THE ANTHROPOCENE AND THE GOTHIC
AN INTERVIEW WITH JUSTIN EDWARDS

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Keywords: American Gothic, Gothic literature, popular culture, Anthropocene, interview.

Trang Dang: I'm very honored to have Justin Edwards for our interview focused on the Gothic in the Anthropocene. Given the ongoing criticism of the Anthropocene as being anthropocentric, colonialist, and racist, I'd also like to hear about your position on the term "Anthropocene" itself.

Justin Edwards: First of all, thank you for inviting me. It's a delight and an honor to be able to participate in this project. I noticed that you've got some fantastic colleagues from around the world and one of the great things about things like Zoom and these kinds of conferences is that you can bring people together in a way that is, to a certain extent, carbon neutral and, of course, this does lead into questions of ecology and the Anthropocene and the ways in which we conceptualize what the Anthropocene is and how we have an impact on our planet.

To begin with the first part of your question, the Anthropocene is a word that comes out of geology, and it is a term that refers to geological time originally and a shift in geological time. Within geological circles, it marks a change in the ways in which the human being has mastery or control over ecology, the environment and the planet more generally. This, for geologists, can be found in the actual rock sediment so finding, say, carbon and methane and other things that are actually located in the stratosphere of the rock, then leads them to articulate this new form of time called the Anthropocene. Now, I mean that's how it begins but then, of course, it moves into other aspects of study within the arts and humanities and social sciences and other areas, to describe the ways in which there is a shift in which the human as a subject or as a collective has a profound impact on the environment and ecology, and that might be through extinction, that might be through global warming and the ways in which we are using up natural resources and contributing to the potential destruction of the planet. The Anthropocene, in a nutshell, is the ways in which the human being now has the potential to destroy, to impact, to change the planet, whether it be through climate, through extinction or other things like that. That's a kind of thumbnail basic way of articulating the Anthropocene.

There is, of course, the contentious issue of when the Anthropocene begins. Some would say the Anthropocene begins with the Industrial Revolution in the UK, in Northern Europe. The Industrial Revolution which then leads to the burning of coal. This marks the beginning of a transformation in which the human being is having a profound impact on the planet in a very negative way, through toxic emissions that then lead to things like global warming. So, the Industrial Revolution is one place that scholars say we can date the Anthropocene to this time—the time of the Industrial Revolution. Others locate it in the Nuclear Age, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, saying that is the beginning of the Anthropocene—that's when we really see the ways in which the human being can transform the planet in really profound ways and actually lead to complete destruction of environments, ecosystems, and planets, and it has a potential to destroy ourselves in the process. Whatever the case might be, what we find is a transformation in the planet that accelerates tremendously throughout the 20th century and into the 21st century so that's what some scholars call the Great Acceleration within the Anthropocene that happens in the 20th century and goes into the 21st century. The ways which the human is negatively impacting the planet through fossil fuels, carbon emissions, methane, and so on and so forth, thus has an impact on things like climate and extinction.

TD: The debate around the Anthropocene often centres on how the term is anthropocentric, colonialist and racist because it's saying that humans are a powerful force able to change the planet and everything. Where do you stand in those debates?

JE: That is a huge question and a huge debate and a fascinating one. In many ways, the word Anthropocene obviously includes something which is anthropocentric about it. It includes the human within the very term itself, and as a result, this has led scholars to really critique the

idea of the Anthropocene. The term leads to a kind of flattening out of all of humankind being responsible for this transformation or destruction of the planet. That word "Anthropocene" does not locate the transformation in the Industrial Revolution or in the Nuclear Age of the Cold War, which is very Western-, European- and Northern-American-centric. The Anthropocene as a word doesn't necessarily call attention to those locations or sites as being responsible for this transformation that occurs. It suggests that people in India or people in Southern Africa are just as responsible for this transformation as those in the UK in the Industrial Revolution or Americans who then develop the atomic bomb through the Manhattan project. So, there's a kind of flattening out of responsibility within the word "Anthropocene," rather than saying no, actually, it is certain areas within the globe or certain locations and certain practices that have led to this situation, and that becomes a very important critique of the term.

