

14th Annual Louisiana Studies Conference

“Supernatural Louisiana”

September 17, 2022

Conference Keynote Presentation: The Winnsboro Easter Rock Ensemble led by Hattie Addison Burkhalter

Moderated by Susan Roach, Professor of English, Emerita,
Louisiana Tech University

Conference Co-Chairs: Lisa Abney, Faculty Facilitator for Academic Research and
Community College Outreach and Professor of English, Northwestern
State University

Jason Church, Chief, Technical Services, National Center for
Preservation Technology and Training

Daniel Gordy, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice and English,
Northwestern State University

Charles Pellegrin, Professor of History and Director of the Southern
Studies Institute, Northwestern State University

Shane Rasmussen, Director of the Louisiana Folklife Center and
Professor of English, Northwestern State University

Conference Programming: Jason Church, Chair

Shane Rasmussen

Conference Hosts: Scott Burrell, Director, The Dear School of Creative and Performing Arts and
Professor of Theatre. Northwestern State University

Leslie Gruesbeck, Associate Professor of Art and Chair, Department of Fine
+ Graphic Arts, Northwestern State University

Francene Lemoine, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Northwestern
State University

NSU Louisiana High School Essay Contest: Shane Rasmussen, Chair

Lisa Abney

Jason Church

Rebecca Macijeski, Creative Writing Program
Coordinator and Associate Professor of English,
Northwestern State University

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Saturday Luncheon: LaQueitchi's Soul Food

Conference Photographer: Leah Jackson, Director of Public Information and Media Relations,
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Dr. Susan Roach, Professor Emerita of English, Louisiana Tech University
Louisiana Folklife Center, NSU
National Center for Preservation Technology and Training
NSU Center for Inclusion and Diversity
NSU College of Arts and Sciences
NSU Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies
NSU Office of Recruiting
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Special thanks to the many other people who graciously donated their time and talents to the Conference.

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

Please note: All events take place in CAPA (Creative and Performing Arts)

Saturday, September 17, 2022

8:00-9:00 a.m.	Conference Registration, CAPA, 2 nd Floor
9:00-9:15 a.m.	Conference Welcome, CAPA 206
9:30-10:45 a.m.	Presentation Session 1, CAPA
11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.	Keynote Presentation, Magale Recital Hall The Winnsboro Easter Rock Ensemble led by Hattie Addison Burkhalter Moderated by Susan Roach, Professor of English, Emerita, Louisiana Tech University
12:00-12:30 p.m.	Awards Ceremony, Magale Recital Hall 14 th Annual NSU Louisiana High School Essay Contest
12:30-1:45 p.m.	Light Lunch and Reception
2:00-3:15 p.m.	Presentation Session 2, CAPA
3:30-4:45 p.m.	Presentation Session 3, CAPA
4:45 p.m.	Conference Close

SCHEDULE

Please note: All events take place in CAPA (Creative and Performing Arts)

Saturday, September 17, 2022

8:00-9:00 a.m.	Conference Registration	<i>CAPA, 2nd Floor</i>
9:00-9:15 a.m.	Conference Welcome	<i>CAPA 206</i>
9:30-10:45 a.m.	Presentation Session 1	
<i>Panel 1A</i>	<i>Lost Louisiana Locations</i>	<i>CAPA 205</i>

Session Chair: Jason Church

Jason Church, National Center for Preservation Technology and Training

“The Loss of Soul: The Vanishing Juke Joints and Dancehalls of Natchitoches Parish”

Christopher Gilson, Northwestern State University of Louisiana
Gil Gilson, Independent Scholar

“Famous and Forgotten: The Lost Parks of Historic Natchitoches”

Gloria Church, University of Louisiana at Lafayette in partnership with Florida State University Department of Anthropology

“The Mortar and Brick Analysis of Archeological Remains from Evergreen Plantation”

Panel 1B Ghost Stories

CAPA 206

Session Chair: Jade Jenkinson

Jade Jenkinson, University of Nottingham

“Putting ghosts to bed: *Zombie Island* and the troubled origins of Louisiana Gothic”

Kathryn Gentry, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

“The History of Delphine LaLaurie and the Occupants Haunting Her Home”

Debbie Smith, National Center for Preservation Technology and Training

“Isabella the Ghost: An NSU Tradition”

Panel 1C Stories of the Supernatural

CAPA 207

Session Chair: Pete Gregory

Pete Gregory, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

“Change and Continuity: Supernatural Stories in the Indo-Hispanic Community along the Sabine River”

Bruce R. Magee, Louisiana Tech University

Stephen Payne, Writer

“Djabe’s Marriage”

Katrina Jordan, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

Debra Jo Hailey, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

Michelle Fazio-Brunson, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

“Fairy Tales, Fables, and Folk Tales with a Louisiana Twist”

11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. *Keynote Presentation*

Magale Recital Hall

The Winnsboro Easter Rock Ensemble led by Hattie Addison

Burkhalter: Demonstration and Discussion

Moderated by Susan Roach, Professor of English, Emerita,

Louisiana Tech University

12:00-12:30 p.m. *Awards Ceremony* *Magale Recital Hall*
14th Annual NSU Louisiana High School Essay Contest

