

**Provisional Programme for  
*Vernacular Religion, Folk Belief, and Traditions of the Supernatural*  
and  
*The Supernatural in Literature and Film*  
23-28 March 2015, Macau**

**An Island Dynamics conference,  
hosted by the Institute for Tourism Studies (IFT)**

*Note: Each day's activities will start and conclude in the lobby of Hotel Sofitel at Ponte 16. It is from here that our trips will depart on 23-25 and 28 March and that our transport will leave for the Institute for Tourism Studies (IFT) on 26-27 March. Please be in the hotel lobby by the designated time. Conference registration includes lunch on 23-27 March. Dinners and the 28 March trip to Coloane are optional and must be paid for separately.*

**March 23: Southern and Central Peninsula**

10:00: Meet in lobby of Hotel Sofitel at Ponte 16 for start of trip. The trip will take us to sites in the southern portion of the Macau Peninsula such as St Joseph's Seminary, Church of St Lawrence, A-Ma Temple, Maritime Museum, and Chapel of St James. The trip will end with a walk through Macau's San Ma Lou district, including Senado Square, St Dominic's Church, and Kuan Tai Temple.

18:00: Meet in lobby of Hotel Sofitel at Ponte 16 for walk to restaurant.

**March 24: Northern Peninsula**

10:00: Meet in lobby of Hotel Sofitel at Ponte 16 for start of trip. The trip will take us to sites in the northern portions of the Macau Peninsula, including Hong Kung Temple, St Anthony's Church, Morrison Chapel (Anglican Church), Lin Kai Temple, the Red Market, Lin Fung Temple, Kun Iam Temple, Guia Hill chapel and lighthouse, and St Michael's Cemetery.

18:00: Meet in lobby of Hotel Sofitel at Ponte 16 for walk to restaurant.

**March 25: The History of Macau & Cotai and Taipa**

10:00: Meet in the lobby of Hotel Sofitel at Ponte 16 for start of trip. We will visit Na Tcha Temple, Ruins of St Paul's, Museum of Sacred Art, Macau Museum, and Fortaleza do Monte. We will take a bus to Cotai, where we will meet Jaeyeon Choe (Institute for Tourism Studies, Macau) at 14:00. She will guide us through the glamorous hotel and casino complexes at the Venetian, City of Dreams, and Galaxy. Proceeding to Taipa, we will tour the island's old streets and temples.

**Thursday, 26 March**

08:00: Meet in lobby of Hotel Sofitel at Ponte 16 for bus to Institute for Tourism Studies.

**09:00-09:15**

S1: (Auditorium)

**Introduction**

09:00: **Fanny Vong** (President of Institute for Tourism Studies, Macau) & **Adam Grydehøj** (Island Dynamics, Denmark/Lund University, Denmark)

09:15-09:30: Break

09:30-11:30

S2a (Auditorium)

**Vernacular Genres of the Supernatural and Contested Beliefs 1**

Chair: **Ülo Valk** (University of Tartu, Estonia)

09:30: **Alevtina Solovyeva** (Russian State University for the Humanities, Russia) **Demonological Beliefs and New Forms of Ghost Storytelling in Contemporary Mongolia: Historical, Religious and Social Contexts.**

10:00: **Margaret Lyngdoh** (University of Tartu, Estonia) **Divine Possession as Human - Non-Human Interaction among the Indigenous Khasis of Meghalaya, North-East India.**

10:30: **Valentina Punzi** (Humboldt University, Germany) **'Dying Mongol and Reborn Tibetan': Stereotypization, Otherness and Integration Discourses in the Tibetan Natural and Supernatural Landscape of Amdo (Qinghai, PRC).**

11:00: **Kirsten Marie Raahauge** (The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Denmark) **Unexplainable Phenomena and Narratives of the Supernatural in Contemporary Denmark.**

S2b (Pousada Conference Room)

**Between Cinema and Tradition**

Chair: **Andrew Harmsen** (University of Melbourne, Australia)

09:30: **Jakub Morawski** (City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong) **What do Films Want from Us?**

10:00: **Huai Bao Dhawa** (Simon Fraser University, Canada) **Mediumship, Aspirations and Fears: Cinematic Reflection of Contemporary Chinese Society.**

10:30: **Vun Huang Liew** (Sunway University, Malaysia) **Taboos, the Supernatural and Chinese Folk Beliefs in *The Maid* (2005) and *Hungry Ghost Ritual* (2014).**

11:00: **Nelson Joseph C. Fabre** (Xavier School, San Juan, Philippines) **Semiotic Scrutiny of the Discourse and Ideologies of Locally Produced Horror Films in 2012.**

11:30-12:30: Lunch at the Windows Cafeteria.

12:30-14:30

S3a (Auditorium)

**Grieving Spirits in Film and Tradition**

Chair: **Raymond Boland** (NHTV University of Applied Sciences Breda, Netherlands)

12:30: **Andre Iman Syafrony** (Naresuan University, Thailand) & **Onusa Suwanpratest** (Naresuan University, Thailand) **The Horror of Restive Women: A Comparative Study of the Indonesian Legend 'Kuntilanak' and Thai Legend 'Mae Nak Phra Khanong'.**

- 13:00: **Ikhlas Abdul Hadi** (University of Leeds, United Kingdom) **The Pontianak: Of Motherhood, Death, and the Evolution of a Tale.**
- 13:30: **Mohd Hafiz Bin Che Othman** (Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia) & **Nur ‘Aainaa Binti Zulkiflie** (Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia) **Stereotype Representation: Woman as ‘Pontianak’ and Malay Culture in Malay Horror Films.**
- 14:00: **Adam Grydehøj** (Island Dynamics, Denmark/Lund University, Sweden) **Demon Lovers: The Missing Spouse in Shindō’s *Onibaba* and *Kuroneko* and European Tradition.**

S3b (Pousada Conference Room)

### **Cultures of the Supernatural**

Chair: **Kerry Hull** (Brigham Young University, USA)

- 12:30: **Ros Dunlop** (University of Newcastle, Australia) **Maulelo a Lulik Myth: What is the Importance of Lulik to the East Timorese?**
- 13:00: **Lindsay Bishop** (University College London, United Kingdom) **Give Me Back My Beautiful Beast! Supernatural Horror and Subcultural Transformation.**
- 13:30: **Samantha Martin** (University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia) **A Comparative Analysis of Women Healers’ Lived Experiences in Two Cultural Contexts.**
- 14:00: **Tsetan Namgyal** (Jawaharlal Nehru University, India) **Understanding the (Lha, Lha mo, and Dbon po) Oracle System of Ritual.**

14:30-15:00: Break

15:00-16:00

S4 (Auditorium)

### **Discussion Panel: Supernatural Tourism**

Chair: **Adam Grydehøj** (Island Dynamics, Denmark)

Panellists: **Kirsten Møllegaard** (University of Hawai’i at Hilo, USA), **Juanjuan Ou** (Institute for Tourism Studies, Macau), & **Ülo Valk** (University of Tartu, Estonia).

16:30: Meet outside IFT for bus back to Hotel Sofitel at Ponte 16.

18:00: Meet in lobby of Hotel Sofitel at Ponte 16 for walk to restaurant.

### **Friday, 27 March**

08:30: Meet in lobby of Hotel Sofitel at Ponte 16 for bus to IFT.