On the one hand, it is an important critique because, whether it be the Industrial Revolution or the Nuclear Age, wherever we begin talking about the Anthropocene, it's very much a part of the North Atlantic. It's very much part of a wealthy elite region within the world, and becomes important for reflecting on it. However, there's also the fact that, in order to address what's happening with the Anthropocene, we can't just locate it in those places so we need to address it across the globe. How do we address it? Obviously, those North Atlantic regions need to step up and be more responsible in terms of dealing with the transformative effects of the Anthropocene, whether it be extinction or climate change. There are many critiques to the word but I think the main one is the flattening out and saying that all human beings are responsible for this transformation when, really, it is a kind of industrialized Northern European or North American area of the world that starts this process. It then gets picked up elsewhere, of course, but in terms of responsibility, that word "Anthropocene" doesn't necessarily articulate that which is responsible.

TD: I think the Anthropocene doesn't pay much attention to the nuances in terms of the degree of responsibility of human beings towards planet Earth. So, it's problematic but at the same time it's a useful term to talk about how it's human action that causes damage to the planet.

JE: We might make the analogy to the word "postcolonial." It has always been contentious. That's not to say that it's not useful. It is a useful term and it's being replaced now, of course, by decolonization and the decolonial, which is very good. But certainly, during the 1990s and early 90s that word 'postcolonial' was important but always interrogated so we need to do the same with that word "Anthropocene." Others have proposed the Capitalocene; other people have proposed the Plantationocene, as being words that could potentially replace the Anthropocene because they, in and of themselves as words, place an emphasis on the development of capitalism in the Capitalocene, or the development of plantation slavery culture in the 16th century in the Plantationocene. Those words, if they were to be used as replacements for the Anthropocene, then do call attention to the ways in which economic models, like capitalism

or like slavery and the transportation of Africans through the middle passage to plantations in North America and other places in South America and elsewhere in the globe, then become important pivot moments in the transformation of the planet, the transformation in species, the transformation in land, the transformation in relations between people, but also between humans and plants, and humans and animals as well. Those words are very important, and I think that we should not dismiss those words and we should think a lot about the use of that word "Anthropocene" and use it alongside "Capitalocene," which calls attention to capitalism as being that which is responsible for this transformation that has occurred, or "Plantationocene," which then dates back to European expansion and imperialism and slavery. I think these words are all important and can be used and all must be interrogated as well; all must be used in their complexities.

TD: I totally agree. To move towards the relationship between the Gothic and the Anthropocene, in your recent talk on your forthcoming book titled *Gothic in the Anthropocene*, you said: "we live in Gothic times." Could you unpack this a little by talking, perhaps, about how the Gothic informs our understanding of this geological epoch?

JE: In many ways the Gothic has always been about death, destruction, ruins, and in many ways, the current focus on ecology, the current focus on environmental crises, the current focus on environmental collapse, on species extinction, raises narratives that relate back to the Gothic, whether it be the ruin of an ecosystem, or the death of a species, or the destruction of certain parts of the environment, that then lead us into a narrative terrain that we can then relate to that dark side of Gothic, which has to do with death and destruction.

To answer your question, I think the Gothic offers us narrative forms and narrative strategies to be able to articulate the times in which we are living, the times which are crucial in addressing the large-scale mass extinction events, death, ruin of ecosystems, and the destruction of various parts of the world. The Gothic gives us language and narratives in order to be able to articulate these things that we're experiencing now and are going through, and that leads me to say that we live in Gothic times. That also leads back to things like the destruction in the castle of Otranto in the 18th century or *The Fall of the House of Usher*, to the ways in which we might consider the collapse of the castle or the collapse of the house in relation to the collapse of ecosystems or the environment. Thinking about these things in analogous ways that the planet is our home, just like the castle of Otranto might be the home for Manfred, or the house of Usher might be the home of the Ushers, we can conceptualize these narrative forms within the larger context of a home or homely space that we inhabit within the planet. The destruction of that or the crumbling or the ruin of that planet is something that we can think about in terms of a Gothic narration and the language that Gothic has offered us.

TD: Indeed, the Gothic focuses on ruins, destruction, the collapse of systems, and how that brings death and suffering not only to humans but also nonhumans. That reminds me of

something I read elsewhere, which says that there are people who actually find the idea of catastrophes enjoyable rather than horrifying. Could the Gothic then, in some way, run the risks of romanticizing those catastrophes, and as a result, of failing to warn us about the consequences of ecological disasters altogether?