12:30-1:45 p.m. **Light Lunch and Reception**

2:00-3:15 p.m. **Presentation Session 2**

Panel 2A ***Political Pipeline*** ***CAPA 205***

Session Chair: John W. Sutherlin

John W. Sutherlin, University of Louisiana Monroe

“An Analysis of Environmental Justice in Louisiana: Toxic Politics and Waste Mismanagement”

Ashley Steenson, The University of Alabama

“Theodore Roosevelt & John M. Parker”

Michelle Fazio-Brunson, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

Katrina Jordan, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

Debra Jo Hailey, Northwestern State University

Taylor McFall, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

Martha Hopewell, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

“Remapping Louisiana’s Cradle to Prison Pipeline to a Cradle to College Pipeline: A Collaborative Early Childhood Education Service Learning Project”

Panel 2B ***Louisiana Television and Beyond*** ***CAPA 206***

Session Chair: Jerry L. Parker

Jerry L. Parker, Southeastern Louisiana University/Morris Brown College

“Toward a theory of ‘Supreme Leadership’: An analysis of the leadership style of Fiona Goode”

Fran Middleton, Independent Researcher

“The Pseudo-supernatural in the *Ghosts of Morgan City’s* Episode, *The Mist*”

Ruth Foote, Independent Scholar

“Louisiana’s Twilight Zone”

Panel 2C Supernatural Echoes***CAPA 207***

Session Chair: Heather Salter-Dromm

Heather Salter Dromm, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

“Supernatural Acadiana in James Lee Burke’s Dave Robicheaux Novels”

Bernard Gallagher, LSU Alexandria

“Eschatology, Humility and the Necessity of Faith in the Fiction of James Lee Burke”

Delaney McLemore, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

“Two Grams”

3:30-4:45 p.m. Presentation Session 3***Panel 3A Voodoo and Vampires******CAPA 205***

Session Chair: Bruce A. Craft

Bruce A. Craft, Southeastern Louisiana University

“Virgins or Vampires: The Real Untold Story of the Casket Girls of New Orleans”

Trisha A. Bonham, Bowling Green State University

“The Marie I Know: Haunting Laveau Through the Contradictions of the Otherworld”

JoAnn St. Clair, Cane River Creole National Historical Park

“Hoodoo, Voodoo, or Vodou? The Miraculous Medal at Magnolia Plantation”

Panel 3B Traditional Landscapes***CAPA 206***

Session Chair: Maida Owens

Maida Owens, Louisiana Folklife Program

“Louisiana Culture and Environmental Changes”

Christopher Jay, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

“Taste and See: Supernatural Stories from Three Northwest Louisiana Chefs”

Keagan LeJeune, McNeese State University

“Some Exploration of Landscape and Healing Traditions during COVID-19”

Panel 3C Sacred, Supernatural, and Symbolic

CAPA 207

Session Chair: Lisa A. Kirby

Lisa A. Kirby, Collin College

“Sacred, Supernatural, and Symbolic: The Power of the Swamp in Louisiana Literature, Culture, and Imagination”

David Middleton, Poet in Residence Emeritus, Nicholls State University

John P. Doucet, Nicholls State University

“‘Holy Ground’: Science, Poetry, Wonder, and the Search for Divine Purpose and Order in Louisiana”

Derek Foster, Upper Iowa University, Alexandria

“They remember and whisper together”: The Supernatural in Grau’s “The Black Prince”

4:45 p.m.

Conference Close

PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

Trisha A. Bonham, Bowling Green State University

“The Marie I Know: Haunting Laveau Through the Contradictions of the Otherworld”

Marie Laveau remains an enigma, and even in death, I think she prefers it that way. Her story has been twisted, turned, and transformed in time by those claiming to know and understand her.

This paper examines the contradictions surrounding the character of this remarkable woman—a free woman of color and substance in the antebellum South (and also a slaveholder herself); an illegitimate property owner who was most likely illiterate; the “Voodoo Queen” of New Orleans even as she was a devout Catholic; a common law wife to a white man when interracial marriages were illegal; a woman feared in the modern age who actually served the poor, imprisoned, and ill. Perhaps the most remarkable contradiction, however, is how she continues to haunt my imagination, when in fact it is I who is haunting her. I have appropriated her story and inveigled it in terms of race, gender, ethnicity, class, heteronormativity, colonialism, patriarchy, and slavery; found discrepancies, interpreted history, and built a country through her triumphs and troubles; and acculturated this Senegalese/Spanish/French/Native American/Creole woman into whatever amalgamation best serves my purpose. She haunts me—I who am nothing, have done nothing interesting, have caused no controversies, and will be forgotten in time. So, I must haunt her, translate her into Moten’s violence in the archive, sell her gris gris, and steal her likeness as I create her out of the Otherworld. Because I am a thing seeing things, I am violence in the archive too.

Michelle Fazio-Brunson, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

Katrina Jordan, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

Debra Jo Hailey, Northwestern State University

Taylor McFall, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

Martha Hopewell, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

“Remapping Louisiana’s Cradle to Prison Pipeline to a Cradle to College Pipeline: A Collaborative Early Childhood Education Service Learning Project”

This presentation will describe our Early Childhood Education service learning project to remap Louisiana’s Cradle to Prison Pipeline to a Cradle to College Pipeline. We will highlight our effort to make and distribute family literacy bags and tutor children from poverty-stricken families in local schools in order to boost their literacy skills and help them be successful learners. We will also describe other service learning/early intervention efforts across campus, including NSU Athletics, and the community aimed at improving young children’s lives.

