

Abstracts:

Cat Lester

“Viewer, beware! You're in for a scare...’ Cyclic structures and uncanny aesthetics in the children's horror anthology series”.

Horror on television and horror for child audiences have both been subject to criticism and derision for not being as effective or ‘authentic’ as their cinematic or adult-oriented counterparts. From this we can deduce that horror television for children is the lowest of the low. In this talk I argue against this position with specific reference to televisual horror anthologies for children, including *Dramarama Spooky* (UK, 1983), *Goosebumps* (Canada, 1995-8) and *Creeped Out* (UK and Canada, 2017-). These programmes utilise an uncanny mode of horror that relies on suggestion, repetition, domestic settings and open-ended narratives. This allows them to work within the limitations of a child audience of address and the televisual medium, and offer children experiences that are simultaneously horrific, child-friendly and distinctly televisual.

Susanne Ylönen

“Sublated Death: Mastering Fear in Zombie Picture Books”

This presentation looks at the manner in which the violent and ugly death embodied by the zombie is brought into picture books. It especially focuses on the aesthetic choices that restrain the frightfulness of zombies in child-directed or child-related/childish stories. Next to aestheticizing cutification or beautification, it draws on the concept of aesthetic sublation, a concept that describes the humoristic, degrading corporeality of zombies when compared to, for example, the more sublime danger posed by evil characters and gothic settings.

Stine Liv Johansen

“Creepy and Disgusting. YouTube as a Site for Children’s Play with Everything Gross”

YouTube has become children’s favourite content provider and search engine. YouTube has become a place to be, out of reach of the adult gaze and a place, where ‘dark play’ (Sicart) can be watched and played out. Through examples taken from the channel of an 8-year old Danish youtuber as well as examples from television shows on DR, this presentation will show and discuss the role of the ‘disgusting’ and sometimes scary in young children’s everyday media. Further, the presentation will present the criteria for film classifying in a Danish context, with particular focus on guidelines for children and parents in relation to scary content.

Helle Strandgaard Jensen

“Horror Comics and *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*: Scary Stories on the Edge of Public Debates about Children’s Media Consumption 1945-1985”

In the 1950s a handful of critics were very vocal about how upsetting they found children’s consumption of horror comics. Likewise the film *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* played a small but distinct role in the early 1980’s debates about children and video violence. Nevertheless, despite what mainstream historiography wants us to believe, these ‘scary’ phenomena were not at the heart of adult’s concerns about children’s media consumption in the latter half of the twentieth century. In my paper, I will discuss how to improve our

understanding public debates about children's media products by leaving behind the previous theories about "moral panics". As an alternative to the theory, I want to demonstrate how new insights into public debates about children and media can be obtained by conducting a transnational and thoroughly contextualized analysis of the views of childhood and the role of media in children's lives held by various professional and political groups.

Mathias Clasen

"Children, Monsters, and Horror: An Evolutionary Perspective"

Children seem to be universally fascinated with monsters and frightening pretend-play. Why, from an evolutionary perspective, might that be? Based on findings from evolutionary psychology and evolutionary developmental psychology, I argue that children's fascination with monsters and horror may be an outgrowth of an evolved and adaptive disposition for imaginative threat simulation. Through simulation of threat scenarios, children may reap the benefits of psychological, behavioral, and moral calibration, learning vital lessons about coping mechanisms, psychological and behavioral dynamics, and cultural norms.

Michael Kamp

"The Joy of Fright"

Join Michael Kamp in a journey into the nitty-gritty technique of being a horror writer. How do you induce fear through the written word, what are the basic mechanisms in transforming fright theory into actual nightmares and why would you want to do such a thing to your readers in the first place? And are there special concerns or techniques when you're writing horror for a young audience?