

EXTENDED DEADLINE !
WE ACCEPT PROPOSALS UNTIL FEBRUARY 15, 2016



English
Department
Münster

THE FANTASTIC NOW: RESEARCH IN THE FANTASTIC IN THE 21st CENTURY

Seventh annual conference of the Association for Research in the Fantastic

University of Münster
September 22-24, 2016

There is hardly any subject in contemporary literary, cultural, and media studies that is discussed and researched with as much controversy as “the fantastic”. Since theoretical debate on the subject was initiated in the second half of the 20th century, largely by Tzvetan Todorov and Roger Callois, research on the fantastic has become a globally relevant, interdisciplinary, and rapidly developing field of scholarship. The field’s significance is reflected in numerous scholarly journals, associations, organizations, research projects and institutions which have focused on the fantastic.

Yet, ever since the formation of the field, there has been active disagreement on how to define and delineate the subject of research, an issue which has become ever more important not least due to the current breadth and diversity of the research. The central question, “What is the fantastic?”, evokes a broad spectrum of answers. They range from outright dismissal of the subject as trivial, to narrow, minimalist definitions in the tradition of Todorov, and then to extremely broad and inclusive definitions that understand and conceptualize the fantastic as any kind of cultural product which juxtaposes an empirically verifiable world to another, fantastic one, and which thereby becomes formative for genres such as fairy tales, legends, science fiction, magical realism, and gothic. Both recent and long-term developments in cultural and literary theory (such as transnational, transcultural and transmedial approaches) contribute to the field’s growing heterogeneity, revealing clearly how significant a place the fantastic has in contemporary culture. At the same time, this proliferation and diversification of “the fantastic” necessitates a survey and a taking stock of the contemporary landscape of research in the fantastic, of its approaches, its interests, its foci, and its findings.

The seventh annual conference of the Association for Research in the Fantastic aims to take on this task under the title *The Fantastic Now: Research in the Fantastic in the 21st Century*. It is our goal to include the greatest possible number of diverse voices and perspectives in this endeavor, in order to do justice to the multiplicity and interdisciplinarity of the field, and to discuss its societal and cultural implications. Possible topics and leading questions in the fields of literary and cultural studies, sociology, philosophy and political science could include, but are not limited to:

- What is “the fantastic”?
- What are/should be the aims of research in the fantastic today?
- Genres of the fantastic (and their theoretical implications): horror and gothic, utopias and dystopias, science fiction, fantasy, magical realism, speculative fiction, fairy tales, fables, myths, etc.

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- Fantastic media (and their theoretical implications): The fantastic in literature, art, theatre, film, comics, computer games, Web 2.0, etc.
- The transmedial fantastic
- The neo-fantastic
- Gender, race, class, disability in/and the fantastic
- Aesthetics of the fantastic
- Individual motifs, groups of motifs, or histories of motifs

We are honored that Professor Fred Botting, internationally renowned scholar in gothic fiction and cultural theory, has accepted our invitation as a keynote speaker. We also especially look forward to PD Dr. Uwe Durst's keynote address and the readings by Larissa Lai and Karl-Ulrich Burgdorf. In addition to the inclusion of further voices of distinguished scholars, it is our explicit goal to encourage academic exchange among already established as well as younger scholars, authors, and artists in the field.

Please send your proposals of no more than 350 words (for 20 minute presentations) in German or English, together with your contact information and a short biography to gff2016@wwu.de by **February 15, 2016**. Proposals for panels of three papers are also welcome before **February 15, 2016**.

The GFF offers two bursaries for exceptional proposals by students (BA, MA, MEd, PhD). If you are interested in applying for one of them, please make sure to mention this when sending in your abstract.

In addition to the traditional presentations and panel discussions, we plan to hold a roundtable discussion on the topic, "What can/should research in the fantastic strive for and accomplish in the 21st century?" If you are interested, you can also specifically apply to be a participant in this roundtable discussion by sending in a short abstract outlining your ideas/position.

We also welcome creative contributions such as readings, performances, and exhibitions. Proposals for such contributions should likewise be sent by **February 15, 2016** via email (gff2016@wwu.de) in a format appropriate to the contribution (images, descriptions, video excerpts, etc.).

We are looking forward to your proposals!

The conference will take place at:

University of Münster
English Seminar
Johannisstr. 12-20
48143 Münster

Contact information for the conference team:

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