JE: That's a really good and important question. If you take a novel which was then made into the film, *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy, for instance, what you have is a very popular novel, a very popular film, which is very much based on apocalypse. So, an apocalyptic narrative like that then becomes a form of entertainment. It becomes consumed on Netflix or consumed as a novel or a bestseller, and that can lead to a situation in which the narrative then provides a kind of entertainment or even sensationalist dynamic for the reader that might romanticize. But more of a kind of sensational aspect exists within those kinds of apocalyptic narratives and those visions of global death and destruction and environmental collapse and apocalypse can be quite sensational, and when consumed as entertainment, as you're suggesting, it can be very problematic. It can be enjoyable rather than actually getting us to really reflect on, or think about, what this might mean.

The Gothic has always been like this. This is not new to the Gothic. The Gothic has always been a popular form, going back to Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), for instance, going back to *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) again, going back to classic 18th-century Gothic novels. They are popular and are often quite sensational. Those sensational dynamics can be highly problematic when it comes to pertinent and relevant political issues, because it can cover over the politics or the pressing issues of the day through the entertainment and sensationless dimensions, which are contained within those narratives. Your question is a really important one, as it relates to the Anthropocene, as it relates to environmental collapse and apocalyptic narratives. But it's always been there in the Gothic, and that's always a question that critics have asked. Can the Gothic be both sensational and have a positive, political dimension to it at the same time? Can it be progressive and get people to think about the pressing political issues of the day, and at the same time have a sensational dimension to it? I'm not sure there's a specific answer to that. I think we have to take it text by text. There are Gothic texts that go back to the 18th century or now that do romanticize or sensationalize apocalypse or a mass extinction event or mass destruction. I think that's certainly there and that's always been there in Gothic. But then I think that there are other texts that actually do force us to consider our position within this and do force us to think about the political dynamics of our place within the planet, as it relates to mass extinction events or mass destruction or the Anthropocene more generally. It's difficult, in other words, to make grand sweeping claims. We need to look at the texts themselves and that has a long history within the Gothic.

TD: I think you're right. I don't think all texts romanticize the idea of death or ruins, and there really are texts that ask us to critique the issues of the present like those about climate change or other political and ecological issues.

JE: It's important to know that that's always been there in the Gothic. That sensational aspect has always been present within the gothic novel, going back to the 18th century, and whether you can be sensational and politically progressive at the same time, I'm not sure. But it's an important question.

TD: Moving the conversation towards the American Gothic and drawing on your previous work on this area, I'm interested in how American writers from the 19th century to the present have utilised the gothic trope to tackle issues of race, class, gender, and the relationships between humans and nonhumans. Would you like to comment on this and on how these issues are interrelated?

JE: The American Gothic does differ from European forms of Gothic in several ways. I would say that there is a strand that we could identify of American Gothic that is unique from European forms in the 18th century. There's been lots written on this, going back to Leslie Fiedler, Teresa Goddu, and others who have written about the uniqueness of the American Gothic. There are certain things that they point to in terms of that American Gothic tradition as being unique, and that is the presence of the exploitation of slavery and of slavery as being something that haunts the nation, things like genocide and 'settler culture of the Americas' more generally, and that is contained within American Gothic—the ways in which the colonial expansion leads to genocide of Native peoples and leads to destruction of large groups that then contributes to a Gothic narrative that is specifically American, or part of the Americas. It's not just US, and we find this in Canada, we find this in Brazil, we find this across the Americas in Gothic text. Questions of race, questions of genocide, questions of slavery, are really present within an American Gothic tradition that aren't necessarily present within 18th century European Gothic. There's a long history of criticism related to that, going back to the 1960s with Leslie Fiedler.

That's one aspect of it, the other aspect of it is, of course, the land itself, and that brings us into the realm of ecology and the environment, the ways in which the American Gothic deals with the so-called frontier, the so-called unsettled land, the dark forest of Hawthorne, the dark forest of Charles Brockden Brown and the threats of the land to the white European colonial settler, and that being really important dimension to an American Gothic tradition that is unique from what we might refer to as the European Gothic. Race, slavery, genocide, colonialism and the so-called settling of the land then become really important in developing narratives that we can call the American Gothic. The settling of the land is, of course, tied to slavery. It's tied to genocide, but it's also tied to the human relationship to ecological space. Here again, the plantation becomes very important, and we can refer to that word 'Plantationocene' within the Americas as being very significant. We can talk about a tradition of plantation Gothic in which what you have is a destruction of a particular ecosystem replaced by a plantation for cotton or sugarcane, which is then farmed by slaves. You have a coming together of labor exploitation, exploitation of people, slavery with a transformation of the land

