

UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLOMOUCI  
FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA

Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Veronika Fialová

Danse Macabre: Aspects of Fear in the Fiction of Stephen King

Bakalářská práce

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. David Livingstone, Ph.D.

Olomouc 2017

Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci  
Filozofická fakulta  
Akademický rok: 2015/2016

Studijní program: Filologie  
Forma: Prezenční

Obor/komb.: Anglická filologie - Japonská filologie (AF-JA)

**Podklad pro zadání BAKALÁŘSKÉ práce studenta**

<b>PŘEDKLÁDÁ:</b>	<b>ADRESA</b>	<b>OSOBNÍ ČÍSLO</b>
FIALOVÁ Veronika	Patrice Lumumby 2311/50, Ostrava - Zábřeh	F13994

**TÉMA ČESKY:**

Danse Macabre: Aspekty strachu v dílech Stephen Kinga

**NÁZEV ANGLICKY:**

Danse Macabre: Aspects of Fear in the Fiction of Stephen King

**VEDOUČÍ PRÁCE:**

Mgr. David Livingstone, Ph.D. - KAA

**ZÁSADY PRO VYPRACOVÁNÍ:**

- 1) Sběr materiálů
- 2) Studium primárních a sekundárních zdrojů
- 3) Rozvržení práce
- 4) Zpracování
- 5) Revize

**SEZNAM DOPORUČENÉ LITERATURY:**

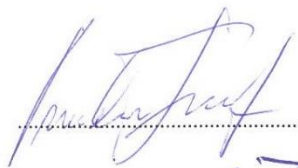
Primární zdroje:

- 1) KING, Stephen: It. Viking Press. New York, 1986.
- 2) KING, Stephen: Rose Madder. Viking Press. New York, 1995.
- 3) KING, Stephen: Carrie. Doubleday. New York, 1974.
- 4) KING, Stephen: Night Shift. Doubleday. New York, 1978.
- 5) KING, Stephen: Salem's Lot. Doubleday. New York, 1975.

Sekundární zdroje:

- 1) KING, Stephen: Danse Macabre. Everest House. New York, 1981.
- 2) KING, Stephen: On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft. Charles Scribner's Sons. New York, 2000.
- 3) LAFFAN, Michael, and WEISS, Max: Facing Fear: The History of an Emotion in Global Perspective. Princeton University Press, 2012
- 4) KING, Stephen: Secret Windows: Essays and Fiction on the Craft of Writing. Book of the Month Club. New York, 2000.
- 5) WINTER, Douglas E.: Faces of Fear, Encounters With the Creators of Modern Horror. Berkley Books. New York, 1985.

Podpis studenta:



Podpis vedoucího práce:



Datum:

4.5.2015

Datum:

4.5.2015

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci na téma „Danse Macabre: Aspects of Fear in the Fiction of Stephen King“ vypracovala samostatně pod odborným dohledem vedoucího práce a uvedla jsem všechny použité podklady a literaturu.

V..... dne.....

Podpis.....

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my supervisor Mgr. David Livingstone, Ph.D. for his advice and for providing me with materials for the thesis.

## **Content**

1. Introduction.....	7
2. Danse Macabre: Origin and Meaning.....	8
3. Fear and Its Forms .....	8
4. Stephen King: A Dancer of Horror Fiction .....	10
4.1 Life in Brief.....	11
4.2 Writing and Horror Fiction .....	12
4.3 Visions of Fear and Death.....	13
4.4 Alcohol and Writing.....	15
4.5 Literary Influences .....	17
4.6 King as Perceived by Chosen Literary Critics .....	18
5. An Analysis of Selected Works .....	20
5.1 Carrie.....	20
5.2 Salem's Lot .....	25
5.3 The Shining .....	30
Conclusion .....	35
Resumé.....	37
Bibliography .....	40
Anotace .....	42
Abstract.....	42

## 1. Introduction

The aim of the thesis is to analyse the concept of fear and horror as envisioned by Stephen King in his fiction, specifically in relation to King's own perception of fear and the theory of fear as perceived by the German psychologist Fritz Riemann. First, the expression "Danse Macabre" and its connection to the entire thesis will be explained, also providing a brief historical background of the term. The second chapter will then introduce fear and its elementary forms based on the book *Anxiety: Using Depth Psychology to Find a Balance in Your Life* by Fritz Riemann. Also, the nonfictional book *Danse Macabre* will contribute providing King's perspective on the topic of fear. Riemann's and King's theories will later be applied to the specific novels.

The next part will deal with facts about Stephen King, including a brief summary of his life and an overview of his literary works. In addition, King's perception of fear will be summarized and the influence of the alcohol addiction on his work will be discussed. In the final part of the chapter the prominent literary influences on King will be mentioned and King's perception by selected literary critics will be clarified. *Danse Macabre* and King's other nonfictional book *On Writing* will serve as the main source of information. Both sources will provide autobiographical information as well as King's description of his views on fear and horror fiction. In case of the secondary literature on King, the main sources will be *Stephen King, Man and Artist (1990)* by Carroll F. Terrell and *Stephen King, A Literary Companion (2011)* by Rocky Wood. The aim of this entire section is to provide the reader with a wider perspective of the analysis that follows in the next part.

In the following chapter of the thesis selected works by King will be analysed: *Carrie*, *Salem's Lot* and *The Shining*. Each of the analyses will be focused on various aspects of fear that are prominent in the books, King's perception of these fears and the application of Riemann's theory. The final section will be concerned with summarizing the acquired findings and providing a concluding point of view.

## 2. Danse Macabre: Origin and Meaning

Danse Macabre, in literal translation “dance of death” is also the title of one of Stephen King’s non-fiction books. This expression refers to the medieval metaphor from the times of the Black Death. It dates back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century when plague epidemics and the mass dying out of the population brought up the topic of death in the public eye resulting in the birth of the visual representation of the phenomenon of “Danse Macabre”. The metaphor was supposed to remind people of the inevitability of death and that regardless of the status of a person, when it comes to dying, death makes no difference. The allegory was typically used in medieval paintings in which personified Death (usually a skeleton), was shown dancing with several people from various social classes and leading them to the grave.<sup>1</sup>

The word “macabre” itself, however, can also carry the meaning of gruesome or horrifying.<sup>2</sup> Thus, in the sense of the Stephen King’s allegory, a more appropriate translation for “danse macabre” could rather be “dance of horror” as he compares horror fiction to a dance. A dance where authors are searching (“dancing”) through the corners of readers’ minds to reveal the raw - even primitive - levels of their lives; or as King himself says, “the secret torture chamber of the Spanish Inquisition” or “the simple and plain hole of a Stone Age cave-dweller”.<sup>3</sup>

Hence, as a parallel to the medieval Danse Macabre of Death dancing with her victims, horror fiction authors could be likewise perceived as dancing with their readers leading them (regardless of their will) to the mentioned secret chambers of their minds, letting them expose their deepest fears and seemingly forgotten nightmares.

## 3. Fear and Its Forms

This chapter deals with the perception of fear and its various forms. In this section, also the theory chosen to support the analysis of King’s selected works will be introduced and described.

As an inseparable part of human life, throughout the history fear has been dealt with in numerous different ways; be it religion, magical rituals or science.<sup>4</sup> To live

---

<sup>1</sup> New Advent, ‘Dance of Death’, accessed October 7, 2016, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04617a.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Dictionary.com, ‘macabre’, accessed October 22, 2016, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/macabre>

<sup>3</sup> Stephen King, *Danse Macabre* (New York: Everest House, 1981), 10.

<sup>4</sup> Fritz Riemann, *Anxiety: Using Depth Psychology to Find a Balance in Your Life*, trans. Greta Dunn (Munich: Ernst Reinhardt, 2008), 6.



without fear, however, is impossible for humans as it goes hand in hand with the self-preservation instinct and the human awareness of mortality. Fear reflects the life we are living with all its aspects (including personality, surroundings, environment we have been growing up in) and exists in all cultures and nations.

This chapter deals with the issue of fear and the information provided will be mostly based on Fritz Riemann's book *Anxiety: Using Depth Psychology to Find a Balance in Your Life*. This particular book has been chosen for the analysis as it provides a distinctly stated universal theory of fear. It will also serve as the source of analysis in upcoming parts of the thesis along with Stephen King's *Danse Macabre* and his other works.<sup>5</sup>

As much as fear can be generalized (fear of dying, fear of the unknown or fear of losing a loved one applies to most people), it needs to be taken into account with regard to each individual separately as well. Such an approach is typically used in psychotherapy and according to Riemann plays a key role in uncovering the source of fear in a person. He also characterizes fear as a danger signal and at the same time as a challenge to overcome it.<sup>6</sup>

There existed and still exist many distinctive methods of overcoming fear, as well as theories regarding them. Apart from Riemann's examples mentioned at the beginning of the chapter (science, religion), another example worth mentioning is the whole genre of horror in general. To be more specific, Stephen King suggests that the answer to the question: "Why do people watch horror movies and read horror stories?" is simply that the movies and books function as a tool to help us cope with the terrifying things in real life.<sup>7</sup>

To return to Riemann, one of the significant findings he introduces in his publication is the division of fear into its four basic forms. In his opinion, all kinds of anxieties are closely related to these forms of fear and in many cases, from fear of spiders to claustrophobia, they are just their variations.

Before introducing these basic forms of fear, it needs to be mentioned that Riemann compares them to four fundamental impulses responsible for the world and its physical laws as we know it and groups them into two pairs. The first one being revolution and rotation and the other one being gravitation and centrifugal force.

---

<sup>5</sup> These works include *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* (2000) or *Night Shift* (1978).

<sup>6</sup> Riemann, *Anxiety*, 11.

<sup>7</sup> King, *Danse Macabre*, 16.

