shame as a provocation of “place” that emerges in the presence of those whose suffering represents it. The “place” is always irremissibly there, manifested as my shame, as that impossibility of evading the assignation of responsibility that this suffering in the end signifies.

Biographical Note

Dr. Zlatan Filipovic is an Associate Professor at Jönköping University and a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in English Literature at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. He has a PhD in English and Comparative Literature from Goldsmiths, University of London. His published work has focused largely on the ethical implications of deconstruction and poststructuralism in modern literature, with one of his latest theoretical contributions, “Towards an Ethics of Shame,” published in *Angelaki*, 2017, and a chapter entitled “Black and Ashamed: Deconstructing Race in Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man*,” published in a recent Routledge volume *Shame and Modern Writing*, 2018. He is currently working on a monograph focusing on the ethics of shame in Emmanuel Levinas and the way it may inform our understanding of diasporic fiction.

Matthew Holman

University College London, London, UK

Abstract

'The first example of world culture'?

Gestural Abstraction and the Limits of Internationalism at documenta II (1959)

'Art has become abstract', wrote Werner Haftmann in 1959 and, in so doing, became 'the first example of world culture.' Haftmann, perhaps the most vociferous supporter of modern art in postwar Germany, believed that a 'world language' of gestural abstraction had become a reality. This philosophical and formal attitude to art informed Haftmann's vision for documenta II, held in the small west German town of Kassel, which he co-curated with Arnold Bode. However, just as a buoyant internationalism looked to cohere a 'lingua franca' in postwar art, the political and transnational power asymmetries in an art-world increasingly dominated by Abstract Expressionism, supported by the deep-pockets of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, exposed the fault-lines in Haftmann's worldview. By focusing on the controversial American representation at documenta II, and using recently sourced archival material from Kassel, this paper will use this exhibition as a case study through which to interrogate wider questions around Cold War cultural politics and the extent to which abstraction can be understood as a genuinely international phenomenon.



Still image, schwarzweiß, Negativ, 56 x 56 mm (H x B), Calder, Alexander, Hextopus, 1955, 255 x 335 x 250 cm (H x B x T), Eisenblech, Skulptur, © Alexander Calder/VG Bild-Kunst

Biographical Note

Matthew Holman is a PhD candidate in the English department at University College London, where his research focuses on the American poet Frank O'Hara's curatorial career. Before UCL, he was an F. R. Leavis Scholar at The University of York. In the academic year 2017/18, Matthew is studying under a Leverhulme Trust studentship at the John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies, Berlin, where he is working on a research project entitled 'Frank O'Hara East and West.' His writings have appeared in *Oxford Art Journal*, *Oxford Poetry*, and *Apollo: The International Art Magazine*.

Dany Jacob

Michigan Technological University, Houghton, Michigan, US

Abstract

Man in (his) Space: Articulation and Visibility in Crisis

In a society eager to define and grasp gender issues, representations of “masculinity” and “femininity” are manifold as well as contradicting. While those terms might have firm borders in our conceptual mind, the modern world keeps highlighting the elementary factor of hybridity. Every day we are confronted to images of masculinity in various medias constructing, re-constructing or de-constructing our social understanding of masculinities. How do those images conform to the plural entities of “masculinities” when the sources are trying to reduce a multifaceted identity to a boxed definition of “the man”? The key argument is to consider the space and rethink our understanding of “masculinities” in not a one-dimensional thread but rather in a pluri-dimensional space.

The dandy, as he emerges from the second half of the 19th century, makes himself noticed by being the odd man out. He is anti-conventional, defies the binary system of gender and urges society to rethink its norms. Today, the “Dandy Effect” is still much in vigor, especially with the support of instant medias such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter who offer the public man an opportunity to construct his image to his liking, and to a certain affect/affect.

Biographical Note

Originally from Luxembourg, Europe, Dr. Dany Jacob is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor at Michigan Technological University. He received his Ph.D. from the State University of New York at Buffalo in French and Francophone Studies in 2016. His current research situates the dandy as a pivoting figure in the overarching path of masculinities in Western sociocultural thought how it affects our contemporary perception of “modernity”, “aesthetics” and “masculinity” through the lens of fetishism. His other research interests include the aesthetic articulation of cultural identities and spaces.