09:30-11:30

S5a (Auditorium)

### **Vernacular Genres of the Supernatural and Contested Beliefs 2**

Chair: **Kirsten Marie Raahauge** (The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Denmark)

- 09:30: **Anastasiya Astapova** (University of Tartu, Estonia) **“All is Fair in Love and War”: Supernatural Elements in the Repertoire of an Alcoholic’s Wife.**
- 10:00: **Kaarina Koski** (University of Turku, Finland) **Genres and Discourses Concerning the Supernatural in Contemporary Finland.**

10:30: **Aparajita Hazra** (SKB University, Bengal, India) **Which is the Witch?: A Study of the Use of the Supernatural in the Rituals of Witchcraft in Rural Bengal in India.**

11:00: **Ülo Valk** (University of Tartu, Estonia) **Vernacular Views about the Supernatural in Contemporary Estonia: The Case of the Haunted Hospital in Tartu.**

### **S5b (Pousada Conference Room)**

The Supernatural in Children's Literature

Chair: **Shahram Afrougheh** (Islamic Azad University, Arak, Iran)

09:30: **Ana Tso Wing Bo** (Open University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong) **Supernatural Horror Creatures in Children's Literature.**

10:00: **Song Hyunhee** (University of Hannam, South Korea) **Supernatural 'Nobody' in Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*.**

10:30: **Ana Tso Wing Bo** (Open University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong) **Meditations on Formlessness in the East and West: Guanyin and George MacDonald's 'Mother of Light'.**

11:30-12:30: Lunch at the Windows Cafeteria.

12:30-14:30

### **S6a (Auditorium)**

Supernatural Experience

Chair: **Aparajita Hazra** (SKB University, Bengal, India)

12:30: **Michael O'Regan** (Independent Researcher, Macau) & **Jaeyeon Choe** (Institute for Tourism Studies, Macau) **Pilgrims to Casinos in Macau.**

13:00: **Kerry Hull** (Brigham Young University, USA) **Encounters with the Supernatural: Syncretism and Phenomenology in the Ch'orti' Maya Experience.**

13:30: **Reet Hiimäe** (University of Tartu/Estonian Literary Museum, Estonia) **Nonverbal Communication as a Basis for Belief Narratives.**

14:00: **Kirsten Møllegaard** (University of Hawai'i at Hilo, USA) **Legends in the City: The Strange Case of Edgar Allan Poe.**

### **S6b (Pousada Conference Room)**

**Gothic and the Past in Supernatural Literature**

Chair: **Lindsay Bishop** (University College London, United Kingdom)

12:30: **Andrew Harmsen** (University of Melbourne, Australia) **After the Apology: The Australian Gothic and Reconciliation Melancholia.**

13:00: **Panida Boonthavevej** (Silpakorn University, Thailand) **Séance with the Past: Supernatural Detection in Colin Cotterill's *Siri Paiboun* Series.**

13:30: **Raymond Boland** (NHTV University of Applied Sciences Breda, Netherlands) **Bangkok Noir.**

14:00: **Shahram Afrougheh** (Islamic Azad University, Arak, Iran) & **Mandana Kalantari Bonjar** (Islamic Azad University, Arak, Iran) ***Christabel*: A Supernatural Evil's Enchantment.**

14:30-15:00: Break

15:00-16:15

S7 (Auditorium)

**Conclusion & Film Presentation: *Into the Void***

15:00: **Adam Grydehøj** (Island Dynamics, Denmark) **Conclusion.**

15:20: **Film Presentation: *Into the Void* (2013, Dir. Ruka Borges & António Caetano Faria)**

16:45: Meet outside IFT for bus back to Hotel Sofitel at Ponte 16.

18:00: Meet in lobby of Hotel Sofitel at Ponte 16 for walk to restaurant.

**28 March: Coloane**

09:00: Meet in lobby of Hotel Sofitel at Ponte 16 for start of trip. We will visit Coloane Village, A-Ma Statue and Cultural Village, and other sites.

**Abstracts for**  
***Vernacular Religion, Folk Belief, and Traditions of the Supernatural***  
**and**  
***The Supernatural in Literature and Film***  
**23-28 March 2015, Macau**

**Shahram Afrougheh** (Islamic Azad University, Arak, Iran) & **Mandana Kalantari Bonjar** (Islamic Azad University, Arak, Iran) ***Christabel: A Supernatural Evil's Enchantment.*** Medievalism and supernaturalism have always exercised a particular allure for Romantic poets by virtue of supernatural beliefs, a murky atmosphere of horror and gloom, and macabre, mysterious, and violent setting and characters. Coleridge (1772-1834), who is mainly a poet of pure imagination without much touch with reality, was spontaneously mesmerized by the lure of the Middle Ages. *Christabel* (1816), like other outstanding poems of Coleridge, is infused with supernaturalism through suggestiveness, supernatural phenomena described in a rational way, the archaic words and phrases, the supernatural incidents, and willing suspension of disbelief. It is an unfinished gothic ballad, first appeared in *Christabel; Kubla Khan, A Vision; The Pains of Sleep* (1816). The first part of the poem was composed in 1797, the second in 1800. *Christabel* tells the story of an evil spirit casting a spell on a virtuous and lovely girl *Christabel*. A notable by-product of Coleridge's Romantic interest in the emotional is *Christabel* dealing with the supernatural, the weird, and the horrible. Making evocative use of Gothic and supernatural themes, Coleridge struggled to demonstrate how naked energy might be redeemed through contact with a spirit of innocent love.

*Biography:* Shahram Afrougheh has taught English literature for 20 years in different universities and research institutions. He has published 10 books and 32 research papers.

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**Anastasiya Astapova** (University of Tartu, Estonia) ***"All is Fair in Love and War": Supernatural Elements in the Repertoire of an Alcoholic's Wife.*** Despite its overwhelming socialist focus on education, medicine, and delinquency, the Belarusian state fails to supervise one of the country's greatest problems – alcoholism. While a regular patient receives medical help free of charge, a reported alcoholic is marginalized and threatened with loss of job instead of being helped. This presents a major social problem and makes the alcoholics' families shift to the alternative solutions. This paper focuses on a case study of a woman disillusioned with official medicine's treatment of her alcoholic husband. The woman instead turned to alternative medicine – over 26 (as she counted) rituals and charms she learned about from the folk medicine press, internet, and personal advice given by other spouses of alcoholics. Interestingly, most of the methods are closely linked to manipulations and rituals performed at graveyards or with corpses. I analyze the description of these practices in the broader context of the diverse genre repertoire reported by the alcoholic's spouse (from humorous events that occurred when she was undertaking practices to stories of successful healings). Special attention is paid to the clash of official and alternative approaches to alcohol addiction treatment in Belarus and to the desperate irrationality of the woman's behavior – an irrationality of which she is herself aware.

*Biography:* Anastasiya Astapova is a PhD student at the Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu. Her research interests include political folklore in Soviet and Post-Soviet realm (belief narratives, conspiracy theories, political humor), focusing on ethnic identity and nationalism.

*E-mail:* anastasiya.ast@gmail.com

**Lindsay Bishop** (University College London, United Kingdom) **Give Me Back My Beautiful Beast! Supernatural Horror and Subcultural Transformation.** In 1988, Clive Barker noted, “The fiction of our fears is at its best also a fiction of transformation...” Throughout its history, transformation has been one of the most potent and persistent aspects of horror literature and film. Beyond the much-discussed aspects of ‘body horror’, transformation of an individual’s character or moral compass could be said to invoke as much discomfort as Giger’s *Aliens*. Most tellingly, beyond the extreme violence of the film *Natural Born Killers*, censors were most perturbed by a character who elects to join the film’s protagonists in becoming a killer. This example neatly illustrates the complexity of our relationship to horror cinema: The appeal of the abject goes beyond the basic assumption that we crave a visual thrill to a more multifaceted absorption into a genre that can shape our perceptions of self and community.

