



FREE-FALLING DESCENT INTO EPIPHANY OR APOCALYPSE STEPHEN KING – A FAIRY TALE

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ABSTRACT

Stephen King has published more than 70 books, many of them adapted to the cinema and television, some original series with no published scenario, except Storm of the Century in 1999. His reach is a lot wider than plain horror. He systematically mixes the various genres of horror, fantasy, suspense, mystery, science fiction, etc. I will only consider his latest stand-alone novel with no co-author, and not part of a series like Gwendy's Final Task, also published in 2022, co-authored with Richard Chizmar.

I will show the style uses some patterns to build the architecture of the story, in this case, ternary structures at all levels of story and style. This ternary pattern is borrowed from the Bible and many fairy tales collected by the Grimm Brothers. The ending brings up a problem: it locks up the two deep and deeper levels with a concrete slab, thus breaking the ternary topography. Is it meaningful about Stephen King's fiction, or is it only suspending the situation in order to produce a sequel by reopening the passage under the concrete slab, or when Gogmagog manages to escape the deeper level and to invade the human world?

That's Stephen King's mystery. His fiction is so popular and has been so much exploited on the various screens that we wonder if this multifarious fiction will survive the author, even with his two sons to promote and prolong the fame of his fiction when it becomes necessary.

Keywords: *horror; fantasy; black magic; Bible; Revelation; Gogmagog;*

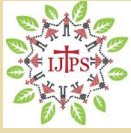
INTRODUCTION

This latest novel published by Stephen King in 2022 could be seen as one more story of a world underneath our own world like in *The Dark Tower*, but this world below, under ours, does not suffer because we are doing unethical things in our world, which would cause some mishap and some distortion if not destruction in the lower world. Not at all.

I am going to follow several lines of interest, angles of approach, or attack, of the story. I am trying to find out if this story has a particular formula that makes it mesmerizing or simply interesting to people because that formula is in phase with an extremely deep pattern in our own psyche or cultural vista.

This study is not exhaustive. It just wants to show the fictional light that makes us behave like night butterflies or moths attracted by a light, to the point of getting destroyed when this light is a flame. Monarch butterflies are essential in this book. Butterflies are the emblem of the lower world known as Empis.

I was all the more intrigued by this novel because of the Biblical reference at the very start of this story. Stephen King is not known for his religious affiliation or religious references in his fiction. This book is an exception. But to set this Biblical reference we are



going to explore in detail, I would like to quote Stephen King on the subject of religion, and the way he expresses his views in the periodical Rolling Stone.

“Switching gears, your new book *Revival* talks a lot about religion. Specifically, one of the two main characters is a reverend that turns on God when his family dies but also delivers a sermon about why religion is a complete fraud. How much of that sermon mirrors your own beliefs?”

My view is that organized religion is a very dangerous tool that’s been misused by a lot of people. I grew up in a Methodist church, and we went to services every Sunday and to Bible school in the summer. We didn’t have a choice. We just did it. So, all that stuff about childhood religion in *Revival* is basically autobiographical. But as a kid, I had doubts. When I went to Methodist youth fellowship, we were taught that the Catholics were all going to go to hell because they worship idols. So right there, I’m saying to myself, “Catholics are going to go to hell, but my aunt Molly married a Catholic and she converted, and she’s got 11 kids and they’re all pretty nice and one of them’s my good friend – they’re all going to go to hell?” I’m thinking to myself, “This is bullshit.” And if that’s bullshit, how much of the rest of it is bullshit?

Did you relay any of your doubts to your mother?

Jesus, no! I loved her. I never would have done that. Once I got through high school, that was it for me. When you see somebody like Jimmy Swaggart and he’s supposed to be this great minister touched by God, and he’s paying whores because he wants to look up their dresses, it’s just all hypocrisy.

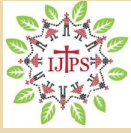
All that said, you’ve made it clear over the years that you still believe in God.

Yeah. I choose to believe in God because it makes things better. You have a meditation point, a source of strength. I don’t ask myself, “Well, does God exist or does God not exist?” I choose to believe that God exists, and therefore I can say, “God, I can’t do this by myself. Help me not to take a drink today. Help me not to take a drug today.” And that works fine for me.

Do you believe in the afterlife?

I don’t know. I’m totally agnostic on that one. Let’s put it this way, I would like to believe that there is some sort of an afterlife. I do believe that when we’re in the process of dying, that all these emergency circuits in the brain take over. I base what I’m saying not on any empirical evidence. I think it’s very possible that when you’re dying, these circuits open up, which would explain these whole white-light phenomena – when people clinically die and they see their relatives and stuff and say, “Hello, it’s great to see you.” (ANDY GREENE, “Stephen King: The Rolling Stone Interview, The horror master looks back on his four-decade career,” October 31, 2014, [https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/stephen-king-the-rolling-stone-interview-191529/2/.](https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/stephen-king-the-rolling-stone-interview-191529/2/))

This is an excerpt from his interview, in no way edited, the way it was published in 2014. The only comment I will make is that he knows his Bible, at least some of it and that in general, he is very critical. Think of Carrie’s mother who is a Christian fundamentalist and think of the consequences of such an ideology. *Carrie* was the first novel published by Stephen King, but you find such fundamentalist or perverse priests and preachers in many books, including pedophiles like the evangelist psychopath Robert Gardner in *The Talisman*, a book with a surface human world, and a deeper replica of it in which all humans in the surface world have a “twinner” in the deeper world. This book was written by Stephen King in collaboration with Peter Straub and published in 1984, with a sequel, *Black House*, published in 2001. Now we can get into this here Fairy Tale.



1. THE BIBLICAL REFERENCE

In fact, the evil that is happening in the lower world in this book is caused by one member of the royal family, in fact, one son of this royal family who was severely handicapped by “nature” since he was born with two deformed feet and a hump on his back. It might have been interesting to know why nature made this man, Elden, that physically unfit, or misfit, but this last son of the royal family is rejected by all the other children and members of the family, except the youngest daughter Leah who protects him and plays with him, but to no real avail. What has to happen happens. In their game in the castle and capital of this lower world, known as Empis, they discover a deeper level that should be off-limits, but what can be kept off-limits for children? It is very difficult to reach, but there, a Dark Well goes even deeper and the vilest character lives down there, Gogmagog (mentioned on page 109), directly borrowed from the Biblical *Book of Revelation*, chapter 20:7-10 (the reference is mentioned but with no verse and chapter specifications page 110).

“The Judgment of Satan

⁷ When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—**Gog** and **Magog** [*Ezekiel*, 38:2, “Gog and the country of Magog”]—and to gather them for battle. In number, they are like the sand on the seashore. ⁹ They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God’s people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. ¹⁰ And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” (*Revelation*, 20:7-10)

In fact, the standard reference to Gog makes him connected to a territory Magog, whose king he might also be. In *1 Chronicles* 5, he is identified as the second son of Joel:

⁴ The descendants of Joel:

Shemaiah his son, **Gog his son** [my emphasis],

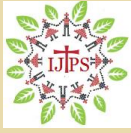
Shimei his son, ⁵ Micah his son,

Reaiah his son, Baal his son,

⁶ and Beerah his son, whom Tiglath-Pileserking of Assyria took into exile. Beerah was a leader of the Reubenites. (*1 Chronicles* 5:4-6)

But in *Ezekiel* 38-39, Gog is provided with a role that is quite typical of the Old Testament and how God punishes his people, Israel, when they do not do what he wants them to do. Ezekiel is a prophet recognized by the three Abrahamic religions. In the Biblical book *Ezekiel*, he is identified as the Son of man. I will not quote the two chapters, but I will give a few verses, emphasis on Gog and Magog, mine.

38 ¹ The word of the Lord came to me: ² “Son of man, set your face against **Gog**, of the land of **Magog**, the chief prince of Meshek and Tubal; prophesy against him ³ and say: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am against you, **Gog**, chief prince of Meshek and Tubal. ⁴ I will turn you around, put hooks in your jaws and bring you out with your whole army—your horses, your horsemen fully armed, and a great horde with large and small shields, all of them brandishing their swords. ⁵ Persia, Cush, and Put will be with them, all with shields and helmets, ⁶ also Gomer with all its troops, and Beth Togarmah from the far north with all its troops—the many nations with you. [...] ¹⁴ “Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to **Gog**: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: In that day, when my people Israel are living in safety, will you not take notice of it? ¹⁵ You will come from your place in the far north, you and many nations with you, all of them riding on horses, a great



horde, a mighty army. ¹⁶ You will advance against my people Israel like a cloud that covers the land. In days to come, **Gog**, I will bring you against my land, so that the nations may know me when I am proved holy through you before their eyes. [...] ¹⁸ This is what will happen on that day: When **Gog** attacks the land of Israel, my hot anger will be aroused, declares the Sovereign Lord. ¹⁹ In my zeal and fiery wrath I declare that at that time there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. [...] ²² I will execute judgment on him with plague and bloodshed; I will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones, and burning sulfur on him and on his troops and on the many nations with him. ²³ [...]

