

TALLINN UNIVERSITY

School of Humanities

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HORROR APPEAL

IN R. L. STINE'S *FULL MOON HALLOWEEN*

AND H. P. LOVECRAFT'S 'THE CALL OF CTHULHU'

BA Thesis

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TALLINN 2016

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INTRODUCTION

‘Readers love fantasy, but we need horror. Smart horror. Truthful horror. Horror that helps us make sense of a cruelly senseless world’ (Vaughan 6). Horror stories have existed since the dawn of time. From the day people started believing in almighty gods who would protect their souls in the afterlife, they also started believing in the so-called ‘evil’ that symbolized horror and death.

Every time we encounter something unknown and mysterious, fear is the first thing we experience, and since our imagination has no bounds, we can only encourage it to develop even further. Despite the fact that we live in a quickly developing world, where science has already explained many of the previously incomprehensible phenomena that we took for witchcraft and magic, artists and writers constantly manage to find new stimuli to challenge us psychologically.

‘The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown’ (Lovecraft 1041), is the opening sentence of Howard Philips Lovecraft’s essay ‘Supernatural Horror in Literature.’ He is a well-known person in the world of horror fiction, born in 1890 in Rhode Island and died in 1937, at the age of 46. H. P. Lovecraft was a prodigy: by the age of six he wrote complete poems. His interest in horror came from his grandfather who used to tell him his own original tales of gothic horror. Lovecraft was a sickly child who barely attended school. Suffering from sleep paralysis made him hallucinate. At night he saw ‘night gaunts¹’ roaming in his room, and later he used them in his fiction. In 1924, Lovecraft attended a convention of amateur journalists in Boston, where he met his future wife Sonia Greene. She was a successful owner of a hat shop, but not long after the marriage she lost her business and assets. At that time Lovecraft’s

¹ Small creatures appearing in nightmares, inspired by Gustave Doré’s drawings.

stories did not have much success, so he tried to get a job as a clerk but failed due to his lack of work experience. One might think that it could not get any worse for him, but he gets burgled, thus leaving him with clothes that he was wearing. Being sick of big city life, he moved back to Providence, where he became popular as a writer. Although Lovecraft became well known, he did not earn enough to sustain his livelihood. In early 1937, he was diagnosed with cancer of the small intestine, which caused him constant pain until the day he died.

On the other hand, there is Robert Lawrence Stine, a famous novelist and television producer. Born in Ohio in 1943, he graduated from Ohio State University with a Bachelor of Arts in English. He created a popular teenage magazine called *Bananas* and wrote humorous stories under the pen name Jovial Bob Stine. His first horror novel *Blind Date* came out in 1986. Stine is one of the best-paid writers, who has sold over 400 million copies worldwide. Although Stine is known as young adult writer, his novels also appeal to older readers. During his career, Stine has received several awards: Horror Writers Association's Lifetime Achievement Award, Thriller Writers of America Silver Bullet Award, and others.

The **subject** of the present graduation paper is American horror fiction. The **object** of the thesis lies in comparing R. L. Stine's and H. P. Lovecraft's texts. More particularly, it **aims** at comparing the appeal factors that those authors utilise. The **problem** of the research consists in analysing Stine's and Lovecraft's texts based on appeal factors provided by Becky Siegel Spratford. The current research is based on the novel *Full Moon Halloween* (2001) by R. L. Stine and the short story 'The Call of Cthulhu' (1928) by H. P. Lovecraft, which shall be used as a basis for comparison, thus comprising the **material** of the research. The descriptive-analytical and comparative **methods** of study have been employed.

Nowadays, horror fiction is one of the most popular movie and literature genres. It has been widely studied throughout the world. In their time, such renowned psychiatrists as

Freud and Jung tried to explain the appeal of horror from a psychological point of view. Johnston administered a study with over 200 participants, thus trying to determine reasons for watching horror movies. Currently, there is little critical studies of R. L. Stine's works, and that which can be found is mainly about the Goosebumps series. On the other hand, H. P. Lovecraft has been extensively studied; however none of those studies compares him to Stine. No prior study of this topic has been conducted in Estonia. The present research paper analyses horror fiction's appeal based on guideline provided by a contemporary author who is also Readers' Advisor in Illinois and a proud member of the Horror Writers Association.

The graduation thesis is divided into two main chapters. The first chapter provides definitions, classifications, sub-genres, brief history, as well as examples and appealing factors based on Becky Siegel Spratford's *Readers' Advisory Guide to Horror*. The second chapter is devoted to an analysis of two literary works based on the factors listed in the first chapter.

CHAPTER 1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND FEATURES OF HORROR FICTION

1.1. Definitions and Classification

Horror is a ‘feeling of great shock, fear or disgust’, as the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines this word. Douglas Winter, an editor of *Prime Evil*, writes in the introduction that ‘horror is not a genre, like the mystery or science fiction or the western. It is not a kind of fiction, meant to be confined to the ghetto of a special shelf in libraries or bookstores. Horror is an emotion ‘(qtd. in Spratford 10). Tzvetan Todorov differentiates between three main forms of horror (Reeder 187).

The first category is **the uncanny**, where the story contains some elements of supernatural that might be hard or even impossible to explain. The events that take place can be disturbing, shocking or unique, and they often defy the laws of rational thinking. Be it extra-terrestrial beings (aliens), mentally damaged people who are suffering from delusions and see the world from irrational perspectives, or even those exposed to radiation, as well as characters who remain mysterious throughout the entire book. However, the laws of nature remain intact. For example, *The War of the Worlds* (1898) and *Jurassic Park* (1990)

The second category is **the marvellous horror**, in which the entire book takes place in a world that is different from ours. To understand it, you have to accept the existence of vampires, ghosts and demons. This world is ‘different’ for us, but ‘normal’ for the book characters. It is beyond the rules of our world. Examples are *Damned* (2011) and *Rosemary's Baby* (1967).

The third category, **the fantastic horror**, does not clearly state whether we deal with supernatural phenomena or whether this is just the narrator’s hallucination. The fantastic horror makes the reader doubt and hesitate between the natural and supernatural. In the end,

it is up to the readers to decide what they would prefer to believe in. Examples are *The Shining*, and *Janghwa Hongryeon jeon* (a Joseon-era Korean folktale).

1.2. Horror's Subgenres

The reason why it is so difficult to define word 'horror' lies in its variety. In her article 'The Genre of Horror', Viktória Prohászková presents nine different horror subgenres.

Rural horror, as the name indicates, action takes place in a remote location that is far away from civilization. Often the story is connected to a local legend or a superstition. Rural horror is also known as redneck horror. Examples: *The Evil Dead*, *Hills Have Eyes*, and *Wrong Turn*.