To be more specific, revolution refers to the revolution of Earth around the Sun and there Riemann sees it as the human desire to belong somewhere, to be part of a group. In opposition to that he places the rotation of Earth around its own axis which he compares to the longing for individuality. As it is apparent from his implication, these “impulses” we are made to strive for create conflicts that then give rise to our elementary fears.<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, Riemann characterizes the other two antinomies; need for stability and safety which he compares to the gravitation force, contrary to the centrifugal force that represents our determination to constantly move on and evolve.<sup>9</sup>

These four elementary desires then collide and lead to four basic fears from which all of existing anxieties are derived according to Riemann:

1. *The fear of losing one's individuality, the fear of being dependent*
2. *The fear of self-realization, being different, the fear of isolation*
3. *The fear of change*
4. *The fear of obligation, commitment, definitiveness*<sup>10</sup>

As has been already mentioned above, the laws of nature and life are based on antinomies that create conflicts leading to our four elementary fears. Comparably, Stephen King suggests that horrors help people overcome their own fears.<sup>11</sup> To put it simple, people fight fear with fear which could be seen as yet another example of antinomy in correspondence to Riemann's theory.

#### **4. Stephen King: A Dancer of Horror Fiction**

The following paragraphs seek to provide, along with insight into Stephen King's life, an overview of basic facts about the author which might provide the readers with a wider perspective on his perception of fear and the genre of horror in general. There will be a special focus on the autobiographical elements in King's non-fictional works.

---

<sup>8</sup> Riemann, *Anxiety*, 13.

<sup>9</sup> Riemann, *Anxiety*, 14.

<sup>10</sup> Riemann, *Anxiety*, 14.

<sup>11</sup> King, *Danse Macabre*, 16.

## 4.1 Life in Brief

As for Stephen King himself, he was born in 1947 in Portland, Maine as the second child<sup>12</sup> to Donald and Nellie Ruth Pillsbury King. After the separation of their parents Stephen and his brother were raised by their mother Ruth who was in Stephen's words "one of America's liberated women, but not by choice".<sup>13</sup>

After the separation of King's parents followed years of moving around the country, from Indiana to Connecticut. The family settled once again in Maine when King's mother had to take care of her elderly parents.<sup>14</sup> King graduated from the University of Maine at Orono in 1970<sup>15</sup> where he was an active member of the Student Senate. He regularly contributed to the school newspaper and worked for the University Library. There he met his wife Tabitha whom he married in 1971.<sup>16</sup>

When he first met her, King described Tabitha as an organised girl with loud laughter and "the prettiest legs he had ever seen"<sup>17</sup>, however, what made him fall in love with her was, beside her looks, her approach to writing.<sup>18</sup> Unlike the rest of young writers around Stephen King at that time, Tabitha Spruce did not support the idea of writing being a solely spontaneous matter of feelings and in her poems it could be seen that they had been thought through very well.<sup>19</sup>

King's major breakthrough came in 1973 when his first novel *Carrie* (1974) was accepted for being printed in paperback, earning him two hundred thousand dollars. Owing to that, King was able to stop working as a teacher and could fully devote himself to writing. The success of *Carrie* was then followed by the publication of the novels *Salem's Lot* (1975), *The Shining* (1977) and many others.<sup>20</sup> In 1977 King also began to teach creative writing at the University of Maine at Orono.

---

<sup>12</sup> The first son being David who is two years older than Stephen (Stephen King, *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*, [New York: Scribner, 2000], 17.)

<sup>13</sup> King, *On Writing*, 17.

<sup>14</sup> King, *On Writing*, 19.

<sup>15</sup> Obtaining a B. A. in English and a qualification to teach at high school.

<sup>16</sup> StephenKing.com, 'Author', accessed November 11, 2016,

[https://www.stephenking.com/the\\_author.html](https://www.stephenking.com/the_author.html)

<sup>17</sup> King, *On Writing*, 57.

<sup>18</sup> Tabitha Spruce was also a member of literary workshop group at their University and a writer herself. According to King, they "shared the same belief that writing can be simultaneously intoxicating and idea-driven" (Stephen King, *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* [New York: Scribner, 2000], 64.)

<sup>19</sup> King, *On Writing*, 62.

<sup>20</sup> So far, King has published over 50 novels, dozens of essays, short stories and screenplays

(StephenKing.com, 'Bibliography – A to Z', accessed November 12, 2016,

[https://www.stephenking.com/the\\_author.html](https://www.stephenking.com/the_author.html) [https://www.stephenking.com/library/bibliography/.](https://www.stephenking.com/library/bibliography/))

Yet another significant milestone in King's life was marked by his almost fatal accident in 1999 when he was hit by a van. He suffered from several serious injuries and was unable to walk or even stand for more than two months.<sup>21</sup>

Although he was brought up in a Catholic family, King himself does not support the idea of organized religion as he sees it as a dangerous tool to manipulate masses.<sup>22</sup> Currently, Stephen King lives in Bangor, Maine with his wife and besides his literary work he spends time contributing to several charities or playing in a rock and roll band Rock Bottom Reminders.

## 4.2 Writing and Horror Fiction

Since his early years, Stephen King has been a fan of horror, science fiction and other genres alike, be it movies or books. However, his first significant encounter with "serious horror fiction" as he describes it<sup>23</sup>, happened around the age of 12, when Stephen came across the fiction of H. P. Lovecraft for the first time and found one of his books among the old belongings of his long-gone father. It was not King's first experience with horror fiction, however, it was experience that had deeper impact on King than anything else at that time and even long after that.

King then further explained that what particularly appealed to him was Lovecraft's hard-working attitude along with his serious approach to work: "Either way, the man himself took his work seriously. And it showed. So that book, courtesy of my departed father, was my first taste of a world that went deeper than the B-pictures which played at the movies on Saturday afternoon."<sup>24</sup>

From his beginnings as an author, King has believed in the same devotion to the craft. As he suggests, despite the enormous amount of rejection notes<sup>25</sup> he used to receive when he started to submit short stories to men's magazines<sup>26</sup>, owing to the hard work and commitment, he eventually succeeded. In addition to that, King also states that talent in general is just a small part of success in comparison to hard-work.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> King, *On Writing*, 253-5.

<sup>22</sup> King, *On Writing*, 61.

<sup>23</sup> King, *Danse Macabre*, 62.

<sup>24</sup> King, *Danse Macabre*, 62.

<sup>25</sup> Or how he called them „this-won't-do-but-send-us-more“ notes. At one point he even started to keep these rejection slips hanging from the spike on the wall in his bedroom as a motivation (Stephen King, *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* [New York: Scribner, 2000], 40.)

<sup>26</sup> King refers to magazines like Playboy that contained erotic themes.

<sup>27</sup> King, *Danse Macabre*, 56.

Apart from the obvious need for a solid knowledge of grammar according to Stephen King, an author serious about his writing needs also a discipline and constant work because writers are not just born. They are intentional results of one's will.<sup>28</sup>

Regarding writing as such, King perceives it above all as telepathy between the author and his readers. As he further explains it, it allows the reader to travel through time and space without any limits while watching what the author has to show.<sup>29</sup>

In *Danse Macabre (1981)*, along with other ideas, King also provides an outlook on horror fiction in particular; he points out that horrors in their essence - from books, over movies to radio programmes – cause impact on two basic levels: “gross-out level” and what could be summarized as “the level of dance”. He adds that sometimes there can be a third one, as well, called “a dance of dreams”.<sup>30</sup>

The “gross-out level” King characterizes as the one that is right under the surface. It could be exemplified as the feeling of disgust mixed with disbelief the reader or the viewer feels while seeing human viscera explode in all directions or using King's own example from *The Exorcist*: “watching the character Regan masturbate with a crucifix”.<sup>31</sup>

On the other hand, “the level of dance” operates on more compelling, powerful level as it literally “dances” through the deepest unconscious corners of a human mind in search of its very substance. The last level, “a dance of dreams” is probably the one that strikes the deepest and is the one most hidden. According to King, this level of horror ought to wake up the inner child “sleeping” in every human and bring out the purest, most sincere emotions along with it.<sup>32</sup>

As King's perception of writing, horror fiction and its types has been clarified, the next part will focus on his perception of fear and death. Furthermore, the topic of popularity of being scared on purpose will be discussed.

### **4.3 Visions of Fear and Death**

Stephen King elaborates on the topic of fear itself on various occasions (in his literary work or during interviews) and in the following subchapter these ideas will be

---

<sup>28</sup> King, *Danse Macabre*, 56.

<sup>29</sup> King, *On Writing*, 103.

<sup>30</sup> King, *Danse Macabre*, 239.

<sup>31</sup> King, *Danse Macabre*, 239.

<sup>32</sup> King, *Danse Macabre*, 239.

further clarified. The main question that probably arises in connection with horror fiction is, why do people willingly seek to get scared in the first place? Stephen King suggests that with the realization of their inevitable end people embrace the fear that goes hand in hand with it. This particular fear is the one that, since realizing it, every human being is trying to cope with.<sup>33</sup>

Furthermore, significant part of the fear of death for most people is also the fear of the unknown. Thus, trying to understand death is what also might help them to come to terms with it. In connection with this fact, King offers examples of behaviour like slowing down while passing a place of serious car accident or when old people read death notices in newspaper just to find out who they have outlived.<sup>34</sup>

King also compares fear to blindness and those who are experiencing it to the blind men from an old fable who were all touching different parts of an elephant thinking they were various different things only to find out (when combining their information) that it was in fact an elephant. Similarly to that, King says that people blinded by their fears are also “touching” them in order to put together a bigger picture in an attempt to lessen the fear.

Thus, to answer the former question about attractiveness of horror genre, with respect to the information provided above, King explains that it simply serves as “a rehearsal of our own death”<sup>35</sup> and he correspondingly adds that horror stories “act as a tool to destroy themselves”.<sup>36</sup> To clarify, King sees horror stories as a way people can deal with real life “horrors”.

Additionally, in the “Introduction” of *Night Shift* (1978), King also debates about the position of horror story authors in society. More specifically, the fact that they are often criticized for “delivering bad news”. Basically, horror writers tell readers that they are going to suffer, that there is something bad waiting for them in life – be it cancer or a car accident – and that eventually, they are all going to die. And that is a fact, people in general do not want to hear.<sup>37</sup>

To summarize, it might be safe to assume that these visions are reflected in King’s works as will be shown in the latter part of the thesis. Apart from that, an

---

<sup>33</sup> King, *Night Shift* (New York: Doubleday, 1978), 15.

<sup>34</sup> King, *Night Shift*, 15.

<sup>35</sup> King, *Night Shift*, 16.

<sup>36</sup> King, *Danse Macabre*, 16.

<sup>37</sup> King, *Night Shift*, 15.

important role in forming King as an author played also his years of struggling with alcohol and drug addictions. This topic will be further discussed in the next subchapter.