³⁹ [...] ⁶ I will send fire on **Magog** and on those who live in safety in the coastlands, and they will know that I am the Lord. [...] ¹¹ “On that day I will give **Gog** a burial place in Israel, in the valley of those who travel east of the Sea. It will block the way of travelers because **Gog** and all his hordes will be buried there. So, it will be called the Valley of Hamon **Gog**. [...] ¹⁷ “Son of man, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: Call out to every kind of bird and all the wild animals: ‘Assemble and come together from all around to the sacrifice I am preparing for you, the great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel. There you will eat flesh and drink blood. ¹⁸ You will eat the flesh of mighty men and drink the blood of the princes of the earth as if they were rams and lambs, goats and bulls—all of them fattened animals from Bashan. [...] ²⁵ “Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will now restore the fortunes of Jacob and will have compassion on all the people of Israel, and I will be zealous for my holy name. [...] (*Ezekiel*, 38-39, excerpts)

We could compare this with the role Gog and Magog play in the *Book of Revelation*. It is very similar: Gog and Magog, hence Gogmagog, is or are the tool(s) used by God to force all those who do not submit to God’s rule to reveal themselves in order to be destroyed. Gogmagog is slightly different in Stephen King’s book. In fact, he is not specified in any way, except that he is living at the bottom of this Dark Well, a sort of inverted Dark Tower, going down ever deeper as opposed to the tower that stood tall, at the end of the trail or pilgrimage or picaresque journey, on the horizon. But this Biblical context is obviously present, directly referred to, and the “banquet” after God’s victory on Gog and Magog is openly cannibalistic. It is not a sheer human sacrifice. It is a vast and multiple, quasi-collective, human sacrifice with only one intention: to eat their flesh and drink their blood. It is not in any way metaphorical, and Stephen King in this novel describes horror in no way as a metaphor: when a character is cut up in pieces, that character is really cut up in pieces, even though he is only a fictional character. It might be a metaphor in our minds, but in the story, it is not a metaphor because it is part of the storyline without which there is no story.

When this is said, when this reference is cleared, Stephen King sets the objective of containing Gogmagog, not destroy him, to his main character, no Gunslinger Roland here, but Charlie Reade, and this seventeen-year-old Junior Highschool student demonstrates in the book that he learns fast how to sling a gun and how to use many weapons very effectively.

2. THE FAIRY TALE REFERENCE, GRIMM AND JUNG

The reference to various fairy tales is constant all along in the book. The explicit reference to *Jack and the Beanstalk* (page 107) is repetitive. Charlie though is not going up the beanstalk but down the beanstalk that is a spiral staircase in the back garden shed of Mr. Harold Adrian Bowditch going down into another world called Empis where there is a lot of magic, gold of course, and a very dangerous situation that is imposing a curse on most people in this deeper world, what they call grayness, or the gray. Only very few remain whole and



are not infected by this disease, but then they are hunted, captured, and put in some dungeon to be trained for a final gladiatorlike fight with lethal weapons, two by two, in an arena, and the objective is to the death of one per pair, the loser of course. This can only happen when there are thirty-two prisoners. When Charlie is captured, he becomes the thirty-first prisoner. This shows you the radical twisting this *Jack and the Beanstalk* story goes through.

But this reference is centered on the famous mantra: “Fee, fi, fo, fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman” (page 108). And this mantra is at once attributed or related to *King Lear*, Act 3, Scene 4, the concluding remark from Edgar:

“Child Roland to the dark tower came,
His word was still Fie, foh, and fum,
I smell the blood of a British man.”
(*King Lear*, Act 3, Scene 4, 172-175).

Note how this reference brings in the Gunslinger Roland and his long journey to the Dark Tower. This is a reference to a series of books by Stephen King, but Stephen King never hesitates to refer to his own books and characters. But this reference leads us to the Brothers Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm who collected popular tales, some fairy tales, others pure horror, in German-speaking countries in the 19th century. Stephen King often alludes to the very horrible and at times gross and nauseating original versions of these tales that we seem to only know in their polished, simplified, and pacified versions rewritten or edited by other authors after the Grimm Brothers. Cinderella’s vengeance that makes her stepmother dance to death wearing red-hot metal shoes on her feet is one of these nice endings. From the Grimm Brothers themselves:

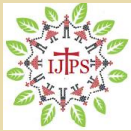
“At first, she did not want to go to the wedding, but she found no peace. She had to go and see the young queen. When she arrived, she recognized Snow-White, and terrorized, she could only stand there without moving. Then they put a pair of iron shoes into burning coals. They were brought forth with tongs and placed before her. She was forced to step into the red-hot shoes and dance until she fell down dead.” (*Grimms Household Tales* 1857) [Tuesday, August 27, 2013, “A Real Life Glimpse Into Snow White's Revenge,” <http://fairytalenewsblog.blogspot.com/2013/08/a-real-life-glimpse-into-snow-whites.html>, posted by Gypsy Thornton on 27.8.13]

But the most important reference in this book is to the fairy tale *Rumpelstiltskin*. It is even embedded into the story by referring to the Little Rumpel River (page 2) which has a bridge that was dangerous a long time ago and on which Charlie’s mother was killed by a truck when he was still a young child. It is said the driver of the truck was not considered in any way accountable for this death because he did not make a mistake and was going very slowly. Pure circumstantial death. Yet this death determined Charlie’s life in many ways. More later. But the repetitive reference to Rumpelstiltskin finds real roots in this fatal event, at least for Charlie.

The reference to this particular story is extremely interesting because of its rich history.

***Rumpelstiltskin*, etymology**, from German *Rumpelstilzchen*, possibly from German *rumpeln* meaning "make noise" and *Stelze* meaning "stilt", combined with the diminutive suffix -chen. It has been suggested that it was inspired by a children's game *Rumpele stilt oder der Poppart* mentioned in Johann Fischart's 1577 book *Geschichtklitterung*. (<https://www.behindthename.com/name/rumpelstiltskin>)

Historical note from Dr. Oliver Tearle: “It was famously included in the 1812 volume *Children’s and Household Tales* by the Brothers Grimm (a book that’s better known



as Grimms' Fairy Tales), but many of the tales written down by the German siblings were of a considerable vintage by then.

“The surprising thing is that the story of Rumpelstiltskin – albeit under a different name – is thought to be some 4,000 years old. To put that in perspective, that’s over a thousand years before Homer, and roughly contemporaneous with the earliest surviving versions of the tales that comprise the Epic of Gilgamesh, widely regarded as the oldest epic. Rumpelstiltskin, in summary, is one of the earliest known narratives in Western literature.”

<https://interestingliterature.com/2017/01/a-summary-and-analysis-of-the-rumpelstiltskin-fairy-tale/> From the blog *Interesting Literature* set up in 2012 by Dr. Oliver Tearle <https://interestingliterature.com/tag/oliver-tearle/>, Lecturer in English at Loughborough University, UK, and freelance writer. Dr. Oliver Tearle, short presentation, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=930901280312860>

But the reference to the story brings up a pattern that is often typical of fairy tales. Stephen King uses his seventeen-year-old character to bring up some references that a Highschool junior would probably not know, and certainly not have read extensively. The reference is purely circumstantial again. Charlie notices a scholarly-looking book next to Mr. Bowditch's bed and he provides us with the title and subtitle: “*The Origin of Fantasy and Its Place in the World Matrix* – what a mouthful. And *Jungian Perspectives* to boot.” (page 177) When you google this title and subtitle, you get the quotation from this very book by Stephen King and many other references, including two books by Jung, but never with this title. I would consider it is a trick to give some density, “a mouthful” of density, to Charlie’s exploration of Mr. Bowditch’s existence or personality. But, indeed, we can easily say that for Jung, fairy tales, traditional stories, myths, and mythologies were the production of collective human imagination and as such reflected very directly the unconscious of humanity that some call the collective unconscious.

That was the main difference with Freud who considered that the unconscious was produced within one personality, one person. But note Wilhelm Reich is not mentioned, thus keeping out of the discussion the sexual dimension of this “collective unconscious,” or personal Id (“the primitive and instinctual part of the mind that contains sexual and aggressive drives and hidden memories.” <https://www.simplypsychology.org/psyche.html#:~:text=According%20to%20Freud's%20psychoanalytic%20theory,id%20and%20the%20super%20Dejo.>) We could discuss the term “mind” in this definition of Freud’s Id, but it is clear that Charlie despite all the dangerous and strenuous situations in which he finds himself with boys and girls alike is never, or hardly ever (and with no satisfaction) sexually motivated, or even stirred.

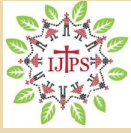
But *Rumpelstiltskin* brings in a pattern, I have said. Let us look at that pattern which is essentially spatial, maybe territorial, but definitely three-dimensional, and that is the main characteristic of this pattern.

1- First night, spinning straw into gold. **First** intervention of the manikin. **First** present: a necklace.

2- Second night, spinning straw into gold. **Second** intervention of the manikin. **Second** present: a ring.

3- Third night, spinning straw into gold. **Third** intervention of the manikin? **Third** present: the promise to get the first child when born.

At first, after the birth of the child, the Queen refuses to give it. Rumpelstiltskin gives her three days to find his name and if she does, he will forget about her promise.



1- **First** attempt to collect the **third** present: she gives the names of the three magi, wise men or kings,

1- **Kaspar,**

2- **Melchior,**

3- **Balzer.**

“That is not my name.”

2- **Second** attempt to collect the **third** present: she gives three rare names,

1- **Rippenbiest (Rib beast),**

2- **Hammelswade (Mutton calf),**

3- **Schnürbein (Lace bone).**

“That is not my name.”

3- **Third** attempt to collect the **third** present: she gives three names,

1- **Kunz,**

2- **Heinz,**

3- **Rumpelstiltskin.**

"The devil told you that! The devil told you that!" cried the manikin, and in his anger, he stamped with **his right foot** so hard that it went into the ground above his knee; then he seized **his left foot with both his hands** in such a fury that he **split in two**, and there was an end of him."