Cosmic horror, better known as Lovecraftian horror, is a horror genre that uses elements of science fiction. It emphasizes the horror of the unknown. Most of Lovecraft's stories are described as cosmic horror. In one of them, an alien civilization comes to Earth and conquers it before humanity.

Apocalyptic horror speaks of a post-apocalyptic world that has suffered from the hands of humans or a natural disaster. *Walking Dead* is a popular TV series about such an event. A book called *Cell*, written by Stephen King, is written in apocalyptic horror genre.

Crime horror is a combination of the detective story and horror. It tells us of how detectives fight against criminals who commit almost inhuman crimes. One of the most famous examples is *Hannibal*, written by Thomas Harris. Another example would be Stephen King's book *Misery*.

Erotic horror is a blend of sexual or sensual imagery with horrific overtones. Owing to Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* saga, modern erotic horror is overflowed with vampire love

stories. For example, *Love in Vein*, by Poppy Z. Brite, and *Sacrificing Virgins*, by John Everson.

Occult horror concentrates on exorcism, antichrist, Satanism, mysticism, curses, and other aspects of the occult. Some of the best-known occult films are *The Exorcist* (1973), *The Omen* (1976), *Hellraiser* (1987), and *Final Destination* (2000).

In *psychological horror*, the story is based on fear, which the protagonist is suffering from. This genre brings forth dark parts of the human psyche. It forces the protagonist to experience suspicion, distrust and paranoia. Psychological horror can be found in such books as *Silence of the Lambs*, by Thomas Harris; *Psycho*, by Robert Bloch, and *Misery*, by Stephen King.

Surreal horror is based on something that can only appear in nightmares. Quite often surreal horror is confused for psychological horror, because readers believe that what happens to the protagonist is nothing but a dream or hallucination, but in the end it turns out that everything takes place in the real life. Living dolls or hungry snowmen that desire to kill are all part of surreal horror. For example, there are six slasher films from a series called *Chucky* (1988-2013). They are all about a living doll that kills its owners and those close to him.

Visceral horror is the most gruesome of all subgenres because it contains graphic descriptions of blood, gore and brutality. Characters are sliced, butchered and mutilated. This genre makes people see death from a completely different angle. Examples: *Survivor*, by F. Gonzalez; *Off Season*, by Jack Ketchum; and *Big Head*, by Edward Lee.

1.3. Brief History of Horror Fiction

The origin of horror stories cannot be truly determined because before people learned how to write, they learned how to speak. Horror narratives, fables and legends were told from one generation to another. The first hints of horror story can be traced as far back as the Babylonian *Epic of Gilgamesh* (circa 2000 B.C.) and Homer's *Odyssey* (circa 800 B.C.) (Dixon 1). Both these epics involve encounters of mortals and otherworldly creatures. Dante's *Divine Comedy* works as a corpus for our understanding of sinners' afterlife in the nine rings of hell.

Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) is considered to be the first gothic novel. It speaks of a young man named Conrad, who is about to marry the love of his life Isabella. Unexpectedly, however, a giant metal helmet falls on his head and kills him. Conrad's father Manfred, the lord of the castle, becomes terrified of the prophecy that was foretold. The prophecy warns Manfred about the absence of successors. He tries to defy the prophecy by raping Isabella, thus impregnating her.

Walpole's work was not appreciated by his peers because in their opinion fantasy was an unworthy genre.

In the period of 1789-1799, the French Revolution took place. Hungry peasants turned to their barbaric nature and started massacring rich people. Rumours began to spread of the poor using torture devices on the more wealthy part of society. This affected the development of upcoming gothic novels.

The next prominent works were Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), closely followed by M. G. Lewis's *The Monk* (1795). *The Monk* 'represented the transformation from the gothic novels to horror' (Prohászková 134). 'Horror stories have moved away from the trappings of gothicism, and setting, atmosphere and style are dedicated by contemporary events, psychology and social realism' (Bloom 1).

The horror genre now had both the fantasy and the violence in it. The next step in the genre's evolution was adding prescience. As the 19th century was a period when scientists began to work more actively, they explained previously unknown mysteries of the world. People were slowly starting to experience paranoia – not knowing how far these scientists would go. A young author, Mary Shelley, played on those fears and produced a book entitled *Frankenstein* (1818), which immediately became a bestseller. At the time of this novel's publication, medicine was at the forefront of development; therefore, young doctors needed dead bodies to train themselves. Since medical institutions lacked corpses, they started offering huge sums of money for dead human bodies. Because of that, a great number of body snatchers² appeared. What terrified people in *Frankenstein* was not so much the abhorrent creature that came to life as the doctor who disinterred dead people. This novel had repulsive impact on the readers.

In 1819, John William Polidori wrote a short story, 'The Vampyre'. It is the story of a young Englishman named Aubrey and an aristocratic vampire named Lord Ruthven, who serves as a figure of heterosexual erotic desire. However, the first real bloodsucking novel was *Carmilla* (1872), created by Joseph Sheriden Le Fanu. It is the story of a lesbian vampire that takes a liking to a certain woman's daughter, but to get to her, she has to seduce the mother. Once the girl's mother has fallen deeply in love with the vampire and lowered her guard, Carmilla takes the daughter and abandons the mother, thus leaving her with a shattered heart. This novel added the element of sex to Victorian horror fiction. At this point, horror fiction still maintained its roots in romanticism.

When we think of vampires, the first title that comes to our minds is *Dracula* (1897), written by Bram Stoker. It was published almost 30 years after *Carmilla*. Unlike the earlier texts, *Dracula* recounts the story of a vampire who acts as a serial killer. In writing this book,

² A person who illicitly disinterred corpses for dissection, for which there was no legal provision until 1832.

Bram Stoker used Jack the Ripper as the basis for *Dracula*. Jack the Ripper was an unidentified murderer that lurked on the streets of London in 1888. Since the police were powerless to capture him, groups of vigilantes started to form in an attempt to catch the Ripper. Similarities to real life events can be found at the end of *Dracula*, where a group of people joins their forces to hunt down and destroy the Transylvanian count. In this novel, Bram Stoker brings together elements of fantasy, romanticism, shock, horror and gore.

H. G. Wells combined genres of horror and science fiction, thus creating such works as *The Invisible Man* (1897), *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1896) and *The War of the Worlds* (1898). In 1886, Robert Louis Stephenson wrote *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, where he ‘delved into the mental health of man, the structure of a personality, and the fear that we can unknowingly become our own worse nightmare’ (Spratford, Guide 4).