#### **4.4 Alcohol and Writing**

As it has been alluded above, King struggled with alcohol addiction for many years and later on with drug addiction, as well. Many times, including his autobiography *On Writing (2000)*, he discusses the issue of alcoholism and its influence on his writing. In this section these conceptions will be further elaborated.

King compared the first experience of getting drunk to a feeling of being outside of his own body, as if he was watching a movie of himself. At that time, as a teenager having his first hangover, he swore not to get drunk ever again and over several next years he seemed to have no major problem with it.<sup>38</sup>

However, with the difficult financial situation of King's family after his graduation and his first serious difficulties with writing coming hand in hand with it, Stephen started to compensate for his frustrations with alcohol.<sup>39</sup> The situation worsened with declining health of King's mother followed by her death in 1974. As he admitted, during the period of heavy drinking and drug abuse, King created an idea for himself that he would not be able to write again if he stopped. Furthermore, he reached the point where he did not know how to even stop or live a different life.

King also explained that he employed what he called "the Hemingway Defence" to justify the heavy drinking. Basically, the term refers to the attitude of alcoholics who are sensitive but wish to stay manly in their own eyes and the eyes of others. However, at the same time they feel the need to come to terms with their personal issues and the only way they see is to drink.

By the year 1985 when King had started taking drugs as well, he had already known for a long time that he had to be really careful not to ruin his life. Although he even sensed that he needed help, he managed to keep his life more or less running and kept his problems to himself. The reason behind this was, aside from shame and fear, the fact that this was the way problems were handled in King's family. Essentially: "you keep yourself to yourself".<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> King, *On Writing*, 92-3.

<sup>39</sup> King, *On Writing*, 93.

<sup>40</sup> King, *On Writing*, 96.

In contrast to King's silence, however, his works reflected his issues and the inner struggle he had been going through. As it has been pointed out in chapter 4.2.1, in *Misery* it was the insane nurse tormenting the main character which King admitted might be seen as a metaphor to his addiction torturing him. In case of *Tommyknockers* (1987) aliens are getting into the heads of characters to form a symbiosis; in exchange for her or his soul the characters receive various types of superpowers. Another metaphor that could explain King's idea of that time that drugs were enabling him to write.<sup>41</sup>

One of many side effects to King's excessive drug abuse was also the complete loss of memory of writing *Cujo* (1981) as he admitted and later regretted.<sup>42</sup> However, the influence of King's addiction was not just one-sided. On the contrary, King's alcoholism and drug abuse obviously influenced his writing but at the same time, his literary work also influenced his addictions. When he was given an ultimatum by his wife to give up drugs or leave the house, he imagined the character of Annie Wilkes from *Misery* as a representation of all his addictions again and he realized that he did not want to be the pet or the toy to "her" anymore. The fear of losing the ability to write did not disappear, however, King decided to risk it in order not to lose his family.<sup>43</sup> Ironically, in retrospective King became very critical of some of his works from that time, for example *Tommyknockers* he marked as: "an awful book".<sup>44</sup>

Nevertheless, despite the primary struggle King was coming through once he decided to stop drinking and using drugs, he never gave up on writing even though many of his attempts were (using his own words): "tentative and flat".<sup>45</sup> Eventually, he managed to come back to the state of mind at which he was able to write again without alcohol or drugs. He compared the feeling of relief over that realization to returning to a summer house after a long winter to discover that everything stayed as it was.<sup>46</sup>

Thus, with respect to his personal experience with alcoholism and its influence on writing, King summarizes his opinion on the "Hemingway Defence" simply as one of many excuses made up by alcoholics to justify their drinking. Furthermore, he adds that the idea of drinking as a tool to lessen the struggle of "a sensitive creative mind" is

---

<sup>41</sup> King, *On Writing*, 87-95.

<sup>42</sup> King, *On Writing*, 99.

<sup>43</sup> King, *On Writing*, 98.

<sup>44</sup> Rolling Stone, 'Stephen King: The Rolling Stone Interview', accessed January 29, 2017, <http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/features/stephen-king-the-rolling-stone-interview-20141031>

<sup>45</sup> King, *On Writing*, 99.

<sup>46</sup> King, *On Writing*, 99-100.



just an illusion brought to life probably mostly because of authors like Hemingway, Fitzgerald or Sherwood Anderson. As King explains, the reason for their drinking (or drinking of any other alcoholic for that matter) remains simple: they drink because they think that they have no other choice.<sup>47</sup>

## 4.5 Literary Influences

In the thesis, several influences that contributed to forming King as an author have already been discussed. Besides growing up with science fiction and horror stories, his wife Tabitha or the experience with alcoholism, the authors that had an impact on his work have been mentioned, as well: Lovecraft, Stoker or Poe. The following subchapter will focus more on the writers whose influences were the most significant according to King himself.

The first ever encounter with horror genre for King happened through the radio adaptation of Ray Bradbury's "Mars Is Heaven!", leaving a long-lasting impression on him.<sup>48</sup> Over the following years, King has praised Bradbury's talent on many occasions and even stated that: "without Ray Bradbury there is no Stephen King".<sup>49</sup> He also described Bradbury as an author who: "lives and works alone in his own country, and his remarkable, iconoclastic style has never been successfully imitated".<sup>50</sup> At the occasion of Bradbury's death in 2012, King noted: "The sound I hear today is the thunder of a giant's footsteps fading away. But the novels and stories remain, in all their resonance and strange beauty."<sup>51</sup>

As it was clarified in chapter 4.2, the first serious horror fiction author whose work King encountered was H. P. Lovecraft. King was mesmerized by the seriousness and truthfulness that showed in Lovecraft's stories: "he wasn't simply kidding around or trying to pick up a few extra bucks; he meant it and it was his seriousness as much as anything else which that interior dowsing rod responded to..."<sup>52</sup> King also adds that the work of Lovecraft became the impulse that showed him the way he wanted to take.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> King, *On Writing*, 99.

<sup>48</sup> King, *Danse Macabre*, 74.

<sup>49</sup> The New Atlantis, 'The Dark and Starry Eyes of Ray Bradbury', accessed January 30, <http://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/the-dark-and-starry-eyes-of-ray-bradbury>

<sup>50</sup> King, *Danse Macabre*, 185.

<sup>51</sup> StephenKing.com, 'Stephen Comments on the Death of Ray Bradbury', accessed February 2, 2017, [https://stephenking.com/news\\_archive/archive\\_2012.html](https://stephenking.com/news_archive/archive_2012.html)

<sup>52</sup> King, *Danse Macabre*, 63.

<sup>53</sup> King, *Danse Macabre*, 63.

However, the author that King claims to influence him the most is Richard Matheson. He explains that owing to the average rural American settings, Matheson chose for his stories, he felt closer to his works in comparison to those of Lovecraft or Bradbury. In addition, along with Lovecraft, Matheson was the influence that King claims to lead him to the career of an author.<sup>54</sup>

In *On Writing* King also summarizes the overall influence on him of the writers that were mentioned above as well as many others he had read. He credits these authors for helping him create his own style of writing while he was imitating theirs:

When I read Ray Bradbury as a kid, I wrote like Ray Bradbury—everything green and wondrous and seen through a lens smeared with the grease of nostalgia. When I read James M. Cain, everything I wrote came out clipped and stripped and hardboiled. When I read Lovecraft, my prose became luxurious and Byzantine. I wrote stories in my teenage years where all these styles merged, creating a kind of hilarious stew.<sup>55</sup>

To conclude, it has been shown which authors King marked as the most influential on him. In comparison, in the following section it will be discussed how King is perceived by others and in which way he fits among the traditional authors according to chosen literary critics.

#### **4.6 King as Perceived by Chosen Literary Critics**

As it has been mentioned, in this subchapter the perception of Stephen King as an author will be discussed and clarified. For the purpose were chosen two books by literary critics: *Stephen King, Man and Artist (1990)* by Carrol F. Terrell and *Stephen King, A Literary Companion (2011)* by Rocky Wood. These particular works were selected due to the different times of their publication to show how the opinion on King might have changed over the years.

First, in *Stephen King, Man and Artist* Terrell compares King to Joyce. He states that similarly to Joyce King writes what he sees and hears and that he uses no censorship. In addition, King also often reflects on the topics of childhood problems, adolescence or adulthood.<sup>56</sup> However, as a significant difference between these two

---

<sup>54</sup> StephenKing.com, 'Tribute to Richard Matheson', accessed February 2, 2017, [http://stephenking.com/news\\_archive/article399.html](http://stephenking.com/news_archive/article399.html)

<sup>55</sup> King, *On Writing*, 147.

<sup>56</sup> Carroll F. Terrell, *Stephen King: Man and Artist* (Orono: Northern Lights, 1991), 11.

authors Terrell marks King's popularity; during his life Joyce was never as popular as King among the readers.<sup>57</sup>

As King's popularity rose, the question that appeared more often was: Where does he stand as a writer in terms of the tradition? Terrell claims that among other things King shares with the canonical authors like Shakespeare, Dante or Homer stand out the similar themes and the fact that his creativity derives from a religious source<sup>58</sup> as it is in case of many traditional authors, as well.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, according to Terrell strong emotions and a clear structure of vision are typical for King's work and his vitality derives from love and compassion.<sup>60</sup>

In contrast, in the book *Stephen King, A Literary Companion* by Rocky Wood the author characterizes King as a mainly mainstream writer<sup>61</sup> (especially in terms of his short stories) and he also provides examples of various genres King has stepped into over the years.<sup>62</sup> Similarly to Terrell, Wood notices that King does not use censorship in any of his books.<sup>63</sup>

Furthermore, according to Wood King has also proved that he can create deep, "life-like" characters who are easy to feel empathy for<sup>64</sup> and that his works have helped increase interest in reading.<sup>65</sup> Wood also marks King as "the Dickens of our times" as he is popular among the readers and was initially unpopular with some critics.<sup>66</sup>

Last, Wood says that as one of the most productive and successful writers of our time King "has been reflecting the mainstream American culture of the last 40 years."<sup>67</sup> Also it is suggested in the book that King's talent might be often overlooked because of his label as a horror writer.<sup>68</sup>

To summarize, in *Stephen King, Man and Artist* the author compares King to the traditional writers (like Dante) and gives him credit for both his popularity and his

---

<sup>57</sup> Terrell, *Stephen King, Man and Artist*, 12.