The ternarism is kept all along with great care, and when he is finally defeated by his own name, he steps out of the ternarism and becomes **so binary, so dual**, that he destroys himself with his own **two hands** ripping himself **into two** by pulling **his two legs** apart.

The worlds Stephen King is proposing, or mapping in this story have a three-tiered architecture.

ON TOP, the human world.

One spiral staircase (185 steps of varying heights, page 183) in one stairwell to go down to the next level.

SECOND LEVEL, Empis under the curse of Gogmagog or/and Flight Killer.

All sorts of stairs to go up and down from one level of this Empis world to another since the Empis of Flight Killer is mostly underground since the security forces, the Night Soldiers, are very weak in the daytime, but in the end, to go down to the deeper level, that of the Dark Well, Charlie and his friends will have to go up to the top of one spire of the castle or cathedral, and then down the second spire, and then enter into descending stairs and corridors, to finally reach the third level.

THIRD LEVEL, the Dark Well with the mouth of it in this deepest level of the second world, leading to Gogmagog in the dark world underneath (“another world down there. A dark one I never want to see,” page 537). We assume it refers to the prison in which Satan has been kept by the decision of God himself in the *Book of Revelation*.

No one can go down into this world, but one, Gogmagog, can come up out of it if someone is doing what's necessary for the hatch to be lifted for Gogmagog to come out. The hatch is already being lifted by a “natural” event: the two moons of this world are kissing, proving that when a binary element comes into play it is purely destructive. And the two moons implode and/or explode when they collide on this very special day.



3. TERNARY STRUCTURE: LOVECRAFT AND CTHULHU

But this ternary pattern brings up another literary reference, this time to H.P. Lovecraft and *The Call of Cthulhu*. (pages 291, 292, and 535, among others). The reference is fundamental. “Lovecraft’s favorite words [...] *eldritch* [weird and sinister or ghostly, my comment], [...] *ordure* [something regarded as vile or abhorrent, my comment], [...] *mephitic* [(especially of a gas or vapor) foul-smelling; noxious, my comment].” (page 293) Of course, three words are mentioned. “Elden [think of “Eldritch”] was this world’s Cthulhu, as surely as Dora was the old woman who lived in a shoe and Leah was the goose girl.” (page 535) You can see the ternary sentence with three characters and three references to fairy tales or H.P. Lovecraft, but we have to specify this Lovecraft’s reference slightly more.

We find the same basic architecture in this short story or novella by H.P. Lovecraft. The novella is a three-tier collection of documents on a fantastic entity known as Cthulhu.

The first phase is brought by a clay bas-relief. Henry Anthony Wilcox brought up, on March 1, 1925, to a group of archaeologists, a bas-relief he had executed in a trance within or just on the verge of getting out of a dream that sounds more like a nightmare. This clay tablet reproduces a monstrous figure with some glyphs on the edge.

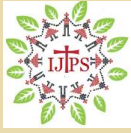
The second phase is a report by police inspector Raymond Legrasse from New Orleans about a police operation to control some voodoo celebration in New Orleans, or rather in the swamps close by. The celebration is described as an orgy of violence, rhythmic drum playing, dancing, and sexuality. Less than a hundred people. Forty-seven were arrested. The police got some tale about Great Old Ones that existed before anything else and who have to be worshiped. They centered their rituals on an idol.

“The statuette, idol, fetish, or whatever it was, had been captured some months before in the wooded swamps south of New Orleans during a raid on a supposed voodoo meeting; and so singular and hideous were the rites connected with it, that the police could not but realize that they had stumbled on a dark cult totally unknown to them, and infinitely more diabolic than even the blackest of the African voodoo circles. [...] between seven and eight inches in height, and of exquisitely artistic workmanship. It represented a monster of vaguely anthropoid outline, but with an octopuslike head whose face was a mass of feelers, a scaly, rubbery-looking body, prodigious claws on hind and fore feet, and long, narrow wings behind.” (The Call of Cthulhu, ISBN 9798671208115, pages 14-15)

The whole episode ended badly with two men hanged in the name of justice and all the others of the forty-seven arrested people institutionalized for life as raving mad, hence dangerous. No regeneration, no reformation, nothing but let’s put them away till death can liberate us from them, or from the fear they inspire in us.

“Only two of the prisoners were found sane enough to be hanged, and the rest were committed to various institutions. All denied a part in the ritual murders and averred that the killing had been done by Black-winged Ones which had come to them from their immemorial meeting-place in the haunted wood. What the police did extract came mainly from an immensely aged mestizo named Castro, who claimed to have sailed to strange ports and talked with undying leaders of the cult in the mountains of China.” (The Call of Cthulhu, ISBN 9798671208115, page 23)

This idol is quite similar to the figure on Wilcox’s clay bas-relief. What’s more this cult brings up some “language,” in fact a formula: “Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn.” Translated as “In his house at R'lyeh dead Cthulhu waits dreaming.” It is this formula that led the police inspector to William Channing Webb, a professor of



anthropology at Princeton University. He mentions a tour of Greenland where he witnessed some similar cultish rituals among some local Eskimos.

The idea that emerges here due to all the events that happened at a certain date, or within a certain period of time, is that this Cthulhu came out of where “he” was, and he then was calling during that period of time.

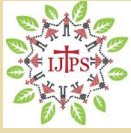
The third section of the novella is dedicated to what happened to the Norwegian naval officer Gustav Johansen and his crew in the Pacific in the same period in 1925. It is the testimony of the emergence of the city of R’lyeh from the ocean for a short period. This city is explored by Gustav Johansen and his crew and only two manage to go back to their ship, one completely berserk, and Gustav Johansen still capable to sail the ship. They were, the ranting mad man and the traumatized Johansen, rescued by some naval agency in New Zealand. They had been confronted by a monstrous being that is quite similar to Cthulhu, the idol of the other cases. But the period of time during which this call was heard and felt comes to a close and nothing remains, even in the memory of Henry Anthony Wilcox, except the clay bas-relief and the small idol from New Orleans.

It’s quite clear that this ternary structure and the description of Cthulhu is in direct phase with Stephen King’s ternarism in his book, and the “octopuslike head whose face was a mass of feelers, scaly, the rubbery-looking body, and the prodigious claws on hind and fore feet,” are in many ways similar to what Elden became when he got possessed by Gogmagog the first time, and we could think of the sketchy description of Gogmagog when he tries to get out of the Dark Well.

To conclude on this dimension of the novel and the various references we find to fairy tales or other existing works of imagination, we should mention Coleridge’s *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798, page 253), with one stanza from the Sixth Part quoted in full; *The Wizard of Oz* quoted several times (*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, a children’s novel by L. Frank Baum illustrated by W. W. Denslow, first published in the United States in May 1900 by the George M. Hill Company. It became a successful 1902 Broadway musical as well as the classic 1939 live-action film); *Red Riding Hood* (Brothers Grimm, 1812), quoted once; the nursery rime *There Was an Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe*, first published in *Infant Institutes* in 1797; the red giant cricket known as the Snab alludes to a certain Jiminy Cricket In *Pinocchio*, a Walt Disney film in 1940; and numerous mentions of films, musical pieces, novels, and other books, not to mention the great number of allusions to other works by Stephen King himself. This list is far from complete.

4. TERNARY TRAUMATIC SUBSTITUTION

The whole book starts with the basic trauma in a family of three people, the mother, the father, and the son. The story starts with tremendous trauma for both the son, seven years old at the time, and the father. The mother is killed by a truck on a bridge over the Little Rumpel River, whose surface was not secure. In fact, it seems to be understandable that the city council should be accountable for this death, but we are in a rural area, and accountability is not always taken into account. The father just sinks into alcoholism and the son will have to take care of his father for several years, showing how deficient social services to protect minors in such situations are in the USA. In this obviously traumatic situation, the son is looking for a substitute father and he turns to God, though he does not seem to be a great believer. His prayer is, in fact, a promise:



“If you do that for me [my father would quit drinking], whoever you are, I’ll do something for you [...] Promise and hope to die if I don’t keep it. You just show me what you want, and I’ll do it. I swear.” (page 11)

This is a typical promise from a young teenage boy scout, but such promises from kids are tighter and more binding than any other promise from any adult. For the child, it is like a mental road from which he cannot step off, a sort of mental personal existential straight jacket that represents his very freedom seen as, not a submission to any one or anything, but as the true nature of his own personality, being. The child IS his promise.

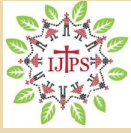
Then, we have a first substitute, God, who rebuilds the ternary structure: the alcoholic father, the caretaking son, and the miraculous God. And of course, a miracle happens but not with wind, storm, lightning, etc. but in the simple form of an ex-colleague (the father was fired because of his alcoholism) of the father who intervenes in the name of AA (Alcoholics Anonymous). This is a typical modern American miracle, based on the voluntary work of some people in many associations, or some people in many churches, who go out of their own way to help other people in their daily predicaments, most of the time, and in this case of alcoholism, practically always, because they used to experience these predicaments, and here be Alcoholics. These volunteers, before being volunteers, found some help concerning their predicament from the members of the circle they become attached to, and one of their missions and ethical promises is to look for other alcoholics and bring them, male or female, to the AA group in which they can regenerate themselves. And then Charlie Reade is the pivotal individual of two ternary structures

The father → Charlie → God (who becomes AA, or for whom AA is the miraculous tool)

The father → Lindsey Franklin (God’s tool) **→ Charlie**

This is going to determine a whole ternary trip for Charlie who will bring together a whole set of triple entities that all target the compensation of the trauma by providing Charlie with various ternary substitutions. And it is this ternarism that makes the story glue together and hold some truthfulness and veracity. That’s always the power of Stephen King. The style, meaning the architecture of the story and the language, provides his storytelling with the proper tune and tone that leads the reader to believe (or suspend their disbelief for a while) and enjoy the story, even if it is horror, fantastic, science fiction, or totally unbelievable in normal conditions. And we must keep in mind Charlie suffered two traumas: the loss of his mother and the alcoholism of his father. And yet instead of developing a case of Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, he rebuilds his sanity, brick by brick, moving from one ternary structure to the next, and even the first shift with AA is seen by him as his doing since he asked God to do it for him, hence in his place. All the others will be the results of his decisions.