In the late 19th century, there were such outstanding authors as Rudyard Kipling with ‘The Mark of the Beast’ (1891), William Hope Hodgson with *The House on the Borderland* (1908), Arthur Machen with *The Great God Pan* (1894), Lord Dunsany with ‘The Laughter of the Gods’ (1922), and Montague Rhodes James with ‘Count Magnus’ (1904).

In 19th-century America, horror fiction earned a certain popularity, especially with such works as Edgar Allan Poe’s ‘The Black Cat’ (1843); ‘The Fall of the House of Usher’ (1839); ‘The Pit and the Pendulum’ (1842); ‘Cask of Amontillado’ (1846); Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Marble Faun* (1860), *Dr Grimshawe’s Secret* (1882) and *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851); Ambrose Bierce’s *Can Such Things Be?* (1893) and *In the Midst of Life* (1898).

At this point, it would be fair to note that horror as a genre has been completely separated from the initial version of the gothic novel, but nonetheless some authors still prefer to use gothic elements in their works.

Howard Philips Lovecraft, a distinguished author and the father of Cthulhu Mythos³, created his own – Lovecraftian – genre, also known as the cosmic genre. He makes his readership explore the fear of the ‘unknown’. He published his stories in a pulp magazine called *Weird Tales*, founded in 1923.

Franz Kafka, a Czech-Jewish writer, gave his fair share to the contribution of horror genre. Although he did not write horror fiction proper, the sinister atmosphere that he creates in his novels terrorizes its protagonists both mentally and physically. By this time the ‘genre as such is already clearly shaped but now subgenres are beginning to form’ (Prohászková 136).

Some of the most famous examples of the 20th century are Robert Bloch’s *Psycho* (1959), Ira Levin’s *Rosemary’s Baby* (1967), Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), Shirley Jackson’s *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959), and Ramsey Campbell’s *Inhabitant of the Lake and Less Welcome Tenants* (1964).

As for modern classics of horror fiction, they are Stephen King’s *Night Shift* (1993); *Carrie* (1974); *The Dark Tower* saga (1982-2004), Dean Koontz’s *The Good Guy*, (2007); *Intensity* (1996), Clive Barker’s *Book of Blood 1-6*, (1984/1985); *Damnation Game* (1985), Anne Rice’s *Interview With a Vampire* (1976); *Queen of the Damned* (1988), and Thomas Ligotti’s *The Nightmare Factory* (1996/2007); *Teatro Grottesco* (2006).

1.4. Horror Appeal

Scaring people and making them wary of their safety is the basic purpose of horror fiction. Readers love books for the feelings they receive. ‘Horror is a story in which the author manipulates the reader’s emotions by introducing situations in which unexplainable

³ A fictional world where cosmic horror dominates.

phenomena and unearthly creatures threaten the protagonists and provoke terror in the reader' (Spratford, *Guide* 13). This is what makes horror fiction entertaining to people of various ages and genders. Many people love horror fiction because it raises fear and disgust in readers, but fear and disgust are unpleasant. Strangely enough, people enjoy that which is unpleasant. Carroll defines it as the 'paradox of horror' (67).

Noël Carroll argues that, 'in addition to fear and disgust, horror fiction also engenders fascination and curiosity in audiences' (67). It is done with the use of monsters. They are impossible beings that 'command our fascination in virtue of its anomaly' (67). Then what can we say about *Psycho* and *The Silence of the Lambs*? Neither of those horror novels contains physically manifested monsters. They tell stories of psychotic murderers who are 100% human. Becky Spratford insists that even though serial killers are very popular, 'this approval does not make them horror novels' (Spratford, *Guide* 16). Bery Gaut disagrees, stating that 'what horrifies us need not be a monster' (qtd. in Carroll 68). A horror novel is successful as long as it terrifies us. Gaut finds that most horror texts are 'so formulaic in their plots, and their monsters and killers so stereotypical, that it is difficult to believe that our curiosity could very often be sufficiently stimulated to overcome the purported disadvantages such works incur . . . ' (qtd. in Neil 319). What Gaut forgets is that, although plots are formulaic, they are used precisely because they are proven to be effective at capturing the audience's curiosity.

Contemporary theorist Rosemary Jackson approaches horror appeal 'as repressive cultural schematisations'. In her opinion, horror has particular themes, which 'society suppresses by cultural conventions'. Horror is regarded as a means to express disagreement. It aims at 'the removal of repression and expansion of the frontiers of reality' (qtd. in Prohászková 141).

In 1990, Deirdre D. Johnston, an assistant professor in the Department of Communication at Hope College, Holland, Michigan, conducted a study called *Adolescents' Motivations for Viewing Graphic Horror*. She tried to determine reasons why young people from age 13 to 16 watched horror movies. A total of 232 children from high schools took part in this study. After exposing them to several movies and asking questions relative to this study, she found that adolescents do not have the same reasons for watching graphic horror and that movies do not have the same ubiquitous effects on all participants. While some enjoy graphic horror for 'gore-watching motivations', others seek the 'thrill, enjoyment and stimulation of the viewing experience and their responses (positive affect and preferences for suspense) are not, at least explicitly, as concerning' (Johnston 545)

For an author of horror fiction to grab the readers' attention, he has to provide something for the protagonist to fight against. It can be something mysterious, unknown or a creature of unearthly appearance. The danger emitting from this book must be to the point where the reader will start to feel anxiety and fear, by simply turning the pages. 'This feature is what makes horror horror – the monster, force, or villain that is stalking our heroes, raising our pulse, and forcing us to read with the lights blazing cannot be of our real world' (Spratford, *Guide* 14). Readers like to live along with the protagonists of stories, walking down the same path, experience what they feel and learn the outcome of the story. From the very first chapter, a successful writer must infuse terror into the reader; otherwise, the reader might lose the enthusiasm he started with and stop reading. Guy Smith emphasizes:

A horror fan pays money to be frightened, whether it is the cover price of a book, admittance to a cinema or the hire of a video. If that person is not scared by what he reads or views then he has not had value for money. It is the duty of the horror writer to ensure the reader receives value for money. (1)

Becky S. Spratford claims in her book *Readers' Advisory Guide to Horror* that for horror fiction to be appealing to contemporary readers, it has to successfully incorporate such literary features as tone, mood, characters, language, style, setting, frame, pacing, story line, and theme. Let us examine them more closely.