<sup>58</sup> Terrell says that both Testaments of the Bible reappear in many of King's books as quotes, references or ethical tests (Carroll F. Terrell, *Stephen King, Man and Artist* [Orono: Northern Lights, 1991], 15.)

<sup>59</sup> Terrell, *Stephen King*, 12.

<sup>60</sup> Terrell, *Stephen King*, 14.

<sup>61</sup> Rocky Wood, *Stephen King: A Literary Companion* (Jefferson: McFarland & Co, 2011), 3-4.

<sup>62</sup> To exemplify, apart from horrors, King has written fantasy stories (*Dark Tower* series) or novels for young adults like *The Talisman* or *Eyes of the Dragon* (Rocky Wood, *Stephen King, A Literary Companion* [Jefferson: McFarland & Co, 2011], 4-5.)

<sup>63</sup> Wood, *Stephen King*, 5.

<sup>64</sup> Wood, *Stephen King*, 7.

<sup>65</sup> Wood, *Stephen King*, 19.

<sup>66</sup> Wood, *Stephen King*, 20.

<sup>67</sup> Wood, *Stephen King*, 21.

<sup>68</sup> Wood, *Stephen King*, 20.

talent, whereas in the second book *Stephen King, A Literary Companion* the author Rocky Wood can also derive from King's long career as a writer. It is obvious that King has a wide range of genres and it can be deduced that his popularity does not derive only from his mainstream themes. Both Terrell and Wood imply that he has a real potential to be listed among the canonical authors in the future.

This subchapter closes the theoretical part of the thesis used as a basis for the upcoming analysis of works by Stephen King. In the upcoming section chosen works by King will be studied in connection to the acquired information above.

## **5. An Analysis of Selected Works**

The following paragraphs focus on analysing selected books by Stephen King in terms of his perception of fear, as well as testing and implementing Riemann's theory on division of fear. The analysis will try to find specific examples of fear and motifs in these books and try to elaborate on their meaning and relations. The books chosen as the object of the analysis are: *Carrie*, *Salem's Lot* and *The Shining*.

### **5.1 Carrie**

In this chapter the background of the creation of the book will be clarified. The important motifs (oppression, revenge, religion or wish for integration) will be further analysed, as well as the types of fear that are derived from them. Furthermore, some of the examined fears will be also explained in terms of Riemann's theory.

As mentioned before in Chapter 4.1, King's breakthrough came with the publication of *Carrie* (1974). However, what preceded were hours of hard work and thorough research on a topic King was until then unfamiliar with. The first draft of the book even ended up in a dustbin because writing about girl characters and their environment was too unknown area for him. Also, he was not able to sympathize with the main character and what bothered King as well was the fact that finishing *Carrie* would consume him a great deal of time and more importantly, it would be too long to be published in a men's magazine.<sup>69</sup> It was King's wife Tabitha who found the manuscript in the bin and saw the potential of the story. She then encouraged him to finish it and helped him with details concerning the "girl environment".<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> King, *On Writing*, 76-7.

<sup>70</sup> King, *On Writing*, 77.

The story itself revolves around a teenage girl, Carrie White, who is, as many teenagers of her age, trying to fit in at school. However, her strict upbringing by a fanatic religious mother combined with Carrie's discovery that she is endowed with telekinetic powers make the task impossible. As Carrie suffers from constant bullying by her classmates and abuse by her mother, she simultaneously learns how to control her powers to finally use them against her bullies. As for the formal structure, the book is written in the third person with epistolary passages from fictionalized newspaper articles, other books written later on about the phenomenon of Carrie or police reports concerning the matter.

The character of Carrie is based on King's own experience with outsider classmates at high school. The first of them whom King nicknames as "Sondra" in his book *On Writing*, similarly to Carrie grew up in a religious family, while the other inspiration, nicknamed "Dodie" came from family obsessed with game shows.<sup>71</sup> However, both of them were predestined with their odd upbringing and old-fashioned, worn-out clothes (especially in the teenage girl environment) to become a target of ridicule.

King summarizes it in *On Writing*. In reference to Sondra he says: "The other girls made fun of her, at first behind her back and then to her face. Teasing became taunting. The boys weren't a part of it; we had Bill to take care of (yes, I helped—not a whole lot, but I was there). Dodie had it worse, I think. The girls didn't just laugh at Dodie; they hated her, too. Dodie was everything they were afraid of."<sup>72</sup>

The character of Chris Hargensen<sup>73</sup> could serve as an example of such behaviour in *Carrie*. In the course of the story she was systematically trying to hurt and humiliate Carrie even though Carrie herself had never done anything to deserve such treatment. Similarly to King's former high school classmates, when Carrie tried to escape her outsider label and went to the prom with the popular sportsman Tommy Ross, it made Chris upset and offended: "There: *Tommy R. & Carrie W.* They were really going through with it. She could hardly believe it. Outrage made her tremble. Did they really think they would be allowed to get away with it? Her lips tautened grimly."<sup>74</sup> As can be seen, neither King's classmates nor Chris wanted the outsider to become "normal".

---

<sup>71</sup> King, *On Writing*, 80.

<sup>72</sup> King, *On Writing*, 80.

<sup>73</sup> Chris Hargensen, one of Carrie's classmates, plays the leading role in plotting the humiliation against her during the final prom scene (Stephen King, *Carrie* [New York: Doubleday, 1974], 127.)

<sup>74</sup> King, *Carrie*, 84.

One of possible explanations behind this might be the fact that there exists a visible distinction between the popular and the unpopular kids. The idea of an outsider fitting in is terrifying because it erases the line between these groups. To put it another way, when there is no line and the outsider becomes popular there also is no guarantee that it cannot happen the other way around; the popular kid can easily become an outsider, too. Thus, when Carrie was presented with the opportunity to go to the prom and socialize with her classmates while Chris was banned from attending, it put Chris in the position of an outcast and that enraged and scared her at the same time.

Regarding the theme and the motifs of the book, there appear the motifs of revenge, Carrie's wish to fit in, the oppression of outsiders or the religious faith. These motifs all contribute to the main theme, the subject of Pandora's box and its closure once it has been opened.<sup>75</sup>

As for the motif of Carrie's wish to integrate at school, it collides with her desire to embrace her telekinetic powers and let people know she is different. As she wrote in her notebook: "*Everybody's guessed/that baby can't be blessed/'til she finally sees that she's like all the rest.*"<sup>76</sup> This fact corresponds with Riemann's theory of fear mentioned in Chapter 3. To be more specific, Carrie's contradictory desires can be perceived as two of Riemann's fears that are in opposition to one another; the fear of losing individuality and the fear of self-realization. Carrie is afraid of her own dissimilarity and worries that she will never escape what she calls "the red circle"<sup>77</sup> but at the same time she keeps exploring and developing her powers.

Concerning Carrie's powers, they are closely related to her emotions; especially her fear and anger. This can be seen in the opening scene, where Carrie gets her first menstruation and as she is unaware of the biological process, she is convinced she is going to die: "There was a bright flash overhead, followed by a flashgun-like pop as a lightbulb sizzled and went out. Miss Desjardin cried out with surprise, and it occurred to her (the whole damn place is falling in) that this kind of thing always seemed to happen around Carrie when she was upset, as if bad luck dogged her every step."<sup>78</sup> This scene

---

<sup>75</sup> King lists the theme of Pandora's box as one of his favourite ones. In *Carrie* this particular metaphor refers to Carrie's powers and their impact (Stephen King, *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* [New York: Scribner, 2000], 207.)

<sup>76</sup> The quote is a reference to a song by Bob Dylan, *Just Like A Woman*. (Bob Dylan, *Just Like A Woman* [New York: Dwarf Music, 1996].)

<sup>77</sup> A metaphor for Carrie's oddity. She drew „the red circle“ and marked herself as a weirdo on the first day at high school by praying in the dining hall during lunch ( Stephen King, *Carrie*, [New York: Doubleday, 1974], 19.)

<sup>78</sup> King, *Carrie*, 9.

can serve as an evidence that Carrie's traumatic experience probably led to awakening her powers.

The fear of death and the unknown Carrie is feeling during the opening scene of the book could also serve as a manifestation of King's perception of fear as mentioned in subchapter 4.3. King states that a significant part of the fear of death is the fear of the unknown. Hence, as it has been already alluded above, when Carrie is experiencing her first menstruation in the opening scene, she is terrified and convinced she is going to die because she is unfamiliar with the biological process.

Regarding Riemann's theory, it can be exemplified also on the character of Sue Snell.<sup>79</sup> Sue might be considered as a contrary character to Carrie and as such she represents the prototypical popular girl with a promising future ahead. However, the idea of predestined small-town life meeting the expectations of others terrifies and attracts her at the same time:

And having something she had always longed for—a sense of place, of security, of status—she found that it carried uneasiness with it like a darker sister. It was not the way she had conceived it... She was quite sure (or only hopeful) that she wasn't that weak, not that liable to fall docilely into the complacent expectations of parents, friends, and even herself... The word she was avoiding was expressed *To Conform*, in the infinitive, and it conjured up miserable images of hair in rollers, long afternoons in front of the ironing board...<sup>80</sup>

These contradictory feelings; the need for safety and stability and the urge to change and stop being so predictable or compliant, represents two of Riemann's antinomies: the fear of change and the fear of definitiveness.<sup>81</sup>

To return to the motifs of the book, another significant one is the motif of religious belief and its influence on the protagonists, Carrie White and her mother, Margaret White. It becomes also a significant source of fear that reappears throughout the story:

Momma's overturned teacup rose and flew past her head to shatter above the stove. Momma shrieked and dropped to her knees with her hands over her head.

---

<sup>79</sup> Sue Snell as one of the classmates who tormented Carrie when she got her first menstruation is trying to make up for her bad behaviour by sending her boyfriend to the prom with Carrie (Stephen King, *Carrie* [New York: Doubleday, 1974], 65.)

<sup>80</sup> King, *Carrie*, 38.

<sup>81</sup> Riemann, *Anxiety*, 14.

‘Devil's child,’ she moaned. ‘Devil's child, Satan spawn—’<sup>82</sup>

It is obvious from the quotation that Margaret is terrified of Carrie’s powers, mainly because she believes they come from the Devil. Apart from Carrie’s powers, she fears her daughter’s existence in general as it is a constant reminder of the “sin” she once committed, and which resulted in the birth of Carrie. Religion then serves to Margaret as a tool for overcoming her fear.