Gloria Church, University of Louisiana at Lafayette in partnership with Florida State University Department of Anthropology

“The Mortar and Brick Analysis of Archeological Remains from Evergreen Plantation”

During the Summer of 2022, I worked with archeologist Jayur Mehta from Florida State University on an archeological excavation at Evergreen Plantation in St. John the Baptist Parish, Louisiana. The original goal of the summer was to explore the idea of a church in the slave quarters. We made the discovery of a chimney that matched the architecture structure of the standing slave cabins. In the chimney ruins test units, many bricks as well as mortar samples, were uncovered. After performing an acid digestion mortar analysis, a conclusion was drawn that the mortar is lime based with silt from a river. Considering the history of lime mortar, we can assume a range of dates in which the building could have been built. Since the silt particles in the mortar are from a river, I can predict based on the location of the plantation where the silt was taken from. The bricks found in each test units were categorized based on Munsell soil color chart, the Mohs Hardness Scale, and physical characteristics observed from close-up surface pictures. This brick analysis gives information to prove what type of bricks were found as well as what purpose the bricks would give in the found archeological remains of a chimney fall.

Jason Church, National Center for Preservation Technology and Training

“The Loss of Soul: The Vanishing Juke Joints and Dancehalls of Natchitoches Parish”

This presentation will address the loss of historic live music venues that were located in Natchitoches Parish from the 1940’s until the 2020’s. NCPTT is working to document the buildings and the stories of juke joints and dancehalls that were once the social cornerstones of the community both rural and urban. The author, with the help of researcher Sukrit Sen, are documenting these vanishing structures using laser scanning, photogrammetry, and photography. Starting with social media as a platform the team has located venue owners, patrons, employees, and musicians to conduct oral histories on where these important cultural venues were located and how they thrived in the community.

Bruce A. Craft, Southeastern Louisiana University

“Virgins or Vampires: The Real Untold Story of the Casket Girls of New Orleans”

The story of *les filles a la cassette* is part fact and part myth morphed into urban legend. These “young women with suitcases” (*les filles a la cassette*) arrived in New Orleans in 1728 as intended brides for the men of the French colony of Louisiana. How this story of church and state sanctioned colonial sex trafficking became romanticized into a Gothic tale of vampires and supernatural occurrences at the Ursuline Convent in the middle of the French Quarter spellbinds tipsy New Orleans tourists and provides significant fodder for scholars to examine how media continually refashions the cultural narrative. This remediation of the “reality” of the Casket Girls (an early 18th century linguistic bastardization and Anglicization of *les filles a la cassette*) moves through a series of mediums from oral history to myth to ghost tour script to online magazine advertising to vampire wiki-fandom to a fictional streaming raucous street festival celebrating a modern-day metaphor of female empowerment.

Channeling Plato’s theory of mimesis and Marshall McLuhan’s notions of mediums, messages, and erasures, Michel de Certeau in *The Practice of Everyday Life* points out that the narrative of a culture “ceaselessly reproduces and accumulates copies of stories.” Suggesting that this

cultural narrative in the media context transforms “seeing into believing” and creates layers of “myth,” de Certeau concludes: “Our society becomes a recited society in three senses: it is defined by *stories* (*récits*, the fables constituted by our various media), by *citations* of stories, and by the interminable *recitation* of stories. The *récits* of the Casket Girls provide a template for examining the mythic (re)making process relative to the cultural narrative of New Orleans. The relationship between contemporary technology and a romanticized past also becomes a critical part of the mythology of digital New Orleans represented by *les filles a la cassette*. Leo Marx argues in *The Machine in the Garden* that modern society often longs for a return to a pastoral ideal due to the incessant creep of technology. This move away from the “artificial” and toward the “real” is symbolic – and often mythically-oriented through the “perversion” of romanticism. This presentation focuses on how the cultural narrative of the Casket Girls capitalizes on this mythic return to and romantic perversion of an 18th century idyll in an intertextual tale rife with remediation and *recitation* of stor(ies).

Heather Salter Dromm, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

“Supernatural Acadiana in James Lee Burke’s Dave Robicheaux Novels”

Many elements of the supernatural in Burke’s Dave Robicheaux novels are based on Louisiana folk beliefs and practices. One example of a recurring folk superstition is the wearing of a dime on a string either around the ankle or around the neck to ward off evil spirits. In his description of bait shop business partner Batist in *A Morning for Flamingos*, Robicheaux narrates, “He wore a dime on a string around his neck to keep away the gris-gris, an evil spell.” According to Patricia Gaitley, “The effect [of including such practice in the novels] is to provide a sense of a community in which folk belief still plays a functional part. Robicheaux is aware of the power that folk belief can have over those who believe in it.” However, while Robicheaux may be skeptical about the folk beliefs of others, he, too, believes in the supernatural. Robicheaux narrates his beliefs in the supernatural in *New Iberia Blues* when he talks about seeing the ghost of his father “who died in an offshore blowout” and when he narrates the following: “my murdered wife, Annie spoke to me in the rain, and dead members of my platoon called me on the phone during electrical storms.” In *Glass Rainbow*, Robicheaux sees a ghost steamboat that appears at moments when his life is in danger. The idea is that the boat is meant to ferry his soul over to the other side. My aim in my paper is to further explore folk motifs of the supernatural in the fictional Acadiana that Burke creates in his Dave Robicheaux novels. My goal is to not just explore the beliefs of the victims, sidekicks, and evil doers, but those of Robicheaux as well.