At the top of the street (1 Sycamore), there is an old Victorian house that is inhabited by an older man with an aggressive dog – behind a fence though. The man is a recluse and very few people have seen him. The man hardly goes out, and he gets his commodities, from food to whatever is needed in a house, delivered by various shops or services. And yet, Charlie in his search for some kind of payback service to hold his promise, after picking trash from the close-by highway for a while, one day goes by this house known as the Psycho House, and hears the dog, not barking, but kind of moaning, whining, and behind this animal cry, a small human voice calling for help. The strange thing here is that Charlie does not even



hesitate. He tries to open the gate but can't. So, he goes over it, goes to the back yard and porch, and finds Mr. Bowditch on the ground. He has obviously fallen from a ladder and his leg shows an open broken bone. The dog (she is female) is "taking care" of her master, and Charlie assumes he is the third element of this situation, and he has to save the man and call 911, which he does: his new regenerating ternary situation is, in fact, double:

Mr. Bowditch → the dog Radar → Charlie

Charlie → the promise → 911

And this double situation will produce another one

The father → Charlie → the dog Radar

And the miracle itself is a ternary situation that connects Charlie to three different entities, one being himself:

Charlie → 1- His promise, God (→ his father)

2- Lindsey Franklin and AA (→ his father)

3- Mr. Howard Adrian Bowditch (→ the dog Radar)

And we could even see the first of these ternary patterns (Mr. Bowditch → the dog Radar → Charlie) emerge from the last one as the direct production of this last one (Charlie → Mr. Bowditch → the dog Radar) by the inversion from Mr. Bowditch and Radar calling or whining for help to Charlie taking over the situation and calling 911. If the intervention of Lindsey Franklin and AA enabled Charlie to become or be again a top student and a top-jock in football, and baseball, but not in basketball, the intervention of Mr. Bowditch and Radar is going to change all that because Charlie expects the baseball coach to have empathy for him, the way he has empathy for both Mr. Bowditch and Radar. But a coach is a professional bully who does not experience and certainly does not express any empathy to his athletes, even if we are only in highschool, who are for a standard coach, too often, nothing but fodder for the Friday night games. That's the picture given by Stephen King of this coach for whom the games are nothing but the gladiatorial games we will mention later in the depth of the capital of Empis, games this time to the death, the gamers really being fodder for the audience.

Thus, while he may entrust his father to Lindsey Franklin, he can take care of Mr. Howard Adrian Bowditch's business while he is in the hospital and then at home for his physical therapy and healing, and the dog Radar who is a female. This triad then recreates the triad he experienced up to the age of seven, before the death of his mother. Mr. Bowditch proposes (a proposal that cannot be refused) direct employment to Charlie – and indirectly to the father – salaried US\$500 a week, plus benefits that include board and lodging but clearly and specifically exclude anything perverse, and this being verified by the father, the arrangement is approved by the three sides: **Mr. Bowditch → Charlie → Mr. Reade.**

You can see the dynamic of this situation that does not only concern living entities, but also the topology of Charlie's territory with his own home with his father, then Mr. Bowditch's house where he is going to spend a lot of time since he will be employed by Mr. Bowditch during his long physical therapy and healing process, and finally, the back garden shed that is padlocked up, in which there are strange noises, and at which Radar barks when these strange noises happen. And this shed which is off limits is, in fact, the center of the back garden lawn that Charlie trims and takes care of. This ternary territory can be seen as centered on Mr. Howard Adrian Bowditch's property: the house (3 stories) → the back porch and the surrounding land from the front fence to the back garden, the specific territory of Radar → the back garden shed. This last element is the element he cannot visit because Mr.



Bowditch has declared it off-limits. And imagine the perfect ending of this territorial triad since the last episode, just before he has the ground surface of this back garden shed covered up with concrete, will bring Charlie's father down the 185 steps guided by Charlie but without Radar, for a demonstrative visit from very far, in fact never leaving the mouth of the cave at the bottom of the stairs, of this lower world he, Charlie, has told his father about. A complete shift of the ternary structure of the family home with Charlie and his father to the back garden shed's universe with Charlie and his father visiting, the first and last time for the father.

We have to understand that Empis has to be protected against the human world, though the danger and the curse that nearly destroyed Empis did not and do not come from the human world, but rather from an even deeper world. Then we can wonder if this concrete sheet over the spiral stairway is not targeting the protection of the human world against this deeper evil in the Dark Well that could invade Empis and eventually come up to the human world like the giant cockroach Mr. Bowditch had to shoot, causing his own death soon after. Nevertheless, this concrete sheet deconstructs the ternary architecture of the three worlds, and like Rumpelstiltskin when he becomes binary, we can wonder if we are not ripping ourselves into two dead halves by breaking the ternary architecture. We can wonder too whether we are not sterilizing our own imagination since we are burying the world of Fairy Tales under a sheet of concrete. Safety first? That is protectionism. Protectionism is bad for the economy, but it is suicidal for culture, the mind, dreams, imagination, and human spirituality. This protective ending has to be seriously considered, questioned, and discussed.

And if we discuss it seriously, then we have to consider the fact that, in literature, everything is symbolical and has a meaning that goes beyond the plain facts and the plain words used by the author. This protectionism, mind you in Stephen King's own words, to protect Empis from human intervention, if not colonialism, hence deculturation and other profit-oriented deconstruction, is cutting Empis from the human world but the people there are humans or at least humanoids who can speak English among other languages, who wear shoes and normal clothing.

This concrete slab is locking them up in what becomes a ghetto out of which they can't get, and into which no one can get, and with no possible communication with the outside world. At the same time, it locks away any kind of fantastic, magical, or supernatural reference and use in his fiction. Is Stephen King symbolically rejecting all that with this ending, and all that made Stephen King's books what they are? Is this ending a U-turn in Stephen King's inspiration and style that had been at work with some more recent books like *Elevation* (2019) where the weightlessness of the main character is pure symbolical magic for death seen as a big trip up into the infinity of the cosmos? We have to understand the magic of Empis has no presence or even real impact on the human world. The U-turn is already completed. The gold Mr. Bowditch probably stole and brought back from Empis is hardly significant, even if it is very useful to pay bills and make Mr. Bowditch independent and well-off. The only real impact is the rejuvenating of Mr. Bowditch and the dog Radar.

Keep these questions in mind, because now we are going to descend into the blackest and darkest magic of the book, of the kingdom of Empis, of the Dark Well abyss. We can now get into the discovery of the meaning of this lower world and its even lower Gogmagog extension.



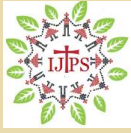
5. A TRIP TO THE DARK WELL

Some cataclysm happened some years ago. We will learn about where and whom it came from later. But first of all, Charlie has to discover the country where he is now, under below, with Radar, and his only objective is to take Radar to the magic sundial on which, if it turns anticlockwise, the living entity on it can go back in age. That's the plan for Radar who has reached the end of her normal life. The first lady they meet (Charlie had already come once and visited that lady) is Dora, the Shoe lady or the lady living in a shoe. That's how Charlie discovered the gray curse that makes people turn gray and little by little lose their various senses. Dora is losing the ability to speak, but she has not reached muteness yet. She repairs shoes that she sends then to her brother who distributes them to the people on the main road who have abandoned their old shoes at Dora's place and have been given a coupon for a new pair from Dora's brother down the road. Radar recognizes her and is very happy, though she is severely handicapped by her age. Dora is going to set Charlie and Radar on the road to the capital city of Empis, Lilimar.

They meet three people who are three survivors of the old kingdom, banned by the new leader. First, the goose girl, who is taking care of a flock of geese. She does not have a mouth anymore, just a hole through which she can straw drink her food. She can communicate via a horse, Falada, because she is a ventriloquist. We will discover later on she is the only surviving heir to the crown and throne and she was banned by the new leader who is her own younger brother turned malicious and monstrous by Gogmagog. Charlie and Radar meet then two other survivors of the old kingdom. Charlie meets the second survivor, Stephen Woodleigh, aka Woody, who is blind. He used to be the Regent of the kingdom. But of the seven children, only two are still alive: one daughter, Leah, who has managed to escape and has become a goose girl to survive, and one of the two sons, Elden, who was severely deformed at birth, two legs out of shape and one hump on the back.

He only had a relationship with Leah who does not want to believe Elden has become the monster that rules Empis. The third person from the royal family that has escaped the new king is Claudia, the aunt of Leah, the goose girl and heiress of the throne. This triad of three escapees connected to the royal family will be complete when we know that they explain to Charlie and Radar the great danger at night outside the city: as soon as the two moons appear in the sky enormous gangs of wolves start howling and rampaging the countryside for anything or anybody they could eat. Then the three survivors explain to Charlie the great danger inside the city, at night again: the Night Soldiers who are, in fact, living dead more than alive and are surrounded by a blue halo that makes them extremely powerful. Their power will be understood by Charlie to be electricity and the blue halo around them. That knowledge will enable Charlie, and a few people with him, to escape from the underground dungeons by destroying the Night Soldiers by throwing water at them. They fry in their own electricity, their own juice if we can say so.