The motif of revenge is shown with both Carrie and Chris Hargensen. While Chris is showing a lot of initiative to get her revenge, Carrie is gradually being forced to it by the people around her (including her mother, Chris or even Sue Snell). However, to claim that Carrie was just a passive victim with no blame on her side would be too simple. The truth is, the opening of Pandora’s box that released Carrie’s powers along with her long-suppressed anger was initiated by Carrie’s distress in the opening scene, but she was well-aware of her actions afterwards.

After the humiliation at the prom Carrie feels broken and part of her wants to quietly return home and admit defeat to her mother: “She would pick herself up very soon now, and sneak home by the back streets, keeping to the shadows in case someone came looking for her, find Momma, admit she had been wrong—”<sup>83</sup> However, at the same time she feels it is “time to teach them a lesson. Time to show them a thing or two.”<sup>84</sup> Carrie realizes that she can in fact change her label and position with the help of her telekinetic powers. Thus, even though she is forced to her desperate state, Carrie’s final decision to slaughter hundreds of people is solely her own and no one else’s.

To summarize the information above, several important motifs appearing in the book were analysed (oppression, revenge, religion or wish for integration) which are all related to various types of fears King uses (Sue’s fear of predestined life, Carrie’s fear of never being able to fit in or Margaret’s fear of Carrie and her powers). It has been also exemplified that these fears correspond to Riemann’s theory and his division of elementary fears as mentioned in chapter 3. In terms of King’s perception of fear, his theory of the unknown being a significant part of the fear of death was shown on Carrie and her reaction to getting her first menstruation.

---

<sup>82</sup> King, *Carrie*, 76.

<sup>83</sup> King, *Carrie*, 140.

<sup>84</sup> King, *Carrie*, 141.



## 5.2 Salem's Lot

In the first part the additional information concerning the title of the book and the inspiration will be provided. The analysis itself concentrates on the motif of childhood fears and the way they can be dealt with. Apart from that, the significant role of the symbols appearing in the book will be clarified and Riemann's theory of fear will be tested, as well.

The novel itself was inspired by Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, however, with much darker conclusion. When King started writing the story his intention was to find a balance for *Dracula* which in his own words "must be the most *optimistic* scary novel of all time".<sup>85</sup> The title of *Salem's Lot* (1975) was influenced by King's wife Tabitha. Originally it was supposed to be *Second Coming* which she noted sounded like "a sex manual".<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, she suggested that the fitting setting for the story would be rural.<sup>87</sup> In addition to that, King mentioned in the introduction to *Salem's Lot* that it was one of his earliest ideas. In *The Playboy Interview* he also mentioned *Salem's Lot* as his favourite story among his other works.<sup>88</sup>

The novel describes a story of the main protagonist, Ben Mears, who returns to a small town, Jerusalem's Lot, to write a book about an old house.<sup>89, 90</sup> As people start disappearing and dying with clues leading to the new owners of the Marsten House, Kurt Barlow and Richard Straker, Ben and the other protagonists soon reveal their true colours; Mr. Barlow is a vampire and Straker his helper. With help from some of the inhabitants of the town Ben begins to fight them to protect what is left from Salem's Lot and to save his bare life.

As it has been already mentioned in Chapter 4, King drew inspiration for the book from Bram Stoker. Thus, similarly to *Dracula*, King's interpretation of vampires

---

<sup>85</sup> King, *Salem's Lot* (New York: Doubleday, 1975), 7.

<sup>86</sup> The title was then changed to *Jerusalem's Lot* which, however, seemed to King's Publisher like a religious book, therefore the title was eventually altered to *Salem's Lot* (Stephen King, *Salem's Lot* [New York: Doubleday, 1975], 8.)

<sup>87</sup> King, *Salem's Lot*, 8.

<sup>88</sup> Stephen King: *The Playboy Interview (Singles Classic) (50 Years of the Playboy Interview)*, Chicago: Playboy, 2012.

<sup>89</sup> The old house named The Marsten House is a building in Salem's Lot which Ben as a child once broke into as a test of his bravery (Stephen King, *Salem's Lot* [New York: Doubleday, 1974], 16.)

<sup>90</sup> The Marsten House was once a property of rich pensioners, Hubert and his wife Birdie. Hubert reportedly became mad, set traps all over the house and ended up killing his wife and hanging himself (Stephen King, *Salem's Lot* [New York: Doubleday, 1975], 16-7.) It is also revealed that in fact Hubert made a living as a gangster, killed tens of people and took part in satanic rituals. He was also in contact with Mr. Barlow (Stephen King, *Salem's Lot* [New York: Doubleday, 1975], 58.)

remains traditional. To name a few examples, they hunt after dark because they cannot stand the sunlight, crosses or even garlic and need a permission to enter a house.<sup>91</sup>

Regarding the structure of the book, it is divided into chapters named after the crucial characters appearing in each of them. The chapter “Lot” then introduces the main, as well as the side characters during the time horizon of one day. The story is narrated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person point of view.

To focus on the main character, the novelist Ben Mears, his primary motivation for coming back to Jerusalem’s Lot derives from his horrific childhood experience that took place in the Marsten House. At that time he saw (or at least thinks so) the original owner hanging from the ceiling: “Hubie was hanging there, and his face wasn’t black at all. It was green. The eyes were puffed shut. His hands were livid... ghastly. And then he opened his eyes.”<sup>92</sup> From this particular moment, he was never able to overcome the shock and dread even though he might have forgotten about it from time to time.

This experience can be understood as an example of King’s perception of horror alluded in chapter 4; “the dance of dreams”. This level of horror, as he describes it, strikes the deepest and wakes up the inner child and the most hidden fears along with it.<sup>93</sup>

The effect of King’s “dance of dreams” is also shown also shown with another protagonist, the English teacher Matthew Burke. To be more specific, when Matthew faces the possibility that in his guest room there is a vampire hiding and waiting for him, he heads there all alone, waking up a long-forgotten childhood memory of his fearful journeys past an old deserted church after dark: “There was a ruined church along the way, an old Methodist meetinghouse...and you wondered what might be in there besides mice—what madmen, what monsters. Maybe they were peering out at you with yellow reptilian eyes.”<sup>94</sup> It can be seen that “the dance of dreams” is exemplified on this childhood memory.

In terms of Riemann’s theory, Matt’s emotions could be traced back to one of the elementary fears, the fear of isolation. As Matt thinks to himself: “Alone. Yes, that’s the key word, the most awful word in the English tongue. Murder doesn’t hold a candle

---

<sup>91</sup> King, *Salem’s Lot*, King, 98.

<sup>92</sup> King, *Salem’s Lot*, 30.

<sup>93</sup> King, *Danse Macabre*, 239.

<sup>94</sup> King, *Salem’s Lot*, 119.

to it and hell is only a poor synonym.”<sup>95</sup> The statement in the scene clearly corresponds with Riemann’s theory by demonstrating the elementary fear of isolation.

Ben’s attraction to the mystery of the Marsten House might be explained also by one of King’s theories of fear alluded in subchapter 4.3; as Ben is trying to come to terms with his childhood traumatic experience, uncovering and explaining the mystery might help him lessen his fear, similarly to King’s example in chapter 4.3 of people slowing down while passing by a car accident.<sup>96</sup>

In case of Susan Norton, the love interest of Ben, Riemann’s division of fear applies, as well. Namely, what seems to be the most prominent feature of Susan’s personality is her desire to escape the small-town life and the fear of definitiveness or being stuck in a rut that results from it: “And that was why New York—or someplace—was imperative. In the end you always crashed against the unspoken barricades of their love, like the walls of a padded cell. The truth of their love rendered further meaningful discussion impossible and made what had gone before empty of meaning.”<sup>97</sup> In this case Susan refers to the love of their parents that she values but at the same time she feels suffocated by it.

However, the fear that eventually costs Susan her life is not the fear of definitiveness but a different one. When she faces the choice whether to believe in the existence of vampires or not, she is too frightened to do so: ““But all rational thought goes against this, Ben. I’d rather believe that Matt somehow murdered Mike Ryerson and invented that crazy vampire story for reasons of his own.””<sup>98</sup> As can be deduced from the quote, Susan fear can be derived from Riemann’s fear of change. She holds onto her hope for a “natural” explanation for the events in Salem’s Lot because the reality that lies beyond what seems “natural” to her is too horrifying. For this inability to accept the truth, Susan eventually ends up as a vampire. To be more specific, what is so horrifying about the existence of vampires is the fact that they symbolize evil and more importantly the ultimate fear: death and all it stands for (the fear of unknown, as well as Riemann’s elementary fears: the fear of change and fear of definitiveness; fear of the fact that after death nothing might follow).

---

<sup>95</sup> King, *Salem’s Lot*, 119.

<sup>96</sup> King, *Night Shift*, 15.

<sup>97</sup> King, *Salem’s Lot*, 15.

<sup>98</sup> King, *Salem’s Lot*, 128.

Regarding the motifs of the novel, faith (or the lack of it, as in case of Susan) plays a key role throughout the whole book; it serves as a tool for fighting evil. Without faith, the cross that is supposed to repel vampires is just a useless object. Namely it can be illustrated on the scene where Father Callahan<sup>99</sup> confronts Kurt Barlow: “The cross’s glow was dying. He looked at it, eyes widening. Fear leaped into his belly like a confusion of hot wires.” When Father Callahan faces his fear he simultaneously loses his faith:

‘Nowhere left to go,’ Barlow murmured sadly. His dark eyes bubbled with infernal mirth. ‘Sad to see a man’s faith fail. Ah, well...’