Gema Ortega

Dominican University, River Forest Illinois, US

Abstract

Where is Home?: Nationalism, Diasporic Consciousness and the Hybrid Self in Contemporary Dialogue

Diaspora is the first step towards an encounter with the other, forcing a re-negotiation of one's cultural identity. This quest for the self, known as diasporic consciousness, is thought to be disruptive and having the power to de-essentialize national narratives. While diaspora does shake the core of individuals, this paper differentiates diasporic consciousness and hybrid discourses of self as opposite. To maintain a diasporic consciousness means to sustain the idea of a physical "home" that has been forever lost. The constant desire to "return" underscores an authentic alliance to the homeland and its diasporic footprint. Consequently, the diasporic experience does not necessarily produce transgressive forms of cultural identification. On the contrary, those who dwell on diasporic consciousness reify national discourses abroad. The language of nationalism remains intact, and "native" and "other" constitute themselves through a dialectic but mutually exclusive relationship with devastating consequences for those who cannot cope with the binary. The alternative to diasporic consciousness is Bakhtinian heteroglossia since it exposes any form of national discourse as "epic" and allows for a hybrid consciousness that de-territorializes "home" to find it in language.

Biographical Note

Dr. Gema Ortega is a professor in the English department and Chair of the Translation Studies Program at Dominican University, near Chicago. She received her Ph.D. in Comparative and World Literature from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. Her work focuses on the comparative study of colonial and postcolonial literature and analyses discourses of *mestizaje* and hybridity across the Americas. Dr. Ortega has recent publications on the works of Maryse Condé, Toni Morrison, and Rosario Ferré. Her teaching includes courses on Colonial and Postcolonial Literature and Theory, Non-Western World Literature, Western Hemispheric Studies, Women and Race and Theory of Translation.

Antoni Raja-i-Vich

University Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain

Abstract

Spain(s) back then, Spain(s) now

In this session we'll try to understand the complex relationship of Spain with the almost unavoidable presence of diversity in historic perspective. To do so, we'll focus on the political construction of the Spanish State that began in Medieval Times, 476-1492, and the subsequent construction of the Spanish National identity in the XIX century. The cohesion of the Spanish State depended in Early Modern times, 1492-1808, on the unity of the Spanish Catholic Community against the presence of Jews and Muslims, whereas now the unity of the Spanish State depends on the capacity of the elites of the country to find new ways to make compatible different and liquid national identities within a globalized and deeply interconnected country like Spain.

Biographical Note

Antoni holds a PhD in Contemporary History and Politics from the University Pompeu Fabra. He is a member of a research group on Nationalisms and Politics (*Grup de Recerca en Estats, Nacions i Sobiraniaes: GRENS*) in the same College. As a professor, Antoni has been teaching for over a decade mostly in the Study Abroad Sector covering subjects such as Politics, History and Culture: for CIEE Barcelona, for example, Spain Today in both Spanish and English. Antoni combines his role as a professor with collaboration with some of the local and regional media. He is responsible for publishing opinion articles in a regional on-line newspaper. Also, he co-created and co-directed a radio show on culture and cinema and cooperates frequently with different radio stations as a History advisor and commentator. Right now, Antoni is working on different papers on the history of culture and social development in Western Societies.

Maria Van Liew
West Chester University, Pennsylvania, US

Abstract

Uncontainable Horror: Rec (2007) and Quarantine (2008) in Synchronous Translation and Simultaneous Circulation

The temporal margin for Hollywood remakes of Spanish (European) films in the 21st century has narrowed in the race to recreate “the same story” on the heels of “original” success already in global circulation. Considering the “Hollywood quality” of contemporary Spanish cinema, we could assume these “qualities” make it easier to defy traditional “borders” that have traditionally contained artistry as a national product. Inevitably, the new host-culture requires adjustments to the dominant discourses at play despite familiar techniques in form. I discuss how shifts imposed to accommodate the “same story” as migratory reveal a shift in a threat to human survival per the dominant ideology prevailing over the cultural context in tandem with its potential for global appeal. These and other identifiers in two versions of “the same story” lead us through a labyrinth of infected bodies, the recording of their movements and the “injustice” of quarantine— a basic storyline that never ceases to resonate with national and global anxieties, and which serves as a tool for understanding the role of social and geo-political borders in the “pleasures” of witnessing horror mutate at home and abroad as entertainment.

Rec (Jaume Balagueró & Paco Plaza, 2007)

Quarantine (John Erick Dowdle, 2008)

Biographical Note

Dr. Maria Van Liew is a Professor of Spanish Language and Culture at West Chester University where she specializes in Spanish cinema, literature and culture courses. She contributed the chapter “Immigration Films: The Reciprocity of Disruption in Transnational Context,” to the anthology *Contemporary Spanish Cinema and Genre*, and co-edited the anthology *Fotogramas para la multiculturalidad: migraciones y alteridad en el cine español contemporáneo*. She has published numerous articles on cinema, music, nationalism and migrations in journals such as *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, *Comparative Literature and Culture*, *Letras Femeninas*, *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos*, *Mosaicos* and *Popular Music*.