AWP 2024 Outline: “Haunting, Healing, and Female Voice: Women Who Write Horror”

Panelists: Erin E. Adams, Lauren Brazeal Garza, Jennifer Givhan, Hailey Piper, & Erika T. Wurth

Outline:

1) Once the recording begins, Lauren Brazeal Garza (LBG) introduces each panelist.

2) LBG calls on each panelist to speak to the following question, “How did you find horror? What attracted you to the genre? What does it offer you, as a writer, that other genres do not?” Each panelist responds, in alphabetical order, for about 2-3 minutes each.

3) LBG then poses her second question, “Each of us writes horror from a unique approach and perspective: but all of our work touches upon concepts of haunting, trauma, and healing. How does your work interact with these ideas?” Each author responds to these questions in no particular order. We discuss “trauma,” “haunting,” and “healing” in our work for about 12 minutes.

4) LBG asks her third question, “In the 1970’s, the film critic Laura Mulvey coined the term “the male gaze” to describe obvious patriarchal practices in films. Recently, feminist theorists have proposed the idea of a “female gaze,” offering that while the male gaze seeks to objectify, the female gaze seeks to empathize. As women writers of horror, how does empathy and the “female gaze” play a role in your work?” We discuss empathy, giving characters “their personhood,” and “the female gaze” in our work, and more broadly in the work of all women writers, for about 12 minutes.

5) LBG asks her final question, “What advice would you give to all the women out there who are potentially interested in writing horror, but not sure where to start?” and open the floor. Because our panelist, Hailey Piper, needs to leave a little early, she offers her comments first then says goodbye. The remaining panelists offer advice and discuss how important it is to make our voices heard, and to keep writing, along with other great advice. We speak about this for about 12 minutes.

6) In the final minutes, Lauren Brazeal Garza thanks all the panelists and we say our goodbyes.