“IN A SEA OF WONDERS.” READING FANTASTIC LITERATURE.

Edited by Ljubica Matek, Valentina Markasović and Saška Petrović

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INTRODUCTION

Ljubica Matek, Valentina Markasović and Saška Petrović

This collection of papers represents a cross-section of topics and literary texts discussed in the elective undergraduate course *The Fantastic in American and English Literature*, and the aims of this publication are multiple. Firstly, the selected research papers testify not only to the students' interest in various subgenres of fantastic literature, but also to their language proficiency, adequate scholarly approach to the subject, and well-developed critical skills. In this way, the collection of papers represents an embodiment of the learning outcomes that are expected from this course. Secondly, the publication represents the first step for both the authors and the co-editors into the world of academic writing and publishing. For those who decide to pursue academic career in humanities, the experience of contributing to and editing a collection of scholarly papers will be priceless. Thirdly, the articles contained in the book serve to show the complexity and depth of fantastic literary texts.

Whereas it is largely undisputed that fantastic literature makes up for an entertaining read, its political implications and literary importance are often ignored. The topics and approaches to literary texts taken in this collection show that fantastic literature – typically viewed as genre fiction – deals with the exact same issues as literary fiction. Moreover, despite the fact that it employs fantastic motifs which formally set it apart from literary fiction, fantastic literature shares the same qualities that are attributed to it: quality of diction, structure, characterization, and the importance of topic(s). In fact, when Fred Botting asserts that "[u]ncertainties about the nature of power, law, society, family and sexuality dominate Gothic fiction" (3), it becomes clear that Gothic and fantastic fiction deal with all the essential questions related to human existence and experience, but also offer the potential to contemplate and better understand the human position within the immediate social context as well as in the vast and unknown universe. Moreover, by destabilizing certain general perceptions about human identity, life, and death, and by exploring issues that are typically seen as taboo, fantastic literature widens the scope of human understanding and knowledge and, through imaginary and imagined representations of various phenomena, pushes scientific research forward. Yet, as imagination helps push the limits of knowledge, at the same time, these imaginative texts also serve as a warning against the abuse of knowledge and power.

The collection contains four parts divided in such a way as to symbolically represent the complex reality within which each individual exists as well as the all-encompassing scope of the fantastic literature. These chapters examine (the psychology of) the individual, the family, the society, and the wider, more abstract issues of what lies beyond the reality of the world as humans perceive it. The first part, titled "Me, Myself, and I: The Dual Identity and the Gothic", deals with the literary character of the double (doppelgänger) which serves to explore and express both the readers' and the literary protagonists' inner demons and psychological states. It represents the basic level of human existence – our individuality. In "*Frankenstein* and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*: Scientist as a Villain in Gothic Fiction" Jana Matuško analyses why the characters of scientists as represented in Gothic (and proto-science fiction) novels *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* and *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* came to be perceived as villains. Lucija Begonja's research paper "The Duality of Shelley's Victor Frankenstein and Stevenson's Henry Jekyll" takes a look at the main protagonists of these same literary works, reading them as typical Gothic doubles. In "The Good and Evil in Poe's 'William Wilson' and Moore's *The Killing Joke*", Zvonimir Prtenjača takes a psychoanalytical approach to show that the nature of the literary double echoes the idea of human nature as double – a combination of the good and evil in all of us.

The second part deals with the innermost circle within which the individual functions: the family. It is titled "Family Feud: Love and Family in Fantastic Literature" and explores the dynamics of familial relationships as represented in fantastic literature. Dorea Cafuta offers a psychoanalytical reading of E. A. Poe's short story "The Fall of the House of Usher" focusing on the nature of the relationship between the Usher siblings and reading it as an incestuous one. In "The Juxtaposition of Love and Desire for Immortality in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*," Juraj Gerovac posits that Voldemort's inability to love fuels his desire for eternal life. The last paper in this chapter, Martina Pucelj's "Victor Frankenstein: A Bad Parent?", examines Mary Shelley's novel from the perspective of a story of creation and postulates responsibility as crucial in the process of creating life.

"Fight the Power: Social (Dis)Order in Works of the Fantastic" is the title of the third part of the collection and it deals with the public sphere by exploring various social implications of power struggles and technological progress. In "'You Reap What You Sow': The Enduring Class and Race Struggles in H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine* and Octavia E. Butler's *Kindred*" Bruno Kulić sees time travel narratives as socio-political genre which highlights inequality as a permanent marker of human existence. Darko Paradžiković's article suggests that

technology is not necessarily the cause of humanity's demise, as it is usually posited, whereas Saška Petrović provides an overview of the development of zombie fiction and maintains that the genre provides a steady political and social commentary on contemporary situations.

The final, fourth, part analyses the ways in which stories influence reality. Titled "Blurred Lines: Fear, Fantasy, and Reality as Instruments of Worldbuilding", the chapter also contains three articles which, in different ways, illustrate various frameworks that form our reality (history, food, knowledge) and may represent a connection between our world and a supernatural one. In "The Truth Behind the Female Dracula: The Story of Erzsébet Báthory" Matea Brkić explores the origins of the myth about Báthory as a sadist and vampire, and suggests that the patriarchal values of the era, rather than actual thirst for blood, contributed to both her demise and her ill reputation. In her paper, Valentina Markasović proposes that food is used as a connection between fictional and actual worlds in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, whereas Ena Vladika's article posits that H. P. Lovecraft combines real and imagined science and events in order to unsettle and provoke feelings of fear in his readers.

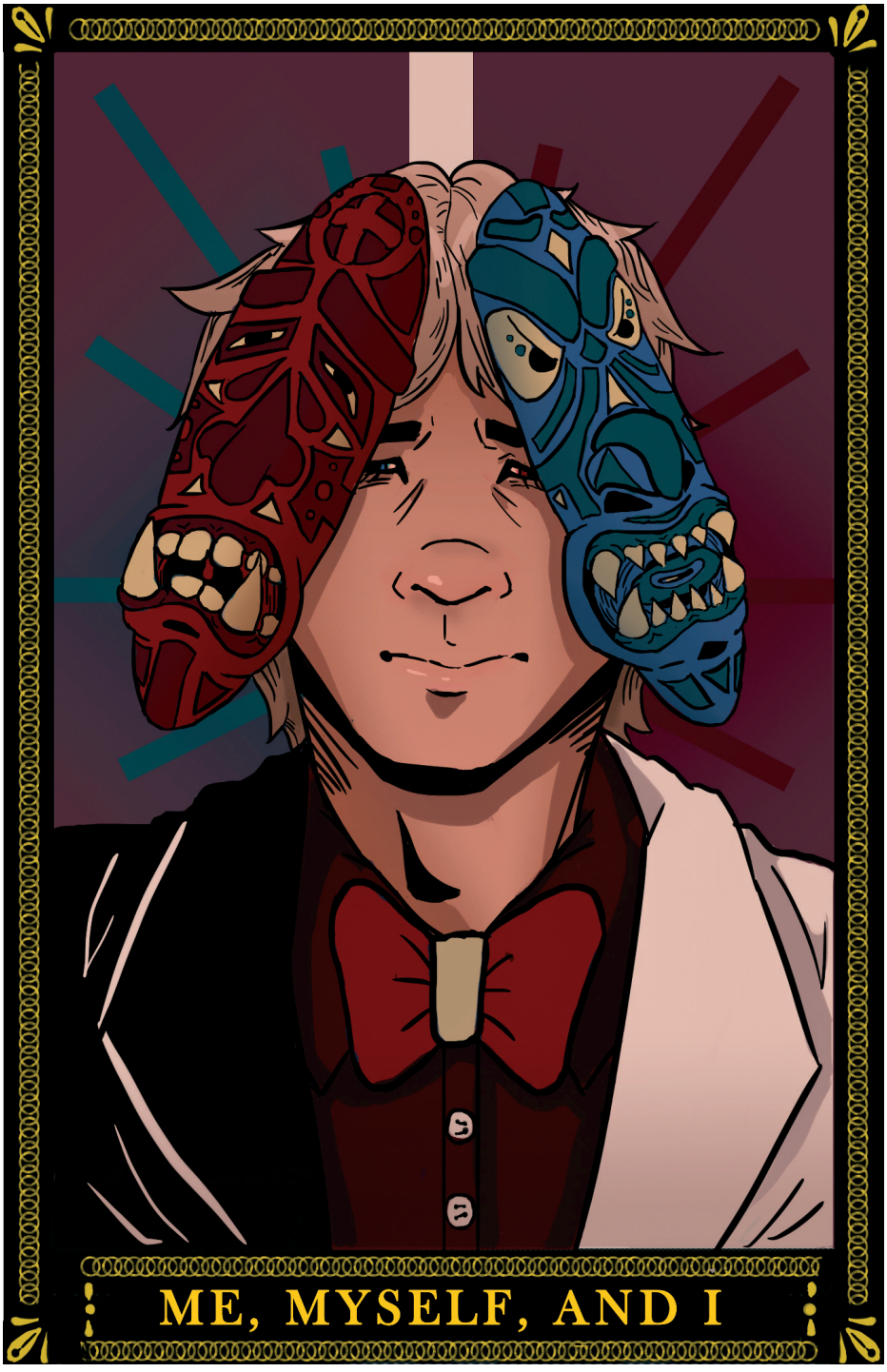
What remains is to invite you to read the selected papers and discover the rich world of both fantastic literature and academic scholarship concerned with it. We hope you will enjoy it.

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Part I

Me, Myself, and I:
The Dual Identity and the Gothic


ME, MYSELF, AND I

FRANKENSTEIN AND *THE STRANGE CASE OF DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE*: SCIENTIST AS A VILLAIN IN GOTHIC FICTION

Jana Matuško

Gothic fiction is a genre of literature that combines fiction and horror. It began in the late eighteenth century with the publication of Horace Walpole's novel *The Castle of Otranto* (Byron and Punter 177), but it was the nineteenth century that produced far more popular works of outstanding longevity. The typical characteristics of Gothic fiction are: the sublime atmosphere, a haunted castle as the setting, death, a lustful villain pursuing an innocent virgin, and so on. Alongside this, another frequently used motif is the portrayal of a scientist as a villainous figure. This essay will show how the perception of the scientists' engagement in forbidden knowledge, and their obsession with their experiments combined with their perceived ever-growing hunger for power and domination over nature, resulted in the scientists of that time being represented as villains. This will be shown on the examples of the portrayals of two famous literary scientists, Dr Frankenstein and Dr Jekyll.

The nineteenth century was an era in which science was rapidly developing, but because the discoveries were often beyond the understanding of the largely uneducated public, common people frequently feared science and the consequences it may have on human life. Scientists, then as now, were exploring within a number of different fields such as mathematics, chemistry, anatomy and medicine, which led to crucial discoveries that affected human life by improving and prolonging it. Until then, it was believed that human life is entirely in God's hands, but, for example, scientific breakthroughs made it possible for people to heal certain illnesses and thus "defy" death.

Consequently, scientists that are portrayed as villains are usually very intelligent, but not humble enough as they refuse to be limited by available knowledge. They are self-taught in forbidden knowledge like alchemy and necromancy, and by exploring the unknown they get overwhelmed with the newly gained knowledge which typically leads them astray. These scientists rarely stay in college because they cannot follow the rules and study only the things that they are allowed to know. People are usually afraid of them, as are their colleagues, because they possess both knowledge and ambition that are unimaginable to them. The phrase "mad scientist" is a result of the fear expressed by the scientists' contemporaries, many of whom were uneducated and even illiterate, due to which all sciences seemed mysterious, forbidden, and somehow connected to necromancy.

According to Glennis Byron and David Punter, Mary Shelley's protagonist, Victor Frankenstein, is a typical example of such a scientist: "Frankenstein introduces the prototypical Gothic mad scientist (...) his studies alienate him from his family, and from the start lead him to charnel houses, to death and corruption" (199). Frankenstein, a student at Ingolstadt, has always been interested in studying natural philosophy and wanted to fathom all of the secrets of nature. His shifting of interests starts after reading works written by Paracelsus and Albertus Magnus, who were infamous for studying the occult, which was harshly criticized by his professors: "Every minute, (...) every instant that you have wasted on those books is utterly and entirely lost. You have burdened your memory with exploded systems and useless names" (Shelley 52). After that, he becomes more curious, reads more forbidden books and soon becomes overwhelmed with the mystery of life and death.

