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To
my mum and my grandfather,
with love and gratitude

**“You learn best by reading a lot and writing a lot, and the most valuable lessons of all
are the ones you teach yourself.”**

~ Stephen King, *On Writing*

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“Hug and kiss whoever helped get you - financially, mentally, morally, emotionally - to this day. Parents, mentors, friends, teachers. If you're too uptight to do that, at least do the old handshake thing, but I recommend a hug and a kiss. Don't let the sun go down without saying thank you to someone, and without admitting to yourself that absolutely no one gets this far alone.”

~ Stephen King

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Fig. 1: Poster (NV)

Content

Abstract

Zusammenfassung

List of used abbreviations

1.	Introduction	1
2.	An Analysis of Stephen King's It	2
2.1.	Topic choice	2
2.2.	Thesis Aim and Research Questions	2
2.3.	The author: Stephen King & his work It	3
2.3.1.	Biography	4
2.3.2.	Works	7
2.3.3.	Inspirations and intertextuality concerning It.....	9
2.4.	Analysis of the book 'It'	13
2.4.1.	Plot summary.....	13
2.4.2.	Specific terms	14
2.4.3.	Structure & narration.....	21
2.4.4.	Themes	22
2.4.5.	Characters.....	36
2.5.	The comparison of the book and the screen adaptations	69
3.	Conclusion.....	79
4.	Bibliography.....	80
5.	Appendix	83

List of used abbreviations

ABBREVIATION	ORIGINAL
SK	Stephen King
OV	Original Version (mini-series)
NV	New Version (two-part film)
SC	Screenshot
POS	Position (Kindle)
PAR	Paragraph (Kindle)
SK SS	<i>Stephen King on the Small Screen</i>
SK BS	<i>Stephen King on the Big Screen</i>
OW	<i>On Writing</i>
TDT	<i>The Dark Tower</i>

“Let’s talk, you and I. Let’s talk about fear.”

~ Stephen King, *Night Shift*

1. Introduction

Stephen King is a worldwide bestselling and prolific author whose presence cannot be denied in today’s horror literature. Almost everybody has heard of his books and films. Despite his fame and importance within the horror genre, a complete analysis of any of his work is unavailable. This is partially because King is not often thought to be an academic subject. King has written numerous works, both as himself and Richard Bachman, a selection of one work needed to be made to complete a full analysis. *It* holds a special place in the King Universe and his readers’ hearts. There is a significant amount of academic research on *It*, as well as two screen adaptations. The currency of the most recent film is part of the reason *It* was chosen for this analysis.

This paper will seek to analyse the story, the characters, and themes within the book. However, this project would not be complete without comparisons to the two screen adaptations. To understand why his novels are so successful and why the screen adaptations differ from the book certain themes will become the focus of this paper. Upon closer examination, it is obvious King has a unique style of writing, which contributes to his success. King employs common horror literature tropes to his advantage as often as he overturns them.

This begs the twofold question as to how and why King’s specific brand of horror writing works well for audiences. *It* will be analysed with the help of secondary sources. However, the bulk of this thesis represents this author’s own analysis. The analysis addresses Stephen King, his life, his works, and his influences. Specific terms will be defined, along with the narrative structure of the novel in order to create a shared understanding which will underpin this analysis. This will be followed by elaborating the predominant motifs in the story. A discussion of the characters and their relationships to each other is required to understand their representations in the screen adaptations. The novel and the screen adaptations will be compared, specifically examining the differences and how they contribute to successfully scaring audiences.

2. An Analysis of Stephen King's *It*

The following thesis aims to analyse one of the most popular works of Stephen King: *It*. *It* is one of his longest stories, which he wrote over a period of four years (cf. Anton 113) and has been made into a television mini-series and a two-part film series. The broad-spectrum appeal of the print and film versions of the story mean there are many aspects which deserve closer examination. Focus will be on the place and status of this work in the King-universe, including other works and his biography, the structure and main motifs of the story, and of course, comparing the book to its dramatizations. The primary sources for this thesis will be the novel, its screen adaptations, and my analysis and comparisons. However, secondary sources will be used in addition to the identified primary literature.

2.1. Topic choice

Finding a topic for my diploma thesis was a long and confusing process. I wanted to write about an author or book series which interested me. I love Stephen King and, especially, *It*; in large part this is related to my love of long and exciting stories. His books are extremely detailed and I find reading them entertains me more than watching television. My first exposure to the work of Stephen King was reading *Pet Sematary*, which remains one of my favourites. Originally, I wanted to write on anthropomorphism in King's works. Unfortunately, there was not enough detailed material available to conduct a complete analysis, however, there will be a sub-chapter discussing this motif. Luckily, in September 2017, the remake of King's *It* came to the cinemas. Three people advised me to write my thesis on *It*. I loved the idea. Thankfully, my supervisor also likes Stephen King and allowed me to choose this topic. The new film and King's worldwide success as a best-selling author means there is a large volume material to support an analysis of the complex story, the intertextuality, and the two screen adaptations.

2.2. Thesis Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this thesis is to analyse Stephen King's novel *It*, considering structure, content, themes, characters, and how the screen adaptations are realized. The following questions will form the basis for my analysis and will be answered in due course:

- What strategies did Stephen King employ to create the complex and detailed world contained within the pages of *It*, and how do these details connect this novel to other works within the King Universe? How does intertextuality affect the audience?

