

INTRODUCTION: GLOBALGOTHIC BEYOND GLOBALISATION

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IN THE DECADE since Glennis Byron published her edited volume *Globalgothic* (2013), to date the most influential account of gothic fiction in the international context, the sense of ‘the global’ has shifted. For Byron, and the contributors to her collection, the ‘global’ was largely synonymous with ‘globalisation’, and specifically with ‘globalisation’ as a late-twentieth-century phenomenon. Hence, ‘globalgothic’ was theorised in respect to what, at this time, was taken to be the emergence of a ‘new world order’ (Byron 2013, 3), one that superseded and complicated a pre-existing set of global relations configured under the auspices of Western imperialism. In place of older critical discourses describing predatory transnational vectors of exploitation and domination, there appeared a different theoretical vocabulary, which focused on such issues as the transnational mobility of people and commodities; intertwining advancements in technology, media and global communication; the rise of immaterial work and speculative finance capital; and newly conspicuous forms of cultural hybridity and multidirectional exchange. Shaped by these ideas, globalgothic came to be understood as the product of a novel and multipolar geopolitical landscape, both reflecting new pluralities and intersections of cultural voices, and at the same time articulating anxieties that emerged from the disturbance of established identities and traditions. Above all, globalgothic appeared in the context of a world characterised, as Byron put it, by ‘flows’ (3) – flows of people, money, goods and cultures – the fluidity and complexity of which seemed to nullify now apparently too simplistic accounts of imperial capitalist expansion.

It may already be clear from this brief synopsis that the vision of the world underpinning globalgothic no longer maps seamlessly on to the global situation. At the time of writing this, just over two years into the Covid-19 pandemic and amid spiralling transformations to the Earth’s biosphere, the trenchancy of ‘old’ lines of power is starkly and grimly evident. Covid and climate change need, importantly, to be understood as two linked dimensions of the same planetary shifts, since as Andreas Malm has pointed out, the instance of ‘zoonotic spillover’ (2020, chap. 2) out of which the novel coronavirus emerged is itself the effect of commercial deforestation across Southeast Asia, which – driving biodiversity loss and destroying habitats – channels novel pathogens directly towards humans as the most prominent remaining species. Also accounting for these origins, the philosopher Srećko Horvat argues that the pandemic has functioned as an apocalyptic event, where apocalypse is taken in its original sense to mean ‘revelation’ (2021, 12). What has been exposed is a radically unequal

global geography, across which poverty – a relative state, always contoured by race and gender (among other categories) – is everywhere an index of environmental and social vulnerability, and where increasingly militarised national borders curtail the possibility of escaping such unliveable conditions.

Thus, the pandemic can be considered in Horvat's terms as a 'sort of . . . X-ray that . . . unmasked a global system based on a vicious cycle of extraction, exploitation and expansion' (2021, 9). It has made available a global picture that markedly differs from the vision of transnational flows, and which in fact corresponds far more closely to mid-twentieth-century accounts of dependency and underdevelopment,¹ on the dismissal of which much influential globalisation theory was predicated. For Immanuel Wallerstein and other thinkers associated with the world-systems analysis approach, the 'claim that it is only in the twentieth century that capitalism has become "world-wide"' is fundamentally misleading (1974, 401). This is because it obscures a much longer transregional history of capitalism, in the context of which late-twentieth-century shifts appear neither anomalous nor wholly unprecedented, as I will discuss below. This history begins in the 'long' sixteenth century, when the powers of Western Europe set out to expropriate the resources of the so-called New World, and did so by harnessing the labour first of its Indigenous populations, and then of captive African people transported to the colonies as slaves. For Wallerstein, this dynamic of expansion, exploitation and uneven accumulation demonstrates what remains the definitive gesture of capitalism as a 'world-system': namely, the production of an 'axial division of labour', which links economically strong 'core' zones to the regions they peripheralise, and on whose cheapened labour power and raw materials they feed (2004, 17).

Though, as Bryan S. Turner notes, one 'early driving force of . . . globalisation theories was dissatisfaction with . . . world systems theory' (2010, 4), critical work in this latter tradition continued in other fields – including in gothic studies, as Stephen Shapiro demonstrates in this collection and elsewhere (2008) – and the salience of such scholarship is arguably growing as the academy seeks to address the racialised, gendered and ecological unevenness of the present. Feminist historian Sylvia Federici (2004) has, for example, outlined how the early modern transformation of women into unwaged domestic labourers underpins the development of the world-system, enabling the production of an exploitable masculinised proletariat, first in Europe and then in the colonies. Addressing the persistence of racial inequality in the nominally postcolonial present, the decolonial philosopher Aníbal Quijano (2000) argues that, because the modern conception of racial difference was invented to serve the first transoceanic division of labour – to construct a colonised and enslaved workforce in the Americas – race is baked into the world-system, and thus continues to function as an identifier for the peripheralised lives on which capitalism depends. Building on these perspectives, and implicitly synthesising them, the environmental historian Jason W. Moore has influentially reframed the world-system as a 'world-ecology' (2015, chap. 1), the point being that Wallerstein's division of labour is not only social, but also ecological. Hence, Moore argues that categories of gender and race are operatively inseparable from the Enlightenment conception of nature as external to society, which – as in Federici and Quijano – is deployed to make the world legible to capital, specifically by transforming the biosphere into a plunderable resource (2016, 79). These accounts bring into focus how, across five centuries and into the present, capitalism operates through processes of exploitation and extraction,

mobilising heteropatriarchal categories of gender, colonial conceptions of race, and instrumentalising notions of extra-human nature, to bind certain regions of the world together unequally with others. They thus provide the critical tools with which to conceptualise and understand the uneven distributions of socio-ecological precarity in the present, in a way that narratives of globalisation cannot.

In her illuminating study of the global novel, Treasa De Loughry argues that the mismatch between now-hegemonised theories of the global and our current global reality is severe enough to constitute a set of ‘disciplinary crises in literary studies’ (2020, 15). The aim of this collection is to address and move beyond this impasse in the context of gothic criticism. Without turning away from late-twentieth-century globalisation entirely (but seeking to contextualise it in the longer history of capitalism), the volume asks how gothic fiction engages with, or witnesses, global relationships, processes and phenomena, and how it does so in locally particular ways from different vantages around the world. Eschewing a focus on distinct national gothic traditions, contributors to the collection instead work with regional paradigms, thus acknowledging the transnational vectors of power and production in the context of which all nations are placed, and by which they are shaped. In taking these approaches, chapters in the volume frequently move beyond the established critical lexica for examining gothic in international contexts, forging new theoretical approaches – rooted in decoloniality, for example, extractivism, non-Western cosmology, or the plantation system – which help to elucidate how the fraught actualities of the global present are imaginatively negotiated in gothic texts. Indeed, gothic emerges across the collection as a discourse especially finely attuned to the social and environmental upheavals of the present, a point that gains new salience if we recall that it was during an earlier moment of vast, capital-driven socio-ecological restructuring that gothic first appeared in Britain, then on the eve of industrialisation.