This leads him to the study of human anatomy, believing that one cannot study the living body if one does not know how the body decays: "I became acquainted with the science of anatomy, but this was not sufficient; I must also observe the natural decay and corruption of the human body" (Shelley 56). Soon enough, he starts to become acquainted with reanimation and conducts his first experiments on small animals, which soon loses its appeal. He grows hungrier for power and praise, and starts to put more effort into his overly ambitious work: "I doubted at first whether I should attempt the creation of a being like myself, or one of simpler organization; but my imagination was too much exalted by my first success to permit me to doubt of my ability to give life to an animal as complex and wonderful as a man" (Shelley 57). The idea that human life can be created inside a laboratory, that is outside of the realm of God-given, or natural, ways of procreation seemed blasphemous and frightening as it implied people acquiring command over the kind of knowledge that was believed to be available only to God.

Consequently, Frankenstein's work and his discoveries led him to a state of madness. He conducted research and worked on his experiments for months, without ever leaving the room or communicating with other people; all he could think about was his creation. Assembled out of body parts of corpses, Frankenstein's "posthuman" (Nayar 13-19) creation was not what he had expected it to be. He realized that his curiosity has led him in the wrong direction, and that his creation was not beautiful, but monstrous: "He succeeded in the first object and failed in the second; he made and animated his giant; but by some little mistake in the artist's calculation, the intended beauty turned out the ugliest monster that ever deformed the day" (Wilson Crocker 77). By realizing that his creature is in fact monstrous and will be rejected by the society, Frankenstein displays his

understanding of the situation, but his selfish nature prevails and he ends up being the first one who rejects it. According to MacArthur, "In Victor Frankenstein we are shown a degree of humanity, but we are also shown an unsettling amount of true evil and the effect of this is that the reader is constantly moved between feelings of alternating sympathy and disgust for him" (5). In the end, he regrets the whole experiment, and views all of the work he had put into it as wrong, but his repentance comes too late because the "uncontrollable monster", a being with its own free will and reason, was already out in the world with nothing else but an experience in being rejected and feared.

Similarly to Dr Frankenstein, Dr Jekyll is also perceived as a "mad" scientist. Dr Jekyll is both the protagonist and the antagonist of R. L. Stevenson's novel *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, given that he is both Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. The novel does not show the full storyline of Jekyll's studies, and all the reader knows about his early works is represented through the point of view of his friend, Dr Lanyon: "But it was more than ten years since Henry Jekyll became too fanciful for me. He began to go wrong, wrong in mind; and though, of course, I continue to take an interest in him for old sake's sake, as they say, I see and have seen devilish little of the man" (Stevenson 10). Clearly, his work excludes Henry Jekyll from society and, ultimately, pushes him into the realm of the forbidden: "You must suffer me to go my own dark way" (Stevenson 35). It is clear that Jekyll knows that he is straying from the proper path of science, but he cannot help himself: "the temptation of a discovery so amazing at last overcame my fears" (Stevenson 65). Thus, he turns from chemistry, which was not mysterious enough to quench his thirst for knowledge, to deciphering the mystery that is the ancient study of alchemy. His discovery resulted in his ability to divide his good side from the bad, and to live as his own evil alter ego.

In the beginning, becoming Mr Hyde was exciting for Jekyll; he felt like a new man, a man reborn: "I felt something strange in my blood, something indescribably new, unbelievably sweet. I felt younger, lighter, happier" (Stevenson 65). However, the appeal of living outside the constraints of social norms and conventions was too great and it was not enough for Jekyll to be Mr. Hyde for just a short period of time – he wanted to indulge in the freedoms that were forbidden to a respectable Victorian gentleman that was Jekyll. Moreover, like Dr Frankenstein, he wanted to create something that would make him widely famous and appreciated. So, before long, Jekyll lost himself in Mr. Hyde. He nourished his "evil" side for too long, creating an alter ego whom he could not contain anymore. Namely, as Jekyll and Hyde represent the duality between our natural instincts and our learned behaviour, or in Freudian terms, the struggle of the ego between the desires of the id and the moral values of the superego,

the novel suggests that if we do not control our instincts, they will prevail and turn us into animals. According to Reid, "Stevenson's writings inquire into these ambivalences (...) the relations of 'savagery' and 'civilization', the influence of environment and heredity" (6). Jekyll felt a glimpse of freedom when he was Hyde because he did not have to follow any rules or norms. However, after using the potion for a while, Dr Jekyll could not shift back to just being his civilized self. His alter ego overcame him and they became one and the same. The major difference between Dr Frankenstein and Dr Jekyll is that Jekyll performed the experiments on himself, becoming his own experiment, while Frankenstein made a monster that is a separate individual. In both cases, however, the result of the experiment, the newly created being, represents a violent and unwelcome threat to the established social order.

Both Dr Frankenstein and Dr Jekyll exhibit traits of the Gothic "mad scientist", a title given to them by their contemporaries who feared them or, better yet, who feared the unknown. Doubtless, Frankenstein and Jekyll are both very intelligent and insightful scientists. However, they indulged in forbidden knowledge, and the more they knew, the madder they became. Their discoveries astonished them at first, and made them want power and esteem, but later they turned out to be violent obsessions with horrifying results. Both of them created monsters; one created an individual who was never given an option to display anything but its murderous spirit, while the other created a potion to make the murderous monster emerge from within. Instead of acquiring praise, their work was frowned upon, which made them withdraw from society. Frankenstein lost his way when he indulged in the study of human anatomy with the purpose of defying death, while Jekyll turned to studying the mysteries of alchemy and human psyche. By pursuing their studies with utter dismissal of ethical standards, they drove themselves mad. Ultimately, their unhinged ambition served as a catalyst of their downfall from a respected scientist to a feared "mad scientist". It is often said that knowledge is power and, just as often, that ignorance is bliss. Judging by the cases of Dr Frankenstein and Dr Jekyll, only the latter has earned its popularity.

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THE DUALITY OF SHELLEY'S VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN AND STEVENSON'S HENRY JEKYLL

Lucija Begonja

The characters of Frankenstein and Doctor Jekyll are scientists and protagonists of two seminal Gothic works. It may be argued that both of these works are concerned with the questions of the good and the evil in human nature as well as the issue of dangerous knowledge and overachieving. The paper argues that both characters represent typical Gothic doubles in most aspects and that they serve as cautionary tales for the readers.

The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde is a story about doubles. The main protagonist of the novella is a scientist, Doctor Jekyll, who creates his own doppelgänger by separating the two sides of his personality – the good and the evil one. The two sides are manifested in the form of two radically different bodies that the protagonist morphs into, depending on which side of the personality dominates at that particular moment. The duality in *Frankenstein*, however, is not so obvious and is much less literal as Victor Frankenstein's Creature seems to exist independently of him. However, the most apparent proof that Victor's Creature represents his alter-ego is the fact that the Creature remains nameless throughout the whole novel. In her essay titled "Narcissism and Beyond: A Psychoanalytic Reading of Frankenstein and Fantasies of the Double," Rosemary Jackson points out that "it is no accident that the monster is anonymous or that in the popular imagination it has come to be confused with Frankenstein himself and frequently given his name, for it is his grotesque reflection, his unnamed, unformed selves" (45). Moreover, Diane Johnson explicitly suggests that "[t]he monster acts as Victor's agent in the sense that the two are doubles" (xvi). In addition, much like Mr. Hyde lacks the morality that Dr Jekyll possesses, Frankenstein's Creature seems to have traits that Victor lacks, both cases suggesting that the double is a representation of an integrated personality.

Secondly, even though initially the story seems to highlight the differences between the Creature and Victor, as well as his idea of what the Creature should be, these characters seem to share the same destiny. Not only does Victor become cruel and desperate like his creation, but they both die alone – the Creature announces his own ending not long after his creator's death, because "Frankenstein's eventual death renders the Creature's own existence empty and meaningless" (Halpin). This turn of events highlights the idea that the only way to free

oneself from one's double is through death. This is also the case in Stevenson's novella since Mr. Hyde dies as Dr Jekyll commits suicide.

Both Henry Jekyll and Victor Frankenstein are born into wealthy families and, as Jekyll himself points out, "with every guarantee of an honourable and distinguished future" (Stevenson 69). In addition, they are both marked by a strong desire to learn. In the beginning of his story, Victor says to Walton that "earnest research to learn the hidden laws of nature, gladness akin to rapture, as they were unfolded to me, are among the earliest sensations I can remember" (Shelley 19). Similarly, Jekyll's explanation is that he was "inclined by nature to industry" (Stevenson 69), suggesting that scientific research was simply something he was predisposed to do. He also points out that his science "led wholly toward the mystic and the transcendental" (Stevenson 70), and he only starts showing excitement when he finds the opportunity to look more closely into the duality of man, as does Frankenstein who wishes to discover the path to immortality.

Additionally, the enthusiasm Jekyll and Frankenstein show for their respective projects is quite similar. Dr Jekyll says that he "had learned to dwell with pleasure, as a beloved day-dream, on the thought of the separation of these elements" (Stevenson 71) and he believes that his discovery would have great effect on humankind, freeing it from suffering and allowing it to fully enjoy their lives. "The physical secrets of the world" (Shelley 45) are at the centre of Victor's interest, too, but he seems to be more egoistic, which makes him dangerous. He becomes so obsessed with the idea of being the creator of a new, more perfect species, that he disregards both the safety precautions and the level of responsibility that such work entails. His inability to deal with this own Creation proves that he is out of his depth. Unsurprisingly, Doctor Jekyll is no better and he ends up failing to find adequate substance to recreate his potion, which results in Jekyll's inability to control his evil, instinctual side.

Furthermore, despite the premise that the doubles represent their evil side, it seems that the scientists' morality is dubitable from the beginning. Jekyll's original idea was to create two separate persons, one of which would be completely evil and the other would be "doing the good things in which he found his pleasure, and no longer exposed to disgrace and penitence by the hands of this extraneous evil" (Stevenson 71). But it is dubious whether he manages to do that, because it seems that, while Mr. Hyde is indeed purely evil, Doctor Jekyll still remains his imperfect self. Even though he has the memories of Hyde's actions, he does not show actual remorse over them. He does not believe that he committed such acts of violence, but rather blames his evil self for them. He

repents only insofar as paying for the damage Hyde has done, but, as Nabaskues points out: "it is also true that Jekyll knows the consequences of drinking the concoction he prepares before committing the crime" (1180). In other words, he is well aware that Hyde is going to behave criminally, and yet he chooses to drink the potion. In addition, when he finally decides to stop transforming into Mr. Hyde, he still feels a strong desire to do something evil. Although it may seem as if Jekyll adheres to the laws of conventional morality more than Frankenstein because he experiments on himself, still his alter ego ends up hurting other people just like Frankenstein's does.

In the same manner, Victor Frankenstein is reluctant to take care of the "thing" he has created. At the first sign of trouble, he escapes, completely abandoning his creation: "Victor will not take any responsibility for the Creature and his actions because he believes that, just by creating, it does not put the blame on him for anything else that comes from that" (Borland 9). It is only after the Creature kills that Frankenstein starts feeling responsible; yet, his sense of responsibility is overcome by his sense of self-preservation as he does not feel guilty enough to tell the truth and sacrifice himself in order to save Justine from being wrongly accused and sentenced to death. Moreover, Frankenstein is given something that Jekyll is not: the direct opportunity to stop his monster's terror by creating him a companion. Admittedly, Victor refuses to do so because he believes he is doing the right thing, but his poor judgment only continues to cause more pain. And not only that, but the process of creation itself is suspicious, because Victor never gives a clear explanation on where and how he managed to get the parts from which he made the Creature. Furthermore, it is only when Victor finds himself in the same situation as the Creature – desolate and lonely – that he decides to take responsibility. Still, he does not offer any sympathy or mercy; his only solution is to find the Creature and kill it, which in the end causes his own demise, too. Similarly, once Jekyll learns that there is no way to escape his evil half, he decides to get rid of Mr. Hyde in any way possible. When the potion proves to be ineffective, Jekyll takes the final desperate measure; he decides to "bring the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end" (Stevenson 88) and hopes that it will kill Mr. Hyde as well.