The cross trembled in Callahan’s hand and suddenly the last of its light vanished. It was only a piece of plaster...<sup>100</sup>

As mentioned above, due to Callahan’s fear his faith in God weakens and so does the light and power coming out of the cross that he is holding. Because of his lack of faith, Callahan similarly to Susan loses his fight with Barlow.<sup>101</sup>

The Crosses appear as one of many symbols in *Salem’s Lot*. As it has been alluded above, they represent faith and in faith lies their power. Among other significant symbols in the book also occur vampires who embody evil or death itself. The Marsten House symbolizes evil powers, as well. The theory of Ben Mears implies that “there may be some truth in that idea that houses absorb the emotions that are spent in them.”<sup>102</sup> In other words, according to Ben, the house accumulates the evil energy resulting from wicked actions that took place there and lures unholy creatures or evil doers.<sup>103</sup>

King also suggest in the story that even without any vampires there is plenty of evil in Jerusalem’s Lot (or any other small town for that matter): “The town knew about darkness. It knew about the darkness that comes on the land when rotation hides the land from the sun, and about the darkness of the human soul.”<sup>104</sup> To be more specific, in the chapter called “Lot” King introduces many of the inhabitants of the town along with

---

<sup>99</sup> Father Callahan as one of the remaining living inhabitants of Jerusalem’s Lot joins Ben and the other protagonists in the fight against Mr. Barlow and his vampires (Stephen King, *Salem’s Lot* [New York: Doubleday, 1975], 165-7.)

<sup>100</sup> King, *Salem’s Lot*, 174.

<sup>101</sup> King, *Salem’s Lot*, 174.

<sup>102</sup> King, *Salem’s Lot*, 30.

<sup>103</sup> King, *Salem’s Lot*, 30.

<sup>104</sup> King *Salem’s Lot*, 122.

their ugly secrets (cheating wife, young mother abusing her infant child, a greedy land dealer who sells the Marsten House to Barlow and overlooks his crimes for money).<sup>105</sup>

Thus, it can also be concluded that becoming a vampire does not always turn people evil; in many cases the victims were corrupted before and transformation into a vampire just brought out the worst in them by removing all the social and moral boundaries. As an example of that can serve the case of Corey Bryant<sup>106</sup> who is persuaded to seek revenge for his humiliation by Kurt Barlow: “‘And you shall yet have your vengeance on those who would fill themselves while others want.’ Corey Bryant sank into a great forgetful river, and that river was time, and its waters were red.”<sup>107</sup> It can be deduced from this scene that Corey is turned into a vampire and as such is left with no restraints, no fear.

In addition to that, Barlow also states about his creations: “There is no memory for the Undead; only the hunger and the need to serve the Master.”<sup>108</sup> This fact also contributes to the statement that with no emotions and no memories there is nothing that can prevent becoming a monster.

The child Mark Petrie also plays an important role in terms of the characters. In fact, he and Ben are the only ones of the main protagonists who manage to survive the vampire feast and again, they owe their success to both bravery and faith. For example, Mark’s faith as well as his bravery and cold-bloodedness are manifested on his dealing with a former friend who turned into a vampire, Danny Glick. As Danny tries to hypnotize Mark and persuade him to get invited in Mark’s house, Mark fights him successfully with a toy cross and then goes back to sleep as if nothing happened.<sup>109</sup>

To conclude, it can be assumed that one of the significant aspects of fear appearing in *Salem’s Lot* lies in King’s “dance of dreams” (as exemplified on the characters of Ben Mears or Matthew Burke). Furthermore, it has been also shown that Riemann’s theory applies in case of the protagonists, namely on the examples of Susan

---

<sup>105</sup> King *Salem’s Lot*, 33-51.

<sup>106</sup> Corey as one of the minor characters serves as an example of corruption before the arrival of vampires in the town; he sleeps with another man’s wife and when he is caught in the act, the husband (Reggie Sawyer) frightens him to that extent that Corey soils himself. Corey with no dignity left in him is too scared to do something about his situation. It is Barlow who, by removing his fear (and turning him into a vampire), gives Corey a chance for revenge (Stephen King, *Salem’s Lot* [New York: Doubleday, 1975], 133.)

<sup>107</sup> King, *Salem’s Lot*, 135.

<sup>108</sup> King, *Salem’s Lot*, 194.

<sup>109</sup> King, *Salem’s Lot*, 137-9.

Norton or Father Callahan. Apart from that, the important symbols of the book (vampires, crosses or the Marsten House) have been explained, as well.

### 5.3 The Shining

The following analysis focuses chiefly on the effects of isolation on the main characters in connection to their fears, especially on the main protagonist Jack Torrance and his inner struggle with his former alcohol addiction and self-doubts. Prior to the analysis the background information of the book will be mentioned. Furthermore, in the analysis Riemann's theory will be applied and the other aspects of fear (on the example of Jack and the other characters) will be further analysed.

Publication of *The Shining* (1977), gained permanently Stephen King the label of a horror writer in the public eye and as he himself commented on that matter: "it gave the bookstores a handy place to shelve his books".<sup>110</sup> As an inspiration for *The Shining* served King Ray Bradbury's short story *The Veldt* or *The Masque of the Red Death* by Edgar Allan Poe<sup>111</sup> which is also quoted at the beginning of the book.

As for the story, the book became the first one that was based on King's own experience; it drew inspiration from his visit to an actual hotel in Colorado and more importantly, his problems with alcoholism. One of the main characters, writer and a former teacher Jack Torrance, similarly to King around that time (1977) battles the alcohol addiction and struggles with writing a play he is working on.<sup>112</sup> In connection with that, King later admitted that at one point he realized that he was writing *The Shining* about himself and Jack Torrance was probably one of the most autobiographical character he had written.<sup>113</sup>

The plot concentrates on the Torrance family (Jack, his wife Wendy and their son Danny) and their stay at the Overlook Hotel in Colorado. They come to mountain hotel hoping that the isolation from the rest of the world will help Jack recover from his failure and alcohol addiction.<sup>114</sup> However, Jack slowly uncovers bloody history of the hotel and at the same time gradually loses the grasp of what is real and what is not and becomes a puppet in the "hands" of the Overlook.

---

<sup>110</sup> King, Salem's Lot, 8.

<sup>111</sup> Douglas E. Winter, *Stephen King: The Art of Darkness* (New York: New American Library, 1984), 127.

<sup>112</sup> Stephen King, *The Shining* (New York: Doubleday, 1977), NP.

<sup>113</sup> King, *On Writing*, 95.

<sup>114</sup> Jack used to drink excessively. Apart from that, he lost his job due to a conflict with a pupil whom Jack expelled from his classes (Stephen King, *The Shining* [New York: Doubleday, 1977], NP.)

Concerning the formal structure, the book is written in the third person point of view. The narration is chronological with occasional flashbacks (for instance, in Jack's childhood or the past of other characters).

The main theme of the book revolves around isolation. As the hotel is located high in the mountains of Colorado with tough winters and no access to the civilization for months, it provides suitable conditions for the observation of the aspects of isolation. To exemplify, Jack's wife Wendy fears the physical effects of isolation in the hotel; she thinks that in Colorado there "are beautiful mountains but they are hard."<sup>115</sup> On the other hand, Jack was afraid (and still is) of the wall that has been built between him and the world (and his family) by his drinking. Fear of isolation also belongs among Riemann's four elementary fears that have been introduced in chapter 3.

In *The Shining* a significant role plays the Overlook Hotel itself. As a place that was once owned by Mafia<sup>116</sup> and where "maybe forty-fifty people have died since the hotel was opened for business,"<sup>117</sup> the hotel has created its own hostility and it becomes clear over the course of the story that the Overlook is the main antagonist of the Torrance family.

It is also implied that the hotel accumulates "memories" of the evil actions that once took place there. As one of the protagonists, Hallorann,<sup>118</sup> says: "it seems that all the bad things that ever happened here, there's little pieces of those things still layin around like fingernail clippings."<sup>119</sup> This motif of a "haunted hotel" is similar to the "haunted house" in *Salem's Lot*. However, unlike Salem's Lot, the Overlook Hotel acts actively and it is not just a passive place where the negative energy gathers. As an example can serve the moving and attacking hedges<sup>120</sup> outside the hotel or the wasps from a seemingly empty wasp nest that attack Danny.<sup>121</sup>

To focus on the character of Jack Torrance, due to his recent problems and difficulties with temperance he is in a vulnerable state and thus becomes a perfect target for the Overlook. Apart from that, Jack has always had issues with controlling his

---

<sup>115</sup> King, *The Shining*, 42.

<sup>116</sup> King, *The Shining*, 112.

<sup>117</sup> King, *The Shining*, 18.

<sup>118</sup> Hallorann is a cook in the Overlook that has the same gift as Danny (Stephen King, *The Shining* [New York: Doubleday, 1977], NP.)

<sup>119</sup> King, *The Shining*, 60.

<sup>120</sup> King, *The Shining*, 142.

<sup>121</sup> King, *The Shining*, 89.

temper, as he clarifies: “All his life he had been trying unsuccessfully to control it.”<sup>122</sup> This fact as well makes Jack easily manipulated by the hotel.

Regarding Jack’s fears, he thinks that when he drinks there is “a broken switch somewhere inside, or a circuit breaker that doesn’t work, and he has been propelled down the chute willy-nilly.”<sup>123</sup> Thus, it can be concluded that Jack views himself as a victim and on this fact is based one of Jack’s fears; the fear of having no control over himself and his life. In other words, Jack’s fear could be traced back to Riemann’s elementary fears, namely the fear of losing individuality and being dependent.

Furthermore, Jack with his role of a victim can serve as a manifestation of King’s statement mentioned in chapter 4.4; that alcoholics drink because they think that they have no other choice.<sup>124</sup> Also, with respect to the fact that King marks Jack as an autobiographical character and that he wrote *The Shining* about himself,<sup>125</sup> the Overlook could be perceived as a symbol of King’s addiction (or any addiction in general). To be more specific, the way the hotel slowly possesses its victims and forces them to lose themselves and destroy everything around them may be regarded as a metaphor to being addicted.

Apart from that, the longer Jack stays in the hotel, the more he feels alienated and isolated from others and he becomes more and more enraged: “the coals of resentment had begun to glow around his heart. First Ullman, then Wendy, now Al. What was this? National Let’s Pick Jack Torrance Apart Week?”<sup>126</sup> As it can be deduced the feeling of isolation and fear of it are being encouraged in Jack. At one point Jack even realizes that he is being manipulated by the Overlook later in the book: “Everything came clear to him. It was not just Danny the Overlook was working on. It was working on him, too. It wasn’t Danny who was the weakling, it was him. He was the vulnerable one, the one who could be bent and twisted until something snapped.”<sup>127</sup>

However, due to his fear Jack suppresses the idea; it is too frightening and too much to comprehend for him to accept the possibility that the Overlook has its own will. Also, he is afraid that he is going mad:

---

<sup>122</sup> King, *The Shining*, 73.