But beyond these explanations, the ternary power these three survivors entrust Charlie and Radar materializes in the tricycle Claudia uses to go around. This tricycle, which has three wheels like all tricycles, is essential for Charlie to save time on the trip, and for Radar to travel like a princess in the luggage carrier made comfortable with thick and soft material. The last ternary element Charlie must know is the three bells that ring, the first one at dawn, the second one in the middle of the day, and the third one at night, when dusk is arriving, and night is falling. The first bell will tell Charlie when the wolves are gone, and thus when he can go to the gate and enter the city. The last one is crucial because it tells him when the Night Soldiers are coming out and can chase him and Radar. The first bell rings at



the same time as an enormous number of Monarch butterflies leave the area around the capital to migrate somewhere else for the day, and the third bell coincides with their returning to the area around the capital city, Lilimar, for the night. These butterflies are the emblem of the old monarchy and sculptures of them were everywhere in the city, but the new king or the new ruler destroyed most of them. The second bell is only to tell Charlie the middle of the day, and since his trip has to be one way to the sundial and then back to the gate and out, the second bell is crucial for him to know when he has to go back since, in his normal life in the human world, he gets his time from his smartphone that does not work here in Empis, and he does not have a mechanical rewinding wristwatch. You can note we assume with Stephen King the day and the night are similar in Empis to those in the real surface world.

On this trip, he follows the red painted signs AB that Adrian Bowditch had painted along the way from the gate to the sundial and back of course during his various visits, particularly the long one when he rejuvenated, on the sundial, his old body born in the 19th century into his own “son” by age, not by birth. He must also have used these inscriptions to navigate to the treasury’s gold reserve when he recuperated a pailful – if only one – of those gold nuggets or pellets that he kept afterward in his safe in his bedroom. Charlie and Radar will spend the night in a trolley depot where the old trolley used to be kept during the night. Charlie will encounter, on his way to the depot with the tricycle, another dangerous character, Peterkin, a dwarf, that Charlie discovers in the process of torturing a giant red cricket, known as the Snab. Charlie remembers how he treated the murderer, Christopher Polky, of the jeweler who bought Mr. Bowditch’s gold to cover the hospital bills, and then how that same Christopher Polky turned burglar in Mr. Bowditch’s house, failed to open the safe with the gold inside, but managed to abduct him when he came back from his first visit to Empis. It ended very badly for Christopher Polky because Charlie opened the safe, and brought the bucket of golden pellets out but, by accident on purpose, spilled them all out on the floor. Christopher just skidded and rolled on them, and he fell and lost his weapon. Then Charlie punished him by breaking both his wrists and releasing him “in nature” where he lived or squatted anyway. He will be killed later on, in some area where homeless people gather.

But this time, Charlie does not kill Peterkin, though he liberates the Snab. Peterkin will get his vengeance by erasing the AB signs so that Charlie gets lost in the city on his way back and is captured by the Night Soldiers, whereas the rejuvenated Radar runs out through the gate, and she will go to Claudia’s.

Nature is providing, as I have said, another surprise. An enormous cloud of Monarch butterflies rises every morning at dawn and comes back every evening at dusk. These Monarch butterflies will be crucial at the end because they will attack the Night Soldiers who will fry in their own electric juice though quite a great number of the butterflies will also fry in this electric juice.

The only thing Charlie knows about the new ruler of the kingdom is that he is called Flight Killer. From the very start, he is told or at least indicated that this Flight Killer is probably Elden, the handicapped youngest son of the royal family.

Charlie is a whole individual, meaning that he is immune to the gray, and as such he is made a prisoner by the Night Soldiers when he is captured, and he is taken to the underground dungeons where he meets with thirty other prisoners, some women, most men. He will have to live in this community for some time and he discovers from the very start the objective of this “enslaved community.” They have to train to become gladiatorlike fighters to provide some circus games to Flight Killer and his two direct associates. First of all, the head of the guard or police, the leader of the Night Soldiers. This military, extremely vicious,

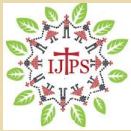


and repressive individual is called Lord High, aka Kellin. He is a Night Soldier himself, and thus, like all Night Soldiers, he is wrapped up in a bluish envelope of electricity. He is only at his best in the dark and during the night, meaning, the real night outside. He can only get out of the underground prison at night. That is the reason why the gladiatorial games take place at night. In the daytime Kellin and the Night Soldiers are weak and their electrical envelope is very feeble. They are presented as being living dead, hence dead really but being able to live in their Night Soldier identity by some magical or devilish force that comes from the monster behind all that, or rather under all that, the one who is known as Gogmagog with whom Flight Killer got an agreement for him to become the king, and we understand that the proviso was that he will go down to the Dark Well and open it up when the two moons kiss, targeting the freeing of this devilish creature to reign unopposed on the earth, I mean at least in the world known as Empis.

The third character in this triumvirate is Petra, a woman, officially the consort of Flight Killer. She looks rather youngish, but she is the great-aunt of Leah, hence of Elden, hence of Flight Killer. Flight Killer has no legs anymore nor arms. He has a great number of tentacles. The model here is typically Cthulhu, the monster imagined by H.P. Lovecraft, though Lovecraft's version has no head, and the head has been replaced by a fair number of tentacles or feelers. Flight Killer is hiding his real physical recomposition with a vast cape entirely wrapping his body. Petra is his consort but that does not mean they have any sexual intercourse that would be highly incestuous, though the relationship, even if it is not in any way sexual, is perverse and can be described as incestuous.

Every two or three days, the prisoners are supposed to train in the circus, stadium, arena, or whatever you may call it, but it is only training, so no death is allowed, but some brutality is required. When they finally turn thirty-two with the arrival of one more prisoner, Cla, an enormous character in size, but very limited in brain. He has a severe case of tunnel vision which prevents him from seeing what is happening on the sides of this tunnel vision. He has to turn his head to see what is on the left or what is on the right. This is a great disadvantage for a fighter. When the Fair One, that's the name of the competition to the death when the prisoners are thirty-two, comes, this new one, Cla, is set to fight with Charlie. At this time Charlie has grown blond and his eyes have grown blue. He is identified as the Prince, Prince Charlie, the promised Prince who is going to liberate the prisoners and the country. Everyone knows about it. All the prisoners, the gray people serving them in their daily life, and of course the triumvirate of this hellish maelstrom of a society. In the first round of this Fair One, sixteen pairs of prisoners will have to fight to the death and at the end of the day, there will only be sixteen prisoners left, though two are maimed so badly that they will not "fight" in the second round, but only be brought there to be executed by the second prisoners with whom they are paired. The pair Cla and Charlie seems to be a plain execution for Charlie, the Prince, even if he refuses this title. Unluckily tunnel vision is no good and sure enough by systematically moving to Cla's sides, he evades his vision and can rather easily defeat him and do what he is supposed to do, hence he kills him.

The second round will never take place because Charlie, with the help of Pursey, their appointed gray servant, and the communication with the outside world carried in and out by the Snab, the red giant cricket that uses the various holes in the walls to reach the common jail. It is only on the very night before the second round that Charlie understands the blue aura around the Night Soldiers and Kellin is electricity, probably static electricity that burns all those who want to touch it, or them the Night Soldiers, and thus it protects them against any physical attack.



This world is inspired by the various films on the subject of gladiators, and *Spartacus Blood and Sand* is the 2010-2013 series we would put forward first of all. It is repulsive in its very target in such a story, and that is the objective: to show how gross and sick such games can be when managed and produced by degenerate perverts, and the triumvirate of this degenerate world is a triplet of perverts. But we have some education and thus that reminds us of the fact that these fights were common in many human civilizations, and first of all in the Roman Empire, the very ancestor empire of the West. In those distant days, the elite of the country or countries had the full right to kill someone from a lower social status, or to have him or her executed for some “fancy” crime, or even to have him or her tortured and executed slowly for no crime at all, just for the fun of the show thus produced for such voyeurs. Here we think of Emperors like Nero or Caligula. And we have to think of Emperor Tiberius who has one man executed in the circus by choking him to death slowly with stones piled on his chest, and what’s more in front of his children and his wife, and at the same time, he keeps Agrippina the Elder, the accomplice of this man, alive but under the menace that she could be executed any time any day as the traitress she is since she plotted the assassination of the emperor, Tiberius himself. The reasoning of such a suspended sentence attached in its performance to the whimsical decision of the emperor is the longer he lets her live, the more she suffers. There is always a small Nero, Caligula, Tiberius, or many others buried deep in the mind of a member of the elite of any autocratic, not to mention dictatorial, state. Here we have to think of Pasolini’s 1975 film *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (*Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma*) which depicts how the elites under Mussolini were able to bring together in a castle twenty or so boys, and as many girls in their mid-teens to submit them to all sorts of tortures and gross behavior ending after several days of that game with their death, executed in the most extravagant ways.