Ruth Foote, Independent Scholar

“Louisiana’s Twilight Zone”

When he arrived at the small church, everyone smiled and welcomed him, shook his hand, and some even called him by name. They asked how he had been doing. He felt somewhat awkward because he had never stepped foot in that church before. He did not know any of the parishioners.

Yet they knew him.

Not only had he never been in that church previously, he had also never been in that state. He was from Louisiana, and was only there by happenstance because of his job. He had decided to incorporate Sunday worship into his weekend schedule. He was still a child who had not departed from how his mother had raised him.

He told me once, that to be a Black man in today's world, you had to live in constant rage. But that day he was at peace, despite his unease, and enjoyed fellowship with the congregation. I was not sure what to make of his story. He was adamant that he had never been there before, and he was adamant that no one knew he was going. As I recall, he had randomly selected the church from his hotel telephone book.

Years later, I was at my close friend's mother's house, and our conversation reminded me of his visit to that strange little church. I realized that her mother may be able to finally solve the riddle. She was from the generation that relied on *traiteurs*, healers, and even mystics.

I relayed the story, and she responded without hesitation: *Whenever you go somewhere that you never been before, and people know you, it means you're gonna die.*

I could shudder just thinking about it. In time, it became one of several stories and encounters that I tucked away in my mind—filed under *Louisiana's Twilight Zone*.

Derek Foster, Upper Iowa University, Alexandria

“They remember and whisper together”: The Supernatural in Grau's “The Black Prince”

One salient feature of literature in the South is a tendency to prefer myth to reality. Shirley Ann Grau employs this technique in her “The Black Prince,” published in 1955. Grau's story follows Alberta and Stanley Albert Thompson, who live in the poorest parish in the state. Alberta's and Stanley's neighbors have long considered them both to be ideal partners for marriage. However, when the two fall in love and then marry, the town turns against them out of jealousy. Through a series of unfortunate events that depart from what is both usual and normal, life in the town does not go as well as the people desire.

Historically, Grau often considered her characters to be members of a community—not just individuals. To that end, Alberta and Stanley are more than just prototypes of their poor, Black community because, by the end of the story, they become mythical creatures. In “The Black Prince,” Grau employs standard folktale elements—ordinary people who live everyday life, striving to overcome every obstacle. As Alberta and Stanley struggle not only with each other, but also with the town, they appear to be caught up in a motionless state. However, they soon find their lives altered when abrupt, supernatural change hits them.

Bernard Gallagher, LSU Alexandria

“Eschatology, Humility and the Necessity of Faith in the Fiction of James Lee Burke”

Susan Dunne of the *Hartford Courant* complains that James Lee Burke's fascination with the supernatural in *Jolie Blonde's Bounce* nearly ruins the novel and that he is better off leaving "heaven and hell" out of his subsequent novels.¹ However, Burke ignores her complaint and with good reason. What writing 23 Robicheaux novels has taught him is that there is no end to the problem of evil. In fact, Burke agrees with interviewer Dave Masciotra who says that "Evil is always stalking the night."² Consequently, the idea of realistic detective fiction becomes problematic for Burke. He understands that narratives about evil are always larger than the individual detective and the isolated events of a particular crime. Burke's solution to this problem is both simple and straightforward. He increases "the amount of supernatural content in his work" (Seattle Book Mama)³. In fact, Burke himself says, "I believe there is a world of spirits right beyond the physical world, but I can't prove that" (Masciotra).⁴ What my paper proposes to do, then, is to trace Burke's moving away from the police procedural and the hard-boiled detective novel to a form of the detective novel that investigates the nature of evil, the need for faith and humility, and the final destiny of the soul and of humankind.

Kathryn Gentry, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

"The History of Delphine LaLaurie and the Occupants Haunting Her Home"

The LaLaurie Mansion is considered one of many haunted locations in New Orleans. This oral presentation takes a deep dive into the former lady of the house, Madame Delphine LaLaurie, describing her upbringing, marriages, and descension into madness. This descension into madness eventually lead to not only the murders and mistreatment of slaves but also a mysterious fire at the mansion that threatened to erase history. However, emerging from the fire, are stories of the ghosts of former slaves haunting LaLaurie's former home, who unabashedly make their presence known to occupants throughout its 200-year history.