- King explores many themes, such as greatest fears, anthropomorphism, transformation, and coming of age in a complex narrative. King uses these themes and fully realized, three-dimensional characters which weave themselves into the narrative. The reader empathises with the characters and feels genuinely scared for them. How did King weave these elements together to effectively create terrifying moments throughout the storyline and continuous suspense?
- In contrast to themes surrounding terror, King explores the themes of innocence, belief, and imagination. These contribute greatly to the sympathy and empathy the characters can inspire in the reader. Why is the antithesis to horror important?
- The directors and writers of both screen adaptations had to interpret King's work in specific ways and translate it for a viewing audience. The adaptations and books achieved varying degrees of success with respect to scaring the audience. Depending on the techniques used, is it possible to translate a story of this complexity, length, and detail to a screen? If so, how?
- The narrative of the novel is dependent on precise descriptions, especially in terms of the characters populating the story. It is through the inclusion of small details that King can prompt a reader's imagination to conjure images of the transformation of the entity under Derry. Do the actors of both adaptations convey the characters well? How does the structure and the way of telling the story affect the reader's experience? The screen audience's experience?

Through the book King prompts his readers to ever more terrifying leaps of imagination. Using descriptions and a complex narrative structure, King builds a level of suspense which is ultimately unrealized. While the screen adaptations must use different strategies to develop the same level of fear in the audience they are able to more fully realize the dramatic and terrifying nature of the monster in its original form.

2.3. The author: Stephen King & his work *It*

It is the “final summing up of everything [King] tried to say [...] on the two central subjects of [his] fiction”, “monsters and children” (Beahm, 259). To understand the novel, *It*, and the nuances within the text one must first know something of the author's life. Numerous experiences in Stephen King's life have influenced his writing, however, several specific events, stories, and people inspired aspects of *It*. The King Universe is vast, filled with many supernatural creatures and regular people hoping to save themselves and their towns. The stories

connect to King's life and each other. The books often contain references to other stories and *It* is no exception.

2.3.1. Biography

Stephen King is a global best-selling author whose name is synonymous with the horror genre. However, King was not exempt from poverty and financial hardship along his journey to fame. As Russel frames it, "King's life and work are examples of both traditional and modern views of the 'American Dream'" (1). While King overcame poverty and rose to fame, it was a long and hard way to the top.

King was born on September 21st, 1947 in Portland, Maine as the first biological, but second child, of Donald Edwin King and Nellie Ruth Pillsbury (Anton 12). Only two years later his father left the family (Russel 2) and so, King "was abandoned [...] – a small child's worst nightmare" (Pollock 5). This is one of the first points of contact with fear for the author (cf. Pollock 5). King's mother kept the family above the water by accepting numerous jobs to afford bare necessities. For a lengthy period, approximately nine years, they moved frequently. Eventually, they returned to Maine to take care of King's maternal grandparents. While the family did not have much in terms of financial assets, King was well loved (cf. Anton 13).

According to King, his initial experience with horror was at the age of four while listening to a horror story on the radio, without permission, and not able to fall asleep afterwards (cf. Russel 5). King has been a great fan of reading horror ever since his mother discovered his father's abandoned book collection in the attic of their family home, including H. P. Lovecraft's anthology of horror stories (cf. Russel 2f). As Russel states, "Lovecraft provided an introduction to the world of horror literature" (3) for him. King's work clearly boasts Lovecraft inspired traits.

While Russel states King's first brush with fear was his abandonment by his father, there were others. King bore witness to his childhood friend being runover by a train. He states he cannot remember it actively, nevertheless, he processed it later in one of his novels. In King's work childhood fears are frequently conjured, mostly his own, as readers can identify with the flawed characters making the stories more effective. King's childhood memories are filled with traumatic situations and macabre occurrences, like seeing the body of his dead grandmother (cf. Anton 14) or watching a corpse be pulled from the water (Russel 4). As with any child, these had a lasting effect on King. However, not only negative events inspire him. The people and places from where King has lived also populate his novels. According to King, he "concentrates

on what he knows and has experienced and finds it difficult to write about something outside of his experience” (Russel 15). Therefore, parts of his stories are frequently inspired by real-life events.

King started writing when he started to read. He wrote his first horror story when he was seven, and approximately five years later he began to send his stories to magazines. King states that “[i]f you want to be a writer, you must [...] read a lot and write a lot” (cf. *OW* 164). After graduating from high school, he wrote under the pseudonym Richard Bachman. In college, he appreciated the literature courses the most and the support of his professors. To finance his studies, he worked part-time. In his final year of employment at a library he met his future wife, Tabitha Jane Spruce, who was highly impressed by him despite his impoverished circumstances (cf. Russel 4f). She is vital to him, Spruce is “his partner in the deepest sense of the word” (Russel 6). Spruce has always supported and encouraged King. She once recovered pages from *Carrie* from the trash and persuaded him to write on. King and Spruce have been happily married since 1971 and has three children. Despite their deeply satisfying personal life the young couple struggled with career and financial troubles. Neither King or Spruce had any luck finding a job in their field after graduation. King trained as secondary-school teacher but at the time there was not a need for teachers. He always wanted to be a writer but his mother advised him to have a back-up plan (King, *OW* 25). Despite the publication of his short fiction in magazines, publishers continually rejected his books. Thus, he worked as a teacher when he got the chance.

Publishing *Carrie* in 1973 was his first breakthrough. However, his first hardcover best-seller was *The Shining* (cf. Russel 6ff), “[w]ith [the book’s] publication King was becoming a brand name, an author whose name alone would sell the book” (Russel 9). With the increased fame, the public quickly discovered his pseudonym Richard Bachman, as the similarities between the works were easily noticed.