I will say more about this relationship between gothic and conditions of socio-ecological instability later on in this introduction. In what immediately follows, I return to Byron’s conception of globalgothic, in order to locate the late-twentieth-century moment of globalisation from which it takes its cue in the longer and wider historical context of the world-ecology. As we shall see, doing so raises important questions over existing accounts of globalgothic aesthetics and concerns, which may in fact chiefly pertain to fiction from certain, largely Northern regions, while at the same time curtailing opportunities to examine how gothic addresses the material or ecological dimensions of global realities. I conclude by engaging with Fred Botting and Justin D. Edwards’s theorisation of globalgothic, which – sensitive to the regionally differentiated experience of global capitalism – lays the foundation for a reconceptualisation of globalgothic as gothic fiction which seeks to retrieve, make visible and at times interrogate the transregional histories and relations that contour the locus at which any instance of gothic production takes place.

Gothic Fiction, Globalisation and the ‘New World Order’

Globalgothic, as Byron explains in her introduction, is a collection motivated by the observation that the term ‘gothic’ was, around the turn of the millennium, increasingly being applied to fiction from beyond the genre’s traditional Anglo-American purview. This development, *Globalgothic* proposes, is connected to the late-twentieth-century

‘development of an increasingly integrated global economy’ (2013, 1), though Byron herself consciously leaves aside the knotty matter of defining globalisation (2012, 371–2). Taking a general approach, she points only to that sense, already highlighted above, of a novel transnational geography characterised by ‘flows’, where ‘people and products move with increasing ease and speed across national borders’ (371). Botting and Edwards, in their contribution to Byron’s volume, provide some theoretical and historical background, examining the globalised world as an effect of socio-economic shifts at the end of the twentieth century – of ‘collapsing blocs and borders, the emergence of transnational economic unions’ (2013, 12). These developments are coterminous, they note, with ‘new technologies, media exchanges and financial fluidity’ (18), which together reflect newly abstract and instantaneous forms of economic activity, where ‘objects and things are rendered secondary to flows of information, signs and services’ (15). Emerging from all of this, a rapidly operating and frequently dematerialised form of ‘transnational capitalism’ is identified, which ‘respects no borders in its pursuits of profit and markets’ (13), while simultaneously ‘discover[ing] profit beyond material goods’ (15). ‘This new market’, Botting and Edwards continue, ‘is, in our thinking, a new world order that can no longer be simply aligned with . . . modern – Western or US – capitalism’ (13).

For Byron, such a new world order shapes gothic production in three key senses (Botting and Edwards provide a slightly different theorisation, to which I will return). In the first instance, the regional expansion of the market – at the same time an expansion into the immaterial domain of signs and images – provides the distribution channels through which gothic acquires global circulation as a cultural commodity. ‘[G]othic tropes and narratives travel with the movement of people and the flows of cultural production,’ Byron writes (2013, 6), and importantly it is not only the case that Western forms are distributed elsewhere. Gothic ‘counterparts in other cultures’ (3) also enter the cultural economy, so that there is a ‘confluence, in globalised space, between divergent cultural traditions’ (4).

Secondly, globalgothic sits in an ambivalent position to these circumstances, because it is often critical of the very market that has facilitated its production. As Byron puts it, ‘globalgothic frequently exploits the flows precisely to give form to anxieties attendant upon the processes of globalisation’, and most notably to those which arise as national and cultural stability is rendered fluid, and thus apparently compromised. The result is a gothic literature that critically represents globalisation itself ‘as monstrous, spectral, cannibalistic’ (5). Finally, because globalgothic is a product of ‘multidirectional cultural exchanges’ (3), it should be considered, Byron writes, as ‘dislocated from specific regions and places’, consisting instead chiefly in ‘new transregional or transnational alliances’ (6).

This last is perhaps the most striking feature of Byron’s account: ‘what is identified as gothic today is something increasingly detached from any specific, historical, social, and cultural “origins”’ (2012, 371). The point, as I have already mentioned, is that as gothic circulates through a newly expansive market of cultural commodities, it loses its national specificity, acquiring traits drawn from multiple supernatural traditions around the world. And yet, there is also a deeper question here which pertains to the regional vantage from which late-twentieth-century shifts to the global order are being perceived. Where must one stand to catch sight of a global situation defined chiefly by cultural intersections that dissolve old social formations and categories? From what

position in the world-system, in other words, might it feasibly seem as if a mode of capitalism has appeared, which operates not by exploiting certain people and extracting value from biophysical nature as it has historically done, but primarily through a free-floating market's circuits and flows? Another way of formulating this thought would be to ask in which parts of the globe it was possible to experience the world order of the late twentieth century as unequivocally new.

Globalisation in Context

Returning to Moore's conception of the world-ecology will help to shed light on these issues, in part because this *longue durée* perspective reveals that the shifts identified with globalisation over the last several decades have a number of precedents across the history of capitalism. To grasp this point, it is also necessary to grasp that crisis and global transformation are not anomalous to capitalism, but integral and cyclically occurring features of the world-system. This is because capitalism works by corroding its own conditions of possibility, in that it exploits given world-ecological 'complexes' of labour and resources to the point of exhaustion (Moore 2015, chap. 6). At such moments, which Moore names 'ecological revolutions', capital regroups by pursuing a frontier strategy – exemplified paradigmatically by formal processes of imperial expansion – in which new sources of (relatively) uncaptalised work/energy are drawn into the system at very low cost, with the effect that conditions for profitable extraction and exploitation are reinstated (Moore 2015, chap. 6). Writing with Giovanni Arrighi, Moore identifies two phases in each of the four 'systemic cycles of accumulation' that have taken place since the inauguration of the world-system in the long sixteenth century: namely, 'a phase of material expansion', in which new plunderable sources of labour and biophysical nature are constructed and appropriated, and a phase of 'financial expansion' (Arrighi and Moore 2001, 56), which responds to the declining availability of these material resources, by temporarily relocating the possibility of accumulation in speculative 'financial deals', until a new wave of material expansion can begin (61). Importantly, these two phases are 'overlapping', as Moore emphasises (2015, chap. 5); this means that the latter does not mark the end of extractivism, but is instead accompanied by its emergence in newly intense forms – more on this shortly.

