



<http://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz>

## ***ResearchSpace@Auckland***

### **Copyright Statement**

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

This thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognise the author's right to be identified as the author of this thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from their thesis.

To request permissions please use the Feedback form on our webpage.

<http://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/feedback>

### **General copyright and disclaimer**

In addition to the above conditions, authors give their consent for the digital copy of their work to be used subject to the conditions specified on the [Library Thesis Consent Form](#) and [Deposit Licence](#).

### **Note : Masters Theses**

The digital copy of a masters thesis is as submitted for examination and contains no corrections. The print copy, usually available in the University Library, may contain corrections made by hand, which have been requested by the supervisor.

**HOUSES AND HORROR: A SOCIOCULTURAL STUDY OF SPANISH  
AND AMERICAN WOMEN WRITERS**

**Clara Pallejá-López**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature,  
The University of Auckland, 2010

## ABSTRACT

This thesis is a comparative study of haunted house fiction written by women in Spain and the United States from around 1900 onwards. It focuses on the aspect of sentience in buildings, establishing a connection between women's sociocultural history and transformations in the trope of the haunted house. This study highlights the vague presence of the haunted house in Spanish fiction when compared to American literature, and presents two reasons that might account for this circumstance. The first seems to be an overall discouragement of horror and fantasy in Spain that can be traced back at least to the times of the Spanish Empire. The second, which stands as the more important, is the particular situation of women in Spain, where a confluence of sociocultural factors upheld the values of domesticity for longer than in the United States, notably the repression enforced by the Franco dictatorship until 1975.

I posit that the presence of the house in horror fiction grows in relation to women's envisioning of the home as the source of their oppression, and that this process is further nourished by underlying inherited anxieties resulting from women's legacy of domesticity. In particular, this study maintains that the sentient house is consolidated in literature the moment that women's primeval need for home enters into conflict with a rejection of domesticity. In order to illustrate this theory, I review work by American writers such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Elia W. Peattie, Shirley Jackson and Anne Rivers Siddons, and compare their narratives to those of Emilia Pardo Bazán, Carmen de Burgos, Mercè Rodoreda, Carmen Martín Gaité, Pilar Pedraza and Cristina Fernández Cubas in Spain. This thesis contends that Spanish horror literature presents belated but parallel transformations in the trope of the sentient house, which confirm the intertwining of this trope with women's culture across time and space.

*To Jaime Pallejá Martínez, my father, and to María Elena López Benlliure, my mother.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with great pleasure that I am able to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to my supervisor, Jan Cronin, to whom I will always be indebted for her guidance, wisdom, dedication to my work, and, most of all, endless support. I would also like to sincerely thank my co-supervisor, Christine Arkininstall, whose encouragement was crucial, both when I began my doctoral studies and throughout the writing of this thesis. I also want to thank Mike Hanne, who coordinated my supervising team and followed the progress of this thesis over the last four years. Warm thanks must also go to Gwyn Fox, who kindly proofread my work with her characteristic prowess, insightfulness and humour. I am also very grateful to Wendy-Llyn Zaza for her generous support during the last days before submission.

I must also express my gratitude to the Spanish Department in the School of European Languages and Literatures at the University of Auckland. The Spanish Department warmly welcomed me as a colleague on my arrival in New Zealand, and years later supported me in my doctoral studies. I feel very privileged for having been part of this remarkable team.

I would like to mention that I am very thankful to the University of Auckland for fully financing my doctoral studies through a Doctoral Scholarship.

Lastly, I must express my deepest gratitude to Santiago Franco Aixelá, Vanessa Enríquez Raído and Frank Austermuehl. Their friendship, support, and reassurance have been of enormous value to me, especially during the writing of this thesis.

# CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b>	ii
<b>DEDICATION</b>	iii
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	iv
<b>CONTENTS</b>	v
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	1
<b>1. HOME, FEAR AND THE HUMAN MIND</b>	10
1.1 The Significance of Home to the Human Mind	11
1.2 The Appeal of Horror	28
<b>2. THE HOUSE IN AMERICAN HORROR FICTION</b>	47
2.1 Early Approximations to the Sentient House in Fiction	53
2.2 Social Changes for American Women after the Wars: The Big Step	67
2.3 Shirley Jackson and the Two-Faced House	83
2.3.a The Scission of Eleanor: A Representation of the American Schizophrenia	98
2.3.b A Comparison and a Contrast between <i>The Haunting of Hill House</i> and Relevant Haunted House Narratives	109
2.4 The Reaffirmation of the Pattern: Sentience in <i>The House Next Door</i>	120
<b>3. THE HOUSE IN SPANISH FANTASY AND HORROR FICTION</b>	140
3.1 The Repression of the Fantastic in Spain: A Historical Overview	145

3.2	Early Women Writers of Horror: Entrapment Focalised through Male Intervention	157
3.2.a	Emilia Pardo Bazán: Early Narratives of Fear and Entrapment	160
3.2.b	Carmen de Burgos: A Fear of Settling	176
3.3	The Second Republic and the Franco Dictatorship: From Freedom to Recontainment	187
3.3.a	Mercè Rodoreda and Exile: Fantasies of Boundaries and Displacement	202
3.3.b	Carmen Martín Gaité: Writing from the Homeland	230
<b>4.</b>	<b>THE EMERGENCE OF THE SENTIENT HOUSE IN CONTEMPORARY SPANISH FICTION</b>	<b>258</b>
4.1	Pilar Pedraza: The Fulfilment of the Gothic Setting	261
4.2	Cristina Fernández Cubas: The Arrival of Sentience in Spanish Fiction	282
	<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>299</b>
	<b>WORKS CITED</b>	<b>302</b>