King admitted he had issues with alcohol and drugs by 1985 (cf. King, *OW* 106), which are common in the celebrity world. However, when Spruce delivered an ultimatum, the choice between his family and drugs, he turned his life around and became sober (cf. King, *OW* 108).

King’s dramatic car accident in 1999 was another serious incident from which King drew strength and inspiration, which he describes in *On Writing*: “I’ve been in a hell of an accident. I’m lying ditch and there’s blood all over my face and my right leg hurts” (King, 309). The New York Times magazine summarises the incident:

In June 1999, he almost died [...]. He and his family were staying at their lake house in western Maine. It was late afternoon and King was finishing up his daily four-mile walk. As usual, he was carrying a book. Although he often reads while walking -- on dirt roads, for instance, or down Broadway while visiting New York -- he was not reading at the moment, for this stretch took him up a steep hill alongside a small highway. Suddenly a blue Dodge minivan crested the hill and pinballed King off its windshield. He came down in a clump. His head was bleeding, his lap seemed to be turned sideways and he saw that a bone in his right leg was pointing in the wrong direction, skyward, bulging out of his jeans. A short while later, one of his lungs collapsed. This was all happening in a blur, literally, for King's eyeglasses were missing. They had somehow landed on the front seat of the minivan (Dubner).

The doctors said he was critically injured but his overall condition was stable (cf. King, *OW* 312). "Five weeks later, after King knew he would survive but before he knew if he would walk again, he resumed writing" (Dubner par.3). Getting back to writing afterwards helped him to cope with the situation, as it always has had. Despite the numerous serious injuries, "Besides the fractured hip, mangled leg, collapsed lung and lacerated scalp, he had four broken ribs and a chipped spine, and he had lost 50 pounds. He didn't feel like working, but a voice in his head -- yes, Stephen King, like his characters, hears voices -- told him to" (Dubner) King was driven back to his desk. One of the most interesting books by King, which combines biographical details and advice on writing, is called *On Writing* and was finished while King was still confined to a wheelchair (cf. Dubner par.11). King started *On Writing* in late 1997 and writing non-fiction was a challenge for him (cf. King *OW* 320f). Other works he completed after the accident and during his recovery include the e-novella *Riding the Bullet*, which was surprisingly successful, and the novel *Dreamcatcher* (cf. Dubner par.19). A book which was completed before the accident but was not published immediately afterwards is *From a Buick Eight*, because of the car crash which occurs as part of the narrative (cf. Dubner).

It is worth noting that King has made enough money to live financially free from worry, he has been an unstintingly generous donor to charity (cf. Russel 10ff). Russel states "[t]he Kings have generously shared the benefits of success" (Russel 11). King does not only take part in charity activities, he also donated money to the University of Maine, the Elementary School, and to the Old Town library in Bangor (cf. Russel, 11). Moreover, the Kings donated to the paediatrics unit and a baseball park in Bangor (cf. Russel, 11). King donates money to many more institutions and spends much money to help the people in Bangor, according to an article in *The Guardian*, he donated four million dollars in 2012. King worked hard to overcome numerous obstacles to achieve success. Sharing the benefits of his success and hard work with others has made him a legend outside of horror writing circles.

2.3.2. Works

King has written a great number of short stories, novels, novellas, and screenplays to date. He started writing very early and considering his current age this means he has a large portfolio. Screen adaptations of his stories are widely popular, which resulted in the production of *It* as both a television series and cinematic experiences.

King is the Master of horror (cf. Müller 108). His career started in the 1960s and is still not over (cf. Janicker 27). According to King, the ability to absorb the reader in a way that he or she forgets the author exists and becomes addicted to the story (cf. Müller 25). This statement applies King's works without exception. His dramatic storylines, detailed and realistic descriptions, and the methods through which he builds suspense, e.g. unanswered questions and unexpected circumstances create compelling narratives which absorb the reader completely. King identifies the most important parts of a story as follows: "narration[,] [...] description, [...] and dialogue" (King, *OW* 187). In each of his books the descriptions are highly detailed, even when not necessary, for instance, detailing the appearance and action of secondary characters. These details bring the story and characters to life and create a "real" world for the reader. In his work, *On Writing*, King explains that "[d]escription is what makes the reader a sensory participant in the story [...] and begins with visualization of what it is you want the reader to experience" (King, *OW* 201).

King's descriptive abilities mean many people want to see his stories on screen, rendering them accessible to everyone. Many of Stephen King's stories have adapted into movies or television series. This is primarily for two reasons. The first is King's name is synonymous with money. He has a strong brand and market recognition which will automatically mean a successful feature for advertisers. The second reason is King has a special style of writing. His stories stimulate visual fantasy through detailed description, which makes the reader turn on his or her inner screen (cf. Kasprzak 12). Pollock describes King's adoption of this style:

Steve was very influenced by the movies [and] [i]nstead of telling the story from a book, he would write the movie scenes down in words. And so even though he read a lot when he was young, and he learned from what he read, he also learned as much or more from the way scenes are written for television and the movies. And, of course, [...] it's no secret that his writing is like that now (Pollock 18).