<sup>123</sup> King, *The Shining*, 73.

<sup>124</sup> King, *On Writing*, 99.

<sup>125</sup> King, *On Writing*, 95.

<sup>126</sup> King, *The Shining*, 128.

<sup>127</sup> King, *The Shining*, 190.



(Cracking up not playing with a full deck lost ya marbles guy just went loony tunes he went up and over the high side went bananas lost his football crackers nuts half a sea-bag) all meaning the same thing: losing your mind.

‘No,’ he whimpered, hardly aware that he had been reduced to this, whimpering with his eyes shut like a child. ‘Oh no, God. Please, God, no.’<sup>128</sup>

This quote might be perceived as another manifestation of Jack’s fear of losing control and being dependent.

Nevertheless, to claim that Jack counts as a merely evil character would be to premature; it is also shown on several occasions throughout the story that he deeply loves both Danny and Wendy and tries to fight the Overlook, as well: “‘Doc,’ Jack Torrance said. ‘Run away. Quick. And remember how much I love you.’”<sup>129</sup> In this part of the story Jack is almost completely under the influence but still manages to regain control over himself and thus saves Danny’s life.

As it has been mentioned, Jack’s wife Wendy similarly to him fears the isolation, however, her concerns are more of a physical character: “Further west in the Sierra Nevada the Donner Party had become snowbound and had resorted to cannibalism to stay alive. The mountains did not forgive many mistakes.”<sup>130</sup> It is clear from the quote that Wendy is afraid of the danger of being trapped for month at one place with no chance for escape.

Apart from that, Wendy’s feeling of being isolated can be exemplified on the relationship with Danny; as it is said about him: “He loved his mother but he was his father's boy.”<sup>131</sup> Wendy also further clarifies that she felt as if she was “deliberately being excluded.” She also adds that “with Jack and Danny around she sometimes felt like an outsider, a bit player who had accidentally wandered back onstage while the main action was taking place.”<sup>132</sup> From this feeling also comes Wendy’s fear of isolation and as she admits, her jealousy: “she felt the old faint pang (It's him first and it's always been him first) of jealousy.”<sup>133</sup>

As a mother, Wendy also experiences concerns about her son Danny, especially in connection to Jack’s unpredictable temper: “If she felt she didn't know her husband, then she was in awe of her child — awe in the strict meaning of that word: a kind of

---

<sup>128</sup> King, *The Shining*, 173.

<sup>129</sup> King, *The Shining*, 294.

<sup>130</sup> King, *The Shining*, 42.

<sup>131</sup> King, *The Shining*, 38.

<sup>132</sup> King, *The Shining*, 61.

<sup>133</sup> King, *The Shining*, 85.

undefined superstitious dread.”<sup>134</sup> This fear can be explained in terms of Riemann’s fear of being dependent. In other words, as Wendy cannot predict her husband’s behaviour, she also cannot always protect Danny from him; it all *depends* on luck. From King’s perspective it can be interpreted in connection to the fear of unknown which is according to the author a significant part of the fear of death (in this case, not Wendy’s own but her son’s).<sup>135</sup>

Regarding Jack’s son Danny, his fear of isolation results primarily from his unusual ability to read people’s minds and emotions or even foresee the future.<sup>136</sup> As Danny is just five years old, he often does not understand what he is seeing and before he meets the cook Hallorann, who is endowed with the same gift as Danny, he fears that he might be alone with his unusual power: “Danny, who had been frightened as well as lonely sometimes, nodded. ‘Am I the only one you ever met?’”<sup>137</sup> The question is meant towards Hallorann and it shows clearly Danny’s concern which is again related to one of Riemann’s elementary fears and the main theme of the book – the fear of isolation.

It is also important to note that the title of the book, *The Shining*, is a reference to Danny’s (and Hallorann’s) gift, the latter of which describes it as follows: “‘Me, I’ve always called it shining. That’s what my grandmother called it, too. She had it. We used to sit in the kitchen when I was a boy no older than you and have long talks without even openin our mouths.’”<sup>138</sup> This clearly demonstrates how the characteristics of the ability of “shining” indicate a telepathic power.

In conclusion, the main theme of the book, isolation has been analysed and exemplified and explained also in terms of Riemann’s theory of fear. Then, the role of the Overlook Hotel and its meaning have been clarified. Apart from that, Jack and the other characters were described in connection to their fears and the theory of Riemann was applied, as well. Finally, the meaning of the title of the book was briefly explained.

---

<sup>134</sup> King, *The Shining*, 37.

<sup>135</sup> King, *The Night Shift*, 15.

<sup>136</sup> The visions are shown to him through the “imaginary friend” Tony whom only Danny can see and it is revealed at the end of the book that Tony is an older version of Danny. (Stephen King, *The Shining* [New York: Doubleday, 1977], 287.)

<sup>137</sup> King, *The Shining*, 55.

<sup>138</sup> King, *The Shining*, 54.

## Conclusion

The aim of the thesis was to analyse selected works by Stephen King (*Carrie*, *Salem's Lot* and *The Shining*) in terms of various aspects of fear appearing in the books. Furthermore, the relation of these fears to the four elementary fears as introduced by Fritz Riemann was elaborated.

In Chapter 5, the works *Carrie*, *Salem's Lot* and *The Shining* respectively were thoroughly investigated. Also, King's previously clarified perception of fear along with the theory of fear by Fritz Riemann were shown on specific examples. In addition to that, the analysis sought to provide distinctive motifs in each of the books and tried to explain their meanings.

In *Carrie* were, apart from the motifs of oppression, religion or revenge, elaborated also the fears that are derived from them. King's claim that an important role of the fear of death plays the fear of the unknown was then exemplified on Carrie and her reaction to getting her first menstruation. As the character was based on King's outsider classmates from high school, King's theory regarding the outsiders was mentioned, as well. Basically, according to King they represented everything the bullies feared.<sup>139</sup> This theory was then shown on the example of Chris Hargensen who wanted to punish Carrie mainly for having the opportunity to socialize at the prom whereas Chris herself was not allowed to attend. This mere fact might have changed her status from popular girl to an outcast.

As for the main theme of the book, the Pandora box and its closure once it has been opened was interpreted as a metaphor to Carrie's powers. It was suggested that whereas Carrie's powers were released due to anger and fear, the decision to kill all the innocent people was Carrie's own.

The analysis of *Salem's Lot* focused above all on, as King calls it, "the dance of dreams". As it has been explained in the Chapter 4.2, "dance of dreams" is one of levels of horror King distinguishes, namely the one that "strikes the deepest and wakes up the most hidden fears".<sup>140</sup>

"Dance of dreams" was then specifically exemplified on the character of Ben Mears who had to endure a terrifying experience in the Marston House as a child and has been dealing with the memory ever since. As a result, Ben was almost obsessed

---

<sup>139</sup> King, *On Writing*, 80.

<sup>140</sup> King, *Danse Macabre*, 239.

with the idea of uncovering the mystery of the Marston House. This particular example was used as a manifestation of King's theory mentioned in Chapter 4.3 on how people tend to deal with their fears; by uncovering the mystery behind the fear they hope to lessen it (especially in case of the fear of death).<sup>141</sup>

Furthermore, the symbols in the book (the haunted house or vampires and crosses) were explained. Apart from that, it has been exemplified that the theory of fear by Riemann can be applied on the protagonists (namely in case of Susan Norton or Father Callahan the fear of change was exemplified).

The last analysis was concerned with the prominent motif of isolation in *The Shining*. It has been thoroughly investigated and specific examples of its effects were provided, as well. In addition, it has also been stated that as King marked Jack Torrance as an autobiographical character, The Overlook Hotel and its influence on Jack could be interpreted as a metaphor to King's addiction. In addition, as the character of Jack posed himself in the role of a victim to his alcohol addiction, it could serve as an example of King's previously mentioned statement about alcoholics: "they drink because they think that they have no other choice".<sup>142</sup>

The motif of isolation was also examined in connection to Riemann's theory. It has been proved that the theory can be applied as it was shown on the main protagonists (on all of them the fear of isolation and on Jack the fear of being dependent).

Overall, it is safe to deduce from the acquired findings and examples analysed in the selected works by King that Riemann's theory of fear is valid and thus can be applied. However, to assume that the whole concept of fear can be summarized just by the mere division into its four main types would be too simple and shallow. It is important to take into account that the topic of fear is far more complex than Riemann suggests and that his theory has been used mainly as a tool for the analysis to better distinguish the individual types of fear as perceived and described by King. To emphasize, the aim of this thesis was not to cover or explain the whole concept of fear with Riemann's theory.

As for King's envision of fear and horror, I cannot entirely agree with the statement that people read horror stories or watch horror movies merely to deal with fears in their own lives or to lessen the terror of death. It may be safe to assume that

---

<sup>141</sup> King, *Night Shift*, 15.

<sup>142</sup> King, *On Writing*, 99.

people do not need any deep profound reason or childhood trauma to justify reading horror stories, some of them might simply enjoy it just like they enjoy other hobbies.

## Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce je nejen analýzou vybraných děl Stephena Kinga (*Carrie*, *Prokletí Salemu* a *Osvícení*), ale také prostředkem k porovnání jednotlivých aspektů strachu, které jsou v těchto knihách prominentní. V souvislosti s těmito aspekty jsou druhy strachu v Kingových dílech analyzovány také na základě teorie strachu Fritze Riemanna.