In conclusion, both Victor Frankenstein and Henry Jekyll are scientists passionate about their quests. They want to make breakthroughs that would make them superior, but the ways in which they try to accomplish this are highly questionable. Both of them are haunted by their dual identity, which only goes to show that human nature is far more complex than the laws of morality suggest. Their destinies are tragic; both of them go from being respectable and prosperous people to being tortured by their sins. Ultimately, it was impossible for ei-

ther of them to prevent their untimely death as it was the only way they could be set free of the evil things they created, or alternatively, of their own evil nature. Both tales seem to be cautionary in the sense that both of the scientists die without passing their dangerous knowledge on to the next generation.

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THE GOOD AND EVIL IN POE'S "WILLIAM WILSON" AND MOORE'S *THE KILLING JOKE*

Zvonimir Prtenjača

Philosophically constructed by Marcus Tullius Cicero in the first century BC Rome and popularized by the Victorian Gothic novella *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* authored by Robert Louis Stevenson, the concept of alter ego or the second self has undoubtedly been prevalent in many literary works over the course of previous years. Therefore, this paper aims to explicate the double as a literary character. Specifically, the character of the double shows not only a man's good side, explored and displayed more commonly, but also the evil side which dwells within every human and is usually manifested in the form of a person's struggle with one's own inner demons. The analysis will primarily be focused on the doubles as represented in Edgar Allan Poe's canonical short story titled "The Story of William Wilson" and Alan Moore and Brian Bolland's one-shot comic book and famous story arc, *The Killing Joke*.

The paper will comparatively look into several features available in both works, beginning with what Poe so masterfully introduces in his short story – the concept of a prison-like structure which aims to further the characterization of his protagonist. Much in line with the conventions of American Romanticist fiction, Poe enlists "a dream-like and spirit-quieting" (19) old town as the setting in which a two-story school, an "Elizabethan 'prison-like' building with an impossible interior design that is claustrophobically labyrinthine" (Fernandez-Santiago 77), and a church steeple whose "bell each hour breaks the stillness of the day" (Poe 19) seem to dominate the landscape. Moore and Bolland juxtapose this by touching upon one of the oldest mythopoeic places in the ever-gloomy, New York-fashioned town of Gotham, the Arkham[1] Asylum. Herein, the world is set upon its head and a different set of values is promoted since the sane are viewed as ill and in need of treatment. In fact, the Asylum's insane inmates are in charge of the facility, so it comes as no surprise that "Batman can count the asylum itself as one of his greatest foes" (Lytle 118). Following Moore's detailed script, Bolland structures the institution "for the criminally insane" (Moore 5-6) rather sombrely, with rain and lightning forcefully overflowing and creating a

[1] The name is a nod to H. P. Lovecraft who invented the city of Arkham as one of the fictional settings of his cosmic horror stories. The implied intertextual relationship with Lovecraft's universe and oeuvre only furthers the sense of dread, claustrophobia and impending insanity that Moore and Bolland wished to achieve.

Gothic atmosphere. Both Poe and Moore purposefully use these sceneries to introduce their protagonists, as well as their apparent and uncanny duality.

On the one hand, Poe attributes "the hotness of his character and his desire to lead" (21) to the firstly introduced William Wilson, making him able to "control all who were not greatly older" (21) with the exception of his alter ego embodied in the second William Wilson. This other William is a boy who "was the only one that ever dared to say he did not believe all I [the first William Wilson] told him" (21). Such representation of the protagonist's alter ego echoes Freud's tripartite personality theory according to which "the superego has the task of dominating the ego 'in the form of conscience or perhaps of an unconscious sense of guilt'" (Freud 30). Openly claiming that he is the dominant side, the first, instinct-driven, William Wilson is challenged by the second one who attains the role of the morally righteous superego as he gains the upper hand. Compared to this, Moore and Bolland invoke a rather striking image of Batman interrogating the Joker in his barely lighted cell, visualizing the similar polar opposites they present, Batman being the morally superior and Joker the unhinged animalistic counterpart, and hinting at Batman's eventual power over the Joker.

Such use of psychological duality, that is the representation of literary characters as doubles illustrates the concepts of good and evil. Interestingly, in both works there is a clear focus on the latter. Namely, from early on in the story, Poe plainly purports how evil the first William Wilson is and he furthers this as he sends him away from the boarding school, stating that he is "a product of this repressive institution" (Fernandez-Santiago 77), into Eton where he – expectedly – continues his gruesome ventures. However, Poe chooses to remain rather modest when it comes to the actual accounts, implying through the first William Wilson that he wishes not "to tell here the story of his wrongdoing — wrongdoing which went against every law of the school and escaped the watchful eyes of all the teachers" (Poe 27). The silence about the mysterious transgressions only makes him seem more dangerous to the readers who are left to imagine Wilson's deeds. What's more, William Wilson is now directly painted as evil because "three years of this had passed and he had grown much larger in body and smaller in soul. Three years of wrongdoing had made him evil" (Poe 27). Moore complements this by revealing that the Joker living in the Arkham Asylum is actually a mute lookalike, whereas the real Joker seems to be roaming free. The figure of the real Joker, now rather calm and exulted, is found dominating the scene of an abandoned amusement park. He openly reveals his vile plans and thoughts about the brooding place he is in: "Well, it's garish, ugly, and derelicts have used it for a toilet. The rides are dilapidated to the point of being lethal, and could easily maim or kill innocent little children" (Moore 10). After he replies to

the man who asks him whether the price is too steep, he light-heartedly exclaims the following: "Too steep? My dear sir, as I look at it, I'm making a killing... and anyway, money isn't really a problem" (Moore 10). Moore uses the scene's setting as a characterization mechanism in lieu of Poe's boarding school; the dangerous, dreary place is where the Joker commits a murder to affirm his negative nature and consequent lunacy.

Furthermore, even though the focus of both works shifts on the evil double, the complexity of this immoral character is revealed only when he is mirrored by his moral, benevolent side. For example, the motifs of cards and gamble present a connection between both works, and in both cases they are being used to represent the benevolent opposites of the wicked characters that were originally introduced. The evil William earns his living by cheating on cards: "I learned and used all the evil ways of those men who live by playing cards" (Poe 28). The other William Wilson, however, thwarts his wrongdoings and "is assigned the task of supervising what he intends to do and whipping himself whenever he has done wrong" (Kao 3). The second one continuously breathes down the first one's neck: "Paris, Rome, Vienna, Berlin, Moscow — he followed me everywhere" (Poe 30). Uncovering the evil that the first William Wilson presents as the "imaginary personification of the second one's evil propensities" (Kao 3), the actions of the second one are in line with Batman's actions directed to thwart the Joker's crimes. In fact, Batman "aims to establish control and security in a Gotham often ravished by crime ... as well as super-villains like the Joker" (Doise). As he comes across the cards containing the Joker's face, Batman realizes that the Joker is at large and initiates a personal crusade against him. The Joker is seen as a demented, yet resolute psychopath, but also "an agent of chaos, a prankster who seeks to make reason untenable" (Doise).

The Joker's purposeful actions seem to make a distinction between the kinds of madness represented by Poe on the one hand, and Moore on the other. Namely, during a carnival in Rome in 1835, in an antechamber-fashioned room, the first William Wilson finally duels the second one, "quickly, wildly, putting his sword's point again and again into his heart" (Poe 33). Subliminally, Poe here accentuates the madness which prevails in the evil William Wilson who is "wild with hate and anger" (Poe 33). His impulsiveness is countered by the concept of "rational madness" (Lytle 116) that the "certifiably mad Joker" (Lytle 116) represents and attempts to justify in his famous monologue:

> Memories can be vile. Repulsive little brutes, like children I suppose. But can we live without them? Memories are what our reason is based upon. If we can't face them, we deny reason itself! Although, why not? We

> aren't contractually tied down to rationality. There is no sanity clause. So when you find yourself locked down in an unpleasant train of thought, heading for the places in your past where the screaming is unbearable, remember: There's always madness. You can just step outside and close the door, and all those dreadful things that happened, you can lock them away. Madness... is an emergency exit. (Moore 25)

With this, Joker suggests that madness (and the transgressive, criminal behaviour that goes with it) is a choice, whereas William Wilson embodies a genetic type of madness, being represented as inherently evil.

Consequently, the representations of their deaths – although death is the only way out in both cases – differ somewhat. Whereas William Wilson kills his double (and himself) with wild passion, Batman rationalizes about it and aware of the imminent result, he infers it to the Joker before their final showdown: "I've been thinking lately. About what's going to happen to us. We'll end up killing each other. Perhaps you'll kill me. Perhaps I'll kill you. Perhaps sooner. Perhaps later" (Moore 40). The inevitability of death is common both in the comic (the end of which is foreshadowed by Batman's words) and the William Wilson characters. For Poe, madness and fury lead to a supernatural and ambiguous ending – a large mirror appears behind the first William Wilson, portraying "his own form, all spotted with blood" (Poe 33), implying that he killed himself by killing his double. Similarly, Moore offers "a grim confirmation that Batman and Joker are both grotesque figures, bound into a dance of death" (Brooker) with a rather lengthy and gory scene in which they brutally confront each other in a dilapidated carnival warehouse, corroborating the thesis that Batman could have easily been the Joker and that "all it takes is one bad day to reduce the sanest man to lunacy" (Moore 42). The finalization of their fray which occurs on the rooftop of the building with Batman and the Joker drenched in raindrops, mirroring the blood-spotted William Wilson in Poe's ending, invokes a belief in the reader that Batman perhaps killed himself by killing the Joker. Yet, the beauty of the novel's ambiguous ending, much like with Poe's William Wilson characters, also lies in the fact that the doppelgänger chase may never end as "Batman needs Joker to define himself against, to prove to himself that there's someone madder, more twisted, more destructive, more aberrant out there; to prove to himself that the world needs a Batman" (Brooker) and the victory of the good side over the evil one.

To conclude, Poe synthesizes his exploration of a man's good side with the good William Wilson by portraying him as the polar opposite of the wicked and perverted reprobate that is construed within the evil William Wilson. He even

accentuates their duality in the story by constituting an entire world which corroborates the good and the evil in a man. Moore follows this train of thought by using the Joker's character as the frantic and nefarious madman who can only be incapacitated by a rational man who is bound to do the right thing – Batman. What both authors so finely assert and thusly prove with their characters is the fact that within every man there seems to be an evil side, usually hidden from plain sight and rightfully challenged by the good side, and that such duality inevitably results in inner frays. This may be confirmed by an anonymous quote that is, as irony would have it, usually inaccurately attributed to Poe, and that establishes the psychological origins of the struggle between the good and evil within us: "The scariest monsters are the ones that lurk within our souls."

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Part 2

Family Feud:
Love and Family in Fantastic Literature


RIP
RIP
RIP
FAMILY FEUD

INCESTUOUS RELATIONSHIP AND ITS SYMBOLISM IN "THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER"

Dorea Cafuta

Edgar Allan Poe's Gothic short story "The Fall of the House of Usher" offers a remarkably elaborate and convincing depiction of the sinister ailments of the human psyche and explores recurring Gothic elements of madness and fear. In addition, by focusing on the relationship between the Usher siblings, the story explores another ever-present Gothic topic: transgressive sexuality. More specifically, it looks at the incestuous nature of their relationship. Namely, the story revolves around Roderick Usher and his sister Madeline, the last descendants of an ancient family, whose lives are closely intertwined not only through the burden of mental illness, but also through the enervating influence of the dreary, desolate, and foreboding atmosphere of the family mansion and its surroundings. According to Andrew Smith's interpretation of the Freudian uncanny, "the home … is the place which generates repression and becomes uncanny because it involves incestuous sexual feelings that evoke fear, dread, and horror" (13). And indeed, as the very title of the short story suggests, the twins are both imprisoned by the dreadful inheritance from their depraved ancestors, specifically, by the sullen residence which they do not choose to leave, and by the corrupt means of preserving their lineage unramified. Resulting from it is their incestuous, pernicious relationship, in which Roderick sexually abuses his sister, who endures her own victimization for too long. This, subsequently, is the cause of their mental derangement and harms them both through guilt and suffering.