King clearly states a sufficient description does not need to be lengthy, instead it focuses on the most salient points (cf. King, *OW* 203). This helps the reader to imagine the characters individually and well. King claims a writer has the advantage of being able to plant the idea of

a character into somebody's head and then it develops: "Description begins in the writer's imagination, but should finish in the reader's" (King, *OW* 203). Being able to give the characters their own final touch is what often leads readers to disappointment in the actors of the film. As King argues, "the filmmaker [...] is almost always doomed to show too much" (King, *OW* 203). Although King's writings are already "extremely cinematic, extremely visual" (Pollock 18), the films are not completely comparable to the books. Consequently, Russel underlines, the author is invariably not satisfied with how the films turned out, sometimes this view is supported by the public too (cf. 13). In fact, "no film based on a work by King exactly reproduces the original" (Russel 13). Despite not completely replicating what is written in the original story, both the books and films, are appreciated (cf. Müller 54). While movie going and home theatre audiences genuinely appreciate the screen adaptations "[w]atching a film of King work is never a substitute for reading his fiction" (Russel 13). There will always be an audience for the multiple ways in which King's work is presented to audiences. King mentioned, that after selling the rights the stories must prove themselves (cf. Müller 55). When filmmakers adapt one of the stories, no one can predict the reception by the public, not even King himself.

Audiences have watched screen adaptations of King's work since the 1970s: They "have premiered on large screens in theatres all over the world as well as on the smaller screens of household televisions" (Magistrle, *Hollywood's SK* 173). The original adaptation of *It* is a television mini-series, whereas, the recent one is a two-part film.

Although King mainly stays in his comfort zone of horror fiction, each of his works are not equally successful. Many of his stories share the same topic canon. However, some of them are outstandingly popular, each for a different reason. *Carrie* is his first published book (Russel 7). The series *The Dark Tower* is claimed by Beahm to be "a remarkable epic, the strangest and most frightening work that Stephen King has ever written" (198). *It*, with extraordinary complexity and considerable length, is "more than just a novel [...] *It* is [...] a contemporary literature event" and referred to as his magnum opus by many critics (Beahm 260). While there is some disagreement amongst critics as to what constitutes King's crowning achievement, *It* or *The Dark Tower*, according to Beahm (cf. 195, 260). However, critics generally agree both are outstanding.

Some books are known by everybody, at least by title. Some are insiders' tips. Further still, some books become popularized through screen adaptations. As Müller points out, there are criteria for a King book to move from being the newest in the canon to the bestseller list, inclusive of a central threatening character and a disastrous climax. Thus, *Pet Sematary*, *Carrie*,

Gerald's Game, *Dead Zone* and *It* were predicted to be bestsellers by 1998 (cf. Müller 80ff). Definitely, *It* is one of the most interesting and successful of King's novels, a point which is further supported by the existence of two separate screen adaptations. Anton calls it King's magnum opus, because it is incredibly thick, with over a thousand pages, depending on the edition (cf. Anton 105). The complexity of King's novel is also referenced by Anton, the narrative presents a great number of recurring elements which connect his books within the greater King universe (cf. 105ff).

The endings of King's books are often surprising and illogical. This means the film adaptations often have ill-fitting endings. The stories contain a rich tapestry of detail and create suspense so effectively that the ending is often anticlimactic and unsatisfying. As Browning points out, the ending of *It* is very disappointing (cf. Browning, *SK SS* 23): "It is clearly a problem to manifest a concept of evil onto which individual characters project their own subjective fears, which leads to the clichéd spider monster" (Browning, *SK SS* 23). The challenge to present a monster, which is in the end more horrifying than all the other representations of *It* nearly impossible. The fate of *It* is one which many other of King's novels suffer. King's endings have inspired much debate as they are considered unsatisfying and disappointing by literary critics and audiences alike.

2.3.3. *Inspirations and intertextuality concerning It*

People who are familiar with the Stephen King universe often encounter details in his works which relate to either his life or other works. In his book *On Writing* he attempts to describe what inspired him and why he writes the way he does. This book further fostered the idea of connected elements within different books and King's incorporation of autobiographical experiences, stories, and autobiographical details.

King's attention to detail is so complete the reader can immediately place the book in a period. For example, in *It* King mentions the president at the time, wars mentioned frequently on news broadcasts, movies played at the cinema, and the current music trends. Ben's mother refers to the presidential election (cf. 195). Almost in passing, King gives his readers the exact time frame of the novel by mentioning the president in a description of a memory, "a nightmare during one hot summer when Eisenhower was still president" (King, *It* 154). Richie, Ben and Beverly watch *The Teenage Werewolf* and *The Teenage Frankenstein* at the cinema (cf. 365). Popular musicians of the time make a brief appearance in the story, for example Buddy Holly (cf. 270; 602), Little Richard (cf. 9), Jerry Le (cf. 314) and Jimi Hendrix (cf. 603) are mentioned

in passing. Therefore, the stories are consistently a puzzle incorporating a huge amount of intertextuality.

Reading biographical works by or about King suggest he frequently makes use of his feelings, surroundings, and events. One of the most striking links in *It* is the connection between the main character, Bill, and King. King struggled to succeed with his writing at the beginning of his career, and so did Bill in the story. As Browning notes in *Stephen King on the Big Screen - Books of Blood: The Writer*, “[m]any of King’s characters [...] are writers, [...]and many are also male” (*SK BS* 171). Naturally, it is easier for a writer to describe somebody who has the same characteristics and interests as him or her; essentially, they have walked in the character’s shoes. As with King, writing serves as a coping-method for Bill Denbrough: “writing down experience becomes a way to understand it, come to terms with it and continue to live a relatively normal life. This becomes especially important when that experience happened in childhood and can only be understood through the filter of adulthood” (Browning, *SK BS* 171). Bill does not realise this for a long time, and becomes obvious when he says he does not know where his ideas come from while on the plane to Derry:

All those stories I wrote, he thinks with a stupid kind of amusement. All those novels. Derry is where they all came from; Derry was the wellspring. They came from what happened that summer, and from what happened to George the autumn before. All the interviewers that ever asked me THAT QUESTION ... I gave them the wrong answer. (224)

In the book, teachers frequently tell Bill his writing will never amount to much (King 128-130). Bill does not understand why his writing is unappreciated by the educational establishment in Maine (King 128-130). Müller addresses the issue of similarities between Bill and King’s lives, stating their writing did not conform to literary rules and expectations at the time which created an internal disconnect about their own talent (cf 20). Bill and King also share a lack of athleticism (Russel 4). While a subtle detail, Bill and George’s mother playing the piano in *It* is a reference to King’s mother (cf. Russel 2). Ben and his mother moving in with an aunt recalls the unsettled nature of King’s childhood. Russel states about King’s early life that “[t]he family moved around the country” and they “stayed with relatives, most often those on his mother’s side” (Russel2).