Tone and Mood

The most important factor in horror fiction is the emotion it creates. With emotion comes the tone and mood into play. No horror book can exclude these two main elements because they are what sets our feelings on the path of fear, panic, disgust, aversion and destruction, which we, the readers, find the most appealing in this genre. The atmosphere that the reader imagines can be achieved through 'subtle suggestion' and a 'series of shocking scenes and brutality' (Spratford, *Guide* 18). Unlike adventure stories, horror fiction imposes the feeling of fear that the writer is trying to convey. 'A well-created atmosphere is integral to a successfully appealing horror story' (18). Therefore, even after putting the book back on its shelf, the reader would still experience fear and anxiety.

Characters

After the mood comes the character. He or she has to be a lovable person, or even an animal that appeals to as many readers as possible. There will always exist those who dislike characters in one way or another, thus giving up on the book without revealing enough plot to get intrigued. By identifying with a sympathetic character, readers develop emotions of friendship and care towards the protagonist. If something were to happen to the main character, the reader would be worried.

In order to create such a character, authors 'spread the point of view around in their novels' (Spratford, *Guide* 19). By putting characters in different situations, we can see their responses, and based on those responses, we decide whether to root for them or feel

indifferent towards their fate. There is another technique used to create sympathy: it is 'to include human villains, or foils to the protagonists' (20). It is usually one person whose actions and motives are questionable, and he might eventually pose a threat to the protagonist.

Pacing

Just as any novel, horror fiction also greatly depends on the development of events and climax of the whole story. There is no strict outline on how to write any book. Authors are versatile in their styles of writing. Stereotypical horror stories begin in a peaceful location, by introducing the characters. 'As the number of actions increase, so does the pace. As the fear and terror are ratcheted up, so too is the pacing' (20). What begins as a normal day ends as the worst nightmare. This rise of hope and expectation makes the reader anxious of what is still ahead. Until the point of culmination, it becomes difficult to stop reading.

Language and Style

One of the noticeable features of horror fiction is its language. It is filled with numerous adjectives used to describe settings, creatures, the protagonist's emotional state and everything else. Those adjectives 'allow readers to feel the fear with all their senses' (Spratford, *Guide* 20). However, adjectives alone do not produce the necessary feedback. They have to be aggregated together with the mood; otherwise, adjectives will lose their function.

The style chosen by the author supports the mood. Authors employ eccentric stylistic techniques to guide readers through the tense parts of the novel. They might use diaries, secret documents, research papers or any other source of information. When reading any of the sources, it is common practice for authors to shift the point of view and time, thus allowing protagonists to perform a flashback. Flashbacks have two purposes; the first one is

to ‘help to underscore the dark tone by going back to a time when things were much better’ (20). By comparing the present and past, a character realizes how the situation has deteriorated over time. The second purpose is aimed at the reader; it provides an opportunity to take a break from all the excitement brought on by the present story line and see a glimpse of light in a seemingly desperate situation.

Story Line and Theme

Story line plays an important role in any fiction genre. It helps readers to see the challenge that protagonist has to overcome. However, sometimes in horror fiction the plot is not as relevant as the theme. As mentioned in the cases of *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*, employing a contemporary theme that allows readers to see themselves in the novel is more important than a random topic.

The most prominent theme is coming of age, a typical feature of Bildungsroman. Seeing their beloved protagonist become stronger after each hurdle makes readers excited. Fighting inner demons, overcoming trials and surpassing expectations is what coming-of-age stories are all about, but the main character cannot be perfect; he/she needs to have flaws. ‘The struggle is a huge appeal factor in the horror story that cannot be overlooked’ (Spratford, *Guide* 21). Witnessing the protagonist’s strength and resolve, readers may obtain the necessary confidence to fare against their own fears. Under normal circumstances, the reader escapes his reality by delving into a book, but horror fiction has the opposite reaction. It works as an ‘antidote’, thus making readers believe that no matter what life throws at them, it cannot be worse than what happens in a book.

The reason why horror story lines are so appealing to readers is ‘because they validate belief in the supernatural’ (22). Sometimes people desire to experience something new to satisfy their natural curiosity. They seek this ‘satisfaction’ in unexplained phenomena and unnatural creatures.

Frame and Setting

There are no restrictions to a location where the action takes place. It can be in a prison, on another planet, in the underworld, or even in your own house, but ‘the only requirement is that the setting allows for the characters to be isolated from the larger populace in some way’ (Spratford, *Guide* 22). Spratford also notes that a popular belief of horror novel being strictly set in a small, rural town is deceptive. More important is the low number of people and not the place of action.

Writers of horror fiction can use any frame they prefer. Some of the popular frames are scientific and medical ones. For example, in the popular television show *Walking Dead* it is still unknown what started the entire epidemic.

Horror fiction is one of the most popular literature and movie genres that appeals to many people. Its readership varies from children to the elderly. There is something in the notion of fear that fascinates those people who seek stronger emotions. To determine which horror story is more appealing to contemporary readers, let us analyse and compare Lovecraft’s ‘The Call of Cthulhu’ and Stine’s *Full Moon Halloween*.

CHAPTER 2. ANALYSIS OF WORKS BY R. L. STINE AND H. P.

LOVECRAFT

The second chapter is dedicated to the analysis of R. L. Stine's and H. P. Lovecraft's texts, based on successful appeal factors presented in the previous chapter. These two specific authors were picked based on the reputation they have obtained in the genre of horror fiction. Works that will be analysed in this chapter are Lovecraft's 'The Call of Cthulhu' and Stine's *Full Moon Halloween*.

'The Call of Cthulhu' is a short story about a man named Francis Wayland Thurston. One day he learns of his granduncle George Gammell Angell's death and goes to his place. While looking through papers, Francis finds a horrible bas-relief sculpture of an unknown creature. In his attempt to investigate the origin of this sculpture, Francis goes through all of his granduncle's notes. Learning of the sculptor's dreams, weird voodoo rituals and other reports from all over the world, Francis gets terrified. Eventually, he obtains a sailor's diary from which Francis learns of Johansen's travel. While on a voyage, Johansen discovers the ruins of a city called R'lyeh, located in the middle of the ocean. Once his crew opens the door of the tomb, a massive creature attacks them, killing everyone except for Johansen and then going back to sleep.

Full Moon Halloween is a young adult novel. It tells us the story of several children that are invited to their teacher's Halloween party. Once these children arrive, they learn that the true purpose of the party is not to have fun but to hunt down a werewolf. Since the teacher does not know who the werewolf is, he decides to make them pass a series of tests, as a result torturing them psychologically. By the end of the novel, we learn that this is just an annual hoax that Mr Moon likes to host in the spirit of Halloween. However, unlike before, this time he really does find real werewolves, but before he does anything, the police arrest him and

his wife for trapping children in his house. As the police take them away, the werewolves' stomachs begin to growl.