V rámci zajištění systematickosti analýzy v pozdější části práce byl v druhé kapitole přiblížen termín „Danse Macabre“ a jeho spojitost s touto bakalářskou prací. Tento termín byl vysvětlen také ve spojitosti se Stephenem Kingem jakožto autorem hororů. Byly zmíněny rozličné způsoby, jakými lze toto slovní spojení přeložit. Vzhledem k tomu, že King přirovnává hororovou tvorbu k tanci, kdy autoři “tancují” skrze myšlenky svých čtenářů, aby odhalili jejich nejryzejší pocity, v kontextu Kinga jakožto autora žánru hororů tento výraz může být nejpřesněji přeložen jako “tanec smrti”.<sup>143</sup>

Ve třetí kapitole pak následoval podrobnější popis teorie strachu Fritze Riemanna, která byla použita jako základ pro analýzu v pozdější části této práce. Dále bylo objasněno, jakým způsobem Riemannova teorie koresponduje s Kingovou vizí strachu. Jmenovitě bylo zmíněno, že Riemann charakterizuje strach jako „signál nebezpečí“<sup>144</sup> a King k tomu přispívá tvrzením, že žánr hororové fikce slouží zejména jako nástroj, který pomáhá lidem vyrovnat se s hrůzami v jejich životech.<sup>145</sup>

Kingovi samotnému byla věnována následující kapitola a zároveň zde byl v základních obrysech popsán jeho život a vize týkající se psaní a žánru hororů. Bylo objasněno, že King vidí své řemeslo primárně jako telepatii mezi autory a jejich čtenáři.<sup>146</sup> V této části práce bylo také podrobněji vysvětleno Kingovo rozdělení hororové tvorby do tří různých úrovní, podle toho, jak působí na čtenáře (úroveň znechucení, úroveň tance a “tanec snů”).<sup>147</sup>

---

<sup>143</sup> King, *Danse Macabre*, 10.

<sup>144</sup> Riemann, *Anxiety*, 11.

<sup>145</sup> King, *Danse Macabre*, 16.

<sup>146</sup> King, *On Writing*, 103.

<sup>147</sup> King, *Danse Macabre*, 239.

V následující části této práce objasňuji Kingův pohled na tematiku strachu a smrti. Konkrétně bylo rozebráno jeho tvrzení, že od okamžiku, kdy si lidé uvědomí nevyhnutelnost vlastního konce, snaží se s tímto faktem smířit. King dodává, že velkou částí strachu ze smrti je rovněž strach z neznámého a hororové příběhy spolu s tendencí poodhalit neznámé kolem smrti mohou pomoci zmírnit tento strach. Slovy Kinga: “horory slouží jako generálka naší vlastní smrti”.<sup>148</sup>

V kapitole s názvem “Alkohol a literární tvorba” bylo na konkrétním příkladu jedné z Kingových postav, Annie Wilkes (*Misery*), ukázáno, jak závislost na alkoholu ovlivnila jeho psaní a naopak. Jak sám autor připustil, zoufalství projevoval ve svých knihách (ku příkladu dílech *Tommyknockeři* či *Misery*) a jejich zápletky byly způsobem, kterým křičel o pomoc.<sup>149</sup> Poslední podkapitola předcházející samotnou analýzu se pak zabývala autory, kteří Kinga nejvíce ovlivnili, konkrétně Rayem Bradburym, H. P. Lovecraftem nebo Richardem Mathesonem.

Podrobný rozbor vybraných děl Stepheny Kinga (*Carrie*, *Prokletí Salemu* a *Osvícení*) následoval v páté kapitole této bakalářské práce. Kingovy teze o strachu byly ukázány na konkrétních příkladech spolu s teorií strachu Fritze Riemanna. K tomu si tato analýza kladla za cíl poskytnout specifické motivy objevující se v každé z vybraných knih za účelem prozkoumat jejich význam.

V analýze *Carrie* byly spolu s motivy útlaku, náboženství či pomsty rozpracovány také druhy strachu, které z nich vycházejí. Bylo rovněž dokázáno, že korespondují s Riemannovou teorií. Kingovo pojetí strachu, konkrétně jeho tvrzení, že důležitou součástí strachu ze smrti hraje aspekt neznámého, bylo prokázáno na příkladu Carriny reakce na její první menstruaci.

Především motivem fobií a traumat z dětství tak, jak ses nimi protagonisté vyrovnávali, se zabírala analýza díla *Prokletí Salemu*. Mimoto byly vysvětleny role jednotlivých symbolů objevujících se v knize (strašidelný dům, upíři, kříže). V neposlední řadě byly poskytnuty příklady podporující Riemannovu teorii strachu na konkrétních příkladech hlavních postav (jmenovitě Susan Nortonové či otce Callahana).

Rozbor knihy *Osvícení* se koncentroval zejména na izolaci a její účinky na hlavní postavy ve spojitosti s jejich strachem. Tento motiv byl analyzován taktéž ve spojitosti s Riemannovou teorií a bylo dokázáno, že také v tomto případě lze tuto teorii použít. Dále byla objasněna funkce hotelu Overlook v knize. Bylo řečeno, že King

---

<sup>148</sup> King, *Night Shift*, 16.

<sup>149</sup> King, *On Writing*, 97.

označil Jacka Torrance jako autobiografickou postavu a v tomto kontextu byla navržena interpretace hotelu Overlook jako metafory ke Kingově závislosti na alkoholu nebo závislostem obecně.<sup>150</sup>

Závěrem lze říct, že poznatky nashromážděné v teoretické části předcházející samotné analýze, byly aplikovány a dokázány na konkrétních příkladech v jednotlivých Kingových dílech vybraných pro tento účel. Riemannova teorie strachu byla aplikována a potvrzena, ačkoliv v závěru bylo doplněno, že neměla sloužit k vysvětlení fenoménu strachu jako takového, ale spíše jako podpůrný materiál k rozboru Kingových aspektů strachu v jeho tvorbě.

Lze rovněž potvrdit, že Kingovy teorie, ať už týkající se strachu samotného či jeho různých podob, byly v praxi nalezeny a uplatněny v analyzovaných knihách. Jak bylo rovněž zmíněno v kapitole 4.6, Kingova tvorba zaznamenala značný vývoj od dob jeho začátků až po současnost. A ačkoliv se tato práce zaměřovala primárně na autorovu hororovou tvorbu, je více než jasné, že vzhledem k jeho širokému spektru žánrů, jimž se věnuje, je nemožné jej zařadit pouze k jednomu.

Vzhledem ke Kingově konstantní literární produktivitě a kvalitě jeho tvorby (uznávané i mezi kritiky), je pak rovněž možné předpokládat, že se v budoucnu zařadí mezi stěžejní americké autory, kteří nebudou zapomenuti.

---

<sup>150</sup> King, *On Writing*, 95.

## Bibliography

Greene, Andy. "Stephen King: The Rolling Stone Interview." *Rolling Stone*. October 31, 2014. Accessed January 29, 2017.

<http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/features/stephen-king-the-rolling-stone-interview-20141031>.

Herbermann, Charles, and George Williamson. "Dance of Death." *THE CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPAEDIA: Dance of Death*. Accessed October 7, 2016.

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04617a.htm>

Interviewed by Christopher Lehmann-Haupt and Nathaniel Rich. "Stephen King, The Art of Fiction No. 189." *The Paris Review*. October 13, 2015. Accessed November 15, 2016. <https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/5653/stephen-king-the-art-of-fiction-no-189-stephen-king>.

King, Stephen. *Carrie*. New York: Doubleday, 1974.

King, Stephen. *Danse Macabre*. New York: Everest House, 1981.

King, Stephen. "IT." *StephenKing.com*. Accessed November 17, 2016.

[http://stephenking.com/library/novel/it\\_inspiration.html](http://stephenking.com/library/novel/it_inspiration.html).

King, Stephen. *It, The 25th Anniversary Edition*. New York: Doubleday, 2011.

King, Stephen. "Misery." *StephenKing.com*. Accessed January 23, 2017.

[http://stephenking.com/library/novel/misery\\_inspiration.html](http://stephenking.com/library/novel/misery_inspiration.html).

King, Stephen. *Night Shift*. New York: Doubleday, 1978.

King, Stephen. *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*. New York: Scribner, 2000.

King, Stephen. *Salem's Lot*. New York: Doubleday, 1975.



King, Stephen. *The Shining*. New York: Doubleday, 1977.

King, Tabitha. "The Author." StephenKing.com. Accessed November 14, 2016.  
[https://www.stephenking.com/the\\_author.html](https://www.stephenking.com/the_author.html).

"Macabre." Dictionary.com. Accessed October 22, 2016.  
<http://www.dictionary.com/browse/macabre>.

Riemann, Fritz. *Anxiety: Using Depth Psychology to Find a Balance in Your Life*.  
Translated by Greta Dunn. Munich: Ernst Reinhardt, 2008.

Stephen King: *The Playboy Interview (Singles Classic) (50 Years of the Playboy  
Interview)*. EPub. Chicago: Playboy, 2012.

Terrell, Carroll Franklin. *Stephen King: Man and Artist*. Orono: Northern Lights, 1991.

"The Dark and Starry Eyes of Ray Bradbury." The New Atlantis. Accessed March 24,  
2017.  
<http://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/the-dark-and-starry-eyes-of-ray-bradbury>.

Watts, Linda S. *Encyclopaedia of American Folklore*. New York: Facts On File, 2007.

Winter, Douglas E. *Stephen King, The Art of Darkness*. New York: New American  
Library, 1986.

Wood, Rocky. *Stephen King: A Literary Companion*. Jefferson: McFarland & Co, 2011.

## **Anotace**

**Příjmení a jméno:** Fialová Veronika

**Katedra:** Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

**Název práce:** Danse Macabre: Aspekty strachu v dílech Stephena Kinga

**Vedoucí práce:** Mgr. David Livingstone, Ph.D.

**Počet stran:** 42

**Klíčová slova:** Horror, Stephen King, strach, Danse Macabre, základní formy strachu, Carrie, Salem's Lot, The Shining

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na tvorbu Stephena Kinga a jeho pojetí strachu prostřednictvím analýzy některých z jeho děl, jmenovitě *Carrie*, *Prokletí Salemu* a *Osvícení*. Jako doprovodný odborný zdroj k teorii strachu pak slouží kniha Fritze Riemanna *Základní formy strachu*.

## **Abstract**

**Name:** Fialová Veronika

**Department:** Department of English and American Studies

**Title:** Danse Macabre: Aspects of Fear in the Fiction of Stephen King

**Thesis Supervisor:** Mgr. David Livingstone, Ph.D.

**Number of pages:** 42

**Key words:** Horror fiction, Stephen King, fear, Danse Macabre, basic forms of fear, Carrie, Salem's Lot, The Shining

This Bachelor thesis focuses on the fiction of Stephen King and the perception of fear shown through the analysis of some of his works, namely *Carrie*, *Salem's Lot* and *The Shining*. As a supporting material serves the book by Fritz Riemann *Anxiety: Using Depth Psychology to Find a Balance in Your Life*.