Christopher Gilson, Northwestern State University of Louisiana
Gil Gilson, Independent Scholar

"Famous and Forgotten: The Lost Parks of Historic Natchitoches"

Between 1922 and 1933, the city of Natchitoches celebrated the opening of three public spaces: the Tourist Park, the Sunken Garden, and the Bathing Beach on Cane River. These remarkable places—one famous, one remembered, and one entirely forgotten—have shaped the way residents experience the outdoors in Natchitoches, enriching public life and encouraging

¹ Dunne, Susan. "Supernatural Secondary in First-Rate Mystery." *Hartford Courant*. June 8, 2002. [SUPERNATURAL SECONDARY IN FIRST-RATE MYSTERY – Hartford Courant](#)

² Masciotra, Dave. "James Lee Burke on Art, Fascism, and the Hijacking of American Christianity." *Crime Reads*. August 12, 2020. <https://crimereads.com/james-lee-burke-on-art-fascism-and-the-hijacking-of-american-christianity/>

³ Seattle Book Mama. "Every Cloak Rolled in Blood." May 25, 2022. [Every Cloak Rolled in Blood, by James Lee Burke***-**** | Seattle Book Mama \(seattlebookmamablog.org\)](#)

⁴ Masciotra, Dave. "Into the Noir Mystic: A Conversation about Injustice, Evil and Redemption with James Lee Burke." September 9, 2012. <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/into-the-noir-mystic-a-conversation-about-injustice-evil-and-redemption-with-james-lee-burke/>

economic development. This presentation traces the history of these public spaces, examining why they were built, how they were funded, and what remains of them today. All three remain important one century later, as local agencies wrestle with the completion of a new Master Plan, an Economic Development Plan, and an Outdoor Recreation Plan. Reflection on this history affords perspective on the role of a uniquely “supernatural” space—the humble city park.

Pete Gregory, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

“Change and Continuity: Supernatural Stories in the Indo-Hispanic Community along the Sabine River”

The Spanish colonial population along the Sabine River in Northwestern Louisiana maintained its dialect until this century. As language death begins to erase the usage of the Spanish language it is interesting to see the persistence of older supernatural stories in English and their function in a changing cultural tradition.

Examples will be discussed: The Mal de Ojo (the Evil Eye), La Llorona (the Weeping Woman), and La Mujer Vestida de Negra (the Lady in Black).

Christopher Jay, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

“Taste and See: Supernatural Stories from Three Northwest Louisiana Chefs”

As an aspiring food writer, I spent my 30s driving around Northwest Louisiana, visiting far-flung eateries and writing them up for local publications. In that time, I encountered several chefs and restaurateurs who told me that their signature recipes were of supernatural origin.

At Moody’s Café in Minden, proprietor Ernestine Moody shared her belief that God sent her a recipe for fluffy cornbread, which she calls “heavenly pan bread.” This event took place around 1981, sometime shortly after she took over her grandfather’s restaurant. At the time, she said, she didn’t know how to make cornbread.

“I tried cooking that, and it was just an absolute mess. I almost cried. I sat out in that dining room one day and I said ‘Lord, please, I know you can do it. Give me a recipe, so that I can cook some cornbread that these folks will enjoy.’”

In Shreveport, Odis “Big O” Johnson told me that the recipe for his famous tartar sauce came to him in a dream. In the dream, he saw himself shopping for tartar sauce ingredients, even though he’d never made his own tartar sauce.

“I woke up and said: ‘I’m making my own tartar sauce today,’” Johnson said.

Also in Minden, revered tamale maker Margie Emerson tells every customer that God showed her how to make tamales in 1977—Emerson hands out a sheet containing this story with tamale orders. That sheet reads, in part:

“The recipe came from a prayer that she prayed for a better living. God showed her in a dream, and she went from God speaking to her.”

This photo-filled presentation will briefly discuss these three chefs and their divine culinary creations while contextualizing their stories within the broader context of Black foodways in North Louisiana.

Jade Jenkinson, University of Nottingham

“Putting ghosts to bed: *Zombie Island* and the troubled origins of Louisiana Gothic”

“This is more haunted stuff than I really wanted!” Daphne cries in *Scooby-Doo on Zombie Island* (1998) where, for once, the monsters are real. Set in a New Orleans bayou, the film capitalizes on the island’s settler, plantation, and Civil War histories to terrify its young audience. Whilst other Scooby-Doo narratives rely on the explained Gothic, *Zombie Island* is keen to reiterate that its ghosts cannot be unmasked, exemplifying the film’s troubling relationship with a history that cannot be put to bed. *Zombie Island* is part of a 1990s revival of the popular Hanna-Barbera cartoon via feature-length films. Indeed, these productions emulate an American Gothic ethos by calling on regional cultures and folklores to add authenticity to the mysteries. Just as Shaggy and Scooby munch their way through Cajun peppers, crawfish and gumbo, the film’s monsters—zombie tourists, vengeful pirates, settler werewolves, flesh-eating alligators and wax voodoo dolls—all add regional “flavor.” By delving into the origins of these Gothic tropes and the Louisianan histories to which they refer, I reveal how the film both capitalizes on and simultaneously “disremembers” the past it portrays. Such misrepresentations not only fit with Slavoj Žižek’s theory of the symbolic versus the spectral history, in which Gothic tropes are sustained by traumatic histories that “continue[...] not to take place” (Žižek, 28); *Zombie Island* also follows a wider purview of “Southern Redemption narratives” showcased on film and television during the Clinton era (Graham, 348). Yet it is not enough to establish the haunting “absence/presence” (as theorized by Renee Bergland and Toni Morrison) of the Indigenous, Black, and Creole narratives that the film removes. I also consider “contemporary contestations, contentions, and traumas” happening on the land to demonstrate how the film itself continues to legitimize the structures of settler-colonialism via the erasure of certain histories (C. Gomez, 213).

