FEAR

“The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown”\(^1\) writes H.P. Lovecraft, one of the masters of fantastic fiction, in his *Supernatural Horror in Literature*. For Guy de Maupassant, the French master of the genre, “[r]eal fear is a sort of reminiscence of fantastic terror of the past.”\(^2\) Rudolf Otto writes of *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* to emphasize the connections between mysticism and the fantastic. The theologian sees the affinity between the thrill experienced by a religious person (and the reader) faced with the unknown, and the manifestation of divinity, the coming in touch with the mystery of human existence. Conversely, Louis Vax and Roger Caillois put fear in a more secular perspective and depreciate its spiritual dimension. In Vax’s terms, fantastic literature and art have to introduce imaginary fears into the real world.\(^3\) Callois stresses the ludic character of fantastic fiction and suggests that the genre is predicated on its play with fear. It is with the significance of this powerful emotion for fantastic literature and other literary genres in mind that we invite reflection on fear in culture and literature in the eleventh issue of *Romanica Silesiana*.

Fear is an umbrella term which embraces a plethora of feelings such as terror, horror, fright, awe, trepidation, and anxiety. Among a great many writers who have explored its various faces there are Ann Radcliffe, M. G. Lewis, Edgar A. Poe, Bram Stoker, H. P. Lovecraft, Roberta Bloch, Graham Masterton, Stephen King, Dean Koontz, Thomas Ligotti, Jacques Cazotte, Prosper Mérimée, Auguste de Villiers de l’Isle Adam, Guy de Maupassant, Jean-Pierre Andrevon, Serge Bruscolo, Pierre Pelot, Jean Ray, Jean-Pierre Bours, Thomas Owen, Giovanni Papini, Dino Buzzati, Pedro A. de Alarcon, Gustavo Adolfo Becquer, Juan Rulfo, Jorge Luis Borgès, Julio Cortazar, Horacio Quiroga, Sylvina Ocampo, and many others.

Psychoanalysis has had a profound influence upon the evolution of fantastic literature by asserting the human as the main source of modern horror, and by exploring the *unheimlich*. As fear marks the return of the repressed, some of the recurrent motifs in horror literature represent common nightmares (being buried alive or having one’s body disfigured), complexes (i.e. the castration complex), and taboos (zoophilia, necrophilia, cannibalism). The

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\(^1\) Available: http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/11737-the-oldest-and-strongest-emotion-of-mankind-is-fear-and

\(^2\) Available: http://www.online-literature.com/maupassant/2986/

\(^3\) Louis Vax: *L’Art et la littérature fantastiques*, Fayard, Paris, 1960, s.6.
The main objective of this volume is to explore the evolution that horror literature and the concept of fear have undergone throughout centuries. We invite submissions on topics related – but by no means limited, to:

- „anxiogenic” literary genres (gothic novel, fantasy literature, horror fiction, thriller, dark fantasy, etc.)
- Fearsome spaces (ruins, castles, cemeteries, woods)
- 19th century fantastic literature (Romantic horror and the art of scaring; frenetic and clinical trends as the sources of angst; fear of the human being; fears of the end of the human race and the coming of its successor)
- new fantastic literature and the horror of everyday life
- frightful heroes (vampires, ghosts, monsters, doppelgangers, psychopaths)
- fear and its objects (mirrors, magic books, elixirs, portraits)
- fear and the cinema (Hammer studio productions, classic horror genre, gore, slasher movies, Spanish and Italian schools of horror, etc.)
- fear-evoking literary/cinematic techniques (gradation, warning signs, bus effect, jump scare, off-camera effects, zoom in/out, etc.)

Brief article abstracts, in French, Italian, Spanish, or English, of c. 200 words should be e-mailed to the editors by **October 15, 2015**. Notifications of acceptance will be sent by November 15, 2015. We also welcome reviews / summaries of recently published theoretical works related to the issues in question.

Submissions in French should be e-mailed to Katarzyna Gadomska at kagdomska@gmail.com
Submissions in English should be e-mailed to Zuzanna Szatanik at zuzanna.szatanik@us.edu.pl
Submissions in Spanish should be e-mailed to Ewelina Szymoniak at ewelinaszmoniak@interia.pl
Submissions in Italian should be e-mailed to Aneta Chmiel at a.chmiel88@gmail.com