The subculture of heavy metal associates itself intimately with horror: Album artwork, music videos, lyrics, and the sound itself are all steeped in horror literature and film tropes. Drawing from extensive ethnographic fieldwork across the UK, this paper examines the role of horror in the creation of the subculture and the implications for the influence of transformation on the functioning of the community at large. Over four decades, heavy metal has thrived, and as a now trans-generational global community, it offers a rich resource to enable a deeper understanding of the capacity for horror to influence how we live our lives.

*Biography:* Lindsay Bishop is an Associate Lecturer for the University of the West of England and is currently developing her manuscript on the subculture of heavy metal.

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**Raymond Boland** (NHTV University of Applied Sciences Breda, Netherlands) **Bangkok Noir.** The classic Hollywood film noir of the 1940s and 1950s was characterised by the workings of fate, whilst the characters were often fatalistic. The city at night was a place where “the streets were dark with something more than night,” as Raymond Chandler so poetically observed. Despite their subject matter, the films and the books they were based on usually contained a strong undercurrent of morality tempered by a deep cynicism about humanity. My presentation will explore how recent examples of Bangkok noir reinterpret this classic tradition and place it in a modern or hyper-modern context. Issues of fate, fatalism, irrationality and morality are combined with contemporary concerns in the dark streets. Augoyard wrote about how local residents often explained their fear of walking around a French public housing project at night by referring to creatures arising from the underground after the sun had set. Let’s see how Bangkok noir explores this fear and fascination.

*Biography:* I am a lecturer in English language at NHTV University of Applied Sciences Breda, working in the International Tourism Management Studies department. My main current research interests are films and the city, walking, and English as a Lingua Franca.

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**Panida Boonthavevej** (Silpakorn University, Thailand) **Séance with the Past: Supernatural Detection in Colin Cotterill’s *Siri Paiboun* Series.** The paper discusses the roles of the supernatural in Colin Cotterill’s crime series featuring Dr. Siri Paiboun, the national coroner of the Lao PDR in the late 1970s. Inadvertently hosting the spirit of the legendary Hmong shaman, the surgeon-turned-coroner-cum-detective experiences the supernatural in various modalities, i.e., dreams, omens, premonitions, trances, and visitations. While the scientific inquiry that forms the bedrock of his medical training fails miserably to explain those uncanny phenomena, the supernatural, as an alternative model of reality, serves as clues in the protagonist’s crime solving enterprise, bringing justice to the

perpetrators and laying to rest the spirits of the dead. Meanwhile, as the doctor's clairvoyance helps the dead handle their unfinished businesses, his ability to communicate with the netherworld is simultaneously instrumental in criticizing the scientific discourse of modernity which contributes to the legitimization of human atrocities committed in the name of civilization and progress, e.g., the French colonial rule, the US bombing campaign in Laos during the Vietnam War, the displacement and exploitation of the Hmong, and the Cambodian genocide under the Khmer Rouge regime. In conclusion, the supernatural in this crime series functions as an intermediary that negotiates the past with the present, and as a critical voice that calls into question the reasoned mode of acquiring knowledge which tragically occasions heinous historical moments.

*Biography:* I received a PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of California, Riverside in 2012. The title of my dissertation is *A Quest for Insularity: Thomas Forrest's 'Voyage to New Guinea, and the Moluccas'* (Scholars' Press, 2013). Currently, I am a lecturer of English in the Department of Western Languages, Faculty of Archaeology, Silpakorn University, Bangkok, Thailand. My research interests include postcolonial crime fiction, travel writing, Southeast Asian studies, and translation studies.  
*E-mail:* boonthavevejp@gmail.com

**Ros Dunlop** (University of Newcastle, Australia) **Maulelo a Lulik Myth: What is the importance of Lulik to the East Timorese?** The animist belief system of the East Timorese centers on ancestral worship with lulik at its core. Lulik is a tetun word meaning holy, sacred, taboo and forbidden and is considered the spiritual root of all life and the cosmos. The world of the ancestors is lulik and the rituals of life have their origins in this world. The Timorese believe life is cyclic and that birth and death come from the same source. Life is a gift that requires a counter gift and what closes and opens each cycle is death. There is a fine balance between the cosmos or supernatural and the world of the living and the ancestors play a pivotal role between these worlds. Some myths continue to have significance in contemporary East Timorese society. Certain origin myths are enacted in multimedia performances involving dance, music, incantations and theatre to remind the living that the world of the supernatural must always be respected. The rituals of some East Timorese ethnolinguistic groups, for example the Mambae are divided into white (light) and black (dark) rituals. This paper looks at one of these myths Maulelo which originated with the Mambae people, believed to be the oldest indigenous group in East Timor. Maulelo is pivotal to the world of light and dark and still resonates with the Mambae people of East Timor today.

*Biography:* Ros Dunlop is a clarinetist and a strong advocate of new music for the clarinet and in that role has given recitals in many parts of the world. One of her more unusual concert tours took her to East Timor in 2002. In 2003 she began recording the traditional music of East Timor with the aim of preserving it for future generations. This resulted in the publication of her award winning book *Sounds of the Soul* in 2012. She is enrolled as a PHD candidate at the University of Newcastle, her research topic is the traditional music of East Timor.

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**Nelson Joseph C. Fabre** (Xavier School, San Juan, Philippines) **Semiotic Scrutiny of the Discourse and Ideologies of Locally Produced Horror Films in 2012.** Oftentimes, cinema is seen as mere reflection of a society. Scenes, dialogues, and even the plot or story of a movie is regarded as an extension if not a representation of the culture and society. This paper is a semiotic analysis of horror as a genre in Philippine cinema. Nine locally produced horror films released in 2012 were used as the basis of analysis. The following themes and discourse were used: faith, violence/crime, status in the society, contradiction in sexualities, rural and urban dialectics, image of authority, family, and beliefs.



Anchored in the concept of mythologies by Roland Barthes, it can be concluded that horror as a film genre can be a vehicle and venue to show and expose the ideologies and discourses behind each movie. Horror serves as a reality that is being obscured as fantasy and fear. In the said obscurity, reading and viewing of themes and discourses become political which makes horror films directly related to the events in the society.

*Biography:* Nelson Joseph C. Fabre graduated with an MA in Philippine Studies - Language, Culture, Media at the De La Salle University - Manila. He earned his BA degree in Philippine Studies at the University of the Philippines-Diliman. Currently, he is a faculty at Xavier School, San Juan. His interests include gender, sexuality and concept of fear anchored in a Filipino context.

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**Adam Grydehøj** (Island Dynamics, Denmark/Lund University, Sweden) **Demon Lovers: The Missing Spouse in Shindō's *Onibaba* and *Kuroneko* and European Tradition.** Shindō Kaneto (1912-2012), a master stylist of post-war Japanese filmmaking, directed a pair of movies set in war-torn feudal Japan and concerning a woman and her daughter-in-law who kill passing samurai. In *Onibaba* (1964), the two women, who live in a field of reeds, survive by slaughtering samurai and trading their armour and weapons for food. In *Kuroneko* (1968), the two women, who live in a bamboo grove, are raped and murdered at the start of the film yet return as vampiric cat-demons, sworn to kill every samurai they meet. *Kuroneko* is an outright supernatural tale, but the supernatural aspect of *Onibaba* is more complex: In contrast to its stark visual, auditory, and emotional realism, at *Onibaba*'s thematic heart are an impossibly deep pit of death and a possibly haunted demon mask. Critics typically trace the folkloric inspirations for *Onibaba* to the 'bride-scaring mask' (*yome-odoshi-no men*) tradition and for *Kuroneko* to tales of monstrous cats (*bakeneko*). However, comparison with the Thai *Mae Nak Phra Khanong* legend, Malaysian *pontianak* traditions, and Indonesian *kuntilanak* traditions suggests a further aspect of shared regional folklore: the contribution of trauma and loss in turning a human into a demon. In the Shindō films and the *Mae Nak Phra Khanong* legend, the actual or symbolic demonification of the central characters occurs while the husband is away at war. Interestingly, tales of a spouse's supernatural transformation are largely absent in European tradition. This presentation argues that the presence of traditions of demon lovers in East and Southeast Asia and their absence in Europe is linked to differing religious contexts, as emphasised by a single point of congruence: Philippine *tiyanak* traditions and Scandinavian ghost infant traditions.