Works Cited

- C. Gomez, Rain Prud’homme. 2015. ‘Crossin’ the Log: Death, Regionality and Race in Jeremy Love’s Bayou’. In *Undead Souths: The Gothic and Beyond in Southern Literature and Culture*, 211–24. Southern Literary Studies. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.
- Graham, Allison. 2008. ‘The South in Popular Culture’. In *A Companion to the Literature and Culture of the American South*, 335–52. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470756935.ch19>.
- Stenstrum, Jim. 1998. *Scooby-Doo on Zombie Island*.
- Žižek, Slavoj. 2001. *The Fragile Absolute, Or, Why Is the Christian Legacy Worth Fighting For?* Ohio: Verso.

Katrina Jordan, Northwestern State University of Louisiana
Debra Jo Hailey, Northwestern State University of Louisiana
Michelle Fazio-Brunson, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

“Fairy Tales, Fables, and Folk Tales with a Louisiana Twist”

Have you ever wondered about the differences between Fairy Tales, Fables, and Folk Tales? If so, then this is the session for you. The presenters will use Louisiana literature and oral traditions to distinguish between fairy tales (magic and oftentimes aristocracy), fables (magic/talking animals, moral to the story), and folk tales (regular people, typical cultural practices, sometimes a supernatural creature/talking animals).

Lisa A. Kirby, Collin College

“Sacred, Supernatural, and Symbolic: The Power of the Swamp in Louisiana Literature, Culture, and Imagination”

“To love a swamp [. . .] is to love what is muted and marginal,
 what exists in the shadows, what shoulders its way out of mud and
 scurries along the damp edges of what is most commonly praised.
 And sometimes its invisibility is a blessing.”
 — Barbara Hurd, *Stirring the Mud: On Swamps, Bogs, and Human Imagination*

For Louisianans, the swamp has long been a site of livelihood, mystery, and even shelter. As Barbara Hurd suggests, the swamp exists on the margins, a haven of sorts, a borderland, which offers a space where cultures exist in their own, often invisible ways. Anthony Wilson continues in this vein in *Shadow and Shelter: The Swamp in Southern Culture*: “the swamp occupies an intriguingly complex and liminal space in the Southern and national imaginations and signifies powerfully across discourses of race, cultural and literal contagion, ethnography, and ecology.” While one certainly cannot help but think of race, folkways, and ecology when considering the swamp, social class becomes an equally important lens through which we can view the meaning and importance of the swamp.

This paper will consider Louisiana swamps as sites of working-class life and culture and how class and swamps intersect in both literature and popular culture. This presentation will consider the complexity of swamp life, its significance to the working class, and the dire ecological situation of swamps due to climate change and vanishing wetlands. I will also seek to re-imagine the swamp as a multifaceted space of both physical and imaginative importance and explore how it demonstrates the complex intersections of Louisiana culture, working-class existence, and the politics of class and place.

Works Cited

Hurd, Barbara. *Stirring the Mud: On Swamps, Bogs, and Human Imagination*. U of Georgia,

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Wilson, Anthony. *Shadow and Shelter: The Swamp in Southern Culture*. U of Mississippi, 2009.

Keagan LeJeune, McNeese State University

“Some Exploration of Landscape and Healing Traditions during COVID-19”

There has been a long relationship between specific locales and healing properties. In the medieval period, as scholar M.A. Hall notes in *Of Holy Men and Heroes: The Cult of Saints in Medieval Perthshire* (2005), pilgrims often made journeys in Scotland to wells, shrines, and other sites known for their healing or restorative properties. But not all healing places have religious associations. Some are known due to their geological or natural features, such as the hot springs in Saratoga Springs, New York; Hot Springs, Arkansas; or even Hot Wells, Louisiana. During the recent COVID-19 pandemic, some Louisianans returned to both religious practices (e.g., procession of relics) and geographical places (e.g., Grand Isle) in hopes of avoiding sickness and procuring curative benefits. This presentation explores some of these practices by Louisianans during the COVID-19 pandemic and, by building on the work of Marcia Gaudet, Wendy Whelan, and other writers who have examined the grave of “the Cajun Saint” Charlene Richard, investigates if the tradition of making pilgrimages to the Charlene Richard gravesite was affected by COVID-19. Finally, it explores if that pilgrimage may have some unseen connections to Louisiana’s other healing landscapes.

Bruce R. Magee, Louisiana Tech University
Stephen Payne, Writer

“Djabe’s Marriage”

Djabe entered his garden, and said to his wife: “Remain here with my mother.” As soon as he was gone the mother said to the young lady: “Ah! my daughter, you have taken a bad husband; you have married Djabe.” — Alcée Fortier

Alcée Fortier was an eminent scholar teaching at Tulane University. As part of his research, he collected and translated Creole folktales, largely from Laura Plantation. Many of them were animal fables involving Compéré Lapin and a collection of characters brought over from West Africa and preserved by generations of slaves and former slaves. He also collected other stories, including “Mariaze Djabe.” A Djab is an unsavory voodoo spirit, invoked to perform harmful spells that other spirits would not.

In this story, a Djab gets married, but he is not what he appears to be. He shows up looking dashing enough, like a Papa Ghede or Baron Samedi. But he has borrowed all his finery and has to give it all back on the way home from the wedding. Making matters worse, she finds his former wives hanging on a nail in a closet. What is a bride to do? Is it possible to go home again? Come to the presentation to find out.