itself, and that transformation of the land is a transformation in which it imposes a kind of monoculture. You wipe out diversity within the ecological system and then you create the plantation for the cotton or for the sugarcane or whatever it might be. In other words, you take out the diversity of the ecological space and you replace it with a monoculture, whether that be cotton or sugar or whatever the case might be. These things are intimately linked. The transportation of slaves, the exploitation of labor through slavery, then becomes linked to the transformation of the land, the ecosystem and the ways in which the human being then impacts that land. That's something specific to the Americas. We don't find the same plantation cultures in Europe, in the UK or elsewhere, geographically speaking, that we do in the Americas. That's one of the ways that the two come together—colonization, exploitation of people through slavery, but then also the imposition of a monoculture within an ecosystem that was once diverse.

That's one way of thinking about it. The other way of thinking about it also is in terms of what constitutes the human, and that was the debates around slavery that go back to the 17th and 18th centuries. What constitutes the human, what constitutes the nonhuman, and of course, the nonhuman argument then becomes a way of justifying colonization, and things like slavery and reducing human beings to the status of the nonhuman, to the animal that then moves from racist discourses into speciesism. I think that relates back to your question. They're very much intertwined and linked.

TD: I think when we think about issues of climate change, we realize that the exploitation of nonhumans is very much similar to that of human labor, as some people would treat other humans in the same way as they treat nonhumans and so they'll exploit and extract the labor of both.

JE: Absolutely, we can't separate these things. The ways in which we exploit human beings, the way we exploit natural resources, the way we exploit the land, those things are intimately connected. We find within a capitalist society, whether it be gender hierarchies or hierarchies in terms of white supremacy and racism, they are intimately connected to the ways in which we treat animals or ecosystems. We can't say we're just going to focus on one. They're so interrelated and so interconnected that they're systemic rather than things that we can tease out and say this is separate from that, this racism is separate from patriarchy, which is then separate from capitalism and exploitation. No, they're all interrelated.

TD: The final question I would like to ask you is about the body in the American Gothic. I think the body as a theme or feature of the Gothic is very important to this particular genre. For example, there are corporate bodies, or the bodies of the exploited, or the bodies of the monstrous other. Could you comment on how the gothic portrayal of the body contributes to our understanding of the human-human and human-nonhuman relationships in the context of the Anthropocene?

JE: Another great question and another very large question but a very important one. We can go back to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1817) and look at Dr Frankenstein's Creature. What is monstrous about the Creature that Victor Frankenstein creates is, of course, the body. It's the visual. The monster just wants to be loved. Internally, there is this desire for connection, this desire to link with others, but it is the body, the grotesque body, the body of monstrosity, that creates fear and anxiety within those around the Creature so the body then becomes located in the Gothic. We find this in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), that transformation from the civilized doctor into the brutal and savage Mr. Hyde. The transformation of the body and the body is essential to Gothic narratives, going back to the 18th century. We can track that through to people like Poppy Z. Brite writing today and others, in which the body becomes central to the gothic text. We can, as you're suggesting, move beyond that to the corporate body, beyond that to the ways in which we might talk about biopower, a Foucauldian concept of biopower, and the ways in which institutional bodies, whether they be corporate bodies or public bodies like institutions, whether they be hospitals or whether they be systems of education, schools, universities, the ways in which these bodies have a profound impact on us and the ways in which we might think about how the corporate body might form us, or how the biopower might form us through an education system or through hospitalization or whatever the case might be. Those bodies then become exploited and changed and transformed in various ways.

How does this relate to the Anthropocene? The body is, of course, central to any conception of the Anthropocene. It's the human body that now has an impact on the planet and how we use our body, whether that be to drive a car or choose to get on an airplane or collective bodies to mine minerals or natural resources or whatever the case may be. So, the body is still at the center of the gothic narrative, as it relates to the Anthropocene and to making choices about how we use our bodies and what we do with our bodies. Nowhere is this more prominent than in what we physically consume. Veganism, for instance, is a way in which we can conceptualize that relationship between the physical body of the individual and the Anthropocene. Choosing not to eat animal products, to have a plant-based diet, then becomes central to the ways in which we can think about methane emissions, the ways in which we can think about the treatment of animals, the exploitation of animals, the ways in which we use our bodies to avoid those forms of exploitation and those things that are going to further lead to the destruction of ecosystems. The body is still at the center of any Gothic narrative that might be related to the Anthropocene and to what we consume on a daily basis in our bodies that then becomes central to an ethical response to the Anthropocene. But in order to be able to have that ethical response, we also need the gothic narrative. We need the narrative of if we don't choose to act in this way, if we don't choose to stop eating animal products, if we don't choose to stop driving cars and getting on airplanes, then we are going to end up in ruin, we are going to end up in death and destruction. We need the gothic narrative in order to help us to conceptualize and to see that relationship between our own bodies and our

relation to the wider world, whether it be other animals, whether it be ecosystems, environmental change and ecology.