Especially interesting is the inspiration for the fictional town Derry. In an interview with Tony Magistrale, King shared Derry is based on the town of Bangor, Maine. A town named Derry does indeed exist in North Ireland, but it is not the Derry of his story, however, [t]here is a

Bangor in Ireland, located in the county of Derry, so [he] changed the name of the fictional town to Derry. There is a one-to-one correlation between Bangor and Derry. [...] Derry *is* Bangor.” (Magistrale *Hollywood’s SK* 4). King moved there in 1979 after discussing with his wife whether choosing Bangor or Portland would be a better place to raise their children (cf. *Hollywood’s SK* 3). He said: “I thought that *the story*, the *big* story that I wanted to write, was here” and he did not want it to be set in Portland (*Hollywood’s SK* 3). Adrian Mellon, a gay man, was murdered in *It* and the events surrounding his fictional death were details pulled from news stories he had read at the time (cf. *Hollywood’s SK* 3). King also went for walks and spoke with people to hear the stories and myths about places, it was not important if they were true or not. An element which he adopted for *It* is the following about the sewers in Bangor:

A “guy told me that the Bangor sewer system was built during the WPA and they lost track of what they were building under there. They had money from the federal government for sewers, so they built like crazy. A lot of the blueprints have now been lost, and it’s easy to get lost down there.” (Magistrale, *Hollywood’s SK* 4f)

King states that he made the decision to put all these details, including the strange sewer system, into a book (cf. *Hollywood’s SK* 4), which would be *It*. The sewer system in Derry is described by Bill’s father like that:

‘The main sewers are maybe six feet in diameter. The secondaries, from the residential areas, are three or four, I guess. Some of them might be a little bigger. And believe me when I tell you this, Billy, and you can tell your friends: you never want to go into one of those pipes [...]’ [...] ‘A dozen different town governments have built on them since 1885 or so. During the depression the WPA put in a whole secondary drain system and a tertiary sewer system; there was lots of money for public works back then. But the fellow who bossed those projects got killed in World War II, and about five years later the Water Department found out that the system blueprints were mostly gone. [...] [N]obody knows where all the damned sewers and drains go, or why (King, *It* 688f).

This is an accurate portrayal of the story he heard. Including these types of references make the story more realistic for the reader.

Another recurring element in his books, including *It*, is the outsider theme (cf. Anton 15). King built the story around this group of children. These children all outsiders before they got to know each other that fateful summer:

Stan Uris with his big Jew-boy nose, Bill Denbrough who could say nothing but ‘Hi-yo, Silver!’ without stuttering so badly that it drove you almost dogshit, Beverly Marsh with her bruises and her cigarettes rolled into the sleeve of her blouse, Ben

Hanscom who had been so big he looked like a human version of Moby Dick, and Richie Tozier with his thick glasses and his A averages and his wise mouth and his face which just begged to be pounded into new and exciting shapes. Was there a word for what they had been? Oh yes. There always was. *Le mot juste*. In this case *le mote juste* was *wimps*. (70)

Many people feel they do not belong at some point in their lives, and “[i]n *It* we identify with the group that has come together to finally destroy the horror that has been part of the town for a long time” (Russel 27). This subject of social groups and their formation appears in *Dreamcatcher* and *The Stand* (cf. Russel 27). King has some favourite themes which he returns to every so often.

There are several allusions concerning Pennywise the clown in other works, for example, the inscription “Pennywise lives” (King, *Dreamcatcher* 537) in *Dreamcatcher*. There is often some hint or a wordplay referring to a clown, transformation, or an evil being in Derry, as in King’s novels *Insomnia* and *The Dark Tower*. Also, Derry is a recurring location, either as the setting of a story or mentioned in passing, “[i]t’s a place that I keep coming back to, even [...] [in] the novel *Insomnia*.” (Magistrale, *Hollywood’s SK* 4). The small town in Maine is also in *The Tommyknockers* and *11/22/63*. An entity featured in a considerable number of works is the turtle. Although it is slightly different in terms of importance and role, recurs in the *The Dark Tower* saga, where it represents a guard whereas in *It* the being is a symbol of good and has only a minor role in the active part of the story.

One of the subtler intertextualities, something which would only strike a real fancier of King, is the car which picks Henry up like Christine, the car in the eponymous novel:

[I]t was the car he recognized first – it was the one his father always swore he would own someday, a 1958 Plymouth Fury. It was red and white and Henry knew [...] that the engine rumbling under the hood was a V-8 327. Available horsepower of 255, able to hit seventy from the git-go in just about nine seconds, gobbling hi-test through its four-barrel carb.” (King, *It* 977)

In comparison, Christine is a red Plymouth, model 1985, Christine, double painted in red and white (cf. King, *Christine* 20-36). While this is an insignificant detail in the narrative of *It*, it is just the sort of detail King fans have come to expect from the writer.