*Biography:* Adam Grydehøj holds a PhD in Ethnology from the University of Aberdeen. He is a Researcher at Lund University and founder of the Island Dynamics organisation.

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**Ikhlas Abdul Hadi** (University of Leeds, United Kingdom) **The Pontianak: Of Motherhood, Death, and the Evolution of a Tale.** The pontianak is a well-known figure of horror in the Malay folk collective. Described as a woman with long black hair, a pale complexion, and dressed in white, this supernatural creature is often said to be the ghost of a woman who died in childbirth. The existence of the pontianak has been documented for centuries and continues to live on through urban legends and purported sightings by the present population in both Malaysia and Indonesia. Although the pontianak is seen as a terrifying creature, it is interesting as to why people continue to seek her out, going so far as to conduct 'ghost hunts' to find a trace of her existence. In this paper, I seek to understand the draw of the pontianak figure in Malay folklore and also question why it continues to persist in the imagination of the Malay people. I will be grounding my analysis based on an understanding of the

character of ‘The Woman Who Died in Childbirth’ through an evolutionary psychological perspective.  
*Biography:* Ikhlas Abdul Hadi is a second year PhD candidate for the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies (LCS) in the University of Leeds. Her research investigates female-driven stories in Western Malayo-Polynesian oral traditions through evolutionary psychology and sociobiology. She is also co-founder of ‘Reading the Fantastic’, a group which gathers folk tales, fairy tales, and fantasy literature enthusiasts to discuss stories from an intercultural and interdisciplinary perspective.  
*E-mail:* mlniah@leeds.ac.uk

**Andrew Harmsen** (University of Melbourne, Australia) **After the Apology: The Australian Gothic and Reconciliation Melancholia.** Australian storytelling is tormented by the ghosts of the nation’s colonial past. From the brutal transportation of convicts to the overwhelming and unsettling evidence for the systematic genocide of the nation’s first peoples, representations of Australia have often staged the terrible spectres of folkloric legend as a way of narrating the effect history has on the settler psyche. This paper discusses three Australian Gothic texts that, in different ways, draw on the supernatural and the Gothic in order to express the way in which the nation continues to grapple with the violence inherent in its colonial project. The texts up for analysis are the novel, *Bereft* (2010) by Chris Womersley, Rachel Ward’s film *Beautiful Kate* (2009), and Andrew Bovell’s play *When the Rain Stops Falling* (2009). The paper investigates how these texts deploy the geographically unique genre of the Australian Gothic across contemporary literary, cinematic and theatrical examples of the Australian Gothic in order to interrogate the legacy that colonial and Catholic hegemony has had on the ongoing negotiation of postcolonial justice. It argues that each text interrogates the ongoing role that settler guilt plays in contemporary Australia through their use of the supernatural, the uncanny and the transgressively abject. As a result, this work suggests that these case studies can be read as Gothic allegories for an emerging ‘post-reconciliation’ Australian melancholia, drawing on Freudian notions of the condition, which is coping with the lost, ideal object of a united national identity.  
*Biography:* Andrew Harmsen is a PhD. student at the University of Melbourne and the Victorian College of the Arts. He is currently working on his dissertation, *Tested Borders, Haunted Stages: The Shifting Field of 21st Century Australian Gothic Playwriting*, under the supervision of Associate Professor Denise Varney. He holds a first-class BA (Hons.) degree from Curtin University and a first-class MA from The University of Melbourne, under the supervision of Dr. Eddie Paterson. He is also working in the playwriting depart of VCA, under the supervision of internationally acclaimed playwright, Raimondo Cortese, on two plays – *Dark Matters* and *The Long Shadow*. He is also co-artistic director of Sly Rat Theatre Co., having written their acclaimed productions of *DOOMSDAY DEVICES* (2014) and *The Martyrs* (2013).  
*E-mail:* andyf.harmsen@gmail.com

**Aparajita Hazra** (SKB University, Bengal, India) **Which is the Witch?: A Study of the Use of the Supernatural in the Rituals of Witchcraft in Rural Bengal in India.** A large chunk of rural India has its own repertoire of traditions, rituals and customs that have been handed down through generations as an inseparable appendage of religion and heritage and spiritual healing. One of them is the formidable practice of witchcraft (called ‘Daainibidya’ in the rural interiors of Bengal) which entails dangerous dabbling in White Magic, Black Magic, ‘Otenga -narbali’ or Human sacrifice, thus teasing at the basics of the liminal interstitiality between the known and the unknown. My paper will explore how and when this tradition of witchcraft with its face-off between the witches—called the ‘Dahins’—or ‘Dayens’—or ‘Daainis’— and the local exorcists—the ‘Guneens’, came into being, its possible roots in the scriptures or ‘Shastras’, who the main game-players in this

epic drama of the victim and the victimized are, its socio-political purport, how it still rules the roost among the ‘Adivasis’—the tribal aborigines in India and how it is struggling to keep up its own amidst the vicissitudes of the scientific temper which turns ‘willing suspension of disbelief’ into an anathema. *Biography:* Dr. Aparajita Hazra is an Associate Professor and Former Head of the Department of English, SKB University, India. She has presented over 47 papers at various national and international seminars. She has been invited as guest faculty in educational programmes on television. She has also been invited to deliver lectures on literature in various universities and Academic Staff Colleges in India. She is the Indian collaborator of the World Shakespeare Project, a global venture initiated by Emory University, Atlanta. She has four books to her credit— *The Terrible Beauty, Her Hideous Progeny: Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein, The Brontes: A Sorority of Passion and The Art of Articulation* from Macmillan Publishers. A fifth book on Supernaturalism in Films and Literature is in the offing from Beowulf Press, Denmark. She has also adapted Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* into a local dialect called ‘Manbhum’ as a project for Performative Shakespeare. Her team won the second place in a contest for local adaptations of classical texts.

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**Reet Hiimäe** (University of Tartu/Estonian Literary Museum, Estonia) **Nonverbal Communication as a Basis for Belief Narratives.** A communicative act that involves the presence of two or more people always contains a nonverbal aspect. In my paper, I will have a look at nonverbal communication as basis for the evolution of belief narratives. This pre-narrative aspect has received little attention in the narrative research as most analyses are based on texts that already exist. However, on many occasions, the basis for a belief narrative is an act of nonverbal communication that has triggered its witness to interpret it within the frames of the vernacular belief background. Human-shaped figures that are interpreted as supernatural beings in the narrative tradition actually do not present their names and titles to the witnesses; they usually remain quiet or express themselves in some other nonverbal way – by making noise or moving themselves, making a gesture, attacking, going away, disappearing, etc. There are also other belief narratives concerning situations where no active communication takes place, for example cases when another person’s actions are described by the narrator or an accidental witness. The witness combines what he has seen with his previous vernacular knowledge. During the re-narrating(s) of the conclusions, new belief narratives are formed (e.g. about intended harmful magical rituals). Hence, such texts consist of two components 1) description of a nonverbal occurrence; and 2) its meaning/interpretation as verbalised by the narrator within the framework of the topical belief tradition. When presenting examples from Estonian belief narratives, seek try to highlight some prominent models and patterns in texts about nonverbal occurrences (connected with the context of the described situation, the types and results of activities described, etc.).

