



8th June 2023

15:25 – 15:45

Speaker: Dr. Roos Slegers

Title: Racism, conspiracy and reptilians: diversity in dark fantasy

H.P. Lovecraft's brand of dark fantasy has profoundly influenced popular culture and authors ranging from Luis Borges to Stephen King. More recently, fantasy authors like N.K. Jemisin have drawn attention to the problematic aspects of Lovecraft's writing: Lovecraft's monsters, Jemisin shows, were an expression and embodiment of his racist fears. Jemisin was the first black woman to win both the prestigious Nebula and the Hugo awards and is considered one of the most important fantasy authors of the 21st Century. Her success has caused a backlash among certain fantasy fans who feel threatened in "their" traditionally predominantly white genre. Since fantasy and horror are commonly regarded as "genre fiction" (and hence not proper "literature"), Lovecraft's influence and Jemisin's reframing of his racist monsters receive little attention in academic circles. I propose to take seriously both the genre of dark fantasy in general and the tropes and monsters we have inherited from Lovecraft in particular. This will allow us not only to do justice to important and widely read texts, but also to better understand the roots of certain contemporary conspiracy theories.