Interestingly, despite King’s popularity he is rarely taught in schools and universities (cf. Magistrale, *Why SK still matters* 353). Magistrale states that “teachers and programs will not permit [...] [students] to study King’s work for academic credit” (*Why SK still matters* 354).

However, “King matters and is contributing something of importance to the culture” (Magistrale, *Why SK still matters* 355). While critics and readers respect Stephen King for his work and achievements, his works of fiction are not yet seen as globally suitable for scholastic purposes.

2.4. Analysis of the book ‘It’

“The terror, which would not end for another twenty-eight years – if it ever did end – began, as far as I know or can tell, with a boat made from a sheet of newspaper floating down a gutter swollen with rain. “
~ Stephen King, *It*

This chapter is the groundwork for the next section and helps to create a shared understanding with respect to the novel, characters, and terms. Many concepts will be introduced which will be necessary in the analysis to follow.

2.4.1. Plot summary

Seven children meet in an abandoned space just outside their small town, Derry. They are The Losers Club. Their meeting seems predestined. And while certain members of the club feel they have a purpose, a reason for meeting, none of them would have expected it to be to fight and kill an evil creature stalking the children of Derry.

Children have been going missing in Derry and The Losers cannot help but feel they must do something. However, at some point, they all meet the Pennywise, the dancing clown. They realise he is a shape-shifting creature with the ability to target their greatest fears. They call the creature It. To lead peaceful lives, free from the ever-present threat of the monster in Derry, they make plans to hunt It down and kill it. During the fateful summer of 1958, The Losers Club learns a much about their town. Every twenty-seven years, Derry has a horrific event which takes the lives of many of the town’s inhabitants.

Through their strong bond of friendship and their imaginations they successfully stop the creature. However, in their first encounter, they only injure it. Leaving the monster to gather strength once again. The children assume it is dead, however, they make a contingency plan; they will come back and stop the monster should they discover It survived their attack.

Nearly twenty-eight years later Mike, the only one who stayed in Derry, calls for reunion after years spent observing the lives of his friends from afar and the events in town, he is sure It is back. The Losers Club suffers heavy losses as two of them die, leaving five adults. Now, that It seems to be dead, they can carry on their lives and start forgetting their disturbing past in Derry.

2.4.2. Specific terms

In this novel, and the universe Stephen King creates throughout his body of work, there are some terms which need to be clarified to create a shared understanding. Some terms, objects, and concepts appear in multiple works and some appear on in *It*. As a reader, King's special terminology may be confusing. King does not always explain his terms when he introduces them, often the explanations only occur much later in the text. Of course, this may help to create suspense, however, sometimes the reader is just left confused and with many questions.

The King Universe

This phrase describes the whole world King built: where his characters live, where his stories are set, specific entities, and motifs. This term is well known throughout the King fan base and scholars. It is referred to as a universe because there is much intertextuality in his works and recurring motifs. Every time the phrase King Universe is used the entire world which he created it what is meant.

The Losers (Club)

The seven main characters of the book form the Losers Club. Despite their coming together being rather coincidental they have a special bond from the start. They all know and realise they are different kinds of losers. This is indicated relatively early in the narrative: "What a bunch of losers they had been" (King, *It* 70), followed by a short justification why each of them is viewed as a failure in their childhood (cf. King, *It* 70). One day Richie, after out running Henry and his cronies, calls the group the Losers Club. As he, Beverly, and Ben escape from the bullies Richie exclaims "The Losers Club Gets Off A Good One!" (King, *It* 369). Furthering emphasising the way this group of children thinks about themselves is a conversation between Bill and another child where he thinks "[S]orry, the Losers' Club membership is full" (King, *It* 372). It becomes a club name; a banner under which they all muster. Throughout the book, the terms Losers and Losers Club are accepted as labels for this peculiar group of seven children including Bill Denbrough, Eddie Kaspbrak, Richie Tozier, Stan Uris, Beverly Marsh, and Mike Hanlon. Everyone uses it, the children and others with whom they interact. During their reunion they toast themselves, "To the Losers' Club of 1985", started by Richie and repeated by every

single member at the table (King, *It* 501). The characters not only identify with the term but take it as a tease which harkens back to their youth.

The Barrens

There seems to be no playground, at least none the boys favour, and so they have to look for their own amusement. The Losers lack of access to a playground does not prevent them from creating their own form of amusement park. In this case a river, stones, and the rest of what they can find in the wilderness create the framework for their games. They are used to being alone in the Barrens. Notable exceptions to this isolation are when the bullies followed them and when Mr. Nell came to look for the sewer system blockage (cf. King, *It* 332ff). Also, it is Mr. Nell who issues the ominous warning to The Losers that they should not come to the barrens alone (cf. King, *It* 335). The Losers recognise “the Barrens weren’t Never-Neverland and they couldn’t be the Wild boys for more than a few hours” (King, *It* 307). They boys had to leave the Barrens to return home to their families and daily life (cf. King, *It* 307f).

The turtle

The Turtle is an entity which appears throughout the King Universe, appearing in *It* and *The Dark Tower* series. The Turtle has a rather small role in *It*, acting solely as an advisor and guide. In Kings’ *The Dark Tower* saga, the Turtle, named Maturin (cf. King, *TDT VI*. pos. 253), is one of the twelve guards of the universe (cf. King, *TDT* pos. 768). In the third part of *The Dark Tower* series the turtle is mentioned for the first time: “The gunslinger resumed: ‘At each of the twelve lesser portals The Great Old Ones set a Guardian. [...] There was the Bear, of course, and the Fish ... the Lion ... the bat. And the Turtle – he was an important one ...’” (King, *TDT III* pos. 768). In *The Dark Tower* the turtle is described as the one “upon whose shell the world rests (King, *TDT VI* pos. 1580). A similar reference of the cosmological nature of the turtle is found in *It*, when Bill sees galaxies in the Turtle’s toe-nails (cf. King, *It* 1082).