*Biography:* Reet Hiimäe, PhD student of Folklore, University of Tartu and folklore researcher at the Department of Folkloristics, Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu, Estonia. Reet Hiimäe’s research interests include belief narratives, psychology of folk belief, magic and witchcraft, and supernatural experiences. Reet Hiimäe has written books on plague legends (1997), protective magic (2012), foretelling traditions (2013), and love in Estonian folklore (2015) (in Estonian) as well as articles on folk belief, psychology of folk belief, supernatural experiences, etc.

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**Huai Bao Dhawa** (Simon Fraser University, Canada) **Mediumship, Aspirations and Fears: Cinematic Reflection of Contemporary Chinese Society.** This study explores how the Chinese thriller films *Death Is Here* (1-3), following the success of the 2004 Korean thriller film, *Bushinsaba*,

reflect their societal context. Both films feature ‘pen spirit’, a popular form of mediumship among East Asian/Chinese youths. Although ‘pen spirit’ is not widely known in Western societies, it is considered similar to Ouija board by Westerners who have observed the practice in China. Along with ‘dish spirit’, ‘pen spirit’ is a simplified variant of an ancient Taoist ritual known as *fuji*, similar to what Westerners know as automatic writing. In this study, I examine the interplay between the increasing popularity of ‘pen spirit’ among Chinese youths and the box office success of the film *Death Is Here*. While past Chinese literary works often make reference to *fuji* as an ancient Chinese mediumistic ritual, the communist government has suppressed expressions on mediumship in publications and media. In fact, my most recent book, *Change Destiny*, published by Beijing’s New World Press, was banned in the PRC shortly after its launch due to certain chapters examining *fuji*, ‘pen spirit’, and Ouija board as well as paranormal phenomena in religious environments. Films and novels, due to their fictional nature, are subject to less governmental restriction. Their stylized reference to mediumship using artistic techniques reflects human aspirations and fears. The films interrogate people’s beliefs within an ideologically atheist and yet traditionally pantheistic societal context.

*Biography:* Mr. Huai Bao, a.k.a. H. B. Dhawa, is a near-completion Ph.D. candidate at Simon Fraser University. He is the recipient of the SSHRC Doctoral Scholarship for 2013-2015. The author of two best selling philosophical books, Mr. Bao has had 11 articles accepted for publication in two European journals, two American journals, one Canadian e-journal, one Chinese journal and one Canadian newspaper. In his publications he has introduced such concepts and terminology as “moral terrorism,” “the law of attraction” in interracial desires, and “natural selection” in the aesthetic regime of theatre.  
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**Kerry Hull** (Brigham Young University, USA) **Encounters with the Supernatural: Syncretism and Phenomenology in the Ch’orti’ Maya Experience.** The Ch’orti’ Maya of southern Guatemala have a complex set of supernatural beings with whom ordinary Ch’orti’ are said to encounter in daily life. These experiences are informed by a powerful oral tradition that details the conditions under which these supernaturals are said to appear. In this paper I will analyze several dozen oral narratives that I have recorded regarding these supernaturals in order to identify the activities, locations, and temporal conditions that are considered to be conducive to a supernatural encounter. I also discuss how each of these supernaturals—all of whom can appear initially in human form—fit into a broader system of folk beliefs and religious ideology. Based on data gathered during three years of fieldwork among the Ch’orti’, I argue that a hybrid religiosity, both indigenous and more recently introduced Christian forms, with its conception of consequence for evil behavior lies at the heart of many of these dangerous supernatural encounters. Thus, it is when a man lusts after a woman in the forest that she shows herself as the K’ech’uj, a variation of the Siguanaba (or La Llorna) found throughout Latin America, and kills the man for his impropriety. Finally, I contextualize these supernatural encounters within the larger indigenous tradition of shape-shifting in the Ch’orti’ folk beliefs system—beliefs that are constantly reified with every recitation of oral narratives relating to these supernaturals.

*Biography:* I am Professor at Brigham Young University. I hold a PhD in Linguistic Anthropology and my primary area of research is in Mesoamerica. I conduct research in linguistics, anthropology, ethnography, ethno-ornithology, poetics, indigenous religion, and gender. I also work with Eastern Polynesian groups and cultures such as Ua Pou and Raivavaean documenting their languages, cultural beliefs, and recording oral traditions.  
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**Andre Iman Syafrony** (Naresuan University, Thailand) & **Onusa Suwanpratest** (Naresuan University, Thailand) **The Horror of Restive Women: A Comparative Study of the Indonesian Legend ‘Kuntilanak’ and Thai Legend ‘Mae Nak Phra Khanong’.**

The objective of this study is to compare the Indonesian legend ‘Kuntilanak’ and the Thai legend ‘Mae Nak Phra Khanong’. Among the best-known pieces of folklore in both Indonesia and Thailand are legends of supernatural beings, including ghosts. In these two countries, ghost stories of the spirit of a restless woman who died while giving birth are prominent. The study reveals that the main similarities of the legends of Kuntilanak and Nang Nak are: 1) there are wide-ranging parallels in the accounts of the legends of Kuntilanak and Nang Nak in terms of the Javanese and Thai cultures’ traditional folk beliefs of ghost and spirits. The names of the two legends also conceivably retain parallel origins. 2) The two legends similarly position the role of women in their respective societies. In contrast, the main differences between the legends of Kuntilanak and Nang Nak are: 1) differing tragedies endured by the heroines and differing roles for the spirits. 2) Whereas Kuntilanak is seen only as a malicious being, a disturbance to the living, Nang Nak is seen both as a guardian and enraged spirit. These two legends share deeper underlying assumptions, demonstrating that Thailand and Indonesia, where these legends originate, possess similar worldviews.

*Biography:* Andre Iman Syafrony researchers comparative folklore and mythology, holds a BA in English Literature from Yogyakarta State University, Indonesia, and is an MA candidate in Folklore at the Department of Literature and Folklore, Faculty of Humanities, Naresuan University Thailand. Onusa Suwanpratest, PhD, is a lecturer at the Department of Literature and Folklore, Faculty of Humanities, Naresuan University, Thailand.

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**Kaarina Koski** (University of Turku, Finland) **Genres and Discourses Concerning the Supernatural in Contemporary Finland.** Finns with out-of-the-ordinary experiences often seek to interpret their experiences through a scientific or Christian vocabulary. Even though neither the Lutheran church nor science accept personal supernatural encounters, these two discourses are culturally legitimate and thus also help to retain the experiencer’s own normality. The third interpretative line involves seeking alternative information from various sources and gradually developing an alternative worldview with spiritual emphasis, possibly also expertise. These new worldviews, drawing from international literature and the internet, have little in common with preindustrial belief traditions in which the presence of unseen realities was accepted. Only with the dead do traces of the old exist. First, the continuity of family bonds beyond death seems to be a social and emotional issue that overrides material questions. Thus, visits of dead family members – today including pets – do not prompt an anxious quest for ontological explanations. Second, in publicly performed narratives, the old moral points and genre conventions are still common. Discourse and narrative analyses on various texts (private letters and reminiscences; stories and discussions on the internet) show, first, how explanations and legitimations of out-of-the-ordinary experiences are sought in contemporary Finland and, second, what and how it is appropriate to speak about the supernatural in public today and how it differs from privately conveyed thoughts. The paper also presents continuities and changes in Finnish belief traditions.

*Biography:* Kaarina Koski, PhD, is a university lecturer of folkloristics and a researcher in the University of Turku, Finland. Her research topics include folk belief and narrative traditions especially on death, burial, and the Lutheran church; and also internet cultures. Current research concerns the human mind and its interaction with the supernatural.