It is already possible, in this short summary, to discern key elements of late-twentieth-century capitalism – specifically, the extension and dematerialisation of market flows. As Arrighi and Moore point out, the financial stage of the last systemic cycle, which concludes around the end of the nineteenth century, was also accompanied by analyses that interpreted the turn to finance capital as representing 'a new phase of capitalist development'. 'The language and concepts have changed', they write, 'but the idea that finance capital constitutes a new, latest, highest phase or stage in the history of capitalism is at least as widely held today as it was a century ago' (2001, 57). Thus, while it is certainly distinct, the most recent new world order may not be entirely new. Accounting for this is important, since, as Arrighi and Moore note, the 'discursive recurrence' of financialisation as a novel capitalist form potentially 'conceals its factual recurrence within a cycle too long to be detected within the time horizon ordinarily deployed in the analysis of capitalist development' (57). A closer – or perhaps wider – look at the late-twentieth-century moment in which 'globalisation' is born will elucidate the point.

The most recent emergence of a newly extensive and speculative global market needs to be understood as an effect of the neoliberal economic agenda, infamously spearheaded by Thatcher in the United Kingdom and Reagan in the United States. This in turn should be contextualised in relation to the crisis that gripped the world-economy in the early 1970s – emblematised by the infamous oil shock of 1974–75 – and which corresponds, in Moore and Arrighi’s terms, to the terminal phase of material expansion associated with Fordism, or the post-war boom. Neoliberalisation may have delivered certain regions of the world from this deepening recession and into a period of relative economic stability at the end of the twentieth century; however, it did so by implementing profoundly unsustainable asset-stripping strategies, which David Harvey describes as ‘accumulation by dispossession’ (2005, 145–52). These work by bringing into the domain of the market regions, assets and sources of labour that had previously been unavailable to capital investment, thus providing stagnant funds with new avenues for growth. The late-twentieth-century globalisation of the market is a direct result of this project, which everywhere also involves the privatisation of previously publicly owned institutions, the concomitant rolling back of social provision or welfare, and the deregulation of both finance and labour.

This said, neoliberalisation needs, crucially, to be understood as a regionally specific programme. In the core economies of the Global North, accumulation by dispossession was coupled, as we have seen, to financialisation, but this acted in tandem with deindustrialisation, which precisely involves the closure of material production sites – of the factory, the mine – thereby releasing workers into a newly competitive job market, with the result that domestic wages are depressed. Importantly, however, production does not disappear. As Moore writes, ‘the falling rate of profit in American industry . . . led American and other capitalists to move rapidly towards the “global factory” in the 1970s’ (2015, chap. 9). In the same moment, in other words, that Northern powers were financialising and deindustrialising, they were also outsourcing industry to other, cheaper (or rather artificially *cheapened*) parts of the globe. These destinations lay across the Global South, and frequently in recently postcolonial nations, which – largely as a result of underdevelopment during colonialism – found themselves urgently in need of cash. Leveraging this situation, institutions of international finance rooted in Northern economies extended credit throughout the (to this day heavily indebted) postcolonial world, on condition that Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) were deployed by newly independent states to bring themselves in line with foreign capital’s demands. These included demands that labour remain cheap, resources accessible, and consumer markets open to imported goods.² A key result of SAPs, and the industrialisation of the Global South more generally, was the production of a ‘global proletariat that dwarfed any other that had come before it’ (Moore 2015, chap. 9), a development which undergirds the global surge of consumer goods for which the late twentieth century is infamous.

As they work together to address the declining phase of twentieth-century material expansion, financialisation, deindustrialisation and the intensified shifting of production and extractive industries to the Global South demonstrate that – in Moore’s succinct phrasing – ‘Wall Street [i]s a way of organising nature’, where ‘nature’ entails both human lives and the rest of the biosphere (2015, intro.). If we account for this situation, the novelty of late-twentieth-century globalisation is called into question in two key senses. On the one hand, this is because it highlights how the economic prioritisation

of market flows has recurred across the four systemic cycles of the world-system, in the way Moore and Arrighi show. On the other – and importantly – it also reveals that, for regions across the Global South, the effect of the ‘new world order’ was to entrench – rather than transform – their pre-existing world-systemic positioning. As Neil Lazarus explains, ‘SAPs . . . became a means of ensuring that postcolonial states *retained* their peripheral status’ (2011, 9, emphasis mine), continuing to occupy the same role in respect to the world’s core economies as they had during the formally colonial period. This shows in turn that ‘globalisation’ cannot be considered a globally uniform phenomenon: what might have appeared from the Global North to be the dissolution into flows of an older, industrial socio-ecological configuration doubtless looks different from the vantage of the former colony, where SAPs functioned to intensify colonial modes of extraction and exploitation. Thus, though the financialisation of the market may be a globally obtaining development, the underlying unevenness of these regional conditions also means that the speculative economy is experienced differently across different locations in the world-system.

Globalgothic and Disciplinary Crisis

All of this has a bearing on the conception of globalgothic as a form of cultural production dislocated from any particular social or regional origins. For, if we situate globalgothic chiefly in the version of the world presumed by this definition – in that novel global landscape characterised by multidirectional flows of goods, people and culture – then the above discussion shows that the term’s ‘global’ element will be substantially restricted, if not eradicated entirely. Located in this way, ‘globalgothic’ would in fact appear to refer mainly to gothic texts that reflect a perspective available from regions undergoing deindustrialisation and financialisation – those largely Northern places where material production, and the social structure attendant on it, had indeed been transformed to the point where they might be said to have disappeared. If this is correct, then what has been called ‘globalgothic’ might better be named ‘post-industrial gothic’, and this has important consequences that relate to the disciplinary crisis we have seen De Loughry identify above.

Key among these is a curtailment of globalgothic’s capacity for addressing unfolding shifts in the biosphere – including the complex of planetary transformations represented by the term ‘climate change’. As Fredric Jameson argued in the essay on which his formative *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* was based, ‘the conventional feelings of First World subjects that they really do inhabit a “postindustrial” society’ (1984, 91) emerge from the disorientating effect of late-twentieth-century consumer culture. In this context, a deluge of commodities saturates reality, with the effect that this comes to be structured by ‘the frantic economic urgency of producing fresh waves of ever more novel-seeming goods’ (56). As a result, ‘the past as “referent” finds itself bracketed, and then effaced altogether’ (66), while ‘the present suddenly engulfs the subject with undescribable vividness’ (73). Building on Jameson, Malm points out the difficulty this situation poses for efforts to engage with global warming: in a version of the world where there is no history there can also be no climate change, since this is – as Malm puts it – the effect of ‘historical fires’. It is ‘cumulative emissions, the pulses of CO₂ stacked on top of each other’ that have raised atmospheric temperatures to the degree that the Earth System is destabilised, meaning

that, '[i]nsofar as extreme weather is shaped by basal warming, it is the legacy of what people have done' (Malm 2018, intro.).