Delaney McLemore, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

“Two Grams”

In “Two Grams,” I trace the synchronicities and strangenesses of my grandmother, Evelyn Honeycutt McLemore Maffia and her burial site, located next to the grave of Gram Parsons, legendary Louisiana rock star. Both were musicians, troubled, abusers of substances and people, incredible creators. In this nonfiction essay, I wonder at the parallels between their lives and the ways we honor those we have lost. How do we as those still living take comfort in the burial of those we love? How does a gravesite hold meaning as a representation of the body? When we visit a grave, what are we doing for ourselves? For the dead? For the keeping of history? This essay is creative, nonlinear, and braided.

David Middleton, Poet in Residence Emeritus, Nicholls State University
John P. Doucet, Nicholls State University

“‘Holy Ground’: Science, Poetry, Wonder, and the Search for Divine Purpose and Order in Louisiana”

It has long been said that there are two primary philosophical questions—Why is there a universe instead of nothing? and Why is that universe as it is and not otherwise? In these two questions may lie the seeds of all sciences and arts—and the seeds of other questions as well. What is nature? Is there something we may call “the supernatural”—something before, after, beyond, or within nature that is not subject to nature’s laws? Is there a Creator? Is there divine purpose and meaning in nature, instilled perhaps by the Logos, The Word? Do the natural order and human history tell a story? And what can the methodologies and languages of science and poetry—the scientific method and the use in measured language of symbol and metaphor—reveal about that primal human experience of *wonder* when looking at the universe?

Doucet will read from and comment on his poems rooted in scientific ideas as a means to explore order and purpose, attempt to explain nature with empirical accuracy, and probe the bases of phenomena seemingly beyond nature’s laws. Middleton will read and comment on several of his Louisiana poems that search for divine order and purpose—in the flora, fauna, geography, and weather of their native Louisiana. And he will offer reflections the correspondences and likenesses of seemingly diverse things make a meaningful pattern as words and the world become, in a moment of perception, all but one and Creation is revealed, to quote Exodus 3:5, as “holy ground.”

Fran Middleton, Independent Researcher

“The Pseudo-supernatural in the *Ghosts of Morgan City’s Episode, The Mist*”

This presentation will examine the accuracy of *The Mist*, the first episode of *Ghosts of Morgan City* aired by the Travel Channel in 2019. On a foggy February morning, Aimee LeBoeuf’s car broke down on the shore of Lake Palourde in Morgan City where she claimed to have seen the figure of a woman wearing a faded pink house dress. She later learned that Ada Bonner LeBoeuf wearing identical clothing had been hanged in Franklin in February 1929 for murdering her

husband James, Aimee's heretofore unknown relative. Morgan City's mayor and police chief contacted the Travel Channel who hired a media consultant from New Orleans to inquire. Up until then, no one had claimed to have seen Ada's ghost. She had prayed during her incarceration and trial, received spiritual counseling, confessed, done penance, and received absolution, the last rites, and a Catholic mass and burial. She, and her immediate family, assumed she had died in a state of grace.

Soon St. Mary Parish, where Lake Palourde is located, was alive with so much ghostly activity that the Travel Channel sent out its team of investigators consisting of a female psychic, a supernatural investigator and former detective, a demonologist and firefighter, and a scientific "genius" and inventor of devices capable of detecting and communicating with ghosts. The group determined that Aimee LeBoeuf had indeed seen Ada's ghost and exorcised it on the lake's shore. Until Aimee LeBoeuf's sighting, Ada Bonner LeBoeuf's immediate family had had no contact with any of James LeBoeuf's family nor have they heard from Aimee since her sighting and appearance on the Travel Channel nor has anyone seen Ada's ghost on the Lake Palourde in an area far from where she died.

Maida Owens, Louisiana Folklife Program

"Louisiana Culture and Environmental Changes"

Louisiana's environmental changes have already prompted population shifts along the coast, which are expected to increase in the future. While restoring the physical coast has received the most focus and funding, cultural concerns have received less attention. While those in south Louisiana are more directly impacted by land loss and storms and are dealing with reduced tax bases as community members migrate, those farther inland will become receiving communities whether they are prepared for them or not.

Seeing a need to address this gap in the community resilience conversation, the Louisiana Folklore Society started the Bayou Culture Collaborative (BCC) to help sustain Louisiana's traditional cultures. The BCC works to connect people concerned with the impact on our cultures. With disruption increasing, we need to pass on our cultures with intention. The BCC strives to support vulnerable coastal communities, engage the arts and culture network in the conversation and, in planning, mobilize artists and tradition bearers to help people recognize this as a statewide issue, and prepare communities to receive newcomers.

The Louisiana Folklife Program participates in the BCC by funding workshops for masters of coastal or highly endangered traditions to pass on traditions. The Folklife Program also conducts workshops to help inform cultural leaders throughout the state about the need to get involved with the environmental planning and prepare receiving communities to welcome newcomers. To achieve these goals, the BCC has offered monthly zoom gatherings since January 2022. The gatherings provide not only information but are a vehicle to stimulate dialogue and support working groups that are developing policy recommendations.

My presentation will introduce conference attendees to the environmental and cultural issues that we currently face in addition to strategies used by the BCC to address them.