2.1. Analysis of Tone and Mood

Tone and mood are considered to be the most relevant aspects of horror fiction. They create a stressful atmosphere that dominates the entire story.

'The Call of Cthulhu' begins with a small but genteel inner monologue by its protagonist Francis Wayland Thurston.

The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age. (Lovecraft 355)

This short but informative monologue works as a partial foreshadowing of the upcoming mayhem. It tells us that knowledge is dangerous and the best method to protect ourselves is through blissful ignorance. Spratford says that the 'reader needs to feel uneasy from the first page, even before any kind of monster is introduced' (Guide 15). This monologue successfully sets the mood and creates a dark and bleak tone. We feel the danger and do not know its source. Now the readers know that all the upcoming events will work as a revelation of the 'hidden truth'. What Francis is going to narrate is an unenlightened event that only few people are aware of, and even they (as we learn) are dying one after

another. Now readers have to ask themselves whether they will they continue reading a potentially dangerous text or give up in order to protect themselves.

By contrast, *Full Moon Halloween* begins in a rather heart-warming style. Two seemingly close friends, Tristan Gottschalk and Ray Davidoff, run around the school hallway while wrestling with one another. This opening brings forth nostalgic feelings in teenagers and adults and excitement in children (unless the reader has been a target for bullies, in which case this opening would bring forth pain and discomfort). After meeting with their friends, they start discussing recent animal attacks that are presumably perpetrated by werewolves. Ray tries to calm his friends down by stating that all those reports are unbiased and are made up by people who have nothing better to do. If the reader is still in his comfort zone, then Bella's reply to Ray immediately shatters it: 'They were torn apart and eaten. There was nothing left of them but their heads. Two cat heads lying in the dirt with big paw-prints all around' (Stine 5).

What Stine conveys here is not the notion of fear but rather disgust and abhorrence. Considering that his primary target audience are adolescents, this opening is disturbingly effective as it makes them imagine a scene of decapitated cats. Even for adults, the presence of such grotesque elements can be overwhelmingly despicable.

2.2. Characters

'The Call of Cthulhu' is a first-person narrative, told from the point of view of Francis Wayland Thurston. He is the grandnephew of George Gammell Angell, Professor Emeritus of Semitic Languages in Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island (Lovecraft 356). Although Francis is George's relative, he remains a mysterious and distant character. Throughout the story, we are given only two specific pieces of information about him.

Firstly, his name and, secondly, his affiliation with George. Due to this lack of further details, we can only speculate that Francis is who he claims to be.

After discovering George's notes on a secret Cthulhu cult, and a 'shockingly frightful' bas-relief, Francis tries to find the meaning to this malformation. His brave soul and keen interest in knowledge is what initially makes him such a lovable character. As the story progresses and Francis gains more information about Cthulhu, we see how Francis' skepticism is being shattered. Nevertheless, that does not discourage him; on the contrary, his desire for truth only grows: 'I felt sure that I was on track of a very real, very secret, and very ancient religion whose discovery would make me an anthropologist of note' (Lovecraft 370). By giving him ambition, Lovecraft makes the protagonist value fame over life. However, in the next segment of the story, Francis starts to suspect that his uncle's death might have been a murder, leading him to doubt his own safety.

Since Francis gets terrified of his fate, he resorts to lies and deception. After meeting sailor Johansen's grieving wife, Francis cunningly states that he is entitled to her husband's manuscript. Since one of the criteria of appealing horror fiction is a lovable character, towards whom we could feel sympathy, then Francis's recent action strips him of that feature. In this diary, he finds answers he was seeking, and for the first time he gains material evidence of Cthulhu's existence. However, he adds: 'I know too much, and the cult still lives' (379), so we can only assume that Francis is eventually assassinated. At the end of the book, Francis prays that his executor puts caution before audacity and never lets this manuscript to be seen by anyone. Nevertheless, his manuscript has reached us, which can only mean that we are reading the testimony of a dead man.

Full Moon Halloween is written as a third-person narrative. The story revolves around four twelve-year-old children – Tristan, Rosa, Ray, and Bella – as well as their captors, Mr Moon and Mrs Angel. They are all young and playful youngsters who want to

go trick or treating on Halloween. This carefree and joyful attitude is what reminds young readers of their everyday life, thus evoking associations of the characters with real-life people. As for older readers, these characters serve as memories of their past, when life was easier. Another aspect that can be looked at is parenthood. Readers who have children feel sympathetic towards the characters because they see their own children in them. One cannot monitor one's children constantly; therefore, all that is left is to feel anxiety and fear for their wellbeing.

Although Stine selects Tristan as the main character who 'was one of the most popular kids at Wordsworth Middle School. He had a lot of friends because he was smart and funny, quite, and easy to get along with' (Stine 17), his role in this story is almost on par with other children. Stine does not give us Tristan's background nor does he go into inner monologue from which we could learn more about him and his mentality.

There is only one instance where Tristan truly deserves to be called the protagonist; it happens at the end of chapter 21, where Tristan lies to Mr Moon and says that he is a werewolf, thus protecting his friend Rosa from a vicious dog called Bully. Tristan shows us signs of chivalry that are hidden in a twelve-year-old boy. True friends can only be found at moments of peril. Tristan does not know what will happen to him; his heart, however, can be at ease, knowing that he has done everything in his power to help a friend.

2.3. Pacing

Lovecraft's short story begins in a hectic and breakneck manner. Francis's introductory monologue has an undisputedly frightening effect, which gives the impression of a high pace. However, after the monologue, tension begins to fall until the moment when the bas-relief of Cthulhu is discovered. Francis's description of the unearthly image of the ancient

creature is vivid enough to slow down the tempo. From there on, we experience time shifts where we discover an artist with mysterious dreams about a sunken city, learn of a weird cult that exists all over the world and finally yet another time shift from which we learn the full truth behind Cthulhu. Since the flashback's function is to provide information and show the difference between past and present threats, the pacing of this story shifts from fast to almost relaxed. The lack of action on Francis's part prevents pacing from accelerating.

The tempo of Stine's book corresponds to a stereotypical horror fiction. The story starts leisurely in a peaceful school setting and then changes to a confined environment, the teacher's house, where Mr Moon forces the children to experience the worst day of their lives. Tension fluctuates between every trial until the end of the book, where real werewolves are revealed and Stine ends the novel on a climax, thus leaving vulnerable Tristan and Bella alone with Ray and Rosa (the werewolves). In this book we can see a disregard of denouement.

