

Fantastic Tropes and Indigenous Female Gothic in Alexis Wright's *The Swan Book*

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The Swan Book (2013) by Aboriginal author Alexis Wright is a novel with cultural, political, and ecocritical implications. Set in a dystopian future in which wars and climate change have destroyed the Western world, it tells the story of Oblivia, a mute Aboriginal girl who is torn away from her people and forced to become the first lady of a fictitious indigenous country named Broлга Nation. Based on Propp's model for the study of the fairy tale and Todorov's characterisation of the fantastic, I intend to investigate *The Swan Book* from a genre fiction perspective. Wright draws on uncanny elements typical of fairy tales and gothic fiction to depict Oblivia's abduction, her confinement in a post-apocalyptic city, her encounters with nonhuman beings, and her journey home. My focus will be on how the author uses fantastic tropes to produce multiple levels of reality that puzzle the reader and challenge a unique interpretation of the events narrated. The spectral entities that accompany Oblivia in her hallucinatory life in the city and during her long walk across the remotest areas of central Australia can be seen as inhabitants of different realities that overlap without melding, namely uncanny articulations of 'cultural difference' (Bhabha 1994: 60).