Jerry L. Parker, Southeastern Louisiana University/Morris Brown College

“Toward a theory of ‘Supreme Leadership’: An analysis of the leadership style of Fiona Goode”

The infamous Fiona Goode, as portrayed by Jessica Lane in *American Horror Story*, is well known for being the reigning supreme of the Coven located in New Orleans. Although from what we are shown of her daily life Fiona is portrayed as an evil villainous woman who only cares about power, liquor, and youth, there is clearly more as it concerns her leadership style and the daily operations of the Coven. From a leadership perspective, she is a strong, knowledgeable, and strategic woman who is well aware of her position within the organization. The purpose of this presentation is to highlight the leadership traits and approaches of Fiona Goode in an attempt to contribute to our understanding of educational leadership here in Louisiana. Through refocusing the character within leadership theory, we can observe her unique approach to leading an educational institution centered in controlling and utilizing the supernatural.

Debbie Smith, National Center for Preservation Technology and Training

“Isabella the Ghost: An NSU Tradition”

Most NSU students have heard the tale of Isabella the Ghost, but do they know her whole story? This presentation will tell the tale of her presence on the campus for over 125 years. It will include legends associated with her life and death, show the places she called home, and describe the times students “moved” her from one campus building to another. It will share names she has gone by and highlight ways students in the past and present have celebrated her existence.

JoAnn St. Clair, Cane River Creole National Historical Park

“Hoodoo, Voodoo, or Vodou? The Miraculous Medal at Magnolia Plantation”

In 2006, archaeological excavations at the Magnolia Plantation unit of Cane River Creole NHP uncovered a Catholic religious medal, known as the Miraculous Medal, buried in the floor of one of the Quarters cabins. Enlarged images of the medal reveal what appear to be alterations to the figure of the Virgin Mary, making some elements more African while outwardly maintaining the overall form. While this is likely a case of “hiding in plain sight” the question is “what is being hidden?” Is this modification based in Hoodoo, Voodoo, or Vodou?

This presentation will explore the differences between those commonly interchanged and misunderstood terms and discuss possible interpretations of the alterations to the medal and two other recovered artifacts. The discussion will also situate the artifacts from Magnolia Plantation in the context of African and European religious syncretism both in Louisiana and the wider milieu of the U.S. South.

Ashley Steenson, The University of Alabama

“Theodore Roosevelt & John M. Parker”

This paper examines the relationship between progressive Northeastern President Theodore Roosevelt and Louisiana politician John M. Parker, beginning with Parker's involvement in the New Orleans lynching of 1891 and ending with his run as Roosevelt's Progressive Party vice presidential nominee in 1916. Employing methods from political and intellectual history, this scholarship found that Theodore Roosevelt and John Parker shared political ideologies across sectional lines, resulting in significant effects for the development of liberalism in region, as well as the United States in the early twentieth century more broadly. The structure of the paper specifically moves chronologically through the Progressive Era up through TR's loss as a Progressive presidential candidate in 1916.

John W. Sutherlin, University of Louisiana Monroe

“An Analysis of Environmental Justice in Louisiana: Toxic Politics and Waste Mismanagement”

This work covers major events where political leaders allowed Louisiana's natural resources to be mismanaged. Two case studies have been analyzed to describe the conditions that have led to air, water, and soil pollution that have further compromised public health. In both cases, it would be the public that altered the course of regulatory failings. These cases include the closer of Marine Shale Processors, the world's largest hazardous waste incinerator. The second involves the permitting process for competing landfills. Despite having significant differences, both cases demonstrate concerns regarding environmental justice in Louisiana. Political corruption and corporate greed were allowed to compromise public health for poor people of color.

The Winnsboro Easter Rock Ensemble led by Hattie Addison Burkhalter: Demonstration and Discussion

Moderated by Susan Roach, Professor of English, Emerita, Louisiana Tech University

Recipients of the 2021 National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Award, the Winnsboro Easter Rock Ensemble under the direction of Hattie Addison Burkhalter will provide a demonstration and discussion of the rare ritual tradition that dates back to the antebellum period. The Winnsboro Easter Rock in Franklin Parish appears to be the only group continuing the tradition although it has been documented in the northeast Louisiana Delta region. Related to African American religious ring shout traditions, Easter Rock is a calendrical ritual, held on Easter Eve and replete with multi-vocal, creolized symbols commemorating Christ's death and resurrection.

Easter Rock is framed with a devotional service, consisting of an *a cappella* congregational hymn, scripture reading, prayer, and another congregational hymn, followed by a variety of sacred music performances. This religious service provides a sacred context for the Rock since many of the singers' spirit-filled performances heighten the emotion of the audience in preparation for the symbol-laden Easter Rock.

Easter Rock is spectacular visually, musically, and spiritually, filled with religious symbolism from the Christian belief system and the West African roots of its creators. As the Rockers sing old spirituals, their feet hit the wooden floor, echoing their ancestral drums. Representing the tribes of Israel or Christ's disciples, the twelve lighted lamps create an otherworldly, hypnotic atmosphere as the streamers of the banner (representing Christ's cross) sweep around the white table (representing Christ's sepulcher). African features include the banner, percussive footwork, call-and-response improvisational singing, and the counter-clockwise circular movement around the table. The Rock ends with a prayer followed by sharing of cakes and punch. Unlike the serious sacrament of communion, this sharing of the symbolic food is festive with much talking and laughing as old friends and family reunite with their home community. The ritual of Easter Rock allows its participants to express their core beliefs and renew their bonds with their God, family, and community.