Something of the presentism that characterises Jameson's nominally post-industrial society is discernible in accounts of late-twentieth-century globalisation that identify this with a new world order. The point has been made directly by Timothy Brennan, who notes that the inclination towards novelty is a general 'feature of capitalist societies', which tend to understand 'each moment as the only reality while expunging the past in a gesture of calculated *anti*-historicism' (2007, 38). In the particular case of globalisation theory, this gesture works by severing the decades preceding the millennium both from the longer, cyclical history of capitalism, and from the geopolitical landscape of formal colonialism, which is taken to have concluded around the middle of the twentieth century. The latter disarticulation specifically obscures the continuing peripheralisation of postcolonial regions, while also giving credence – in the way Jameson suggests – to the notion that industry and extraction have been wholly superseded by a transnational and increasingly dematerialised market economy. The erasure of history is thus inseparable from the erasure of material production, and concomitantly from production's cumulative ecological effects. It is in this sense, then, that 'the seamless surface of the globalised world' – to use Malm's phrasing – cannot conceptually accommodate escalating environmental breakdown (2018, intro.).

The point sheds light on the predominantly cultural register in which globalgothic fiction has thus far been conceived, as demonstrated both by Byron's emphasis on the cultural hybridity of globalgothic forms, and by the nature of the anxieties such texts are taken to encode – including 'new kinds of disturbances to identities and borders' (2012, 376), and those relating to 'the stability of local or national . . . cultures' (2013, 5). These are 'impacts of transnational capitalism' (5), where capitalism is conceived chiefly as a sophisticated global marketplace, its sprawling circuits and channels cutting across national boundaries to deposit in any given location (cultural) commodities and images from different parts of the world. To restore capital's socio-ecological dimensions to this picture requires, as we have seen, renewed attention to the geography of production, and thus to the late-twentieth-century moment as one of historical continuity with the colonial past, as well as one of transformation. This in turn will mean taking an approach to gothic fiction that is attuned to the regionally specific operation of neoliberalisation – to the uneven distribution of de/industrialisation and its socio-ecological consequences – and which is thus able to move beyond the critical impasse that emerges from generalising a 'post-industrial' perspective. It is to this reconceptualisation of globalgothic that I will now turn.

Flows and Regionality

Botting and Edwards's theorisation of globalgothic lays the foundation for such a revision. Though their assessment of globalisation's novelty differs from my own analysis – a point to which I will return – these authors ground their conceptualisation of globalgothic in an account of late-twentieth-century economic shifts that takes in the extent to which these are experienced differently across different regions of the world. As we have seen, Botting and Edwards prioritise a 'global market, in which cultures produce, consume, appropriate and transform stories, images, and characters' (2013, 12). Acknowledged alongside this, however, are 'the "structural adjustments" that have imposed global

forces on developing nations' (14), and which generate a situation in which effectively 'every member of Western culture is . . . expropriating the resources and labour of other countries' (20). This sense of the unevenness of the late-twentieth-century global order underpins a conceptualisation of globalgothic that is similarly attuned to how different local vantages afford different perspectives on transnational shifts and processes from the late twentieth century. 'Global manifestations of the gothic', Botting and Edwards write, 'touch on the sense of the unnerving, unpredictable and uncontrollable scale of world changes that impinge *diversely* and relentlessly on *different locales and peoples*' (14, emphasis mine).

To illustrate this definition, the authors turn to the anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff's influential account of xenophobia, witchcraft and zombie-making in millennial South Africa, all of which – the Comaroffs argue – need to be understood as a response to the neoliberalisation of the post-apartheid economy. As Lazarus demonstrated in a 2004 essay, South Africa's neoliberal turn effectively enacted a form of self-imposed structural adjustment. On the one hand, the nation's incorporation into the increasingly financialised and globalised market is experienced as 'sudden infusions' of foreign commodities and speculative wealth into the newly postcolonial state (Comaroff and Comaroff 2002, 782). On the other, it is expressed by the casualisation and fragmentation of the national workforce, a form of accumulation by dispossession intended to lower production costs through a shift to 'part-time piece work . . . [and] relatively insecure, gainless occupation[s]' generally (781). It is amid these circumstances that the Comaroffs locate a rise, among the nation's poorest, in xenophobic violence, which is directed at immigrants from elsewhere on the continent, on the grounds that they are ostensibly stealing gainful forms of work from South African citizens. This grim development is linked, they argue further, to the popular identification of illegitimate labourers of a different, more sinister kind. 'Long-standing notions of witchcraft have come to embrace zombie-making,' they write, which involves 'the brutal reduction of others . . . to insensible beings stored, like tools, in sheds, cupboards, or oil drums at the homes of their creators' (787). As this exposition suggests, such zombies bear little resemblance to the cannibalistic hordes of mainstream contemporary horror cinema, but are instead undead workers: victims of occult murder, whose corpses are reanimated and put to work for the enrichment of their makers, using nefarious magical means.

Like the job-thieving immigrant of the xenophobic imaginary, the murderous zombie-making witch should be understood – the Comaroffs argue – as an attempt to resolve the 'contradiction at the heart of neoliberal capitalism in its global manifestation', namely 'the fact that it appears to offer up vast, almost instantaneous riches' to certain people, 'and simultaneously to threaten the very livelihood' of others (2002, 782). Both figures – demonised migrant and zombie labourer – thus fulfil an interpretive function in respect to late-twentieth-century shifts in the world-system, as these appear from a postcolonial vantage. They offer hyperbolised figures of threat in answer to the question of how new wealth is rapidly accumulating, under material conditions where work is ever more arduous, precarious and poorly rewarded. In this way, the intertwining narratives of zombies and immigrants exemplify globalgothic as Botting and Edwards see it: they witness and articulate, in a local cultural idiom, the particular regional experience of wider global transformations. 'In attempting to broach the scale of change', the authors summarise, 'the globalgothic mode registers an ill-formed grasp of the consequences attendant on the dissolution of old securities . . . and comforting boundaries' (2013, 14).

It is worth pausing here over the phrase ‘ill-formed’, to examine how it can be seen to apply to the narratives of zombies and xenophobia described above. In one sense, it is clear that these interpretations of neoliberalising South Africa get something very wrong: it is neither immigrants nor witches – disproportionately taken to be elderly women – who are responsible for intensifying exploitation, or for the conspicuous appearance of new and inaccessible forms of wealth. Indeed, as with all instances of ‘moral panic’,³ these supposed villains are likely to be themselves especially seriously affected by deepening inequality in the post-apartheid nation. For Botting and Edwards, importantly, this kind of misreading is a fundamental function of globalgothic more widely, which, they write, ‘constructs an otherness that screens out the . . . anxiety’ (2013, 23) produced on the advent of ‘a new world order’ – one which ‘is mediated, networked, militarised and corporatised but offers no clear-cut image of itself’ (18). Thus, what the tales of witches and demonised migrants only imperfectly grasp – and in this way ‘screen out’ – is a global system of rapid and dematerialised flows, which is taken to supersede older ‘active imperialisms witnessed in tangible and positioned structures’ (17), and which becomes in the process near-unthinkable in its complexity.