2.4. Language and Style

'The Call of Cthulhu' is a detective story where the protagonist investigates facts, pieces together dissociated information and, based on the findings, puts everything in chronological order. The story is divided into three separate chapters, each one with its own 'exemplifying-summarizing title, a typical device of the detective-investigative story' (Berutti 364). It gives readers a general idea of the contents of each chapter.

One of the most important features of the Lovecraftian techniques in this story is the vagueness of the cosmic threat. Cosmic atmosphere is created through 'the manifestation, in succession, of a series of "cosmic hints" that allude to realities and truths "ulterior" if compared with those that the phenomenal, visible world presents on its surface' (Berutti

364). When Wilcox describes the contents of his dreams to professor Angell, the ‘cosmic reality’ of the unutterable terror cannot be described, therefore making it even more frightening, this is what Berutti defines as ‘cosmic hint’.

In this story, ‘cosmic hint’ works as a mere ‘hint’. It helps readers to make logical connecting operations, based on the vague fragments of collected data. It should not be overly explicit; otherwise, it may disrupt the suspense and work as an anti-climax. Hints provided by Lovecraft often tend to be very vague and not easily perceived. Berutti distinguishes between two different types of hints: ‘cosmic’ and ‘terror hints’. An example of their synergy can be found in the *Sidney Bulletin* newspaper, which tells us of sailor Johansen’s voyage to the mysterious island in the middle of the ocean:

The next day, it appears, they raised and landed on a small island, although none is known to exist in that part of the ocean; and six of the men somehow died ashore, though Johansen is queerly reticent about this part of his story, and speaks only of their falling into a rock chasm (Lovecraft 372).

The unknown plot of land, located somewhere in the ocean, is a ‘cosmic hint’. Since it is uncharted, it is likely to be the recently resurfaced stone city of R’lyeh. More importantly, it is significant to note the second hint, which speaks of Johansen. The fact that Johansen does not want to reveal details of the deaths of his fellow seamen, increases both suspense and tension. Using this technique, Lovecraft tries to induce readers to distrust the Norwegian seaman and doubt his intentions.

‘The Call of Cthulhu’ is a story in which Lovecraft emphasizes the epistemological value of the oneiric experience. Dreams serve as the main source of uncovering deep and hidden as well as genuine truths about cosmic reality. In fact, Lovecraft’s dreams inspired him to write this tale. However, ‘dreams are not only millennial and capable of revealing cosmic truths unattainable by the diurnal investigation of reality: they provide the artist with

matter for the creation of his own works; they inspire the artistic work' (Berutti 368). In one of his dreams, Wilcox 'touched wildly on a gigantic thing "miles high" which walked or lumbered about. He at no time fully described this object' (Lovecraft 359). Wilcox's ability to touch and feel the skin of Cthulhu in his dream remains an unexplained phenomenon because the dream of an average person is not memorable and descriptive. As soon as person wakes up, he quickly forgets details of his dream, thus leaving him with only general thought.

Although 'The Call of Cthulhu' is not Lovecraft's longest narrative, Joshi considers it to be the greatest in terms of structural complexity and lists four typical patterns of Lovecraft's complex structure: '1) strict chronology (i.e. the incidents are narrated from beginning to end without a break in chronological sequence); 2) flashback; 3) double or multiple climax; 4) narrative within narrative' (253).

Some of the most important devices used in this story are flashbacks and subnarratives⁴. Two lengthy flashbacks are found in the first two chapters, where Thurston narrates to us his uncle's investigations and findings. The first flashback occurs when Thurston discovers a document among his great-uncle's notes which describes the meeting of the American Archeological Society that took place in 1908 in St. Louis. This flashback is especially complex because it consists of three subnarratives. The first subnarrative is the description of Wilcox's statuette and his dream; the second one is Professor Webb's encounter of the Esquimaux tribe or cult, which was devoted to Cthulhu; and the third is inspector Legrasse's account of the police ambush and apprehension in the Louisiana swamp of Cthulhu cult members who took active part in an orgy.

While it may be the greatest story in terms of structure, Lovecraft's overuse of flashbacks obstructs the atmosphere of danger, which is an integral part of effective horror appeal.

⁴ A narrative making up part of a larger narrative.

In the third chapter, Lovecraft adds two additional narratives within narratives. The first one is the *Sidney Bulletin* article of April 18, 1925, which reports the events occurred to sailor Johansen on the schooner *Emma* and the yacht *Alert*, and then Johansen's personal diary, which finally reveals the existence of the Great Old One.

In this story, Lovecraft uses an antiquated writing style. It can be explained with the fact that he lived nearly a hundred years ago and, in comparison to that time, present-day language is less artistic and more colloquial (from our point of view). It is also important to note that Edgar Allan Poe was a great influence on Lovecraft, thus he tried to use similar sophisticated and archaic language. He uses British spellings in some words: 'The matter of the cult still remained to fascinate me, and at times I had visions of personal fame from researches into its origin and connexions' (370). The word 'connexion' is the almost obsolete British equivalent of the American 'connection'. We can also find an outdated form of 'Eskimo': 'a singular tribe or cult of degenerate Esquimaux whose religion, a curious form of devil-worship, chilled him with its deliberate bloodthirstiness and repulsiveness' (363).

Full Moon Halloween is a psychological horror fiction that is divided into 31 separate chapters. Each chapter is relatively short and ends with a new action that leaves the reader guessing and wondering about what is going to happen next. Stine has an unusual approach to writing: while most authors add the title to their book after finishing it, Stine first comes up with a title and only then imagines the plot. He explains this about his creativity:

If I can get a title first, then I start getting ideas for it. Like *The Baby-Sitter*. You start to think what's scary about being a baby sitter? Or *The Stepsister*. What would be scary about getting a new stepsister? The title will lead me to an idea about what the book should be. (qtd. in Jones 42)

This style of writing is what enables Stine to produce books on a monthly basis.

Stine also exploits a technique called foreshadowing: the very title *Full Moon Halloween* serves as a premonition of the events to come. The word ‘Halloween’ indicates the date and time when the story takes place. It is believed that 31 October is the day on which the gap between the worlds of the living and the dead closes and creatures from the other side infiltrate the human realm. As for the full moon, it is commonly associated with howling wolves, who on such a sinister night remind people of werewolves, also known as lycanthropes.