TD: I think you're right about the question of consumption, of contamination that involves all sorts of human and nonhuman bodies, and the gothic narrative can be a really helpful tool to question and explore these sorts of relationships, especially when it plays with the idea of the uncanny, for example, or fear and anxiety.

JE: Quite often, the gothic narrative is very much about the body consuming. The vampire consuming blood; the zombie consuming brains. We have this monstrous body in the vampire or the zombie that is consuming. I think we need to think about that for ourselves in relation to the Anthropocene, about our daily actions of consumption in relation to that. I think the gothic narrative can help us to see that.

Open Q&A session

Paul Mitchell: I'm really interested in this idea that you mentioned in the forthcoming book about we're living in gothic times and I was wondering, when you said that, if you'd agree that we're actually living in posthuman times and that the Gothic is a very useful tool to elaborate and to explore some of our experience of being posthuman. I was also interested in what you said about the differences between British and European and American Gothic, and wanted to ask if you think that actually there's a kind of coming together in the 21st century, that some of the preoccupations maybe of the American Gothic in the 19th century, as you said, with slavery and exploitation, have become now very much part of the European Gothic, and the other way around that the American Gothic is now beginning to elaborate ecological concerns, which it perhaps didn't do in its earlier manifestations.

JE: To answer the first part of your question, the Gothic has always been about what constitutes the human. Going back to Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), the transformative human body of the Count that appears to be human, to be Harker, and then suddenly transforms into the bat. What does that mean in terms of the transformation of the human? That word 'posthuman'—you're absolutely right—it's been used to describe things like zombification and it's been used to describe the cyborg. It's been used to describe all kinds of things, and I think that there are a couple of strands to posthuman narratives, some of which can be quite positive. To move into the posthuman could be moving beyond the political hierarchies related to patriarchy or racism or white supremacy. Moving into the posthuman could have a utopic vision of leaving these things behind us, which we all, of course, want to do. The flip side of that is the posthuman as machines or that which is not human controlling us in some ways and that's a much darker side to the posthuman. I think that there's a Gothic strand in that second part of the posthuman and the human losing touch with any kind of power over the technology that the human has created, for instance, and there's definitely a dark Gothic aspect to that. That answers the first part of your question.

The second part of your question is really pertinent. Right now, I'm editing a collection of essays called *Global Gothic*, which follows on Glennis Byron's book on global Gothic. Thinking about Gothic just in terms of national traditions or regional traditions is something that we need to move away from, and a focus on the Anthropocene or the Capitalocene or whatever we want to call it is very much part of that thinking about ecological collapse. It's not something we can do just within a national tradition of Gothic literature, and nor should we. I think that those kinds of categories, of national traditions, are important for literary history and thinking about the ways in which a Gothic tradition might develop in the United States from Charles Brockden Brown and Hawthorne and be distinct. But in a contemporary global world, those kinds of national divisions begin to break down and we see something that we can call a global form of Gothic that there's a mesh in which things are related and connected.

PM: I'll just follow up on what you were saying. I think what you said is really interesting, that the idea of the global Gothic is becoming something that, as you say, academics now are beginning to consider. I get the feeling that Gothic is becoming in a way more affirmative, that in the past, it's been obviously associated with horror and shock, celebrating, as Trang mentioned earlier, some of the more unfortunate things that happen. But actually, I get the feeling that the 21st century Gothic is becoming a lot more politically aware and that it's using some of those elements of shock and horror to make very important and affirmative political messages particularly about the Anthropocene and about ecological issues. Do you agree with that or do you see it in a different way?