“Benito Mussolini’s fascist Italy, 1944. In the northern Italian Republic of Salò, a Nazi-controlled puppet state, the town’s four most wealthy, powerful, and decadent members – The Duke, The Bishop, The Magistrate, and The President – herd the finest specimens of young men and women into a palatial villa. Having established a set of authoritarian rules for their captives, the perverted dignitaries then plunge them into a hideous, three-part abyss of systematic degradation and torture inspired by Dante Alighieri’s *Inferno* – the first part of the *Divine Comedy*. And as the sadists indulge in their most despicable vices and depraved erotic fantasies, only death can save the doomed prisoners.” (Nick Riganas, an IMDb contributor, https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0073650/plotsummary?ref_=tttr_ql_stry_2)

But I may think that today in such films or books the viewers or the readers keep a distance between their reading or watching experience and their real behavior. Yet it is a certain level of reflection and detachment that has to be seen and analyzed. In a way, Stephen King speaks against such monstrous acts, even if they occur in war time. But at the same time, the readers or viewers of such works of fiction may feed, nurture, and nourish a demon deep in them that may instill pleasure in their psyche. Pleasure at the level of an individual is a corporal phenomenon based on simple hormones and chemicals produced by the body when confronted with something that is for them pleasurable.

“The Neurochemicals of Happiness, Seven brain molecules that make you feel great.”

1. Endocannabinoids: “The Bliss Molecule” [...]
2. Dopamine: “The Reward Molecule” [...]
3. Oxytocin: “The Bonding Molecule” [...]
4. Endorphin: “The Pain-Killing Molecule” [...]



5. GABA: “The Anti-Anxiety Molecule” [...]

6. Serotonin: “The Confidence Molecule” [...]

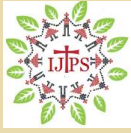
7. Adrenaline: “The Energy Molecule” [...]

(Posted November 29, 2012, by Christopher Bergland, a retired ultra-endurance athlete turned science writer, public health advocate, and promoter of cerebellum ("little brain") optimization, **Psychology Today Blog: *The Athlete's Way***, in *Psychology Today*, the world's largest mental health and behavioral science destination online. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-athletes-way/201211/the-neurochemicals-happiness>

And there is no unique trigger for each one of these chemicals, what's more for them all. In fact, the triggers are, in our case here, from outside since we are discussing circus games providing the audience with a direct, slow, and extremely violent killing of one person by another, and this show is repetitive. In our case, the first round provides sixteen duels of this type in one night. Furthermore, there are no two viewers or two readers who have the same triggers to their pleasure chemicals, and some may very well find pleasure in the suffering expressed or described by a film or the author of a book. There should – or might – be a boundary between the pleasure found in the representation of something, and the pleasure found in the direct participation as a witness or as an actor in the real action. Some may consider the ethical dimension of the expression of such deviant behaviors as described in this book and even consider they should be X-rated, the same way as for films. That goes against the grain of the freedom of expression, and yet in bookstores, various practices enable people to know at once where books for kids or teenagers can be found, whereas adult literature will be in another section of the store, often under special surveillance or so high that you need a ladder to reach it. Is it advisable to consider that books of fiction that describe or include violent or sexual scenes should be kept away from the eyes and hands of people under a certain age? It seems to be a vain attempt because any person, no matter their age, who wants to get to a certain book will always find a way or another person who will provide them with the book. The list of such works of fiction or art that were, in one way or another, censored is long, and yet these censored works always got to the targeted audience under the table, under the blanket, or simply on the black market.

The song “Le Déserteur” by Boris Vian was banned in France in 1954, interpreted and recorded by Mouloudji. I remember getting an underground version of the record long after its first interpretation and its being banned because the song was understood as a song against the war in Indochina (not much since it was finished in 1954), but against the war in Algeria since this one started in 1954. I seem to remember the record I am talking of was pressed in Switzerland. We all know censorship is vain, but censorship in school libraries in the USA is a very common phenomenon initiated most of the time by parents in the Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) of the concerned schools, though in this country this censorship concerns mainly racism, slavery, sexuality, especially LGBTX-oriented sexuality, but violence does not seem to bother these parents a lot. Some parents protested in a Highschool Junior class in France in 1999 because to amplify the antisemite discourse of the film *American History X* that the class had chosen to watch, I provided them with an excerpt of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* on racism and various photographic, artistic, or testimonial documents on the Holocaust. The argument was, for these parents, that it gave their children nightmares.

To conclude this point, the book is particularly effective in showing that all extreme authoritarian regimes are based and founded upon mental and psychological perversions, and



in this book those who fight can escape, even if most of these fighters will not survive the events, the worst death being that of Charlie's closest fellow-prisoner, Iota, aka Eye, in this dungeon: he dies of a superficial wound on his leg but performed with a poisonous blade, and just at the most one hour away from the final victory against Flight Killer. To die like that when they were so close to the final victory is cruel and poignant: to have suffered so much and so long to die in a few minutes from a superficial cut on the leg is the most absurd and unhappy ending for Iota. How many readers would feel some empathy for Iota in his death, and Charlie in his suffering then, suffering that he had to crush away to be able to finish his mission which was to liberate Empis from Gogmagog?

6. BACK OUT AND BACK IN TO CLEAN THE MESS

After escaping from the dungeons through an evacuation passage for the elite revealed to them by the gray man Pursey who considers Charlie as the promised Prince – Pursey will be killed by the Night Soldiers after the escape – they end up in the trolley terminal, very close to the gate. Yet they have to deal with three obstacles. Charlie has to run to the other side of the avenue and recuperate the two guns he had left there at the end of his first visit, just before being captured. These weapons will enable him to kill the daughter of the giant Hana, Red Molly that is coming on a sort of big vehicle moved by her pedaling a very powerful system that does not need any energy other than the muscular work of her legs. Peterkin – who reappears here to be the traitor he has always been – is trying to tell her that Charlie is there – as if she did not know – but he is run over by Red Molly in her vehicle. Then Charlie can shoot her, but it takes a few bullets to manage to kill that giant girl. Then a cloud of Monarch butterflies, the emblem of the royal family, arrive on the scene since we are close to dusk and these monarch butterflies just fly en masse onto the Night Soldiers, getting fried for sure, but the Night Soldiers are fried by their own electrical juice. The giant Hana, Molly's mother, comes for vengeance, but all the surviving escapees manage to get out of the gate, Charlie last, and the gate is closed by the regular command "Close in the name of Leah of the Gallien."

The survivors and the three people we have already met, Leah, Claudia, and Woody have a conference to determine how they are going to block the evil liberation of the monster down in the Dark Well on the following day when the two moons kiss the following night. The attack will be led by Leah herself who still pretends the Flight Killer is not her brother, her brother being dead, pure and simple. We know of course this is symbolical. He is dead because he no longer is Elden. He has become a monster. But she wants to be the one who confronts Flight Killer and does justice to her brother Elden by killing the monster he has become. So, on the morning following their escape, they start back into the city, this time through a little side door that was completely concealed under the ivy. They are five human beings: Leah, Charlie, Iota, Jaya, Eris, and two animals: Radar and the Snab on top of her. That makes seven. They all have to confront Hana and kill her to be able to reach the entrance of the palace and cathedral. There they have to go on three vertical ascent-descent. First, one ascent up to the top of one spire on a platform worked by some wheel that has to be turned. Seven individuals on this platform with no security around it are bound to make the readers feel some vertigo. At the top of this first spire, they have to use a rather rinky-dink footbridge to the second spire next to the first and go down a long, very narrow spiral staircase down to the ground and into the palace. They then have to cross some rooms. That's where Iota is going to be wounded with a poisonous dagger by Lord High, aka Kellin, who is then killed by Charlie, and Iota dies just a couple of rooms farther. Then they have to go



down a second time, hence, to climb down, this third time, into the underground world leading to the Dark Well. They have to choose first one corridor out of three and then one corridor out of twelve. Charlie notices some ripped fragments of green silk, the dress Petra was wearing the last time they saw her. At this moment they have been reduced in number: Iota is dead, and the two girls, Jaya and Eris are too afraid to go on, so, they stop in one of the rooms. Apparently, the Snab stays behind too, so they are three: Leah, Charlie, and Radar (the rejuvenated version of the dog they discovered at Claudia's after their escape).

Then they go onto the third vertical transit, the second descent that leads them to the room of the Dark Well. The confrontation is three to three: Leah-Charlie-Radar versus Flight-Killer/Elden-Petra-Gogmagog. The last one, a demon from the deepest darkest underground world imaginable will manage to get a little bit of his nose out when the hatch rises from the opening of the Dark Well when the two moons collide. But, without me giving the details, Petra is killed, Flight Killer is killed by Leah herself and the hatch is brought back down on the nose precisely of Gogmagog. The funny thing is the way Charlie manages to bring the hatch down and force Gogmagog to retreat. It is one more reference to the fairy tale Rumpelstiltskin and he just gets inspired by the ending of the tale. Rumpelstiltskin is defeated by the newly promoted Queen (by getting married to the King) who tries to save her first-born from a bad promise she had done to the manikin. He had given her three days to either find his name or to hand up her child. Three evenings with each time three names, and it is the ninth name that is the true name and the defeat of the manikin when she gives his name, Rumpelstiltskin. This inspiration is used by Charlie. Here is the mantra, progressively developed by Charlie, which defeats the monster.

'I KNOW YOUR NAME!' [...]

'I KNOW YOUR NAME, GOGMAGOG, AND I COMMAND YOU / TO RETURN TO YOUR LAIR!' [...]

'GOGMAGOG, GOGMAGOG, YOUR NAME IS / GOGMAGOG!' [...]