After Bella tells everyone about the recent cat murders, Stine moves to the description of Mr Moon: ‘Mr Moon looks like a vampire in an old movie. [. . .] With his hair slicked straight back like that. And those heavy eyebrows. And those beady, round eyes’ (Stine 3). Any reader would immediately suspect him of being the main villain of this story. His appearance alone brings forth the distrust in readers. Then, on the next page, we learn that Mr Moon’s son, Michael Moon, who looks ‘[s]kinny and dark with Mr Moon’s slicked-back black hair, tiny round eyes, and a narrow, unpleasant face. A face like a ferret, Tristan thought’ (4), is following Tristan around the school, just to say ‘Be careful’ (4). Tristan and his friends immediately feel chills going down their spines because they interpret it as both a warning and a threat. By adding a suspicious character, Stine forces us to doubt the entire Moon family. However, the children remain ignorant; they do not take into consideration any of the signs or Michael’s warning and still attend the Halloween party.

Until the very end, Stine leaves us with the suspicion that we are dealing with a purely psychological horror story, where a paranoid teacher tries to find and kill a werewolf whose existence is a mere assumption throughout the whole text. One of the techniques that Stine seems prefer is the unexpected ending. Only on the last page do we witness the appearance of real werewolves.

Unlike ‘The Call of Cthulhu’, *Full Moon Halloween* incorporates colloquial language. Since the target readership are adolescents, Stine refrains from using formal language in favour of informal, unpretentious, frank and simple diction such as ‘yuck’, ‘hey’, ‘yo,’ and ‘what’s up’. All these words are in frequent use among children in the streets, making conversations more concise and less formal. These words carry a disrespectful and often humorous tone, therefore allowing the story to sound more domestic and natural.

In order to identify the werewolf among the children, Mr and Mrs Moon decided to squeeze the juice of a plant called wolfsbane and make them drink it.

Wolfsbane is perhaps the most famous herb associated with shapeshifting, and with werewolves in particular. This herb has long had an association with wolves, werewolves, and dogs, partly because it is extremely poisonous, and was put on arrows to kill wolves and other ‘vermin’ beasts that would not be consumed. (Greene 206)

The fact that Stine incorporates wolfsbane shows that he conducted some research and did not compile the entire book using only his imagination. Besides wolfsbane, Stine also invents small creatures who are supposedly capable of locating werewolves. He calls them plogs.

It comes from the island of Borneo, many thousands of miles from here. [. . .]
 ‘The plogs have only one natural enemy,’ Mr Moon continued. The werewolf. They are quiet and tame most of the time. But if a werewolf is near, they attack. And so the people of Borneo use these little guys as werewolf hunters.
 (Stine 27)

Since ‘plog’ is not recorded in any English dictionaries, we can assume it is a nonce-word coined by Stine.

2.5. Themes

In his works, Lovecraft uses several recurring themes such as misanthropy, hopelessness, helplessness, fear of the unknown, vulnerability, loss of sanity, and otherworldly creatures.

'The Call of Cthulhu' is a perfect example of a misanthropic story. Lovecraft disregards the significance of the human species in the name of the Great Old Ones. Cthulhu, an alien monster, possesses immense size and power to the point of impossibility. No one can fathom the creature not to mention defeat it. One of Johansen's companions who escapes from the ancient city with him succumbs to insanity caused by Cthulhu's image. As a Great Old One, Cthulhu has lived on Earth much longer than humanity. Lack of knowledge and historical evidence suggests that 'human known history is nothing in comparison with the whole existence of the universe, and they find out that there are other civilizations and beings that have existed even before we could remember them' (Carlos 2). Since Cthulhu has existed long before humans, it makes one wonder if humans were brought to Earth by aliens and if that is the case, what was the purpose? Without providing additional information, Lovecraft presents an unknown entity, whose origins create many unanswered questions.

Throughout the whole story, the protagonist Francis only seeks knowledge concerning Cthulhu and its cult. We must read the entire text in order to realize his insignificance in this story. Cthulhu appears and disappears without Francis doing anything. Instead, he writes a manuscript where he notes down every piece of information that he manages to find about Cthulhu. However, even then he writes that this text should not be seen by others. Even though this writing may have dangerous consequences, neither Francis nor his will executor burn the manuscript. The executor is most likely greedy and interested in publishing this text to earn money, and Francis takes too much pride in his work, which renders him incapable of destroying it.

As for the otherworldly creature, Lovecraft describes him several times, therefore emphasizing his imposing appearance:

It seemed to be a sort of monster, or symbol representing a monster, of a form which only a diseased fancy could conceive. If I say that my somewhat extravagant imagination yielded simultaneous pictures of an octopus, a dragon, and a human caricature, I shall not be unfaithful to the spirit of the thing. A pulpy, tentacled head surmounted a grotesque and scaly body with rudimentary wings; but it was the general outline of the whole which made it most shockingly frightful. Behind the figure was a vague suggestion of a Cyclopean architectural background. (Lovecraft 357)

The most important part of this story is the Cthulhu. Unlike gothic horror that uses well-known supernatural entities such as vampires and ghosts, Lovecraft exploits ‘unknown’ threat from the infinite cosmos. While everyone knows that vampires are fictitious creatures, nobody knows what can be found outside our planet.

Like Lovecraft’s story, Stine’s novel also explores the themes of insanity, helplessness, vulnerability, supernatural and hopelessness, but in addition to these we can also notice the presence of improper parenthood and betrayal.

Considering the fact that *Full Moon Halloween*’s main characters are children who fall into the trap of an insane teacher, there is nothing they can do except feel helpless and vulnerable. After Mr Moon locks his house, he declares that ‘[s]omeone in this room is a werewolf. [. . .] And we’re not going to leave this house until we find out who it is’ (Stine 17). This statement shocks the children. In the beginning, they assume that Mr Moon is only joking, but once he starts accusing them of being werewolves, they realize the danger that this situation poses. These children are completely vulnerable and helpless at the mercy of a ‘delirious’ teacher.

One of the biggest topics for discussion in this novel is improper parenthood. In this story, we can examine two parents, Tristan's and Michael's. Although we have no information regarding Tristan's father, we know that his mother is a multitask woman. She chats, watches television and reads at the same time. When the invitation arrives and the envelope explodes, Tristan's mother, Mrs Gottschalk, rushes towards her son; however, once she learns of the envelope's contents, she thinks that a Halloween party at the teacher's house is 'nice' (13). A caring parent would get terrified of sending her child to a person who uses gunpowder. Although the explosion is nothing but a loud 'pop', Mrs Gottschalk's response is unacceptable for a parent.

On the other hand, we have the Moon family. Based on the information given, they relocate and throw Halloween parties every year. Mr and Mrs Moon are infatuated with their practical prank where they play 'werewolf games'. However, unlike his parents, Michael lost interest in this game a long time ago. Realizing what his parents make children go through every year, Michael attempts to reason with them, but they do not listen. Michael develops a sense of alienation. He does not try to befriend new people; instead, he keeps his distance because he knows that his parents' actions will lead to others hating him. Mr and Mrs Moon disregard their child in favour of their annual hoax.