And yet, as we have seen with Moore above, the late twentieth century is not only a moment of rupture and novelty, but also one characterised by a deepening of the extractive and exploitative relationships developed during formal colonialism. Viewed with this history in mind, another perspective on the zombie in particular begins to shift into view, one that foregrounds the sense in which narratives around this figure seem to provide a grimly accurate analysis of neoliberal transformations to the South African economy. For is there not, we might ask, some truth in the pervasive suspicion that to be poor in the post-apartheid nation is to risk being treated as an expendable body? Botting and Edwards take care to point out that encoded in frightful tales of zombies and witches is the ‘tangible . . . distress and anxiety of a globalised system’ (2013, 12). However, their prioritisation of the sublimely complex new world order means that they overlook, or dismiss, the interrogative possibility of this narrative function, which in no small part inheres in the challenge it mounts precisely to that vision of the global as a frictionless and dematerialised space of transnational commodity and cultural flows. The figure of the undead labourer – indexing a vulnerability to deleterious conditions of work – asserts that, in the Comaroffs’ phrasing, ‘there is no such thing as capitalism *sans* production’, and thus tacitly insists that the ‘neoliberal stress on consumption . . . is palpably problematic’ (2002, 782). In his own analysis of the contemporary African occult, David McNally phrases the point more strongly still:

The new genre of African witchcraft refuses bourgeois narratives in which capitalist wealth gives birth to itself through a self-reproducing machinery that knows neither victims nor losers . . . A hermeneutics of suspicion animates these folktales, a thoroughgoing mistrust of the claim, popular among postmodern theorists of the so-called information economy, that we have transcended the economics of materiality. (2011, 201)

As it underscores, in this way, the persistence of an ‘economics of materiality’, the figure of the African zombie also makes visible the continuity between colonial and globalised world orders, exposing the extent to which the latter relies on the intensification of the same relations of extraction and exploitation as the former. The point is

confirmed, in fact, by the longer history of zombie lore, upsurges of which, both the Comaroffs and McNally note across their respective pieces, have accompanied the implementation of capitalist relations on the continent, at least since the inauguration of the last systemic cycle of material – imperial – expansion in the nineteenth century. Throughout this trajectory, McNally observes, the peculiarly corporeal vocabulary of occult narratives and practices – including zombification, but also ritual murder and forms of vampirism – can be understood as an effort to give tangible bodily shape to the experience of capitalist production, which, even when not literally violent, from the workers' perspective entails artificial temporalities and absurdly repetitive and apparently pointless activities that together generate a mystifying feeling of violation which 'they cannot see or touch' (2011, 200). This, as McNally writes, 'is doubly so' in the present era of finance capital, where – as the Comaroffs have also noted – the enduring relationship between production and consumption, work and wealth, is rendered intensely obscure (201). Hence, he concludes that the African occult tales under consideration 'seek to map an archaeology of the invisible in capitalist modernity . . . In their hunt for the bodies that are being harmed and the blood that is being sucked, these stories seek out traces of the corporeal power upon which capital feeds' (201).

Something critical is thus lost if we consider such narratives – and globalgothic more widely – as responses to globalisation. Botting and Edwards substantially nuance the landscape of flows, accounting for the variegated experience of late-twentieth-century capitalism across de/industrialised regions, and thus unlocking the possibility of reading globalgothic texts not as dislocated cultural hybrids, but rather as locally rooted – though perhaps culturally complex – mediations of the uneven global system. Nonetheless, they themselves ultimately position globalgothic chiefly in relation to a newly immaterial and fluid global landscape, with the effect that the stress in their argument falls on the impossibility of grasping this complexity, and figures such as the African zombie largely become imperfect representations, which at root demonstrate the inevitable failure of efforts to conceptualise – and thus to adequately critique or resist – the numinous degradations of a new world order. What this reading passes over too quickly, I have suggested above, is the sense in which globalgothic forms encode the real violence of transregional capitalist relations, as these act on and shape a particular regional context in both new and historically redolent ways. In doing so, such figures of dread and threat enact a proto-critical gesture, precisely by exposing – rather than 'screening out' – the conditions of precarity and disposability on which capital continues to depend. This critique acquires particular valency in the context of accounts that see the global present as an age of spectral capital and immaterial labour as McNally has shown, but it pertains equally to the history of the world-system more widely. It is also, notably, a mode of interrogation that both entails and surpasses Byron's account of globalgothic's ambivalent critical positioning: what is being skewered here exceeds threats to cultural stability under global market conditions, relating also to the deeply felt destruction of livelihoods that – though regionally specific – everywhere undergirds this global market.

Globalgothic beyond Globalisation

I will propose across what remains of this introduction that while globalgothic incarnations of world-systemic violence can produce the kind of othering and moral panic

demonstrated by the entanglement of zombies and xenophobia in post-apartheid South Africa, they might also generate more critical forms of consciousness, which seek out the structural relationships and histories from which the experience of violence emerges. Because they give this experience tangible form, figures such as the undead labourer might also prompt a reflection on the origins of violence, thus enabling, as Jameson writes in his essay on 'cognitive mapping', 'the whole architectonic of . . . global space to rise up in ghostly profile' (1988, 352). Indeed, Jameson's famous description of conspiracy theory as a distorted effort to locate the social levers of power is relevant to a discussion of globalgothic: the mistrust that underpins the conspiracy analysis – what McNally calls 'a hermeneutics of suspicion' – can be turned to ends other than the identification of demonised 'others'. It can be pressed into the service instead of mapping the world-system within which categories of otherness are mobilised for the structural peripheralisation of certain lives and environments.

This possibility has been examined by critics working with the Warwick Research Collective's (WReC) influential theorisation of 'world-literature', by which they intend literature that registers how, on a world scale, 'capitalist social relations are "lived" – different in every instance for the simple reason that no two social instances are the same' (Deckard et al. 2015, 12). Since, as Moore has shown, all capitalist social relations are also ecological relations, world-literature should be understood not only as the literature of the world-system, but also – Michael Niblett writes – 'of the capitalist world-ecology': 'world literature will necessarily register ecological regimes and revolutions . . . since these organise in fundamental ways the material conditions, social modalities, and areas of experience on which literary form works' (Niblett 2012, 20). Both the WReC and Niblett pay particular attention to what – following Michael Löwy – they call 'irrealist' forms of cultural production: modes of narrative – like the gothic – which contain elements of 'fantasy, the oneiric and the surreal' (Niblett 2012, 21), and which can be understood as reflecting the experience of those moments in the history of capitalism when the established patterning of socio-ecological relationships falls into crisis, prompting shifts of the kind discussed by Moore and Arrighi in their account of financialisation and renewed material expansion. As Niblett explains, the transition from one phase of accumulation to the next 'destroys the pre-existing social [and ecological] unities that might have provided the unified referent required by "realist" representation' (2012, 21). As the lineaments of a familiar reality become destabilised in this way, irrealist representations appear with particular force, capturing the ensuing sense of disorientation in figures drawn from folklore, the occult or urban legend.