The most outright evidence of incest between the twins is provided by the narrator, Roderick's childhood friend, who has come to know that "the stem of the Usher race…had put forth, at no period, any enduring branch…that the entire family lay in the direct line of descent, and had always…so lain" (Poe). The family, "all-time honored as it was" (Poe) and successful in the field of art, resorted to inbreeding to retain their wealth and power which produced an inauspicious outcome – the proneness to mental illnesses which are now troubling the last remaining descendants of the family. According to John L. Marsh, Roderick's nervous agitation and Madeline's catalepsy "rise from and are the aftermath of a longstanding, deliberately incestuous relationship" (8), both through the consequent guilt and genetic propensity for mental illness. The corrupt nature of their relationship is subtly confirmed by Roderick when he confides in the narrator, admitting that his despondency and dismal mood have been induced by the

illness of his "tenderly beloved sister – his sole companion for long ages – his last and only relative on earth" (Poe), whose death would leave him entirely alone and unable to continue living once their close bond is broken.

The twins and their ancestors have long lived reclusively in their mansion, isolated from the rest of society and surrounded only by "the decayed trees, and the gray wall, and the silent tarn – a pestilent and mystic vapor, dull, sluggish, faintly discernible" (Poe). The Ushers have resisted marrying and reproducing outside of the family as they believed it would debase their bloodline; consequently, incest was seen as the only way to keep it intact. The disconsolate atmosphere of the house and the gloomy landscape surrounding it have contributed to the deviation of their already impaired mental state and even the newly arrived narrator remarks that "with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my [the narrator's] spirit" (Poe). In the eyes of other people, the Ushers' seclusion led to the identification between the family and their residence. Likewise, the twins, subjected to the malevolent influence of their environment and having no one else to turn to but each other, became consumed in their forced dependency by each other's derangement.

Marsh suggests that Roderick is "a sexual criminal" (8) as he dominates over his sister and initiates the sexual relationship, and that to interpret this bond in a solely platonic way, to "attempt to purge the love concerned of all physical meaning" (8), would be inaccurate. He claims this is "a story of moral perversion" (8), and so, Roderick's nervous agitation and constant fear can be interpreted as the result of his erotic affiliation with Madeline. Their relationship is at first depicted as monolithic, since they are represented as both unnaturally close to each other and practically identical to the residence which embodies the family. However, as they begin to separate from each other, the disintegration of their relationship is symbolically represented by the fissure which extends from the bottom of the mansion to its roof. Eric W. Carlson suggests that the fissure symbolizes "the diffusion split between Roderick and Madeline" (194), and it foreshadows the final obliteration of the complete family.

Moreover, the split which occurs in this seemingly unified entity suggests that Roderick and Madeline's relationship is not as solid, and that it can be seen as representing two parts of one being only at first: "Usher represents the mind or intellect, now diseased, too long separated from the physical or sensual side (twin sister)" (Carlson 195). But, as Madeline manages to escape from her tomb and take her revenge on her brother both by causing his death, which is an outcome of the utmost fear at seeing the supposedly dead sister, and by destroying the corrupt family and its residence, it is plausible to see her as a separate person.

Although in the beginning she might have willingly participated in their incestuous relationship, she eventually becomes a victim of her brother's perverted desires, expressed and admitted in his art. Marsh suggests that Roderick's painting which depicts a long narrow tunnel "with low walls, smooth, white, and without interruption or device apart from a flood of intense rays rolling throughout" (Poe) could be interpreted as a representation of woman's sexual organs (8), and Darrel Abel sees it as "an impromptu expression of the evil which has mastered Usher's sensibility" (56). The actualization of his sexual desire is the foremost source of his mental deterioration because it eventually brought upon him a disheartening, inescapable guilt and dread. He is afraid of his sister's retaliation for his abominable acts and even anticipates the ending of his life in "some struggle with the grim phantasm, FEAR" (Poe). Madeline is possibly a victim of the relationship and incestuous acts to which she has subdued but never really consented and has, although aware of corruptness of such actions, accepted it because of the constraints of her social position and power which her brother has over her. Her physical and mental deterioration have been largely caused by her brother's abuse, since the catalepsy from which she suffers often has a source in a great psychological trauma and lengthy exposure to stress. To be sure, Roderick is aware of the irrevocable harm and suffering which he inflicted upon his sister, but knows that "this sin cannot be atoned for" (Marsh 8). This does not restrain him from acting upon his depraved impulses, instilled by the family's practice of inbreeding, and imposing sexual violence on his entombed, cataleptic sister for the last time. Although the "blood upon her white robes" (Poe) is also a sign of struggle during her exertion to escape from the vault, it may also suggest that Roderick violated her seemingly dead body as the "culmination of the 'sympathies' that Usher admits between Madeline and himself" (Marsh 8) and this atrocious deed might have caused his excessive nervousness.

To sum up, the parts of the once spiritually single being disintegrate as the sister finally rejects the family's practice and her perverse and singular relationship with her brother. Her rebellion, however, ends the family and kills both of them. Ironically, Madeline and her brother are both destroyed by and reunited in death. Roderick, representing the conscious, is "overwhelmed and destroyed by the unconscious" (Martindale 9). The oppressed, tormented sister in her act of revenge, which entails inflicting horrible fear upon Roderick, is for the first time not suppressed by her dominant brother but wields power over him. Both are the victims of their morally corrupt family inheritance and urges, but also the culprits, as their death by mutual destruction proves that moral depravity is always eventually punished.

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VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN: A BAD PARENT?

Martina Pucelj

Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* opens up many timeless questions which is what makes this book a literary classic and why we still read it two hundred years after its initial publication. The novel depicts an ambitious scientist with a pronounced desire for success and glory, which costs him dearly as it ruins his life and the lives of those close to him. In his desire to defeat death and achieve great scientific success, he creates a monster out of body parts of corpses, but when it comes to life, he cowardly runs away, abandoning it. This paper focuses on the question whether Victor Frankenstein's monster would have been a wonder of life, rather than a curse, if Victor had taken adequate responsibility for his creation.

Victor Frankenstein is a genius who wants to prove his worth to the world and be remembered for his scientific knowledge and skill. His excessive desire for fame ushers him into the world of forbidden knowledge and transgression; he refuses to be limited by death and searches for ways to overcome it. Famously, Frankenstein carefully collects the necessary body parts, puts them together, infuses a mysterious spark of being into it, and the creature comes to life. Thus, he subverts the natural order and creates life out of death, making himself into the "father" of the newly made creature. Contrary to typical parents, Victor's power is especially shown in the fact that he can hand-pick the body parts to create his child. This is something that no other parent so far was ever able to do: "Victor Frankenstein's role as father is intensified by that fulfillment of every parent's dream: he can deliberately, knowingly create his child; he can actually choose the parts" (Claridge).

However, despite his meticulous efforts in selecting "his features as beautiful" (Shelley 42), what lay in front of him was the ugliest monster human kind had ever seen. The creature frightened him, even though it was his own: "I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. […] but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart" (Shelley 42). The moment he looked his creation in the eyes, he realized what he had done and, simultaneously, felt his experiment was a failure; the child did not meet the parent's expectations. The desire to become famous faded and gave way to cruel reality in which the world, he feared, will not hail him as a creator of life, but will judge him as the creator of evil. Nevertheless, instead of staying and taking care of the creature

he brought into this world, his fear overcame his reason, making him run away from his responsibility, and thus inadvertently making the problem worse as he abandoned the creature.

Although it had the body of a gigantic grown-up, an eight-feet-tall man (Shelley 38), the creature's nature was that of a new-born child. It had the same needs and wishes as a new-born, which also means that it did not have an idea of its own identity. In order to develop and learn more about itself and the world around it, it needed a parent figure in its life. According to Lall, "[s]uccessful identification depends on the parent's ability to direct a gradual compromise of the child's instinctually uninhibited mental state and the cultural 'rules' he/she is expected to follow as a member of society" (6). But Frankenstein robbed the creature from this opportunity; although it wanted to be loved and cared for, it never experienced those emotions, especially not from its father:

> Unfeeling, heartless creator! You had endowed me with perceptions and passions and then cast me abroad an object of the scorn and horror of mankind. But on you only had I any claim for pity and redress, and from you I determined to seek that justice which I vainly attempted to gain from any other being that wore the human form. (Shelley 124)

Instead of being socialized by its parent, it learned how to speak and behave by watching the De Lacey family, and, observing their everyday life, it notices the most important thing – love and devotion within the members of this community. They show the creature the way society works and, lonely and isolated as it was, it decides to present itself to them expecting a similar treatment that they have for one another. Tragically, the family is disgusted and afraid that it would hurt them, so they chase it away. Thus, the opposite occurs: the monster is hurt by them. Felix beats it with a stick and the monster shows no intention of defending itself: "I could have torn him limb for limb, as the lion rends the antelope. But my heart sank within me as with bitter sickness, and I refrained" (Shelley 120). Again, the monster is left alone with the cognition that it would never be accepted into society and would always be the source of human nightmares.

The creature blames Victor for its tragic destiny because it knows that Victor should have stayed and helped it adjust to the human world. As his creator, he should also have been his protector and shown everyone that it is not a monster, despite his looks: "His character has thus far been constructed by innocence and generosity, but his appearance (as constructed by Victor) has condemned him to a life of isolation" (Lall 33). The awareness that the creature is blameless when it comes to its appearance, and its touching speech make the readers sympa-

thize with it and even identify themselves with the creature: "The reader's understanding of the creature through his narrative/speech rather than a physical encounter with him suggests that while language is certainly a tool of communication, there are other factors which must be considered when understanding the human ability to empathize" (Lall). In other words, the monster had the psychological characteristics of a human being, but its physical appearance was too scary to be ignored, and it repulsed others.

What is worse, its "father", the only person who should have been able to love it, was the first person to abandon it, which left the creature hurt and lonely. In fact, the lack of parental care, which in Frankenstein's case is a result of a lack of parental responsibility, is the crucial cause of all the crimes the creature commits. According to Klug and Bonsall, "[p]arental care can improve offspring performance in several ways" which include offspring survival, offspring quality and offspring reproduction (2333). Through his negligence, Victor Frankenstein has failed the creature in all of these ways. Unlike the father, the creature shows real emotions, and for the reader, it is Victor Frankenstein who turns out to be the real monster in the novel as he failed to socialize his child and help it adapt successfully to a life among humans. In fact, his abandonment embittered the creature; furious at its only parent and his lack of love, it seeks revenge. If Frankenstein is not able to love it, it will kill everyone who is close to him so that Frankenstein would learn how it feels to be left alone with no one to turn to. Although Frankenstein tried to run away from his responsibilities, he could not hide from them, and the consequences of the abandonment turned out to be tremendous. After learning about the horrific things which his creation has done, he finally realizes he can no longer ignore it: "[o]nce Victor hears his Creature out, their bond permanently changes: from here on, Victor is so firmly bound to his Creature that he sees him as an extension of himself, as when he claims guilt for the deaths of his brother William and Justine Moritz" (Griffin). Still, he does not find love and acceptance in his heart and sees no way of restoring the balance, but tries to make things better by destroying the creature, dying in the process.

Frankenstein's death brings the monster to the realization that its life ceased to have a purpose: "He is dead who called me into being; and when I shall be no more, the very remembrance of us both will speedily vanish" (Shelley 205). The monster thinks at first that it deserves to be loved and appreciated, but it was disappointed very soon because people would not give it a chance to show who it really is. They feared its looks and could not think about anything else nor go beyond the physicality of the body. They did not know that inside this grotesque looking creature lies a warm being in need of love and affection. If Victor had

taken the effort to raise his son the way he should have, he might have been able to introduce it to the public and show everyone that it is harmless and that there is no reason to run screaming from it. But because Victor reacted the way he did, his creation never got a chance to show that it is just like any other human, only trapped behind a scary facade.

Victor Frankenstein is a brilliant scientist. He achieved what no one else had – gave life to an inanimate object. Paradoxically, his life went downhill after his experiment turned out to be a success. He could not handle the responsibility and fled from it out of fear, not knowing that the creature is not a monster on the inside but the same as any other human being. It seeks love and care, but does not find it in its father, who abandons it. Left alone with no one to turn to, it has to learn how to be alone and how to accommodate to society. Without Frankenstein's help, it fails to do so. The monster wants to feel accepted, but people only see its uncanny physique. If Victor had stayed with it, taught it how to speak and act, it would have at least got the opportunity to prove that, its appearance notwithstanding, it is benevolent and kind. Victor should have been a better parent and helped his child to be happy and a part of the society. The lives of several innocent people could have been spared if Frankenstein had not given in to his fear and weakness.

