

Gothic Studies Special Issue CFP - *Tales of Terror: Gothic and the Short Form*

Tales, fables, fragments, sketches, and other short literary forms have comprised the fabric of scary stories told and re-told, adapted, transformed, appropriated and re-appropriated. Undoubtedly, much of their debt is owed to the oral yarn, the fireside tale, the urban legend, and many have, and remain, connected to a diverse and rich visual culture. The fragmented literary form integral to the early Gothic novel and played with by the Romantics is inspired by and influences other forms: the narrative painting or illustration capturing a scene, a moment; architectural ruins both physical and imaginary which simultaneously encapsulate a moment and a history. The brevity of Gothic short fictions was often central to wider dissemination, and for the publication and democratisation of voices that might have otherwise remained unheard; allowing them to be accessed by those who might have otherwise been excluded as well as discuss issues dismissed by the mainstream. This potential freedom of the short form continues to be used and blended with other forms: for instance, flash-fictions adapted into short youtube videos allow less-established and more experimental creators to respond to the changing pace of culture, while “choose your own adventure” books established in the late 1970s, which comprise numerous short paths to comprise a whole narrative, have been reimaged in, for instance, the new fragmented interactive media of online gamebook *Evermore: A Choose Your Own Edgar Allan Poe Adventure* (2016) and the Netflix programme *Bandersnatch* (2018).

The aim of this special issue of [*Gothic Studies*](#) (23/3, to be published Nov 2021) is to bring together research that does not simply consider Gothic short fiction and its artistic and cultural brethren as incidental, but *integral* to the design and effect and/or cultural significance of the piece because the short form in the Gothic tradition has, as yet, received little in the way of sustained scholarly attention. **Form and structure, publication histories, and multi-media adaptation, in various guises, will comprise a key focus of the issue.**

As well as more traditional authors and periods associated with the Gothic short story, those less-studied, from forgotten or overlooked authors and those otherwise well-known but whose experimental short works play with Gothic and its brethren as a less-familiar mode (such as Poppy Z. Brite, Roald Dahl, Patricia Highsmith, Robert Aickman, Raymond Carver, authors of short-story collections for children like Alvin Schwartz, etc), are also encouraged.

The following topics are a good indicator (but proposals are not limited to this):

- The relationship with oral tales, folklore, urban legends, and the Gothic;

- Histories of publication (magazines, publishers, reception, and the establishment);
- Short fiction cover art and illustrations (e.g. Harry Clarke, Edward Gorey, Jan Pienkowski, Kate Baylay), narrative painting and the Gothic (Fuseli, von Holst, Grant Wood, etc);
- Specific authors, rediscovered authors of short forms;
- Literary formats such as penny bloods, ghost stories, paranormal, and hybrids with detective, sensation, sci-fi; theories of the short story form,
- Structure, narrative, ideas and theories of genre (weird, horror, dark, regional, seasonal);
- Historical forms and modes such as literary fragments, the role of the archive
- New forms such as flash fictions and mini-sagas;
- Collaborations, serials, short-story cycles and collections;
- Adaptations/originals of comics, graphic novels, radio plays, film, television, theatre;
- Youtube shorts, interactive books, video games, RPG,
- Global literatures, translations, de-canonisation;
- Children's literatures (James Flora, Alvin Schwartz, Chris Priestley, R.L. Stine).

Guest editor: Dr Jen Baker

Please send a **proposal of about 500 words** and a **short biography**, to jenbaker7@live.co.uk by **12th August 2019 [extended deadline]**. Informal enquiries may also be sent to this address.

Contributors can expect to be notified of the outcome by **Monday 9th September 2019**. The deadline for submission of completed draft articles (c.5-6000 words) will be **19th April 2020**.

<https://talesoferrorconference.wordpress.com/gothic-studies-cfp/>