There is clear resonance between this argument and Botting and Edwards's thesis examined above, in which the authors position globalgothic as a misinterpretation of the local effects of 'world change' (2013, 14). Niblett, too, draws attention to cultural production that registers the shifting world-ecology only 'negatively through its absence', thus providing accounts such as the xenophobic narratives discussed above (2012, 19). However, he also highlights fiction that deliberately activates irrealist aesthetics in order to capitalise on their interpretive function, and thus 'grasps towards its [the world-ecology's] mapping as the condition of possibility for making some ultimate sense of social experience' (19). In these latter instances, irrealism becomes 'critical irrealism', which the WReC describe as 'the self-conscious transformation by authors' of folkloric or supernaturalised figures and poetics for the ends of performing a 'critique of the

world historical order' (Deckard et al. 2015, 97). Such texts thus repurpose McNally's hermeneutics of suspicion, so that these no longer indict vilified (local) 'others', but function instead to identify and interrogate the systemic drivers behind deleterious socio-economic/ecological transformations, as these are experienced at a given regional location in the world-system.

Considered with this distinction between irrealist and critical irrealist cultural production in mind, the term 'globalgothic' takes on two distinct but related significances. In the first place, it designates a critical approach, which functions by situating a given regional instance of gothic fiction in the wider historical and geographical context of the world-ecology. As with Edward Said's famous injunction to read '*contrapuntally*' (1994, 59, emphasis in original) – the approach through which the Antiguan sugar plantation is exposed as *Mansfield Park*'s suppressed condition of possibility (69–70) – a globalgothic reading practice might be applied even to narratives that seem to engage predominantly with local realities, in order to make visible what such texts witness 'only negatively', or – in Botting and Edwards's formulation – what they 'screen out'. In the second instance, 'globalgothic' refers to a critical gothic poetics, the purpose of which is to chart, from a certain regional perspective, the transregional dynamics and connections that give rise to the moments of social and environmental destabilisation to which gothic responds.

Outline of Chapters

Contributions across this collection engage in a range of ways with these two dimensions of globalgothic beyond globalisation, and attend in each instance to a particular theoretical or conceptual lens, global issue, mode of writing or regional positioning. These four focuses inform the organisation of the volume into sections dedicated to 'Approaches', 'Issues', 'Modes' and 'Regions and Geographies', although, as the reader will find, there is much dynamic dialogue between contributions across the collection as a whole. The first section brings together contributions concerned with elaborating the critical perspectives from which globalgothic fictions might be read, opening with Sheri-Marie Harrison's 'Decolonial Gothic'. Harrison's chapter outlines an ethic of incommensurability which distinguishes decoloniality from other approaches to colonial history and power, and analyses gothic fiction as a mode in which persistent conditions of material inequity might be addressed in a way that refuses a too-easy politics of resolution. Stephen Shapiro's 'The World-System of Global Gothic, Horror and Weird' follows with a framework, grounded in the work of Immanuel Wallerstein, for reading a cluster of speculative forms related to (and including) the gothic. Shapiro draws from world-systems thinking to excavate the distinct ideological and political underpinnings of the gothic, horror and the weird, while also positioning the approach offered in the chapter as a means for productively rethinking the established historiography of gothic literature. In 'Economy of Shadows, Work of Death: Necropolitics, Slavery, Zombi/e', Fred Botting examines the multidimensional figure of the zombie in the historical context of globalised capitalism, which is framed in the chapter with recourse to Achille Mbembe's conception of the necropolitical. Botting traces a theoretical trajectory that runs from the Haitian plantation economy, where the zombi emerges as a revolutionary figure, to a neoliberal present increasingly characterised by a condition of generalised zombification, in which ever more facets of existence

are saturated capitalist processes. Maisha Wester's 'Gothic and the Black Diaspora' also turns to the relationship between gothic forms and histories of racialised power and oppression, examining how Black diasporic writers reappropriate and mobilise vocabularies related to gothic fiction, in order to register and contest forms of cultural and epistemic colonisation. Wester highlights how gothic is used in the fiction under consideration to make visible the limits and contradictions in Eurocentric knowledge, attending also to the resistant possibilities of the folkloric imaginaries through which gothic in Black diasporic writing is remade.

In 'Engendering Globalgothic: The "Hideous Progeny" of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*', Monica Germanà foregrounds the significance of gender and sexuality in gothic fiction that registers and engages global relations and systems. Generatively following the afterlives of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Germanà's analysis highlights how the figure of the composite monster has been taken up across a transregional selection of contemporary fiction to interrogate and imagine beyond vectors of heteropatriarchal power. The chapter takes care to acknowledge the tandem operation of gendered oppression and related forms of colonial and environmental violence – intersections that are also centralised in Gregory Luke Chwala's 'Queering Globalgothic Ecologies'. Reading the work of Jamaican-American author Michelle Cliff, and drawing on queer theory, ecocriticism and decolonial thinking, Chwala elaborates a conception of gothic as a lexicon for imagining decolonial queer ecologies, in which the socio-ecological relationships instantiated under formal colonialism are both brought to light and reconfigured.

My own chapter, 'Anthropocene Gothic, Capitalocene Gothic: The Politics of Ecohorror', builds on the expanding body of work that identifies gothic and horror as key idioms for articulating anxieties around unfolding climate breakdown, but proposes that within the broad category of emergency-related ecogothic production, different aesthetic impulses are discernible, which belie different climate politics in each case. Accordingly, the chapter defines Anthropocene and Capitalocene Gothic aesthetics, excavating and critiquing the distinct origin stories of planetary crisis these encode. The final chapter in this section, written by Sharae Deckard, also engages with ecogothic production, approaching this through the lens of extractive cultures and technologies. From Deckard's readings, which encompass a diverse and regionally differentiated body of texts in a range of media, 'Extractive Gothic' emerges as fiction which either hinges on ecophobic tropes that tacitly legitimate the plundering of biophysical nature, or – especially in peripheralised or postcolonial regions – operates in an anti-extractivist register that entails the symbology of exhaustion – of, in Deckard's words, 'draining, sucking and pulverising'.