'RETURN TO YOUR LAIR, GOGMAGOG! YOU MAY COME AGAIN, GOGMAGOG, IN TEN YEARS OR A THOUSAND, GOGMAGOG, BUT NOT THIS DAY, GOGMAGOG!' [...] ***'IF YOU TAKE ME IN, GOGMAGOG, I'LL BURST YOUR GUTS WITH YOUR NAME BEFORE I DIE!' [...]*** (page 539-540)

The whole incantation, command, and curse are based on the hammering of this command with three-syllable words or phrases that are repetitive, and they are all the more powerful because they alternate or contrast with the four-syllable or five-syllable phrases. The three-syllable words or phrases are the nails of the execution of Gogmagog. Note, three-syllable words are the very basis of Hebrew which is a Semitic language based on triconsonantal roots that mostly produce trisyllabic words. Note it is not exactly the same here since "GOGMAGOG" itself has only three vowels, but it has five consonants, a pentad in a way with 4 "G's" and one "M." But it has to be noted that the ternary pattern we find everywhere in this novel does not find its origin in but can be attached to the long human tradition that can be found in Homo Sapiens' culture as far as we can go in archaeologically certified elements, and the triconsonantal roots and mostly trisyllabic words of Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament, are fundamental. These three-syllable words or phrases are the nails (the three nails of Jesus' Crucifixion) that are supposed to seal the hatch for a long time. Note the "one-thousand-years" phrase is directly extracted from the *Book of Revelation* (20:7), and it is the time that elapsed between the first battle and the second battle with Satan,



or the Beast, the time during which Satan had been imprisoned. And that is exactly what Charlie promises Satan he will do. That is maybe slightly too much. But we are in a fairy tale after all. The colors I used (red for three-syllable words or phrases, blue for four-syllable phrases, and green for five-syllable phrases) show this hammering. The lay-out can be changed to even amplify the hammering.

Note the only line that is different and set in purple: it is a six-syllable phrase. I would keep this direct reference to the number of Solomon or David, to the wisdom of Solomon, and to the truth of God poured into the cup of man, especially because it can easily be considered as two three-syllable groups both starting with the first word "TO," an infinitive particle first, and a simple nominal preposition second:

TO RETURN
-//-
TO YOUR LAIR!

It could be a subtle piece of advice from Charlie to Gogmagog, a piece of advice he will not really take. And the hammering will then be resumed. Of course, we could also consider this phrase to be cut into two three-syllable groups that would be part of the hammering.

'I KNOW YOUR NAME!' [...]
'I KNOW YOUR NAME,
GOGMAGOG,
AND I COMMAND YOU
TO RETURN
-//-
TO YOUR LAIR! [...]
'GOGMAGOG,
GOGMAGOG,
YOUR NAME IS
GOGMAGOG!' [...]
'RETURN TO YOUR LAIR,
GOGMAGOG!
YOU MAY COME AGAIN,
GOGMAGOG,
IN TEN YEARS
OR A THOUSAND,
GOGMAGOG,
BUT NOT THIS DAY,
GOGMAGOG!' [...]
'IF YOU TAKE ME IN,
GOGMAGOG,
I'LL BURST YOUR GUTS
WITH YOUR NAME
BEFORE I DIE!' [...]

And I will consider that the twelve red three-syllable words or phrases are not haphazardous in their number. The six blue four-syllable phrases are not haphazardous either. And the five green five-syllable phrases are definitely not an accident. Three is the number of the nails of Jesus' Crucifixion, and twelve is the number of his apostles. Six is Solomon's



number and his wisdom, while four is the symbolic number of the crucifixion, hence Gogmagog has been crucified twice (three and four) by Jesus' twelve apostles and Solomon's wisdom (six). And to top it off the five five-syllable phrases are a double reference to the devil (five). That's what can be called a prophetic style used here by Stephen King to speak to the totally unconscious numerical experiential, even existential knowledge of such symbols, a knowledge that most people have though they are unconscious about it. They may use such numerical symbols, feel or experience an emotion or a force carried by these numbers, and yet not know why they feel like that.

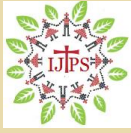
Once I asked Pascal Dusapin why he used so many three-syllable phrases and three-note musical items in his *Faustus, The Last Night*. He answered me that "pan-pan-pan" is the rhythm of conviction, action, anger, etc. You could of course think of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and its rhythmic evocation of fate as a four-note musical phrase, three short and one long, "pan-pan-pan-paaan." And it works. Four notes but five in length.



Five has always been attached to evil, to Satan, and all Satanic rites with the five-branch star. And yet this five-branch star is magic because it can be drawn in one single continuous stroke, and this magic has been recuperated by many non-satanic traditions so that the Satanic traditions are at times using the five-branch star upside down. We could, like Stephen King, refer the readers here to Carl Gustav Jung and his collective unconscious. But we could also refer the reader to Jürgen Habermas, Theodor W. Adorno, and Wilhelm Reich who are, along with Kenneth Burke, approaching life, daily language, and creative language, not to mention all arts, in a symbolical perspective, and then numbers are essential. Note here the tradition of numerical symbolism in the Jewish Kabbalah.

But I would like to insist on another influence that pervades Stephen King's work. The musical background is always present in his novels, and this novel is no exception. But to amplify what I have just said on the power of the incantation against Gogmagog, I would like to quote what Bono, the singer of U2, writes in his latest book, *Surrender, 40 songs, one story*, (Hutchinson – Heinemann, London, 2022) on how a song, here an incantation, must have "a hook" (page 163) for the audience, and the hook is for him coming from the drum, from the drummer who gives the rhythm that carries the song to the listening audience and can have a mesmerizing effect because it is permanent, constant, continuous. Rhythm is obviously sequences of two, three, four, and five beats, and the architecture of these rhythmic units has a direct effect on the audience because of the deep and somatic more than psychological force of rhythm. But Bono insists on the fact that the strongest impact of a song comes when the drummer and the singer are working together when the rhythm and the melody are one and supporting each other, and as soon as you introduce the melody, the singer, you introduce language and words, and thus we come back to Charlie's incantation. The rhythmic architecture reinforces the words used to hammer in the necessity for Gogmagog to go back into his lair, his deep underground realm of night and darkness under the menace that, if he did not, he would simply be destroyed from the inside of his own material body, if it is a body, by Charlie himself and his continuing incantation.

The last and important element here is not so typical of Stephen King who has not dealt so much with voodoo, the way his colleague Anne Rice used to. But he knows perfectly well some very important traditions in black, native American, and other minority cultures in



America which have kept contact with the magic of nature, the magic of life and death, and which consider that the name of a person has to be kept secret, unpronounced because uttering the name of a person in plain life is equivalent to endangering their life or survival. The private name of a person can only be used within a ritual to contact that person after they have passed to the other side of life and that uttering has to be performed by a ritualistically certified person, hence a shaman, sorcerer, or witch doctor. It is quite different with the unutterable name of God in the Old Testament, the ban on the public use of the name Yahweh because it reveals God, it endangers him – and it definitely is a “him” – in his own essence. Here in this novel, we are dealing with a being that is not human at all, and yet that is stated as having a material “body” and the use of his name does not endanger his essence, but his real material existence. The devil is more material than spiritual. He – and in his case again he definitely is a male – can be destroyed in his material flesh and bones. God, on the other hand, is spiritual, and pronouncing his name may endanger his spiritual essence which is based on the fact God is pure spirit, and the distance between him and the people can be endangered by using his name, by making him familiar, which he is not supposed to be. God is supposed to be unreachable in a way. You can speak to his spirit, but you cannot touch God, or embrace and hug him, because then he would not be God anymore, and using his name is part of this destabilizing familiarity or bold informality.

And that episode ends up with the reinstating of Leah as the Queen of Empis, and the slow regressing of the older curse, hence the liberation of the people from grayness. Charlie after celebrating the victory, mourns the dead, particularly Iota, aka Eye (not at all a gratuitous nickname) whom Charlie had learned to love like a brother or maybe even more than a brother, maybe a mate in fate, a seer, a prophet, – after all, he, Charlie, was the Prince. And he is starting to feel homesick – and he can be since now his main loving and emotional bond that could retain him in this Empis world, namely Iota, is no longer there. The relationship between Charlie and Iota is mysterious and such relationships between two characters are common in Stephen King’s books, and they become strategic or crucial when embedded in some endangering and existentially lethal adventures. The death of Iota enables the final fight to be three versus three, but it also enables the book to find an easy way to go back to Charlie’s world, our own world. This pattern of some mate-ness existing between two characters is in perfect line with a common reference to “Jesus and the disciple he loved.” The phrase “the disciple he loved” is used five times in John’s Gospel. You can check *John*, 13:23, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, and 21:20. The debate about the identity of this disciple is open between those who believe John was that disciple, and at the time of crucifixion he was around 12, and those who read this phrase as meaning Mary Magdalene; between those who see non-carnal love here, and those who consider all love is carnal, and hence the disciple has to be a woman, which might be an interpretative gender bias.

So, he packs up his possessions, presents, souvenirs, and of course Radar, and off they go back home. No surprise in the back-garden shed whose door had been padlocked by his high school friend, as required before leaving a totally untrue note and explanation (he supposedly went to Chicago to see a quack doctor who was supposed to make miracles with aging dogs). He emerges back in his real world on a Saturday in February 2014. He had just seen one of the numerous flyers glued or stapled to poles and trees requiring people’s attention.