While Francis conducts his investigations all alone, Tristan has reliable friends next to him, whom he can trust. As the plot progresses, we are shown how Tristan tries to protect his friends by diverting Mr Moon's suspicion towards himself. At this point we can see strong bonds of friendship; however, as the story reaches its culmination and Tristan's best friends transform into real werewolves, this bond is tarnished. One might say that there is no bigger pain than the pain of losing a friend. As readers, we might assume that Stine will finish this novel in a 'Happy End' manner; however, werewolves express their lust for blood, thus ending the story with a climax.

In the last chapter, Stine sows distrust among friends, underscoring the hopelessness of the situation. Like Lovecraft, Stine finishes his novel with enough space for our imagination to create its own images as far as our mind can reach.

Unlike 'The Call of Cthulhu', *Full Moon Halloween* has two monsters. However, the biggest difference is that Stine does not incorporate them into the story until the very last chapter. Cthulhu is frequently mentioned and described, but real werewolves are introduced only at the end of the novel.

In terms of the story line, both plots incorporate a come-of-age theme. We see how Francis's scepticism is slowly disappearing; he comes to terms with the existence of Cthulhu. Tristan puts the life of his friend above his own, thus growing in the reader's eyes. *The Call of Cthulhu* is mostly focused on validating a belief in the otherworldly. However, *Full Moon Halloween* focuses on the dark side of humanity. It shows us to what extent people can go for a practical prank.

CONCLUSION

The aim of current paper has been to analyse and compare horror appeal in R. L. Stine's *Full Moon Halloween* and H. P. Lovecraft's 'The Call of Cthulhu'. One of the reasons for conducting this research is to make people culturally aware of Stine's existence outside America. Even though Stine has achieved worldwide fame and success, only a limited number of his books have reached Estonia. This paper attempts to determine who is more successful at incorporating factors of appeal based on Becky Siegel Spratford's guideline in *Readers' Advisory Guide to Horror*.

Lovecraft and Stine use different approaches to set the tone and mood. Lovecraft tries to infuse fear using a monologue located at the very beginning, which openly confesses that this story will bring nothing but terror to its readers and it would be in their best interests to put this story aside. However, Stine begins his novel in a deceptively calm and pleasant manner, which quickly escalates from trivial dialogue to the depiction of a decapitated cat. Both of these styles successfully set the tone and mood, although Francis's monologue does produce a bigger impact and it is evident from the start.

The protagonists of 'The Call of Cthulhu' and *Full Moon Halloween* have their similarities and differences. We lack information regarding their background; therefore, their identities remain a mystery. By the end of both stories, the protagonists realize that they will not survive. Francis is most likely killed by assassins from the Cthulhu cult and Tristan is devoured by his best friends Rosa and Ray. Moreover, only one character meets the requirement of being sympathetic, and this personage is Tristan, who lies to Mr Moon in order to protect his friend, thus putting his life in danger. This admirable and chivalrous act makes him a positive character whom we admire. On the other hand, Francis deceives a

grieving woman who just lost her husband in order to get his hands on a diary. This deceitful incident turns Francis into a negative character, thus not fulfilling the requirement.

According to Spratford, '[a]lthough there is no standard pacing for a horror book, all horror stories need to build in intensity' (20). In *Full Moon Halloween*, we can see a steady ascension that brings us to the culmination. However, after the inner monologue, 'The Call of the Cthulhu' starts to lose much of its speed. With the lack of action on Francis's part, the plot's pace does not intensify to the necessary degree.

Both texts use language and style to their advantage. 'The Call of Cthulhu' introduces several sources of information and uses flashbacks to reveal other people's experiences with everything that can be related to Cthulhu. The language is formal and old-fashioned. There are deaths and even a voodoo orgy in a swamp, but the writer refrains from describing them. Most of the adjectives used by Lovecraft describe Cthulhu's appearance. *Full Moon Halloween* is quite different. Stine uses colloquial language and abstains from incorporating flashbacks. There are disturbing scenes of dead animals and moments when the teacher's sanity falls under question. This is a graphic story that is less technically challenging, but it seems more realistic and domestic in comparison to 'The Call of Cthulhu'.

Several themes found in 'The Call of Cthulhu' have also been identified in *Full Moon Halloween*. These include hopelessness, helplessness, insanity, and vulnerability. Both stories encounter unearthly creatures, explore a coming-of-age theme and examine the dark side of humanity. They also validate the belief in the supernatural. Fear of the unknown and misanthropy are most certainly powerful sources of horror, but the notion of betrayal carries a deeper wound. Whereas the story line and themes of 'The Call of Cthulhu' are more mystical and less action oriented, *Full Moon Halloween* corresponds to the appeal features better because it is more domestic and natural. As a result, readers can associate themselves with the book's characters.

In sum, based on the appeal factors listed by Becky S. Spratford, the research has demonstrated that, as a tale of horror, *Full Moon Halloween* is more appealing to contemporary readers than 'The Call of Cthulhu'.

It could be of further interest to conduct a survey among people who have read both 'The Call of Cthulhu' and *Full Moon Halloween* to determine the validity of the above conclusions. Becky S. Spratford's list of horror appeal features may be applied in a comparative analysis of other well-known texts.

The present paper can be used as practical material in studies of both the psychological and Lovecraftian horror genres. Since Stine is relatively unknown in Estonia, the thesis can also be employed as supplementary material in classes of contemporary American literature.

ANNOTATION

Käesoleva bakalaureusetöö teemaks on „Õuduse köitvus R. L. Stine’i romaanis *Täiskuu Halloween* ja H. P. Lovecraft’i jutustuses *Cthulhu kutse*“. Uurimisel on kasutatud kirjeldavat-analüütilist ja võrdlevat meetodit.

Uurimustöö koosneb kahest osast. Esimene osa annab ülevaate õuduskirjandusega seotud terminoloogiast, ajaloost, klassifikatsioonidest, selle žanri alaliikidest ning õuduskirjanduse köitvusest. Teine peatükk on võrdlev-analüütiline ning keskendub Lovecraft’i ja Stine’i töödel.

Uurimuse käigus selgus, et kuigi Lovecraft on kirjutanud kasutades keerulisemaid võtteid, tänapäeval ei ole tema teos nii atraktiivne. Seega on Stine’i teos lugejatele lähedam ja pakub neile rohkem huvi.

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