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**Vun Huang Liew** (Sunway University, Malaysia) **Taboos, the Supernatural and Chinese Folk Beliefs in *The Maid* (2005) and *Hungry Ghost Ritual* (2014)**. The Chinese Hungry Ghost Month, called Kuei Cheih, is one of the most significant festivals in the Chinese calendar. According to Chinese belief, the gates of Hell are thrown open during the seventh lunar month, and spirits are set loose upon the unsuspecting world. There are many taboos to keep a person safe and to keep ghosts or deceased spirits happy during the Hungry Ghost Month. To appease these straying destitute ghosts, the Chinese generally make a preliminary offering on the first day of the seventh moon. In the context of taboos, the supernatural (such as ghosts, gods, goddesses, and miracles) is believed to play a significant role in dealing with unknown questions of life. This research applies a two-sided theoretical approach, using culture and social theory. To address this issue, the contents of two films were analyzed in an attempt to explore the roles of the supernatural in film throughout history. The analysis reveal that Malaysian and Singaporean horror films focus on folk beliefs in their supernatural film genre to incorporate religious elements into the plot. The findings indicate four roles of supernatural in films: (1) To entertain, (2) To educate, (3) To create awareness of dos and don'ts during the Hungry Ghost Month, and (4) To reinforce observation of Hungry Ghost Month taboos.

*Biography:* Liew Vun Huang (also known as Woody Liew), is a Lecturer in the Department of Communication and Liberal Arts, Faculty of Arts, Sunway University, Malaysia. He graduated with a Bachelors of Art in Communication and a Master in Educational Management. He teaches Script Writing, Cinema Studies, Introduction to Film Studies and Advertising. His research interests include analysing film contents on the supernatural, the power of romance and drama.

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**Margaret Lyngdoh** (University of Tartu, Estonia) **Divine Possession as Human - Non-Human Interaction among the Indigenous Khasis of Meghalaya, North-East India**. The Khasis are an ethnic community inhabiting the state of Meghalaya in north-east India, where they number around 1.2 million. A subgroup of this tribe comprise the Pnars, who inhabit the Jaintia Hills. Prevalent in this region is the 'Descending of the Deities' (Hiar Blai) possession where various clan and other deities possess certain individuals for different reasons. This paper is based on fieldwork carried out exclusively in a single village in the Jaintia Hills and will examine the phenomenon of possession within its own context to bring out the cultural meanings and valuations within the parameters constructed in the society from which it stems. In addition, the transformation from human to non-human is invariably part of and accepted within the community. Possession is enacted through the verbal genre through which supernatural communication between the other-than-human and human takes place. Additionally, the dominant social discourse of Christianity remains contested within the particular village where I carried out my fieldwork. About 85% of the Khasis are Christian whereas the 40 households in this village remain staunch adherents to the indigenous religion. Therefore, the verbally expressive genre of divine possession may be one way of asserting indigeneity or difference from the encroaching foreign religion.

*Biography:* Margaret Lyngdoh is a PhD Student in Folkloristics at the Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu, Estonia. As a Khasi indigenous scholar, she is working on the supernatural folklore of the Khasi, Karbi and other ethnic communities of North Eastern India. Her work focuses on the vernacular interpretations of belief and the relationships that are fostered in the society as a result of the changing contexts of religion and tradition. She has previously published an article on Khasi urban folklore in the journal *Asian Ethnology* and another article has been accepted for publication in the journal *Anthropos*.

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**Samantha Martin** (University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia) **A Comparative Analysis of Women Healers' Lived Experiences in Two Cultural Contexts.**

The focus of this comparative case study is processes or experiences of becoming among women who practice traditional, alternative, and/or non-biomedical forms of healing. The study considers two groups of women in two specific contexts: Anglo-American alternative (non-faith-based) healers in South-Central Indiana, USA, and Muslim, ethnically Javanese *dukun-dukun* (“shamans”) in Malang Province, East Java, Indonesia. The study takes a phenomenological approach to understanding participants’ lived realities and exploring experiences that influenced their “becomings.” In each context, the researcher conducted participant-observations and one-on-one informal interviews in order to gain insight into the lived realities of participants. As both an anthropological and an educational project, the study considers both the cultural, historical, and religious/spiritual influences on contemporary healers’ lived realities as well as the informal learning structures, such as personal experience and/or enculturation, by which they came to their present paths. The study makes use of a variety of theoretical frameworks and concepts to illuminate participants’ lived experiences. These include, but are not limited to: archetypes, including the Wounded Healer (Jung); hegemony and alienation (Gramsci, Marx); settler- and post-colonial theory; discourse (Foucault); and feminist theories of care and ways of knowing.

*Biography:* Samantha Martin is US Student Fulbright Fellow at University of Muhammadiyah Malang in East Java, Indonesia. She is a recent graduate of the Cross-Cultural and International Education program at Bowling Green State University, Ohio. From 2010 to 2012, she served as a US Peace Corps Volunteer English teacher in Magetan Regency, East Java, Indonesia. Her research interests include: educational policy; traditional, religious, and spiritual healing; Indonesia/Southeast Asia; Indigenous studies; experiential and informal learning; critical theory; and comparative education. After returning to the United States in July, 2015, she will continue her studies at Indiana University, Bloomington.

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**Jakub Morawski** (City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong) **What do Films Want from Us?**

In my paper I would like to focus on horror films from the perspective of the question of cinematic desire. I will try to answer the following questions and give examples of how horror movies are structured and what structures their both aesthetic and narrative layers in order to evoke required effects. I will use contemporary Lacanian psychoanalysis as a theoretical tool to explain what horror movies want from the spectators and in reverse what do we expect from them? I will also give few examples of how historically both aesthetics and narrative structures of horror films have changed over the years.

*Biography:* I am a PhD research student, currently enrolled in the School of Creative Media at City University. My research area covers film theory, philosophy, visual culture and politics of aesthetics.

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**Kirsten Møllegaard** (University of Hawai’i at Hilo, USA) **Legends in the City: The Strange Case of Edgar Allan Poe.**

Although contemporary legends, also known as urban legends, often deal with the trials and anxieties of everyday life, a considerable body of folk narratives deals with famous historical people and the mysteries, rumors, and anecdotes ascribed to them. Such narratives often draw on the thematic and stylistic conventions of tales of the supernatural. Contemporary legends reflect the experience, anxieties, and mysteries of urban living, revealing psychosocial and sociological perspectives on gender, identity, and social status within specific urban environments. This presentation situates the rich folklore surrounding Edgar Allan Poe within the context of Michel de

Certeau and Jacques Derrida's perspectives on the city as lived and haunted experience. Poe's short, difficult life and mysterious death have fueled both academic and folkloristic narratives. Where the academic narratives often analyze his fiction biographically as reflections of his life such as his impoverishment, alcoholism, and frustrated ambition, the folk narratives typically focus on dark romantic mysteries, especially his fascination with pale, dying women and death. The folklore of famous people is intimately – perhaps even mysteriously – tied to the social experience of urban space and, in Poe's case, to the haunting experience of crowds, strangers, and alienation in the city. A comparison between Poe's fiction and contemporary legends surrounding Poe's person offers broader sociological perspectives on the complexity of folklore in the city.