HAVE YOU SEEN THIS BOY? [...] CHARLES MCGEE READE, AGE 17. [...] Charles (Charlie') Reade disappeared in October of 2013. He is 6'4" and weighs 235 pounds. He was last seen . . . (page 568)

Welcome home Prince Charlie. You sure have a story to tell your father, and he will have to be convinced it is the truth if you want him never to tell anyone. And sure enough, the whole book has been told by Charlie, quite a few years later, but it is OK since it is a fictional fairy tale.

CONCLUSION

We could consider many other details and episodes that I have overlooked in this story. It is high time we ask the simple question: "Will Stephen King's books still be read in one century the way they have been voraciously devoured by generation upon generation of many million readers for forty-eight years?"

My answer is: "Oh yes, definitely, like Shakespeare and Dickens, to quote only two English authors that have reached long-lasting fame and recognition." The real question is why? What makes reading Stephen King a must-read, at times an addictive must-read? Since 1974, starting around 1976, I have read all the books, novels, and collections of stories, in any format and form, plus collaborative works with other authors, illustrators, and his own sons, that have come out. I may have missed a couple of stories that were published in some confidential magazine and have not been reprinted. I even have all installments of a story that was published as an eBook exclusively on Amazon, *The Plant* (1982-1985, 2000), that he never finished, or I do not know if he has, and at least I must not be wrong since Wikipedia tells me it is unfinished.

There are many reasons why this polymorphous work will outlast the author. Let me give a few. The first one is simple enough: every novel, in one way or another, is always rooted in the reality of the time of the action (particularly when it is the past, for example, *11.22.63*, (2011) and in the time when the book is written, either because the present of the storytelling is included in the story, or because some problematics are clearly from the present of the writing time, or "universal in time," and not from the past of the main historical period concerned.

The second reason comes directly from the one I have just given. The problems evoked in the books are fundamental and will be problems for a long time, and they may even become historical elements taught in schools in the future, like the clandestine survival of Nazi criminals in the USA in the book *Apt Pupil* (1982).

We have to think of children and young people who are immensely present in the books in so many ways. First of all, the bad *Children of the Corn*: check my own exploration of these Children of the Corn on Medium.com: "Children of the Corn and Maize God," <https://jacquescouardeau.medium.com/children-of-the-corn-and-maize-god-69ca482c03ef>, and "Children of the Corn — 40th Anniversary — 1978–2018," <https://jacquescouardeau.medium.com/children-of-the-corn-40th-anniversary-1978-2018-bb1a4bce02f3>. Then glorious children or teens like Charlie Reade, but also so many frustrated children in their families with at least authoritative parents (think of *Carrie*), bullied children in schools or society in general, including some children encountering pedophiles from whom they manage to escape, but how many have not escaped their claws? And what about the extreme exploitation of differently abled children to turn them into killing agents sent out to execute some politicians or elite that are considered bad by the masters of *The Institute* (2019)?

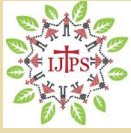


Then the presence of handicapped people is constant. Think of *The Dark Tower* (1982-2004) where a black girl is reduced to traveling along with Roland in a wheelchair. This empathy for handicapped people is also vastly expressed for dogs and other animals. Radar is the animal hero in this book, but another animal, a billy-bumbler, a sort of dog, goes along with the group of “pilgrims” drawn together by Roland Deschain, Eddie Dean, Susannah Dean, Jake Chambers, hence four people plus Oy, the billy-bumbler, hence reaching five, a pentad, a very bad omen as for the fulfilling of the mission. And the empathy I am speaking of is so rare in our society where dogs and animals are reduced to pets... that can be abandoned when their masters go on vacation. We must definitely think of *Cujo*, (1981), a dog that is made rabid by bats, and how it becomes a terror to several people till he is put to sleep... forever.

Then, of course, you have the various genres that go beyond the real world and the various genres are mixed in many novels, like in this one, and these genres work directly on our deeper emotions and the books concerned become very fast mesmerizing, if not addictive. Let me give some of these genres. Science fiction when the action is projected into the future (*The Gwendy Trilogy*, 2022). You have a lot of fantasy when the action is in another world, another universe, under our own, or parallel to our own, but living in some heroic medieval culture (*the Dark Tower*, of course, but also *A Fairy Tale*, or *The Talisman*, 1984 & 2001). Then, you have much horror in many books (and that horror is quite present in this here *A Fairy Tale*). But beyond horror or along horror, we often have magic, which is too often, black magic (present in *A Fairy Tale*, as a curse or the sundial). The use of Extrasensory Perception (ESP) is also very common: the ability to move objects with one’s mind (*Carrie*, 1974, for example), the ability to start a fire with one’s mind (*The Firestarter*, 1980, for example), the possibility to communicate with other people directly via your mind’s waves (*The Dead Zone*, 1979, or *The Gwendy Trilogy*, 2017-2022). Along that line, think of Abigail Freemantle in *The Stand*, (1979), a black lady from the corn belt who plays the guitar and sings psalms, who can communicate with God, and who is the seer in the book, the one who guides the good ones in Boulder, Colorado, against the bad ones in Las Vegas.

That’s where we can consider the use of “monsters” coming from the deepest layers of human culture: vampires, werewolves, living dead, extra-terrestrials, and at times some Stephen King invented like Gogmagog. His world is supernatural, and I use “supernatural” here with the meaning that should refer you to the TV series *Supernatural* (2005-2020) by Eric Kripke (now producing the TV series *Revolution*). In fact, I would say that the series *Supernatural* is some prime-time soft fantastic, and frightening series inspired (is there a copy-cat in the studio?) by Stephen King, but in a more commercial approach: what can be sold to television channels in the whole world for the prime time general public, not even PG, a type of television fiction, implying the presence of real Satan, of an angel, and a few other mythical characters who are so polite and polished that we could serve them tea in an upper-middle-class tea party celebrating the beauty of the world from rich-biased eyes.

There is one more element I would like to give here. The possibility for houses, hotels, places in general, factories, and slaughterhouses to be haunted in one way or another. Think of *The Shining*, (1977). But a car can be haunted too, Think of *Christine*, (1983). The house on the hill in *Jerusalem’s Lot*, (1978) is another example serving as the base of vampires, especially Victorian houses. I was expecting Mr. Bowditch’s house to be haunted, but the cliché was changed here in a different direction: it is the gate from our world to another world, not the gate of another world into our own world. Along that line, in a later period, Stephen King tried to approach suspense and mysteries, meaning crime, detectives,



police, and investigations. We could also insist on the use of technology to achieve mysterious effects. Think of the *Mr. Mercedes Trilogy*, (2014-2016) which uses simple game tablets to capture the mind of some people and make them become criminals.

The last element I want to mention is political. In this book here there is a strong denunciation of the perverse dimension of any dictatorial regime. But in several books, the simple democratic system is both questioned and advocated. In *The Stand*, (1978, abridged; 1990, uncut), an epidemic erases humanity (a theme that has been used and overused since 2000 by TV series), and the survivors are going to divide themselves along two lines: the followers of the Dark One, the devil of course, in Las Vegas, Nevada, who will try to conquer the world with nuclear weapons, and the followers of those who believe in democracy in Boulder, Colorado, led by a black woman and a few other people, inspired by Christian principles and dedicated to rebuilding the USA. But in Stephen King, we never have that clear-cut good and evil, black-and-white approach. There are always other, third or fourth, solutions, options, and thus side-conflicts that can become crucial in choosing the low road or the high road, the easy one, and evil is easy, or the difficult one, and to choose the NON-EVIL road is a lot more difficult because then there are many roundabouts and junctions and choices to make.

It is quite obvious in *11.22.63*, which takes place at the time of the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, there is a fair amount of criticism of the American society that produced such a tragedy that was to be repeated twice before 1968 with Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, plus a few more. The question behind it all is: “Is democracy responsible for such a political catastrophe?” Stephen King never clearly chooses. Read the third volume of *The Gwendy Trilogy* that takes place in 2026 and you will find some direct references to Trump and the divided situation in the USA. But he does not seem to suggest a choice against democracy, even if it enables charlatans to take over the system, or some regulations to prevent it that would mean some limitations of the sacrosanct freedom of expression. But the question is definitely open and absolutely urgent in relevance.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

All references are specified in the text.

I will not provide a full list of all books, novels, novellas, and short stories, ever published by Stephen King because that is available on the Internet in about two clicks. I would suggest

***All 70+ Stephen King Books in Order | Ultimate Guide*, by [Anna Marie CARROLL](#), December 5, 2021, books in order, horror, <https://www.tlbranson.com/stephen-king-books-in-order/>.**

Anna Marie Carroll remains evanescent so far. The only Anna Marie Carroll I can find is a Digital Content Strategist | Experienced Editor and Writer, connected by education to Carleton University, and living in Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada, <https://www.linkedin.com/in/annamariacarroll/>. I have no idea if she is the one I am looking for. She is also a Maritimer | Prolific reader | Travel enthusiast on <https://twitter.com/CarrollAnnaM>.

T.L. Branson (<https://www.tlbranson.com/>) is a participant in the Amazon Associates Program. All links to Amazon provide him with a small commission on qualifying purchases. T.L. Branson is the author of the all-new [Soul Stones series](https://www.tlbranson.com/books/) (<https://www.tlbranson.com/books/>). Branson started writing when he was eighteen and has contributed articles to several blogs and websites over the years. *Soul Render* is his debut novel in a planned quartet. He finds his inspiration from the kings (and queens) of storytelling, J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, George Lucas, and J.K. Rowling. Born in Pennsylvania, he currently lives in San Diego, California with his wife and two children.