The reader gleans very little knowledge about the turtle from the narrative of *It*: “*Before the universe there had been only two things. One was Itself and the other was the Turtle. The Turtle was a[n] [...] old thing that never came out of its shell*” (King, *It* 1034). Moreover, “*the Turtle vomited the universe out*” (King, *It* 1034). When Bill meets the Turtle, its appearance and nature are described as follows: “[I]t was a great Turtle, its shell plated with many blazing colours. Its ancient reptilian head slowly poked out of its shell [...]. The eyes of the turtle were kind. Bill thought it must be the oldest thing anyone could imagine, older by far than It, which had claimed

to be eternal” (King, *It* 1081). The turtle introduces itself and its cosmological origins to Bill, “*I’m the Turtle, son. I made the universe*” (King, *It* 1081).

References to the turtle occur frequently in *It*. The Losers frequently say the sentence “The turtle couldn’t help us” (King, *It* 46) in various situations. They dream of the turtle (cf. King, *It* 340). Even Stan’s wife, a person wholly unconnected to Derry, thinks about the mystical being (cf. King, *It* 57). None of The Losers understand the importance of these thoughts before they arrive in Derry (cf. King, *It* 46). Sometimes, the turtle is presented as the voice of reason or faith, for example when Mike thought: “[S]ome part of me which had been asleep woke up...” “What part? The watchman part, I suppose. Or maybe it was the voice of the Turtle. Yes ... I rather think it was that” (King, *It* 150). Mike assumes he hears the turtle’s voice because he stayed in Derry (cf. King, *It* 152). Coincidentally, he credits his memory of events to the same (cf. King, *It* 152). The turtle is also the one who explains at least part of what It is and why the creature is in Derry, stating It has its place and he cannot interfere (cf. King, *It* 1081).

Dogsbody

The term “dogsbody” is a colloquial appellation for henchman. The creature, It, labels his human helpers, whom he only exploits to reach his goals, dogsbodies. First, Henry Bowers, whom the monster wanted to use to kill The Losers. The incident with the librarian Michael Hanlon was first time in which the label appears: “*It was true that Its dogsbody hadn’t been able to kill the librarian*” (King, *It* 1042). Although it is not explicitly mentioned the reader can infer from the context that Henry is referred to in this case. The second occurrence of the word concerns Beverly’s husband, Tom Rogan. In contrast to Henry, Tom is not only called a dogsbody but “the dogsbody husband” (King, *It* 1043). The difference in designation almost seems derogatory with respect to Tom. Using the term “dogsbody” dehumanizes the people the monster is controlling. This highlights the fact that It sees the individuals he uses as tools and not as people.

Ritual of Chüd

The Ritual of Chüd is a way to fight the evil which the boys found during their research session in the library (King, *It* 690f). The explanation of fighting an “evil magic being” (cf. King, *It* 691), or *taelus*, which the boys find is: “[i]f you were a Himalayan holy-man, you tracked the *taelus*. The *taelus* stuck its tongue out. You stuck out yours. You and it overlapped tongues and then you both bit in all the way so you were sort of stapled together, eye to eye” (King, *It* 691).

Then both the evil being and the hunter start telling jokes (cf. King, *It* 691). Whoever laughs first loses the battle (cf. King, *It* 692). The result of which is either the monster killing and eating the human or the creature going away for a long time (cf. King, *It* 692). The children realise that this might work through telepathy (cf. King, *It* 692).

In the two encounters with the creature, the Ritual of Chüd occurs, but not exactly as described in the library. The focus was more on the telepathic communication, primarily between the monster and Bill in the childhood narrative and between the monster and Bill and Richie when The Losers return to Derry. The children's encounter with the monster is described as follows: "Bill was staring up at it, his blue eyes fixed on its inhumane orange ones, eyes from which that awful corpse-light spilled. Stan stopped, understanding that the Ritual of Chüd – whatever that was – had begun" (King, *It* 1079). Bill is the one who telepathically communicates with the monster and weakens it. The physical act of biting into the monster's tongue does not happen, rather it is a metaphor for telepathic communication, which Bill understands during the fight: "Suppose they had bitten deep into each other's tongues, not physically but mentally, spiritually?" (King, *It* 1084). Then "Bill bit in – not with his teeth, but with the teeth in his mind" (King, *It* 1084).

In the second battle with It, Bill again "reached for the tongue of Its mind" (King, *It* 1089) and "concentrated all of his being on seizing Its tongue ... *and missed the grip*" (King, *It* 1089f). Therefore, Richie intervened (cf. King, *It* 1091) and thought: "I'VE GOT ITS TONGUE! I THINK BILL MISSED IT SOMEHOW BUT WHILE IT WAS DISTRACTED I GOT" it (King, *It* 1091). The other Losers concentrated on causing external damage while the telepathic battle was happening (cf. King, *It* 1095). The Losers found they could injure the creature: "*We could hurt It while It's still occupied with Richie!*" (King, *It* 1095). It would seem there is a physical component to the ritual which was not outlined in the books The Losers found. It is not explicitly stated which actions belonged to the ritual. The explanation the turtle gives to Bill bears out the chaotic nature of the ritual:

[Y]ou already know. [T]here is only Chüd. [A]nd your friends. [...] [S]on, you've got to thrust your fists against the posts and still insist you see the ghosts ... that's all I can tell you. [O]nce you get into cosmological shit like this, you got to throw away the instruction manual (King, *It* 1082)

However, it seems like King did not know how to explain everything, and so he attempts to explain this through the turtle. The Clubs' cohesion and their belief in that they can kill It are important aspects of the ritual.