*Biography:* Kirsten Møllegaard is associate professor and chair of English at University of Hawai'i at Hilo, USA. She teaches courses in literature, film, folklore, and mythology and has published articles on contemporary legends; retellings of myth and folklore in literature and film; tourism and contemporary legends in Hawaii; and haunting and history in contemporary literature of the American West. E-mail: mollegaa@hawaii.edu

**Tsetan Namgyal** (Jawaharlal Nehru University, India) **Understanding the (Lha, Lha mo, and Dbon po) Oracle System of Ritual: Practices in Traditional Contemporary Buddhist Society of Ladakh (La-dwags).** The transmission and development of Lha, Lha mo, and Dbon po traditions are true reflections of the age-old custom, tradition, and cultural ethos that zealously kept beliefs alive. These traditions have been practiced as homage by people, societies, and communities to their manifested gods and goddess. Ladakh is associated with the shamanic 'sacred landscape' of Tibet, where traditions were practiced to treat illnesses in people and animals and identify auspicious times for activities. The performance of these unscientific activities is grounded in the faith and beliefs of a shamanic Buddhist culture that was strongly influenced by Tibet's indigenous Bon religion and its followers across the Trans-Himalayan region. Indigenous Buddhist peoples thus worshiped their local gods and goddesses for happy and prosperous lives and in order to have soothsayers (Tib. mo) foretell prophecies (Tib. lung bstan) of a better future. Such traditional religious practices continue today. Ladakh has deep-rooted cultural linkages with the West Asian and Arab worlds, even after being divided from Tibet at various points in time, first as part of Western Tibet in the 10<sup>th</sup> Century and later as an independent kingdom before finally being amalgamated into India's territorial state in 1947. In this paper, the author seeks to represent the various lha lhamo and Dbon po ritual practices in Ladakh and to examine the significance of traditional and cultural inheritance of religious symbols as well as scientific approaches in the conceptual world.

*Biography:* Tsetan Namgyal (PhD) Assistant Professor, Centre for Inner Asian Studies (Tibetan studies) School of International Studies, JNU New Delhi-67(India)  
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**Michael O'Regan** (Independent Researcher, Macau) & **Jaeyeon Choe** (Institute for Tourism Studies, Macau) **Pilgrims to Casinos in Macau.** As societies have become complex and individualistic, with highly differentiated belief systems and relations, the traditional academic field of religious tourism and pilgrimage has increasingly incorporated secular religious practices into their discussions, with American anthropologist, Alexander Moore (1980), for example, arguing that playful pilgrimage is appropriate to secular, technologized societies. This exploratory paper argues, that in Macau, a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, mainland Chinese and Hong Kong gambler-visitors (who make-up 95% of the visitor market) can be seen as playful pilgrims entering bounded ritual space. While casinos, at least in America, are technologically developed, scientifically



managed and commercially informed; their design templates made up of intricate mazes created to create interconnected pathways for inward, introspective focus, we argue that in Macau, the pilgrimage concept has largely been appropriated by commercial, secular to make to ensure the experience is culturally coded for collective activities. This exploratory study using participant observation over six months at three leading casinos in Macau, argues that the casinos draws pilgrims from around China and Hong Kong, with casinos in Macau exposing the pilgrims to exposure to novel, but cultural significant sights, sounds, tastes and smells to ensure their playful pilgrimage consisting of liminoid behavior, is stripped but not free from the liminal context. The Asia based casino groups in Macau have paid close adherence to ‘feng-shui’ principles (wind and water), which were traditionally associated with siting graves and houses, and used ‘Geomancy’, which links the natural world to the supernatural world, by connecting the supernatural power of animatism with animated spirits. They have also broken many of the ‘scientific rules’ in the casino-design playbook by rejecting intricate mazes for open, straight lines, largely eliminating slot machines for the mass playing of baccarat and adding lucky charms, symbols and evoking myths. Casinos have understood how Chinese visitors gain agency through become transformed or empowered through these traditional beliefs they take on when entering Macau. From encouraging myths (refraining from sex before gambling, avoiding rooms with unlucky numbers, making offerings); and facilitating ritual acts (booking into a lucky room, making offerings), and encourage ritual behaviors (encouraging visits to ‘lucky’ shrines built inside the casino), this exploratory paper argues that these secular-religious tourists can be seen as entering bounded ritual space. This study will contribute to extending the discussions about secular-pilgrimage and rituals in religious tourism and argue that pilgrimages today are profoundly different from their ancient predecessors, while pilgrims, while playful, take on serious dimensions when rituals are realized in Macau’s casinos.

**Biography:** Michael O’ Regan, PhD, is an independent researcher, and Jaeyeon Choe is Assistant Professor at the Institute for Tourism Studies.

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**Mohd Hafiz Bin Che Othman** (Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia) & **Nur ‘Aainaa Binti Zulkiflie** (Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia) **Stereotype Representation: Woman as ‘Pontianak’ and Malay Culture in Malay Horror Films.** Horror films are becoming a major attraction in Malaysian society today. The film *Pontianak Harum Sundal Malam (Vampire with Night Scent of the Tuber Rose)* from 2004 followed a ban on the horror film genre in Malaysia stretching back to the 1970s. This movie shows that the horror genre has always been an audience favourite. Although various supernatural entities could be used, *Pontianak*, or vampires, have often been selected by directors as focal point for films. Animistic beliefs among Malays concerning the existence of *Pontianak* and other beings have existed since time immemorial. Previous studies found that stereotyped female *Pontianak* characters in films bear little resemblance to beliefs in Malay culture. Hence, by using textual analysis of films focusing on *Pontianak* from 2004 to 2014, this study will evaluate the meaning and ideology of the stereotypical representation of female characters as *Pontianak* in relation to Malay beliefs.

**Biography:** Nur ‘Aainaa Zulkiflie is currently a PHD student in Project Management in Universiti Sains Malaysia. Areas of interest are in Built Environmental Project Management, Media Studies and Popular Culture, Gender and Ethnicity and Human Communication. Mohd Hafiz Che Othman is currently a PHD student in Communication in Universiti Sains Malaysia. Areas of interest are in Media Studies and Popular Culture, Gender and Ethnicity, Film Adaptations.

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**Valentina Punzi** (Humboldt University, Germany) **‘Dying Mongol and Reborn Tibetan’: Stereotypization, Otherness and Integration Discourses in the Tibetan Natural and Supernatural Landscape of Amdo (Qinghai, PRC)**. In today’s politically fragmented territory of ethnic Tibet, Amdo Tibetans occupy the northeastern portion of the Tibetan plateau, now included in the Chinese province of Qinghai. From the 13th Century onwards, this vast area of grasslands and mountain peaks has been under the discontinuous rule of Mongols. A clear trace of this foreign occupation is still detectable in the oral descriptions of the landscape and the belief narratives retold in the nomadic county of Zekok in southeastern Qinghai Province. Based on ten oral narrations, recorded in Zekok between 2011 and 2014, concerning the Mongol ancestry of Amye Drakar, the local Tibetan protector god, I aim to explore the narrative strategies implemented in deconstructing the historical Mongol presence in the area and reconstructing it into a belief narrative. By analysing the relationship between the autochthonous Tibetan agency of a protector god with the advent of the Mongol army, this presentation explores how these narratives contribute to elaborate the Mongol presence in Amdo within a Tibetan cultural framework. These belief narratives show how, by transposing an historical event into a legendary setting, the Mongols’ foreign identity has been first stereotyped and then gradually incorporated in the Tibetan landscape.

*Biography:* I got a double PhD in Asian Studies from L’Orientale University in Italy and Minzu University in China in June 2014. From October 2014 I will be a postdoc researcher at the Central Asian Seminar at Humboldt University. My main research interests are in Amdo (Qinghai Province, PRC) Tibetan local history, collective memory, vernacular religion and geographic knowledge.