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THE JUXTAPOSITION OF LOVE AND DESIRE FOR IMMORTALITY IN *HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE*

Juraj Gerovac

In the world of Harry Potter magic is real and people who wield it can do extraordinary feats; the books describe a large number of spells which become more impressive as the story goes on. At the beginning of Harry's story, about simple spells for levitation and illumination are described, but as the story continues, the readers learn about spells that can disarm or freeze a person, and eventually spells that can outright kill a person. The wizards and witches are capable of teleportation and even time travel, but despite their amazing abilities, they have no power over death. Death is a constant in the world of magic just as it is in the world of Muggles; there are no spells which can resurrect a person. The fear of death is one of the major motifs in the *Harry Potter* saga since everything Voldemort does is motivated by the fear of dying, and his only goal is to achieve immortality. The second major fear tied to death is the fear of our loved ones dying which is something Harry regularly has to deal with. He serves as Voldemort's counterpart and represents a person who is able to accept his own mortality and the mortality of others. The main difference between Voldemort and Harry, one that is emphasized throughout the novels, is Harry's ability to love which Voldemort lacks. If Voldemort had the capacity to love he would not desire immortality because, living as an immortal among mortals, he would have to endure and grieve the deaths of everyone he loves he cares about for all eternity.

The first time Rowling really tackles the topic of death is in Chapter Twelve when Harry discovers the Mirror of Erised. The mirror shows a person's deepest desire so Harry, who has never known his parents, sees their reflections waving back at him from the mirror. This is the first time Harry has to deal with death and grieving and it is only through the help of Dumbledore that he manages to get over the death of his parents and abandon the mirror. Because he missed his parents so greatly, Harry was nearly trapped by death, but due to the love and care of his mentor he is able to move past it and continue with his life: "In the *Philosopher's Stone*, Harry is introduced to the idea of death as not a conclusion or an end, but as the next great adventure" (Saxena 3). Moreover, in their analysis of parental love and attachment, Provenzano and Heyman argue that love which Harry "received from both his parents in infancy likely supplied him with the secure attachment" (113) he needed to overcome all future adversities. This

is the first example of overcoming death with love and it shows us that love can conquer at least one of the two great fears associated with immortality, the fear of watching other people die. The second fear, the fear of our own death, can be conquered by accepting our own mortality or by somehow prolonging our life.

The first novel of the series, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, describes two major ways to cheat death, obtaining the Philosopher's Stone and drinking unicorn blood. The Stone is described as "a legendary substance with astonishing powers. The Stone will transform any metal into pure gold. It also produces the Elixir of Life, which will make the drinker immortal" (Rowling 220). It is a product of alchemy and, unlike drinking unicorn blood, it hurts no one in the process and is pure and uncorrupted. Drinking unicorn blood, however, is described as something that "only one who has nothing to lose, and everything to gain" (Rowling 258) would do. Killing a unicorn and drinking its blood is considered a vile act that results in a cursed life, but it is something that Voldemort is ready to do. From this, it is evident that he will stop at nothing to cheat death, which Katrin Dahlbäck sees as a consequence of his fear of nonbeing and of the continuous anxiety provoked by such fear (13). He will commit the most heinous act and suffer a curse just to prolong his already twisted existence. Harry, on the other hand, is deeply disturbed by such behaviour; his body reacts to Voldemort's existence and his acts in the form of pain in his scar. Unlike Voldemort, Harry feels compassion for the unicorn. He can appreciate its beauty and grace and would never even think of murdering such a creature.

Later in the story it is revealed that the Philosopher's Stone is being kept in Hogwarts, and that Voldemort intends to claim it so that he may regain his true form and full life. Harry and his friends intend to stop Voldemort and as they attempt to do so**,** Harry ends up facing Voldemort alone. In their battle Harry realises that "[Voldemort] couldn't touch his bare skin, not without suffering terrible pain" (Rowling 295). Dumbledore later explains to Harry that his mother sacrificed herself when Voldemort tried to kill him as a baby and, as a result, her love became a form of protective magic that kept Harry safe: "Quirrell, full of hatred, greed, and ambition, sharing his soul with Voldemort, could not touch [Harry] for this reason. It was agony to touch a person marked by something so good" (Rowling 299). In this way, love is represented as an ancient form of magic that Voldemort simply could not comprehend. In fact, "Dumbledore has told him often enough: he loves. It is the reason he can defeat the evil Lord Voldemort, who lacks the power to understand love and who laughs at Harry because he knows it motivates him" (Killinger 61).

Contrary to Harry's success, Voldemort's efforts were thwarted because he could not understand love as he never felt it and thus had no idea of the power it has. Voldemort's desire for immortality trumps all his other desires and is a result of his selfishness and self-absorption. His lack of respect and understanding for others results from the fact that he has no one to love and no one loves him. His servants and loyal followers admire him and envy his power, but they have no fond feelings for him. Voldemort's relationships are based on pragmatism as he uses other people for his own benefit, and other people allow themselves to be used in the hope of achieving more power through Voldemort. Thus, "[t]he life of self-sacrifice, the life that defeats death, the life of ongoing friendship and relationship" (Killinger 61) are concepts that Voldemort could never grasp, and this is why, unlike Harry, he failed to defeat death. Since Voldemort is unable to love, he is unable to have a close relationship with another person; rather, he is only capable of loving and valuing himself. The vacuousness of his existence results in his excessive desire for power, which will elevate him over all other "worthless" people, and immortality is the ultimate power that will allow him to live forever and outlast the meaningless people around him.

In conclusion**,** it is clear that Voldemort's lack of love for the people around him is what enables him to pursue immortality so fervently. If he had the ability to care for anyone but himself he would not be able to abuse others as he does, and he would feel sorrow for the deaths of those around him. Unlike Harry, Voldemort has no loving mentor to guide him. He has no friends to care for, and being alone he sees eternal life as the only true way of living. To Voldemort, "mortality is linked with weakness and living forever is the ultimate form of power" (Saxena 1-2). This is why Voldemort sees the Philosopher's Stone and even unicorns as mere objects, means to an end instead of magnificent creations that celebrate life. The Elixir of Life can be used to prolong more than one life, but Voldemort wants it only for himself while someone like Harry would never use it, and if he did, he would probably only try to bring back his parents. Immortality seems desirable at first, but in the world of Harry Potter it comes at a price that only someone who has nothing to lose would pay, which is why a person who can feel love for others can never truly desire immortality.

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Part 3

Fight the Power:
Social (Dis)Order inWorks of the Fantastic


XII
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FIGHT THE POWER

"YOU REAP WHAT YOU SOW": THE ENDURING CLASS AND RACE STRUGGLES IN H. G. WELLS'S *THE TIME MACHINE* AND OCTAVIA E. BUTLER'S *KINDRED*

Bruno Kulić

According to Sorcha NíFhlainn, "[t]he time travel narrative effectively offers a condensed representation of epochs, offering warnings about the progress of mankind in evolutionary and social terms" (9) which makes such narratives far more complex than it may seem at first glance. Due to being shaped by his Victorian milieu, H. G. Wells wrote a time travel story cautioning about the consequences of the class divide. Octavia E. Butler, being a product of the Civil Rights Movement in 1960s USA, examined racial discrimination in her work. This paper aims to analyse how the authors discuss class and race struggles respectively, as well as to see how inequity can be augmented.

In *The Time Machine*, the unnamed protagonist travels to the distant future to find descendants of the society he has just left. He assumes that the Eloi, the baby-like race of uneducated herbivores, came from the upper class of English society because, although they are beautiful, they have no skills. Their survival was ensured by a lucky coincidence of having settled in an area with abundant vegetation that provides edible fruit. They have no incentive to survive or help others survive: "I tell you that none made the slightest attempt to rescue the weekly crying little thing which was drowning before their eyes" (Wells 43). They live in fear of the Morlocks, but do not do anything to save themselves from them.

The Morlocks are their opposites as they are the alleged successors of the working class. They are represented as ugly, but intelligent workers who manage to survive in an environment with scarce resources due to their wits and skills. Carnivores who hunt for food are a later evolutionary product than plant eaters, which indicates that the Morlocks are more evolved than their peaceful counterparts. Although they are presented as animalistic, they seem to have a certain degree of technological knowledge. However, whether they are inventors themselves or just custodians of machines previously created remains unclear. Wells presumes that society as it was in his time will not change in class division, but only in the reversal of dominant roles: "The Upperworld people might once have been the favoured aristocracy, and the Morlocks their mechanical servants; but that had long since passed away" (Wells 59).

NíFhlainn believes the biological segregation of the human race into two lesser varieties to be a consequence of class, geographical and eugenic divisions continuing over hundreds of thousands of years (8). She poses that the degeneration present in the novel is an argument against Herbert Spencer's Social Darwinism, a popular nineteenth century theory of "survival of the fittest" (a phrase coined by Spencer himself after having read Charles Darwin's *The Origin of the Species*), which correlated class division with natural selection as favoured races would persevere in the struggle for life. Wells contended that the unjust distribution of wealth as a consequence of such divisions would invariably lead to devolution and degeneration. One of Wells's contemporaries, the journalist R. H. Hutton, reads the novel as warning to "[a]bove all things avoid sinking into a condition of satisfied ease" (104). It is a warning addressed in the form of a dystopian Victorian future to the Victorian elite of his day, who are the direct ancestors and instigators of the state of affairs seen in AD 802,701 (Lawton qtd. in NíFhlainn 9).

A more contemporary text, Butler's *Kindred*, finds a black woman called Dana transported from 1976 to the Antebellum South whenever her white ancestor Rufus Weylin, the son of a plantation-owner, is in mortal peril. The question of class in a society where slave-ownership is legal seems to be quite complex and race-based. White people occupy the top of the class hierarchy, based on their material status, whereas black people, the freed ones included, occupy the bottom of the social ladder. "White" is used as a synonym for intelligent and outspoken, so when Dana is called "white" by white people, it as a compliment for having an idea of her own. The same term, however, is spoken as an insult by black people: "Thank you so much. Reading-nigger. White-nigger! Why didn't you know enough to let me die?" (Butler 160). Butler undermines this idea of "white = smart" by having the family business of plantation management fall through. It gets to the point where the Weylins have to sell their workforce, which is to say their slaves, to keep their head above water. Additionally, Dana has to teach Rufus, and later his children, to read because he himself is uneducated, which further subverts the idea of white intellectual superiority.

The slaves themselves are also divided along the class line as some of them are field hands and others are house servants. Field hands are the ones who actually work on the plantation, tending the land and working in the harshest of conditions. The house slaves have to live with a different kind of danger as they are basically servants that cook, serve, and clean in the family's home, meaning that the family watches directly over them. When punishment is deemed necessary, the house slaves are sent to work in the fields. This implies that the field hands have it worse, which is why some of them despise the house slaves, whose work

is not as physically demanding, even going so far as to call them traitors who willingly submit themselves to the whites. To make matters worse, because the slaves cannot see a way out of the oppressive system of discrimination thrust upon them, they succumb to horizontal violence, meaning that, as well as suffering under the unjust treatment by the whites, they themselves abuse each other.

Butler uses her science fiction premise of time travel to explore the present day as well. By 1976, the Civil Rights Movement is a generation away, and slavery not even a memory so one would expect racism to be a thing of the past, but things are revealed to be far from perfect through the possibility of Dana's interracial marriage to Kevin, a white man. Kevin's sister forbids him from visiting her family if he and Dana marry. Dana's family does not take to the idea either, her uncle being repulsed by the idea that a white man would inherit all that they have worked for, and her aunt only supporting the idea because their children would have lighter skin. Donaldson posits that "although the overt racism and sexism of 1819 might no longer be practised in 1976, these prejudices remain, and have been so subtly interwoven into everyday interaction that one is no longer aware of them" (102).

