

## **Stranger than *Stranger Things*: the Symbiosis of 1970s Film, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Television and the American Grotesque**

Elizabeth Mullen  
Université de Bretagne Occidentale  
Brest, France

In his famous tome on the American film industry in the 1970s, David Cook explores how a period of intense upheaval led to a remarkable period in American cinema: “In a degree of self-examination extraordinary for this country in any medium at any time, the American commercial cinema was experimenting with social criticism and making money at it in the bargain”<sup>1</sup>. Likewise, in his comparative study of 1970s horror films and their 21<sup>st</sup> century remakes, David Roche explores among other aspects the interplay between film text and cultural context within a given genre (horror) and medium (film)<sup>2</sup>. In both periods, social upheaval and cultural malaise are reflected through the prism of the grotesque. This talk will explore how certain American films of the 1970s and 21<sup>st</sup> century television series resonate with one another and with their contemporary contexts, focusing on their use of grotesque elements in an era marked by Jenkinsian convergence and Orwellian malaise.

Elizabeth Mullen is an Associate Professor in American Studies at the Université de Bretagne Occidentale in Brest, France. Affiliated with the research laboratory HCTI (Héritages et Constructions dans le Texte et l’Image, EA4249), she is currently working on a book about masculine malaise and the grotesque in 1970s film. Her work focuses primarily on gender, adaptation, television and film.

---

<sup>1</sup> David Cook, *Lost Illusions: American Cinema in the Shadow of Watergate and Vietnam, 1970-1979*. University of California Press, 2000, p. xv.

<sup>2</sup> See David Roche, *Making and Remaking Horror in the 1970s and 2000s : Why Don't They Do It Like They Used To?* The University Press of Mississippi, 2014.