The second section of the volume, 'Issues', includes chapters that identify key concerns in contemporary globalgothic fiction, beginning with Kevin Corstorphine's 'US Imperial Gothic'. Here, Corstorphine demonstrates the value of a gothic studies approach to US narratives around the invasion and occupation of Iraq, reading across different media and narrative forms to highlight how horror and gothic can be pressed into the service of active imperial agendas. Beyond this function, however, the chapter also considers how such agendas' weak points and contradictions might be exposed in criticism and fiction that is sensitive to gothic's long-standing function as a vocabulary for anxieties around imperial fragility and decline. Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet's 'Globalgothic and War' examines a diverse selection of texts in which militarised conflict is addressed via gothic figures and devices, noting that in certain respects gothic

literature has always been ‘a child of global war’. Tracing the significance of this point in the present, the chapter attends to the sinister effects of technological mediation in the warzone context, the gendered and ecocidal effects of conflict, and the complex intersection in War Gothic texts of gothic forms with those drawn from other cultural traditions of the supernatural. In ‘Terrorist Gothic’, Steffen Hantke examines the relationship between gothic and representations of terrorism in a selection of US popular culture texts, and also gestures beyond these to other potential areas of analysis. Taking an approach that underscores symmetries across gothic strategies and narratives of terrorism, the chapter outlines – but also interrogates – gothic constructions of terrorist activity, noting how these can be mobilised in support of multiple, conflicting political agendas. Linnie Blake’s ‘Neoliberal Globalgothic: The Trump White House, the Alt-Right and the Long-Heralded Death of the Dream’ locates gothic production in the context of rising ethnonationalism, associated with the emergence and legacy of the Trump regime in the US, itself a conservative political response to the deleterious effects of decades of neoliberalisation across North America and elsewhere. Blake reads across a number of US films and narratives to highlight gothic impulses which appear unable to throw off the ideological infrastructure of the socio-economic status quo, while also pointing to emerging work that mobilises gothic differently, in an effort to imagine collective resistance.

Gothic encounters with neoliberal hegemony beyond the United States are examined in Elsa Bouet’s ‘New Weird Technologies: Subverting Neoliberal Globalisation through Hybridity’. The chapter identifies a gothic-inflected idiom of the New Weird in contemporary British and diasporic fiction, and considers how this is deployed to interrogate globalisation as a deeply uneven, technocratic world order, undergirded by systems of resource imperialism that replicate colonial histories in the present. In a chapter that partly shares Bouet’s focus on Tade Thompson’s *Rosewater* (2016), Chloé Germaine combines insights from ecocriticism and ‘new animist thinking’ to examine a preoccupation with more-than-human lifeworlds visible across a range of diasporic gothic texts. ‘Uncanny Globalgothic Ecologies: Animate Intimacies’ identifies this emerging focus in gothic production, but also synthesises an innovative framework for reading postcolonial ecogothic texts, which draws from accounts of African epistemologies, alongside those of non-anthropocentric ontologies forged within a European critical tradition. Also positioning itself in part on ecogothic terrain, Johan Höglund’s ‘Pandemics and Globalgothic’ examines gothic’s relationship to tropes of pandemic across the full spread of the genre’s history. The chapter identifies three ‘strains’ of globalgothic pandemic narrative, which – respectively – tack into the logic of empire, resist coloniality and seek to move beyond the human. Throughout this discussion, Höglund keeps front and centre the systemic exploitation of certain lives and environments from which the emergence of novel pathogens has often been inseparable – including in the context of Covid-19. Laura R. Kremmel’s ‘Medical Globalgothic: Organ Harvesting and the Red Market’ similarly emphasises how states of medical vulnerability apprehended in gothic texts are contoured by vectors of race, gender and class. Focusing on representations of the global organ trade in gothic fiction, Kremmel’s chapter distinguishes the fiction under consideration from sanitised narratives of organ ‘donation’. Because these rely on the silence of the exploited body for their coherence, such discourses are challenged – as Kremmel shows – in gothic texts that expose the violence of the ‘Red Market’.

'Modes', the third section of the volume, assembles chapters that examine different formal impulses of globalgothic production, focusing also on historical trajectories, migrations and disseminations of gothic aesthetics. Sandra Guardini Vasconcelos opens the section with a chapter entitled 'Globalgothic Translations and Migrations: From Britain to Brazil', which outlines how elements of the gothic novel are translated into the novelistic tradition that emerges in Brazil after independence from Portugal, and which seeks to participate in the imagining of a national identity. The chapter maps out the distinct socio-economic conditions under which gothic is incubated across these two regions, arguing ultimately that gothic elements in the salient Brazilian fiction articulate local realities – and specifically the institution of slavery – for which the new national consciousness could not directly account. Also providing insight into the historical possibilities of globalgothic as a category, Lucie Armitt's chapter – 'Gothic Literary Travel and Global Tourism' – begins from the premise that, at least since Radcliffe, gothic has always been centrally concerned with travel. To address this preoccupation, Armitt examines gothic narratives which stage artificial and uncanny tourist encounters, framing her analysis with the observation, drawn from imperial gothic fiction, that a (colonial) traveller might return to the metropole carrying with them the threatening strangeness they perceive in the colonies. Addressing travel writing from the (post)colonial Caribbean, Sofia Aatkar's chapter – 'Gothic and Global Travel Writing' – considers how elements adapted from, or related to, gothic imaginaries participate in a project of writing back to the imperial centre. This strategy unfolds through a demystification of Vodou practices and a defamiliarisation of figures that populate canonical gothic writing, but is also further complicated and enriched, as Aatkar argues, in travel writing that mobilises gothic tropes of haunting to materialise a lived historical connection to the Caribbean.

The construction of belonging is addressed in a different register in Timothy Jones's 'Folk Horror and the Globalgothic', which considers British folk horror narratives since the 1970s as responses to the local effects of globalisation. Jones shows folk horror to be a mode reliant on invented tradition, mobilised in the British context to suggest an autochthonous national identity that supposedly pre-dates the age of global connection. Noting how this constructed relation lends itself to processes of othering, Jones concludes by positioning the contemporary rise of folk horror in the context of the UK's exit from the European Union – a development that is central also to the subsequent chapter. In 'Brexit Gothic', Roger Luckhurst identifies a selection of gothic tropes that recur across contemporary English literary production and public discourse, and which – Luckhurst argues – encode a structure of feeling particular to the social and political climate in which the 2016 referendum took place. Rather than reading for Brexit metaphors in contemporary fiction, the chapter thus identifies Brexit horror as a mobile aesthetic, and outlines how this relates both to gothic as a mode and to the politics underpinning the movements to leave the EU. In 'Online Gothic', the last chapter in this section, Xavier Aldana Reyes examines a selection of late-twentieth- and early-twenty-first-century gothic texts that take the internet as a key site of horror. The chapter begins by noting that, though it has transformed social existence on an enormous scale, the rise of the internet and associated technological developments has taken place at such a pace that these changes, and the new forms of threat they represent, have yet to be fully processed or assimilated. They are voiced, however, in Online Gothic, which, as Aldana Reyes shows, is structured by a set of

recurring tropes and concerns, including those relating to isolation, surveillance and ‘the irrevocable immediacy made possible by wide bandwidth data transmission’.