What is more, there seems to be trouble even among Dana and Kevin, who wanted her to quit her job because he was in a position to support them both. In exchange, he would only ask that she type his stories, something he knows Dana dislikes doing even for her own writing. In addition, Kevin's request would result in Dana losing her independence. This reveals that, although he is supposedly progressive and open-minded, he still does not see them as equals, but rather perceives himself as superior in their relationship. His stance is a consequence of intersectionality, that is his prejudiced perception of gender and race, which implies "the crossover of two distinct discriminations – racism and sexism – that happens to people who are both black and women" (Eddo-Lodge 118). Donaldson argues that Dana's being marginalised on the basis of both gender and race means that her position in society does not change in relation to time: "There is neither an acceptable role for her in history, nor is there one in her present/future if the norms that govern patrilinear time remain unchallenged" (101).

Kevin's flaws come to light even more clearly when he travels to the past with her. While he is initially repulsed by slavery, not experiencing it first-hand causes him to accept minor acts of degradation as normal. He eventually even starts to think that the slaves are treated fairly since they are assigned no more work than they can manage. At a point, he becomes so desensitized to the everyday injustices that he even muses that "this could be a great time to live in" (Butler 93). Donaldson poses that Kevin's distance from the brutalization of slaves, being

always in the position of a witness and not at the receiving end of it, means that he is unable to see slavery as "a wholly destructive force that needs to be resisted wholesale" (103).

In conclusion, what both authors seem to agree on, despite the fact that their respective time-travel stories are very different, is that human society will always suffer because of our past distinctions. In *The Time Machine* this literally means that the class division is here to stay such as it is for as long as there is humankind. In *Kindred* Butler says that, even though people may try to forget the past, it has and will continue to haunt them because they exist in a society with a complex history in which class and race are still seen as defining characteristics. These warnings may seem grim, but they also imply that the future is in our hands, and that it will be what we make it.

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MANKIND'S IDENTITY AND LEGACY OF TECHNOLOGY AS PORTRAYED IN H. G. WELLS' *THE TIME MACHINE*

Darko Paradžiković

When discussing the identity of mankind and what factors constitute a human being or separate one from the rest of all living organisms on the Earth, concepts such as individuality, morality, as well as the ability for abstract and complex thought, and, finally, communication through language are suggested as the primary factors that elevate humans above other terrestrial species. One oft-overlooked point, however, is mankind's deep and inseparable connection to the usage of tools and technological development that has occurred only in our species at such a grand scale throughout history, and that continues to define mankind's path and way of life to this day. It seems fitting, then, to analyse the world presented in Herbert George Wells' novella *The Time Machine* through this perspective. It is not surprising that one of the defining works of European science fiction written by an outspoken social critic such as Wells touches upon the contemporary issue of technology and its effect on mankind in the world of the far future.

First and foremost, a digression is necessary to define the scope of "tool usage" and "technology" that is being referred to, and how the gap between humankind and all other animals has even come to be. In his essay "Do Animals Have Technologies?" Galit Wellner analyses the works of Marx, Engels, Heidegger, and Stiegler in an attempt to clarify the issue. The essay establishes the hierarchy of technological application in three steps: tools, machines, and digital technologies (265). Wellner points out that Marx attributed only tool usage to animals, but counters this point by showing that even animals transform nature with rudimentary machines according to their needs, for example beavers alter the flows of rivers, and some forms of agriculture have in recent history been observed in certain species of ants (269). The obstacle to identifying such patterns throughout history has been mankind's own stage of development: only as mankind's own level of technical and cognitive advancement progressed could we begin to perceive such patterns in other species.

From the very outset of the framed narrative of *The Time Machine*, the eponymous time machine itself is established to be a man-made tool, constructed by the story's primary protagonist, the nameless Time Traveller. It is a purposeful machine made of a multitude of materials: "a thing of brass, ebony, ivory, and translucent glimmering quartz" (Wells 62). Wells' almost prophetic inclusion of

the crystal quartz into the time machine predates the invention of the crystal oscillator and the quartz clock. Thus, as irony would have it, the key component and crystal related to the machine will remain forever connected with the concept of time.

Upon being thrust into the far future by the machine, the Time Traveller initially discovers a seemingly idyllic world populated by childlike humanoids, the Eloi, who he soon discovers have abandoned all technology and communicate in an extremely rudimentary and simple language: "Their language is trivial, constrained, and stupid. They have lost all knowledge of civilization's heights. They bunk down in ruined palaces but have no memory of how machines work" (Anderson 34). Even the control of fire, commonly regarded as one of early mankind's most essential and ground-breaking cultural, and technological achievements, is lost to these creatures: "I have no doubt they found my second appearance strange enough, coming suddenly out of the quiet darkness with inarticulate noises and the splutter and flare of a match. For they had forgotten about matches" (Wells 25). Their fascination with the match's fire is merely the tip of the iceberg, as the Eloi devote the entirety of their lives to indulging in the simplest of pleasures with not so much as a trace of technics or constructive activity. The question thus presents itself: can the Eloi truly be considered *human* simply because of their implied ancestry to mankind as we know it today? In the first part of *Technics and Time,* French philosopher Bertrand Stiegler analyses Habermas's and Heidegger's thoughts on the relationship between humanity, technics, and language, coming to the radical conclusion that contemporary philosophy needs to completely rethink its idea of the bond that has existed between the three, and abandon the idea that technology is something detracting from human nature in some abstract way (13). Following this line of reasoning, it is a foregone conclusion that the Eloi cannot be considered human in the contemporary sense, and possibly not even according to the values of the late nineteenth century. In a way, the Eloi, as they are shown in the novella, are at an even lower technological stage than contemporary animals. They possess none of the aforementioned three steps of technology: neither tools nor machines, let alone digital technologies. A little more can be said of the underground-dwelling Morlocks, who still maintain rudimentary tools and machinery necessary for their survival underground, but ultimately resort to beastly savagery and predation, making absolutely no attempt to communicate with the protagonist or the surface-bound Eloi, or to establish any sort of agriculture or economy.

Furthermore, the Time Traveller is faced with truly heart-breaking scenes upon finding the abandoned museum: deteriorating exhibits of times past, machines and puzzles beyond repair or solving, and books crumbled to dust. Ironi-

cally, the only thing he can feel for the latter is the sense of an "enormous waste of labour", unable to dedicate any more thoughts to the existential conundrum of finality because of the looming danger of the Morlocks (Wells 47). Yet, perhaps another theme and meaning of the story can be derived from this episode and the overall situation surrounding the Eloi and the Morlocks: all that is living must also die. If the Eloi and the Morlocks are to be taken as the far descendants of mankind, it follows that the story should be read as a warning. In abandoning technology, language, self-improvement, and hardship, mankind doomed itself to a slow and agonizing deterioration and inevitable collapse, perhaps unknowingly sealing its fate. While the Marxist interpretations of the story as an extension of nineteenth century class struggles are valid and even hinted at by Wells, they seem short-sighted in contrast to the imagined danger of the entirety of mankind falling into complacency and abandoning the tools that they made, and that in turn shaped them, and continue to shape them. The world of the far future presented in *The Time Machine* is the direct consequence of such counter-intuitive *evolution,* a course in which humanity has abandoned all the technological wonders it had created, as well as any ambition for improvement.

To conclude, perhaps the time has come for the ideas that technology is dehumanizing and unnatural to be put aside, and for their proponents to learn from lessons of history: no successful individual, group, nation, or otherwise has ever achieved their success by surrendering to complacency and forcing outdated ideals into their life, or by blocking out new forms of manufacturing or thought. Innovation and the latest technologies have always been the key driving force of human progress, be it cognitive, physical, or industrial, bringing benefits and dangers alike in their wake. It is up to humans to choose their own path and course, as well as a purpose for all their tools, using all the moral and idealistic qualities that we possess, but, as *The Time Machine* suggests, the path of deterioration and surrender should never be taken.

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ZOMBIE FICTION AS A FORM OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL COMMENTARY

Saška Petrović

Zombie fiction has been around since the 1920s. It started as lore and myth and quickly developed into a cultural phenomenon when a man by the name of William Seabrook set out to research Haitian voodoo culture. However scientific his intentions were, the events and practices he had described would later primarily be used and reworked in the realm of popular culture. The notion of reanimated corpses might have started as a product of the Haitian belief system, but it had definitely evolved beyond the primitive attributes that had been contributed to it over the early years, establishing thus the zombie character as a metaphor for various socio-political issues. This paper will look at the novel *Zom-B* by Darren Shan, but also attempt to explore some of the ways in which zombie fiction had more generally been used as a means of political and social commentary through the years in both literature and movies.

Starting with the early examples, the stories of zombies first appeared in movies. The first zombie movie was released in 1932 under the title of *White Zombie*. The movie depicts a white couple visiting Haiti, where they wish to be wed, and encountering a local plantation owner. Considering both the early stage of zombie fiction and the fact that the slavery laws[2]were still in place in Haiti at the time, the film opts for racist representations of local population neglecting the depraved behaviour of the colonizers. So, the plantation owner, a rich white man, seeks the help of a voodoo master to transform the woman into a zombie because he fell in love with her. Despite his clear psychopathic urges, in the film, the Haitians are portrayed as evil and vile savages and treated as such, which results in the rescue of the woman and the murder of the voodoo master, whereas the white plantation owner's criminal desires were pushed to the background: "Haiti is presented as a primitive, order-less place where witchcraft and zombies run rampant. The ultimate tradition of Western religion, marriage, is savaged by the dark magic of the uncivilized world" (Crockett and Zarracina). This resulted in the perception of the voodoo culture as malevolent and terrifying, and zombie characters were represented in popular culture as a reflection of the fears of voodooism and blackness up until the 1940s.Moreover, in addition to explicit racism, zombie films relied heavily on a misogynistic point of view: "Early zombie

[2] Under the occupation of Haiti (1915-1934), the US reinstituted the practice of forced labour under the corvée system (Skinner 15).

movies are most obviously concerned with the appropriation of female bodies, and the annihilation of female minds, by male captors" (Dendle).

But as the political landscape of America shifted, the creatures soon acquired new symbolism (Crockett and Zarracina). By now, the zombie phenomenon had become widespread and evolved from racial fears to the fears of a more contemporary nature, such as the fear of communism. With the horrific outcome of World War II, the real threat of atomic warfare and the news of the genocides had caused general consternation and fear. The ensuing Cold War had only served to further this fear by adding to it an element of surprise. This only further fuelled the fear of the unknown and the Americans turned to zombie fiction to grapple with said fears. In 1954, a zombie-themed comic called *Corpses: Coast to Coast* emerged. It revolved around a Soviet communist who reanimated corpses and used them to infiltrate the highest positions of power all over the world, including the White House. Such representations of alien and other kinds of invaders were typical in SF and zombie literature and film as they reflected the fear of the espionage dominant in the McCarthy era. People were distrustful; they were scared and they were even doubtful of their government because they had no way of knowing if a Soviet sleeper agent – whose existence was taken for granted – was their neighbour or their loved one.

But as the Cold War came to a stop, a new one emerged and with it came new fears. The "apocalypse zombie" was a response to the Vietnam War. People had protested the Vietnam War extensively and had found various ways of expressing themselves and their protesting words. One such example is *Night of the Living Dead* by George Romero. This movie revolutionized zombie movies as they had been known until the 1970s by taking a seemingly positive ending and turning it into a negative one at the very last moment. After that, the "pandemic zombie" appeared in the time frame between and after 1980s and 1990s as a reaction to the great increase of previously unknown viruses like those of AIDS, Ebola, and SARS. The nations feared the spreading of a potentially unstoppable disease. Tapping into and making use of these fears, the video game *Resident Evil* was released in which the plot revolves around the fact that a pharmaceutical company purposely releases a bio-organic weapon that turns people into zombies. And finally, the focus is currently on the "post-apocalyptic zombie". The fear of each other, the ultimate fear of humans being afraid of other humans, holds features of all the previous zombie "types" making contemporary zombie fiction rather complex. For this reason, in *Zom-B* there is a fear of the mass contagion due to a virus that spreads quickly, the racial fear because of the increase of immigrants in countries, and the fear that the government is not their own anymore.

