

# Forms of Slovak Horror in the 21st Century

Marek Debnár氏特別講演



講演者：Assoc. Prof. Marek Debnár, PhD (Constantin the Philosopher University in Nitra)

講演題目：Forms of Slovak Horror in the 21st Century

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会場：東京大学本郷キャンパス 法文1号館 319教室

進行：阿部賢一(東京大学) 使用言語：英語

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Bio:

Assoc. Prof. Marek Debnár, PhD (b. 1979) is a Slovak scholar specializing in aesthetics, philosophy, semiotics, media and digital humanities, with a particular focus on authorship, autobiography, and digital textuality. He is also a literary critic and publicist, with his research interests spanning Slovak minor genres – including horror, on which he contributed a chapter to *Contemporary Slavic Horror across Media: Cursed Zones* (Manchester University Press, 2025) – and literary journalism, particularly narrative techniques in Slovak reportages. His work also examines the language of disinformation and propaganda, analysing how narrative, stylistic, and aesthetic strategies are employed to influence public discourse. Assoc. Prof. Debnár earned his PhD in systematic philosophy from Comenius University in Bratislava and completed his habilitation in aesthetics at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, where he currently teaches at the Department of Journalism and New Media. He was principal investigator of *DISPRO – Digital Collection of Slovak Prose* and is a recipient of the NextGenerationEU Research Excellence Fellowship. He has undertaken research stays across Europe and the United States and has published with Peter Lang, Manchester University Press, Palgrave Macmillan and other leading international academic publishers.

## Abstract

Visiting Associate Professor Marek Debnár, PhD, from Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra will, in his presentation, explore the emergence and development of horror as a distinct literary genre in Slovakia, with particular emphasis on its transformation during the first two decades of the 21st century.

Although motifs of natural mysticism, the supernatural, and horror can be traced deep into the history of Slovak folklore and literature, including oral traditions, as well as into literary production – most notably in the lyrical prose of František Švantner – the horror genre as such remained, especially during the totalitarian socialist period of the 20th century, a marginal form situated at the periphery of literary interest. Political and cultural conditions prior to the changes of 1989 revolution tended to limit the development of fantastic forms of writing, which were often regarded as “low” or ideologically unsuitable and suspect genres.

The presentation will address the gradual formation of Slovak horror after the political transformation, specifically from the 2000s through to the progressive consolidation and increasing popularization of the genre in the 2010s. Particular attention will be paid to key milestones such as the anthology *Farby strachu (Colours of Fear: An Anthology of Slovak Horror, 2011)* and the scholarly volume *Strach a hrôza (Fear and Horror, 2011)*, which together contributed to the rehabilitation of horror both as a literary form and as an object of critical reflection.



The central focus of the presentation will be the work of Jozef Karika, currently the most prominent Slovak author in the field of horror. His novels – especially *Trblina (The Rift, 2016)* – have brought the genre to a broader readership. The analysis examines the philosophical and aesthetic dimensions of Karika’s writing, highlighting his synthesis of Anglophone horror conventions with domestic folklore, social realities and a strong localization of narrative settings.

The presentation aims to situate Slovak horror within its broader historical and cultural context, while also suggesting that it should be approached not only as a form of entertainment, but also as a mode of speculative imagination that reflects certain social and political concerns.