The fourth and final section of the volume, ‘Regions and Geographies’, opens with Rebekah Cumpsty’s account of ‘Gothic and the Global South’. The chapter takes a productively critical approach to this latter category, noting that – despite its frequent usage in gothic studies and elsewhere – it carries with it the risk of replicating discourses that problematically essentialise so-called ‘developing’ nations. Cumpsty thus refines and nuances the terminology in question, ultimately suggesting that reading gothic fiction in light of the hemispheric divide demands a critical sensitivity to the histories and relations of capitalism and colonialism that shape a given region, and connect it with others. Putting this thesis into practice, the chapter examines a selection of postcolonial ecogothic tropes, deployed in fiction from the (Southern) frontlines of planetary emergency to address its unrepresentable scales and temporalities. Enrique Ajuria Ibarra’s ‘Migration and the Gothic: Border Gothic’ also complicates received categories for analysis – namely those that descend from conceptions of frictionless globalisation. Ajuria Ibarra reads across a selection of Mexican fiction, in which the Mexico-US border is presented as a site of gothic violence and anxiety. Such narratives, the chapter shows, resist globalgothic readings that prioritise cultural flows and heightened mobility, because they foreground instead the experiences of those for whom global interconnections are experienced as detainment or endless waiting. ‘Globalgothic Americas’ are also the focus of the subsequent chapter by Inés Ordiz and Sandra M. Casanova-Vizcaíno. Subtitled ‘Consuming and Consumed Bodies in Twenty-First-Century Narratives’, this contribution examines a regionally diverse selection of American fiction in which gothic forms make visible and interrogate the gendered production of exploitable lives under neoliberal capitalism. Ordiz and Casanova-Vizcaíno draw from the work of Sylvia Federici – among other Marxist feminists – in order to map out a politicised aesthetics of horror, which indexes the heteropatriarchal violence underpinning the contemporary consumer economy.

In ‘Tropical Gothic: Plantation Ecology, Commodity Frontiers and the Aesthetics of Excess’, Esthie Hugo also considers fiction from Latin America, but places this region in conversation with the Philippines to examine how notions of ‘the tropical’ descendent from colonial discourse are interrogated in gothic forms. Hugo’s chapter builds on, but also rethinks, established analyses of ‘tropical gothic’, suggesting that key tropes characterising such fiction can be understood as registering socio-ecological anxieties unfolding from the violent (post)colonial transformation of equatorial regions into sites of primary commodity production. In ‘Asian Gothic: Asian Folklore and Globalgothic’, Katarzyna Ancuta examines a corpus of literary and cinematic texts from regions across Asia, highlighting the foundational role in all of these narratives of local folkloric imaginaries. Ancuta’s chapter foregrounds concerns with gender and ecopolitics, and concludes with a discussion of how a global appetite for Asian Gothic fiction is reshaping cultural production across this region in the age of digital streaming services.

The following chapter turns to the geography of the desert – a perhaps unlikely locus for the gothic imaginary, given, as Rune Graulund points out, the absence in such spaces of gothic’s signature darkness and decay. In ‘Desert Globalgothic’, Graulund shows, however, that gothic strategies are nonetheless illuminating in respect of – and have at times been integral to – the construction of the desert in literary narrative. The

chapter takes in three phases of Desert Gothic production, beginning with the colonial trope of *terra nullius* which represses Indigenous presences and ecosystems, and from there moving on to postcolonial desert fiction in which such presences are retrieved in uncanny haunting forms. Graulund concludes with an account of Desert Global-gothic as a planetary imaginary – a terrible forecast of the world to come if practices of extraction and exploitation are not arrested. Karen Grumberg's chapter, entitled 'Queer Gothic Narratives of Palestine in Alon Hilu's *The House of Rajani* and Ayman Sikseck's *Tishrin*', examines how gothic forms in the two fictions under consideration are deployed to engage with Israeli and Palestinian identity, functioning to destabilise and interrogate hegemonised accounts of regional history by drawing attention to the violent possibilities and limitations of narrative itself. The chapter argues ultimately that these texts contribute to the queering possibilities of gothic tropes and devices, exposing complex links between heteronormative patriarchy, national identity and discourses of the land.

Focusing on the nations of Sweden, Denmark and Norway, Yvonne Leffler's 'Nordic Gothic' traces out currents in the literatures of this region, which combine tropes drawn from the canon of anglophone and European gothic with local issues and aesthetic traditions. Leffler's chapter outlines a trio of recurrent concerns that structure Nordic Gothic writing – namely those relating to the welfare state, gender inequality and ecological destruction – and positions these in relation also to wider processes of globalisation, of which they can be understood in part to be regional expressions. The last chapter in this section is written by Barry Murnane, and defines 'EU Gothic' as a fictional mode that responds to tensions within the EU's history and politico-economic agenda. Key preoccupations of EU Gothic include nationalist impulses and national traumas, which both define and resist EU integration, as well as the spectrality of the EU itself, which, as Murnane shows, is always caught between the national and the post-national. In an extended engagement with the 'Greek Weird Wave', the chapter reads narratives of familial abuse and transnational vampirism as encoding anxieties around the effects of austerity and 'fortress Europe', and touches on the leveraging of gothic tropes by populist movements from Golden Dawn in Greece to UKIP in the UK. Such gothic figures, Murnane demonstrates, reveal the contradictions and grim consequences of EU biopower, and so function critically in respect to the EU as an institution.

Together, the contributions to this volume move decisively beyond the rhetoric and categories of globalisation, approaching 'the global' as inseparable from colonial history, racialised oppression, heteropatriarchy, the plundering of the biosphere, ethnonationalism and inequality on a world scale. In the coda which provides an outlook for collection, I reflect on how these concerns, and the aesthetics and forms to which they give rise, might be collected via a new conceptual vocabulary, and consider the affordances of 'the planetary' in this respect. 'Planetary Gothic', I suggest, can be understood as a particular complex of preoccupations and formal strategies – namely those that excavate an 'Earth-System unconscious' which subtends narratives of globalisation. However, the term is also intended in a more open sense, designating a set of approaches to gothic fiction which locate this in the context of the (racialised, gendered) transregional relationships that organise human societies and the rest of nature. Planetary Gothic is in this sense an invitation, extended also to the reader, to participate in an emerging conversation around the politics and possibilities of gothic imaginaries, which, as all the contributors here show, constitute a key register for articulating the challenges of the global – or planetary – present.

Notes

1. Walter Rodney's classic *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972) provides an apt example here; Fernando Henrique Cardoso's 'Dependency and Development in Latin America' (1972) offers another.
2. A concise overview of structural adjustment can be found in the introduction to Neil Lazarus's *The Postcolonial Unconscious* (2011), especially pp. 8–9.
3. I use this term in the sense intended by Stanley Cohen: 'a condition, episode or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests' (2002, 1). For an illuminating repurposing of Cohen's concept in the gothic context, see Maisha Wester's article entitled 'The Gothic Origins of Anti-Blackness: Genre Tropes in Nineteenth-Century Moral Panics and (Abject) Folk Devils' (2022).

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