Following this, it is difficult to see contemporary zombie fiction as a "tool" as it is all-encompassing rather than focused on a single aspect of contemporary reality. *Zom-B* is narrated from the point of view of Becky 'B' Smith, who is the protagonist of the novel written by Darren O'Shaughnessy under the pen name of Darren Shan. The novel is the first in a 12-part series of books about Becky, and is set in England. While the story does not necessarily focus on the political and social aspects of London at the time when ringtones had to be transferred by, presumably, Bluetooth (Shan 40), the family in which B was brought up certainly has something to say about it. B's father Todd is a white supremacist and at the beginning of the book he strongly believes the zombie invasion to be a hoax: "'The government would love that. Get everyone off the streets, terrify us into holing up like rats… That might be what the whole thing's about, a plot to make us look away while they sneak in a load of scabs who'll work for peanuts and steal out jobs'" (Shan 21). This is an element of the "apocalypse zombie" where the government is not to be trusted in regards to anything and people are preparing to riot against it. B and her class might only be children but they have seen enough zombie movies to have a good idea of what this could be. They exemplify it as a media hoax or a publicity stunt, a government conspiracy (Shan 65), or an experiment gone wrong, a chemical weapon (Shan 66). One of the more paranoid ideas that fits with the idea of the three most prominent zombie pandemic types is also exemplified: "'He thinks the army went in looking for terrorists. Got carried away and killed civilians by mistake. Then cooked up this zombie story to give them an excuse to kill the witnesses'" (Shan 67). The statement comments on the government's determination to keep secrets from the people and on the fear of the terrorist threats that are plaguing the nation. The latter is highlighted by another student's claim that they are going to use the weapon on Arabs to spare troop lives.

Looking back on the original problem of B's household – racism and intolerance of differences – it is clear that the fictional issues and fears find their origin in reality. England has always been a melting pot of people from all over the world but in recent years the numbers of immigrants have increased exponentially:

> By the mid-2000s, 12% of the working age population had been born overseas. … Rising immigration is also common to many industrialized countries, where the average share of immigrants in the labor force increased from 4.3% to 7.2% between 1995 and 2005. …The impact of immigration on labor market outcomes is a controversial issue. (Manacorda et al.120-151)

The numbers had skyrocketed but the fear was shown to be baseless because studies have concluded that the increase in immigrants does not affect native-born workers in the slightest. If anything, it affects other immigrants most. The novel also alludes to the dangers of irrational fears which may cause mass hysteria, and shows that most discriminatory ideas have no foundation in actual facts.

Another contemporary work of zombie fiction is the movie *World War Z* directed by Marc Foster. In this case, the zombies are not slow-moving or dim-witted; they adapt and move at greater speeds than humans. They consume everything on their path and spread the virus in a matter of minutes: "Unlike the creatures of previous films, these migrant zombies move at fast speeds, with a sense of urgency, riffing on our fear of rapid migration rates" (Crockett and Zarracina). There are many aspects of the subgenre that comment on the daily lives of people: from punishing the "heathens" and those who are "different," over fears of migrants, to governments working only to secure the 1% of the rich. Nevertheless, the fact that people have always been prone to conspiracy theories is undeniable, and the genre exploits this, too.

In fact, there is one thing that stands out the most in the contemporary version of zombie fiction and that is: people cannot work together. In the past, groups of people always managed to stick together and survive, but now everything seems to be about the survival of the fittest, and zombie narratives seem to highlight the revival of Social Darwinism at its worst. The "post-apocalyptic zombie" seems to show that people will sacrifice each other in order to survive and this brings forth the notion of a nation divided. This problem is also evident in *Zom-B*, which features teenage protagonists, and contains a scene near the end of the novel where a black child is represented as less worthy than the rest of the group: "'You've got to stall them. We only need a few more seconds.' 'How?' I scream. 'There's nothing I can do to-' 'Throw them the black kid!' Dad roars" (Shan 205). This type of savagery, resulting from a lack of empathy, is humanity's worst enemy and the most likely cause of its downfall.

To sum it all up, the social and political situations in the world have greatly varied throughout history and people continuously used, and still use, stories to express their discontent and fears. Zombie fiction has always been a clever and conspicuous way to cover up the unwanted, almost taboo, commentary. What appears to be trashy and cliché, blasé and vapid, is in reality an extremely clever metaphor for both human fears and human nature itself. After all, it seems that there is no worse monster than a human: "'You know the problem with you, Dad?' I stop him, calmer than I've any right to be, wiping angry, bitter tears

from my cheeks. 'You're a bigger monster than any bloody zombie'" (Shan 211). Whether or not all zombie fiction is used as a form of commentary stands to be tested, but the examples offered in the paper prove that there is certainly a greater purpose to this subgenre than just mere entertainment.

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Part 4

Blurred Lines: Fear, Fantasy, and Reality as Instruments of Worldbuilding


BLURRED LINES

THE TRUTH BEHIND THE FEMALE DRACULA: THE STORY OF ERZSÉBET BÁTHORY

Matea Brkić

Stories about Countess Erzsébet Báthory have been circulating for more than four hundred years. Some argue that she was the first female serial killer, a sadistic – possibly also homosexual –tormentor of women, but the most interesting is perhaps the vampire theory, according to which she displayed vampire traits and bathed in the blood of young virgins. Based on these allegations, Báthory was even seen as one of the role-models for the literary character of Count Dracula. But the actual truth behind the rumours still seems to be elusive and demands further historiographical research. In fact, the plausibility of such rumours seems to be questionable according to various sources discussed in this paper. Taking into consideration her position and fortune, it is not far-fetched to assume that the Countess was just a victim of political games rather than a female Dracula, or an abuser with vampire inclinations, as many believe(d). This paper will explain that instead of being a vampire, Erzsébet Báthory was a political victim, a powerful woman who represented a threat to the nobles and the King.

The Báthory family was an eminent and powerful family in Hungary. They were educated and successful people and Erzsébet was not an exception: "She was trained in the classics, mathematics, and could read and write in Hungarian, Greek, Latin, German and even Slovak, the language of many of her servants" (Craft 16). She married Ferenc Nádasdy from "an incredibly wealthy and powerful family" (Craft 18). For them, she was the perfect bride because her pedigree, intelligence, and wealth made her eligible for preserving the family fortune. The importance of the Báthorys was even more expressed thanks to her decision to keep her maiden surname. According to Craft, she soon became the Lady of the House (34) making all the important decisions, and after her husband's death, the household belonged to her completely. She spent most of her time in Csejthe (Čachtice) Castle, which was a gift from her husband. As a widow, she inherited all of his wealth, which included the Csejthe Castle and "a fiefdom of 17 villages" (Craft 37), which only highlighted her status of a single (widowed) noblewoman owning a great fortune. Significantly, the day before he died, Ferenc Nádasdy wrote a letter to György Thurz**ó**, the Palatine who later imprisoned Erzsébet, asking him to protect her in her precarious position and entrusting his family to Thurz**ó**. Craft explains that Nádasdy knew that, after his death, his wife would have problems with nobles, the Church, or the King because of her wealth, and

he feared for his wife and children (47). In addition to her status as a widow, which made her vulnerable to various social and political machinations at the time, she was also jeopardized by her unusual independence and determination which were not considered feminine and which caused people to frown upon her actions. Her husband's fears proved to be justified. It did not take her too long to recover from the loss of her husband, and, instead of playing the role of a helpless, grieving widow as was expected at the time, only four weeks after his death, she took care of her business in Vienna, paid off all their debts, and managed to financially support certain charitable endeavours. She paid for everything in advance and in cash, and showed that she can take care of her family and business without the help of a man.

Her "masculine" behaviour resulted in various reports against her which escalated between 1604 and 1610. The Countess was accused of murder of hundreds of innocent girls. She was said to have surrounded herself with servants who allegedly helped her torture and kill the girls. Although there was a trial and a lot of witnesses were called to testify, most of the evidence did not fit the accusations, and the real truth remained vague. Because of this, the popular opinion, which favoured gossip and titillating stories, accepted her cruelty as a fact and she came to be known as the Notorious Lady during her lifetime. Interestingly, it was only two hundred years after her death that she was given the title of the Vampire Lady which mostly resulted from the fact that her life was retold and embellished in the form of a legend (Thorne 53). People spread rumours that she bathed in human blood as a result of her obsession with eternal beauty, but there is no evidence that she either drank human blood or used it for any other purposes.

Báthory's problems grew once the clergy started speculating whether the killings were actually taking place in Csejthe or not. It was not the first time that she was a subject to such speculations, but she had always had the help of Thurz**ó**. However, after seeing bodies of dead girls in the underground tunnels of the castle, Reverend Ponikenusz sent a report to Thurz**ó**, who had been bound by the promise to protect her and her children. The Palatine hoped to quiet the matter down, but, as Craft suggests, he was not naive and he knew that, in addition to the Church, the Crown also had a personal interest in seeing the Countess convicted criminally (72), which forced him to take the Crown's side. In fact, her loyalty to King Matthias II of Habsburg turned out to be an issue after she agreed to financially support her cousin Gábor Báthory, who would soon after declare the war against the Habsburgs. So, Thurz**ó** ordered two men to interrogate everyone and collect the evidence regarding the strange events in the castle. They interrogated thirty-four witnesses, but not one of them saw beatings or killing with

their own eyes; like many others, they just heard rumours. The Palatine did not stop there, so they questioned eighteen more people and the result was the same – no one witnessed the torturing personally. The Countess could not be arrested due to a lack of evidence. Nevertheless, she was aware of the secret proceedings, and she even appeared before the court with a woman who testified that her daughter died of natural causes and not by Erzsébet's hand, but her statement was never taken into account.

In her Last Will, written during that period, she left everything to her three children. By doing that, she hoped to become a less attractive target to the King who wanted her dead and disgraced as a criminal or traitor in order to claim all of her properties. In addition, she collected all of her jewellery and brought it to Csejthe. According to Craft, this was because the Palatine's wife stole jewellery from her and because she realized that both Thurz**ó** and his wife were only interested in her money and estates. To end the matter, the Palatine decided to catch her "red-handed", so he entered her castle on 29 December 1610, accompanied by his accomplices, including Erzsébet's sons-in-law, and an armed escort. They found dead bodies inside, according to "Chronicle of Castle Csejthe" written nine years after her death, but there is not a single document confirming that Erzsébet was involved in any kind of crime. Her servants were taken away and then interrogated before the trial even began, and she was imprisoned in her castle. Reverend Ponikenusz already knew what would happen to the Countess – she would be kept in the tower and locked up for the rest of her life, and "Confessions had already been extracted from her accomplices through torture" (Craft 81). The use of force was typical in interrogating the suspects, but in specific cases it was so brutal that even an innocent person would confess, which casts a shadow of doubt even on the official court records.

In addition, because Hungarian grammar does not have gendered personal pronouns, it is hard to determine whether her servants referred to Erzsébet, a male or a female servant in their statements. Moreover, "Names are rarely used and certainly not by the servants when referring to their mistress" ("Erzsébet Báthory: Political Prisoner"). Details were later edited and it is likely that their testimonies were changed. Moreover, her servants did not know the exact number of murdered girls and their statements differed so significantly that they must be seen as questionable: one of them said around thirty, another suggested fifty women were killed. What is more, there was a woman who claimed that the Countess killed more than six hundred virgins, which seems highly unlikely as the region suffered from depopulation at the time, and the Countess could not have killed almost a half of its female population without this being noticed and recorded. In addition, she was never brought to Court, despite the King's insis-

tence, and it was Thurzówho refused to arrange her audience with the King. This puts great suspicion on his role in the whole case, as it was him who collected evidence based on which he later imprisoned her in the castle's tower, instead of giving her up for trial and execution. From the letter his wife sent him, it is not clear whether Thurz**ó** was sure about her guilt or not, because they were both speculating that, in fact, her servants lied. However, despite the real possibility that she did not have a role in the death of all these young girls, she could still be seen as guilty since a master was responsible for the behaviour of his (or her) servants.

To further complicate matters, the King was not pleased with the Countess's life imprisonment and insisted on interrogating Erzsébet. He did not settle all of his debts to the Countess, and, more significantly, he was the next in the line to become an Emperor under the condition that he transfers all of her properties to the Catholic nobles. Being a Protestant like the Countess, Thurz**ó** knew that he could be the next victim and that the King could decide to take away his land as well, so he worked hard to prove that his decision was the best solution. Luckily, the Parliament acknowledged her sentence as valid because it would be hard to prove her guilt, and most importantly, the King would only get one-third of her estates because she left everything to her children. Finally, the locals had to make accusations against her if they wanted justice, but all of them feared her, and would not testify against her. Thurz**ó** immediately proposed a new solution: all documents about the life of Erzsébet Báthory would be sealed and her name would never be mentioned in "polite society" by the order of Parliament. Even the King agreed, mostly because his debt was cancelled, and the reputation of the national hero Ferenc Nádasdy remained intact. In 1612, King Matthias II did become Emperor Matthias and everything worked out well, except for Erzsébet Báthory who died in isolation in her castle in Csejthe.