JE: I absolutely agree with that. I think that Gothic affords us a narrative form and language to really articulate the horrors of environmental collapse or ecological destruction, and that then can lead to an ethical response. Once we can envision and articulate the narrative of ecological collapse and the death of humanity, it's only then that we can actually begin to really fully understand what that means and then act appropriately, so I do believe that there is an ethics to contemporary forms of global Gothic. Like we're saying earlier, we don't want to make broad generalizations about the Gothic. We have to take each text on its own merits, but I think there is a strand that you're pointing to that is really important for thinking about the ways in which we can draw upon the gothic narratives and the language of the Gothic to really help us to understand the crises that we're going through now and once understanding them, act appropriately in terms of ethical responses.

PM: Something you said right at the beginning really made think. You were talking about the beginning of the Anthropocene as a concept in talking about the Industrial Revolution and the Nuclear Age, and these kinds of very important moments historically, when we really started to impact upon the world and the planet. I was just wondering about the role of medicine, and if you have any thoughts about that, whether it is possible to conceive it as the beginning of the Anthropocene in terms of our ability to fight disease, for example, and the consequences that have in terms of population growth that actually has had a massive impact

on some of the problems that we now experience ecologically. It's not always necessarily related to things that we would consider to be historically negative events like Hiroshima, but there is a much longer projection in terms of the development of the Anthropocene which actually didn't necessarily begin with nefarious ends, that actually it began with the intention to save people's lives and to prevent suffering. Would you say that it's a justifiable sort of viewpoint?

JE: I think so, and it's a very pertinent question in time of COVID. Medicine is something that can be conceptualized in terms of something that's very positive, keeping people alive, and, of course, the Anthropocene is quite often about that relationship between life and death and blurring the boundaries between life and death. Medicine does that—medicine has the potential to keep people alive or indeed to kill people. Going back to *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, the doctor develops the medicine that then transforms him and his body. The way in which we could conceptualize medicine as having a profound impact on the world around us, not just on the individual's body, but how long the individual lives, things like overpopulation, as you're suggesting, then become really pertinent in terms of these questions about the Gothic and the Anthropocene. Overpopulation is something that we need to address in relation to the Anthropocene, and medicine in many ways is contributing to that. I'm not saying that we should stop practicing medicine in order to call a large number of people. Not at all. That's not what I'm saying but because medicine transforms our relationship between life and death, and the gothic narratives have always been about that complex relationship between life and death and breaking down the barriers between life and death.

Natalia Kopytko: I really enjoyed those points you emphasized. My question is whether the Gothic is naturally or used to be claustrophobic. We've been talking about the recent time and the pandemic and so forth. Do you think that there is a tendency to view the Gothic now as not so much claustrophobic but claustrophilic because we asked to be isolated and to social distance? My other question deals with the urban spaces. You've been talking about the monstrosity of the bodies and so forth. Do you think there is a relationship between the classical and urban setting in the Gothic? When we discuss classical Gothic, the settings are often mansions and castles, which are isolated from the rest of the country, but nowadays if you pay attention to postmodern tags, they tend to be more like urban Gothic in that there are urban spaces—like the city—that are monstrous themselves, and they transform the body, the spiritual world of the characters.

JE: Regarding the first part of your question about the claustrophobic dimensions of the Gothic, we definitely see that—going back to *The Castle of Otranto*, the underground passages, the dungeons, the buried alive, these kinds of Gothic tropes that we find in classical European Gothic texts. But then when we come to American Gothic, it's more the vast spaces that then become fearful. It's no longer the castle or the dungeon. It's the threatening forest. It's the threat of the frontier. It's the huge spaces that are untamed that then become a threat. We

move from a claustrophobic enclosed space to the untamed huge space that then becomes threatening within the early American Gothic narrative. That's certainly one of the distinctions and differences. That tradition of the urban Gothic that really begins in at least Anglophone literature in the 19th century, with texts by Oscar Wilde or Robert Louise Stevenson. I just referred to *Dracula* and *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* as classic urban Gothic texts set in central London, parts of it in Soho, and the ways in which the city then becomes this Gothic space. Stevenson was writing around the time of Jack the Ripper and the ways in which the urban location, the urban space, can create a certain anonymity for people that then leads on into the 20th century and in Gothic narratives about the serial killer. They're usually within urban settings, and the ways in which the serial killer can then blend into the populist, the large or urban population, and that fear of the monster as being invisible, as being no longer Frankenstein's Creature in which the monstrosity is inscribed on the body but within that urban Gothic context. Quite often, at least, in contemporary forms, there's that fear of the monster being your neighbor, of not knowing that this person is the serial killer, of the serial killer walking beside you on the street and having no idea that this person is dangerous or monstrous in any way so there's definitely a transformation there in terms of space.

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