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**Kirsten Marie Raahauge** (The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Denmark) **Unexplainable Phenomena and Narratives of the Supernatural in Contemporary Denmark**. Many people experience something that they cannot explain, often they hear something that is not there as a visible fact; the sensation of hearing for example someone who is walking through your apartment, when no one is there, as far as your eyes can see, poses a problem to the witness, especially if you do not think that this kind of sensation is possible. Based on my fieldwork on haunted houses in Denmark today, this paper deals with the narratives of the supernatural, mostly about haunting, put forward as explanations by people who are subject to experiences of otherwise unexplainable phenomena. The experiences concerned typically produce rather vague narratives, pointing to possible explanations in traditional Danish folk belief in ghosts and haunting. These explanations function as residual categories for the haunted persons, who seldom believe in supernatural phenomena before they have had their experience. The paper focuses on experiences from urban areas, and on the impact on the personal narratives from entertainment products such as TV-series on haunting, ghosts movies, or advertisements about ghost lore used by owners of castles and manors for tourist-related reasons. Furthermore the paper explores the possible reasons for sceptical comments from scientific circles on the fact that haunted houses can become part of a research project.

*Biography:* KMR is trained as an anthropologist at The Department of Anthropology, The University of Copenhagen (mag.scient./master), and The Department of Design and Architecture, Aalborg University (Ph.D.). KMR has been employed at several universities (as assistant professor, post doc., researcher, and lecturer). Furthermore KMR has executed several consultant projects, and is performing as an editor and a referee for a range of journals and anthologies, organizer of conferences, seminars and sessions, and supervisor and lecturer at the whole range of academic levels. KMR is employed as an associate professor at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts.

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**Alevtina Solovyeva** (Russian State University for the Humanities, Russia) **Demonological Beliefs and New Forms of Ghost Storytelling in Contemporary Mongolia: Historical, Religious and Social Contexts.** This report is dedicated to contemporary beliefs of devilry in Mongolia. It touches upon such matters as the relationship between tradition and mass culture, the transformation of folk plots within modern urban culture, and the preservation and transformation of a demonological tradition within new social and cultural conditions. This research focuses on ghost stories and ghost storytelling in contemporary Mongolia – “chötgöriin yaria”. These tales are widespread in modern culture and form a special genre, which occupies a middle ground between written and oral culture, based on traditional beliefs and inserting new plots from mass culture and foreign demonology. I will analyse some aspects of the formation and the occurrence of texts of this genre in modern Mongolia, the image of demonological characters, the structure of the ghost tales, their semantics and pragmatics, and their adoption of plots and images from other traditions. My research is based on material and ghost stories collected during fieldwork in Mongolia (annual expeditions from 2006 to 2014). The material includes oral and written sources.

*Biography:* Member of the Centre for Typological and Semiotic Folklore **Studies**, Department for Chinese History and Philology and the Department of Mongolian and Tibetan History and Philology at the Russian State University for Humanities, Moscow, Russia. Research interests include folklore studies, cultural anthropology, Mongolian studies, Chinese studies, folklore and mythology of East Asia.  
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**Song Hyunhee** (University of Hannam, South Korea) **Supernatural ‘Nobody’ in Neil Gaiman’s *The Graveyard Book*.** This paper is focused on discovery of one’s true self’ with supernatural assistance in children’s literature, specifically Neil Gaiman’s *The Graveyard Book*. Humans live in reality, but we do not know whether this is the real world. Humans have their names from birth to death but do not recognize which name is right for them. *The Graveyard Book* (2008), written by Neil Gaiman, is a story about the supernatural boy Nobody Owens. He has a name, ‘Bod’, that disappeared after his parents were killed by Jack Frost. He escaped the terrible situation alone and was then adopted by the ghosts Mr. Owens and Mrs. Owens in the graveyard. He also lives with various other beings; Vampire Silas, Werewolf Miss Lupescu, Witch Elizabeth, another ghost Mr. Pennyworth, and finally the human girl Scarlett Perkins. At the end of story, Nobody’s supernatural family tells him that he will find his own society with humans. This paper questions the nature of true happiness for Nobody. Humans do not understand his supernatural abilities, even though he himself forgot them for a time. The point of the book is not that it is important one’s existence is supernatural. After all, the most vicious character in the book is the human Jack in the discriminatory group ‘Jack of All Trades’. The key, so the novel says, is to discover our true selves through self-awareness.

*Biography:* Song Hyunhee was born in Daejeon, South Korea. She holds a doctoral degree with a thesis on ‘Children’s Literature and Ecofeminism’ in February 2013. She is a member of various journals that seeks to be a leading professional lecturer in field of children’s literature. She has translated Andrew Lang’s fairy tales and writes concerning the gothic, zombies, and the supernatural in children’s literature.

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**Ülo Valk** (University of Tartu, Estonia) **Vernacular Views about the Supernatural in Contemporary Estonia: The Case of the Haunted Hospital in Tartu.** Narratives about ghosts and haunting belong to the most persistent genres in Estonian folklore. They were discursively marginalized in the atheist atmosphere of the Soviet period, as they did not fit in the dominant rhetoric about social progress and

scientific materialism. Post-Soviet belief traditions in Estonia witnessed lively return of the ghosts, both in legends and personal experience stories. These narratives are mediated in private communication, Internet forums, tabloid newspapers and esoteric periodicals. In addition, several tourist guides and real-estate agents are experts of local ghost-lore. The paper discusses ghost-lore on micro-level, focusing on the narrative tradition of an old hospital of maternity and gynecology in Tartu. In 2008 a new medical center was opened and the employees of the hospital were getting prepared for moving to the new building. At this time the ghost-lore of the old hospital was re-activated and several people among the personnel had strange and supernatural experiences. Some cases were even discussed in the mainstream media, which is far from ordinary in contemporary Estonia. The paper is based on interviews with the employees of the old hospital and it analyzes different perspectives and attitudes towards the supernatural. How to make sense of ghosts? seems to be the basic problem that people address from different angles. The paper discusses vernacular answers to this question.

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**Ana Tso Wing Bo** (Open University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong) **Meditations on Formlessness in the East and West: Guanyin and George MacDonald's 'Mother of Light'**. According to Buddha's preaching, eternal soul, identity, and self in beings and things do not exist. The sense of being a permanent, substantial self is only an illusion. In time, our bodies deteriorate and decay, our feelings and perceptions alter, as do our volition and consciousness. As the Great Heart Sutra states, 'form is the void, and the void is form'. Guanyin, commonly known as the Goddess of Compassion in English, is perhaps the best demonstration of this doctrine. Guanyin has almost always been represented as a goddess in the Chinese culture. Interestingly, the deity is in fact neither male nor female and is instead simultaneously both male and female. Such genderlessness mirrors the Buddhist wisdom of seeing through the superficiality of form. Freed from the boundary of form, Guanyin can take on any gender, any form to save beings from sufferings and ignorance. While the notion of formlessness manifested by Guanyin may seem unfamiliar in Western culture, George MacDonald, the Scottish fantasy literature writer who inspired C.S. Lewis, Tolkien, and E. Nesbit introduced the idea of possessing multiple incoherent, fluid selves through 'the Mother of Light', a female goddess figure he invented in *The Princess and Curdie* (1883). With reference to the representation of Guanyin and MacDonald's portrayal of the female deity, this paper looks into how the notion of formlessness is perceived East and West.

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**Ana Tso Wing Bo** (Open University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong) **Supernatural Horror Creatures in Children's Literature.** Supernatural horror causes psychological fear and emotional distress in all of us, but strangely enough, rather than shunning from it, people are constantly attracted to this genre, which is popular not only in cinema, but also in literature, even children's literature. One main reason for this phenomenon is that horror can function as an agent of the norm. It is a medium for the readers and/or audience to release their fear and abjection against the alien Other who does not conform to their standards of normality. With reference to Kristeva's notion of horror and abjection, this paper explains the social function of the horror genre and look into the supernatural horror creatures in two popular children's books, namely Roald Dahl's *The Witches* (1983) and Philip Pullman's *The Amber Spyglass* (2000). The supernatural evil creatures' grotesque appearance, as well as how they disturb the borderlines between human and beast, natural and supernatural, living and dead, clean and defiled, self and other, will be discussed.

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