To sum up, "[t]here is no question that her treatment of her maidservants was harsh and violent by modern standards, but her aggression was certainly not the exception in her era" ("Erzsébet Báthory: Political Prisoner"). It is likely that she hit her servants, but killing and drinking their blood was never proven. Contrary to this, the evidence given here suggests that she was a powerful woman in a world controlled by men, and as such she is likely a victim of political games. She had no hope of salvation: her privileges were taken away, her family forgot her, and her name was never to be mentioned as if she had never existed. She did not have a chance to defend herself and her destiny was already determined after her husband died. Although she was not a vampire, the stories and legends about her and the fact that many writers were inspired by her life made her immortal.

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THE ROLE OF FOOD IN *HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE*

Valentina Markasović

The bestselling *Harry Potter* series by Joanne Rowling recounts the adventures and misadventures of Harry Potter, whom the reader first meets as an orphaned boy living at his Uncle and Aunt's. When he finds out he possesses magical abilities, he leaves for Hogwarts, a magical boarding school, and only returns to his relatives during summer breaks. But his transition from the Muggle (non-magical) into the Wizarding world is not abrupt. Harry, along with the reader, has to adjust to new circumstances. Among other tactics, the construction of the magical world is conducted through descriptions of food. This paper will attempt to explicate the role that food plays in bridging the gap between the Wizarding and the Muggle world, as shown through several key moments in the first book of the series.

The first notable mention of food occurs in "The Vanishing Glass", the second chapter of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone,* when Aunt Petunia instructs Harry: "I want you to look after the bacon. And don't you dare let it burn, I want everything perfect on Dudley's birthday" (19-20). Harry is thereby cast into a "subordinate position" (Clark 60) and "unequivocally excluded from the Dursley family unit" (Daniel 112). Furthermore, it could be argued that the Dursleys impose normality onto Harry by making him put together traditional English "plates of eggs and bacon" (*Philosopher's Stone* 21). There is nothing extraordinary about the characteristic food he cooks, so it is ironic that he – the only member of the family with magical powers – is the one who prepares it. This establishes Harry as a character who does not fit into his present surroundings. The scene therefore acts as a prelude and a contrast to Harry eventually finding a society that accepts him.

After finding out that he is a wizard, Harry is taken to the magical counterpart of the Muggle London. It is interesting to note that Harry enters the magical world via Leaky Cauldron, a famous wizard pub. According to Clark, "the name 'Leaky Cauldron' is allegorical for food that has leaked from one world to another, like a trail of breadcrumbs guiding the chosen few (wizards) into a new life" (26). However, Harry does not consume any food or drink in the pub, and he continues to ingest familiar foods, for example sausages (*Philosopher's Stone* 41), ice cream (chocolate and raspberry with chopped nuts) (*Philosopher's Stone* 61), and a hamburger (*Philosopher's Stone* 66).

Harry's first taste of magical food takes place on the train ride to Hogwarts. Harry is ready to buy numerous Mars Bars (a common non-magical candy bar), but is surprised when he finds out that the trolley offers sweets such as "Bertie Bott's Every-Flavour Beans, Drooble's Best Blowing Gum, Chocolate Frogs, Pumpkin Pasties, Cauldron Cakes, Liquorice Wands and a number of other strange things Harry had never seen in his life" (*Philosopher's Stone* 76). Harry buying a sample of each sweet can be interpreted as characteristic children's behaviour: "children's sweets in particular are a form of resistance to adult culture and involve a rejection of its rituals and symbols" (Daniel 83). Harry, who has never had an opportunity to spend his own money, seizes the chance to indulge in all kinds of sweets, and hence rebuffs the restrictions inflicted onto him by the Dursleys. This brings him one step closer to entering the magical community. It is significant that this happens on the train ride because the "shift from one location to another is ideological as well as geographical" (Clark 27). While the train covers the physical distance between Little Whinging, Surrey (the Dursley's home) and Hogwarts (Harry's new home), the invented foods play the role of establishing "the Wizarding world as separate and different from the Muggle world" (Clark 25): the discovery of the sweets serves as an entranceway to the deeper understanding of Wizarding culture. Chocolate Frogs in particular stand out in this role: the collectible cards that come with these sweets reveal that people move in magical photographs, unlike in the Muggle ones; one card introduces the character of Albus Dumbledore, a great wizard, and it mentions Nicholas Flamel, hence being of great importance in solving the puzzle of the titular Philosopher's Stone (*Philosopher's Stone* 77). Therefore, it can be observed that important knowledge about the magical world is passed to Harry – and the reader – by means of food.

The final stage of transitioning into the magical world is the banquet organized in honour of the start of a new Hogwarts term. The banquet also serves as a sample for other feasts occurring throughout the novel – the Halloween feast (*Philosopher's Stone* 127) and the Christmas feast (*Philosopher's Stone* 149) – so it will suffice to quote the description of the start-of-term banquet to indicate that none of the foods mentioned are magical or unfamiliar: "roast beef, roast chicken, pork chops and lamp chops, sausages, bacon and steak, boiled potatoes, roast potatoes, chips, Yorkshire pudding, peas, carrots, gravy, ketchup and, for some strange reason, mint humbugs" (*Philosopher's Stone* 92). Instead of inventing various magical foods, Rowling opts for feeding her characters "usual foods found in a Boarding School dining hall" (Clark 50). The magical world is obviously and purposefully imbued with elements of the Muggle cuisine. The examples of this are abundant: there is a situation in which Harry is supposed to eat a usual

breakfast of sausages and toast, but is too nervous to do so, due to an upcoming game of Quidditch, a sport unknown to the Muggles (*Philosopher's Stone* 135). The only difference between a Yorkshire pudding served at a reader's home and the one served at Hogwarts is that the latter would be prepared by a house-elf, as we find out in the fourth instalment of Rowling's series (*Goblet of Fire* 181-182). This mixing of ordinary and extraordinary allows the reader to connect with the characters more easily and retain a sense of familiarity, while being thrust into an otherwise completely alien world.

Through the evolution of food consumed by Harry in the first half of *The Philosopher's Stone*, the reader can observe Harry's transition from the Muggle into the Wizarding world. It is important to point out that the reader undergoes the same transition as the protagonist – the food is the first insight into the world of magic, but the reader is still rooted in the familiarity by the presence of ordinary dishes, albeit mixed in with some more exotic foods indigenous to the wizards. Because of this, food is not only an expositional device of introducing the reader to the fantasy world, but is also a way of establishing a connection between the reader and the main character, making the latter more relatable and the plot more believable.

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"THE CALL OF CTHULHU": INSTRUMENTS OF FEAR

Ena Vladika

The horror genre relies on fear to keep the reader involved in the story. When it comes to cosmic horror, a subgenre of horror fiction to which H. P. Lovecraft's "The Call of Cthulhu" belongs, fear is strongly present, but its true power lies in the fact that it encompasses not only the protagonists of the story, as it is usually the case, but humanity as a whole. "The Call of Cthulhu" draws its terrifying allure from several underlying themes and the aim of this paper is to explore the instruments that Lovecraft uses to inspire terror in a reader. This, namely, includes breaching the laws of nature and exploitation of human fear of the unknown, immediately punishing those who dare to uncover secrets and venture past the ignorance, either by madness or death. As suggested by Walidah Imarisha, fantastic literature in general relies on the interrelationship between the real world and the imagined, fictional one which accounts for its relevance ("Rewriting the Future"). Lovecraft slowly tears down the very substance of the human world, introducing things that are unimaginable, knowing that those who attempted to comprehend what they were seeing would inevitably perish. But first he grounds everything in the known world. Lovecraft employs physics, mathematics, architecture, and the overall familiarity of human world as a reference point from which he then forms a creature defying, and in a way mocking, all those laws.

Firstly, Lovecraft uses real places and events to make the setting closer and more familiar to the reader and therefore more shocking when something disquieting happens. For instance, the Charlevoix-Kamouraska earthquake that took place on 28 February 1925 serves as a model for the South Pacific earthquake in the story that is responsible for the rise of R'lyeh and bizarre visions among some people ("The Earthquake that Uplifted R'lyeh"). Moreover, madness is closely tied with Cthulhu and his cult on numerous occasions throughout the story. Many artists suffered delirious dreams and violent episodes of insanity (Lovecraft) that seemed to be directly connected to Cthulhu. By associating such strange occurrences with real life events, Lovecraft draws the reader deeper into the story, as he implies that what may seem "fantastic" can also become real at a certain point in time or under the right circumstances. Similarly, instead of simply using the perspective of one narrator to tell the story, he introduces several unrelated characters and their testimonies of the events as if to add credibility to the story and make it more convincing. All these intricacies contribute to a greater credibility of the setting which makes it more immersive and intriguing.

The next point to consider is the use of mathematical elements, most notably non-Euclidean geometry. Before defining such geometry, one should be acquainted with the meaning of the term "Euclidean". It is, simply put, a collection of postulates that define geometry that is most natural to humans, consisting of straight, perpendicular lines, and angles of 90 and 45 degrees ("Lovecraft and Mathematics: Non-Euclidean Geometry"). While non-Euclidean geometry is neither supernatural nor coming from beyond the perimeter of human comprehension, and people can easily picture elliptical and hyperbolic geometries as well, it defies human intuition just enough to fit perfectly into the description of R'lyeh. Being used to seeing certain conventions in architecture, human brain would surely be baffled by anything that does not conform to the standard, and the city of R'lyeh serves as a glimpse into something even more alien to human nature. In the story, the sculptor Wilcox based his bas-relief of Cthulhu on a strange dream that he describes as "unprecedented dream of great Cyclopean cities of Titan blocks and sky-flung monoliths, all dripping with green ooze and sinister with latent horror" (Lovecraft). Not closely describing R'lyeh, but rather vaguely using terms such as "monolith", "sepulchre" and geometry that is "all wrong", Lovecraft leaves the readers to the horrors of their own imagination.

The most prominent theme in the story is the idea of man facing the vast blackness of unanswered questions about himself and the world around him. The story toys with human understanding of the universe, more precisely, the inability of mankind to comprehend the world as it truly is. Boundaries set by the human intellect that prevent people from gaining insight into the real nature of things actually serve as a shield. The inability to perceive the truth protects people from spiralling into madness caused by witnessing something terribly inconceivable. The opening lines of the story best illustrate this notion:

> 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 light into the peace and safety of a new dark age. (Lovecraft)

Directly following the matter of the understanding of the world and the limits of human mind, Lovecraft sentences his characters to either death or insanity should they become aware of the existence and nature of Cthulhu. While ignorant of Cthulhu and his involvement in any strange happenings, a person can

live a relatively safe life. But, as soon as they come into contact with Cthulhu, they go mad, as is the case with the followers of the cult and, to a degree, Wilcox, or die, like Francis's grand-uncle Angell, and Johansen and his crew. The story ends with Francis's realization of his own imminent demise due to his exposure to the forbidden knowledge. Following this, the reader is now next in the line of people who know too much.

To conclude, in order to instil the feeling of dread, Lovecraft challenges spatial and temporal relations that are at the very core of the world as humans see it and exploits the confusion and panic which arise from tampering with the familiar system. The strangeness of Cthulhu and the unknown that he represents is amplified by the breaking of laws of physics that are taken for granted. Real life locations and actual events that have taken place in reality serve as a blueprint for situations in the story and help create the impression of something familiar being disrupted by something terribly unfamiliar and incomprehensible. The idea that human life depends on ignorance to sustain itself is enforced by the ghastly fate of anyone aware of the horrifying truth. By combining all of these elements Lovecraft creates a story that chills to the bone, not necessarily because of his monster's petrifying appearance but rather due to what this abnormal quality of the monster means for people and their readiness to explore beyond the comfort of the known world.

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