When the Losers' Club returns to Derry as adults, It reveals the turtle died (cf. King, *It* 1089). For the reader this is sad and strange, especially after learning its timeless nature at the time of their first encounter with the monster. The death is described by It as deeply pathetic and miserable: "[T]he old idiot puked inside his shell and choked to death on a galaxy or two. [V]ery sad, [...] but also quite bizarre" (King, *It* 1089). The audience does not know if turtle truly dies. However, the reader is likely to assume the death is real because the turtle has stopped communicating with The Losers.

Silver

Bill's bike Silver a large symbolic role in the novel. When the eleven-year-old boy first sees the bike in the shop window he could not have known how important it would be. Bill's first sight of the bike is memorable: "*Bill had seen it in the window of the Bike and Cycle Shoppe down on Center Street. It leaned gloomily on its kickstand, bigger than the biggest of the others on display, dull where they were shiny, straight in places where the others were curved, bent in places where the others were straight*" (King, *It* 226). Bill named the bike "Silver", "after the Lone Ranger's horse" (King, *It* 225f). The bike is described as unattractive, "Silver never would have won any beauty-contests anyway. His one virtue was that he could go like a blue streak" (King, *It* 623). Bill decided to buy it with his savings (cf. King, *It* 226). It did not look like the best bike but Eddie "*had shown Bill how to get Silver in shape*" (King, *It* 227).

Bill uses Silver to get Eddie's medicine when he his aspirator was empty in the Barrens (cf. King, *It* 231fff). The bike saves Bill and Richie at the Neibolt house (cf. King, *It* 390-394) however it does more than facilitate a quick escape, it helps snap Richie from his dazed state after encountering the monster (cf. King, *It* 390-394). Bill uses silver to save his wife in a similar fashion after their final encounter with the creature (cf. King, *It* 1160ff). Tresca refers to the bicycle as the magical wheel and these scenes are the "ultimate expression" of it (cf. Tresca 181). King titles both scenes "Bill Denbrough Beats the Devil" in the narrative structure of the story (King, *It* 223; 1155). Bill feels powerful with Silver, the bicycle into which he poured time, effort, and love; to make something perfect. Silver makes him believe in himself.

Not only does Silver make him feel powerful but it also helps with his stutter and enables him to forget his problems for a while (cf. King, *It* 235). When riding the bike, "[i]t was all behind him [...]: his stutter, his dad's blank hurt eyes [...], the terrible sight of dust on the closed piano cover upstairs – dusty because his mother didn't play anymore. [...] George going out into the rain, [...] [Georges] body wrapped in a bloodstained quilt" (King, *It* 235). In his mind, he "was the Lone Ranger, he was John Wayne, he was Bo Diddley, he was anybody he wanted to be

and nobody who cried and got scared and wanted his [...] mother” (King, *It* 235). When saying “*Hi-yo Silver AWAYYY!*” (King, *It* 234), “[t]he words came out deeper than his normal speaking voice – it was almost the voice of the man he would become” (King, *It* 234), which enabled him to say it without a stutter.

As an adult, Bill coincidentally find the bicycle in a second-hand shop (cf. King, *It* 615f). He purchases it and reassembles it (cf. King, *It* 618-624). He originally repurchased the bicycle for sentimental reasons. He never even intended to ride it again (cf. King, *It* 621). However, it helps him revive Audra from her catatonic state at the end of the story (cf. King, *It* 1163).

Silver, the bike, is one of the few vehicles, which is not seen as evil and destructive in King’s novels (Tresca, 172). Quite the contrary, bicycles are “symbols of the innocence and imaginative magic of childhood” (Tresca 172). Tresca states if bicycles appear in King’s work they are important (cf. 172). In King’s novel bikes are presented “largely as the child’s method of navigating the world” (Tresca 172). When Bill purchases Silver he starts to cycle everywhere he wished to go. In *It* “the bicycle becomes a magical object imbued with the pure power of childhood innocence. Silver, [...] is just such an object. Silver is key to helping Bill and the rest of the Losers Club [...] to escape [...]” (Tresca 179). While Bill feels powerful with Silver the reader recognises Bill’s innocence. The innocence is almost as magical for the reader in this tale of misery and death as the bike is powerful for Bill.

Bill’s Mantra

In the novel one sentence is repeated continually, sometimes only in part: “He thrusts his fists against the post and still insists he sees the ghost” (King, *It* 116). The phrase comes from the science fiction novel *Donovan’s Brain* by Curt Siodmak. In this 1942 book, Dr. Patrick Cory, a well-to-do physician is controlled telepathically by the brain of W.H. Donovan, a wealthy and paranoid business magnate involved in illegal activities. To resist the telepathic commands he repeats the rhyme. The reader sees Bill use this mantra for the first time when he tries to repurchase Silver as an adult from “Secondhand Rose, Secondhand Clothes” (King, *It* 614). While stuttering during the emotionally charged transaction the sentence emerges in his mind (cf. King, *It* 615ff). At first, neither the audience nor Bill know why this sentence is in his thoughts. Bill only notices later, when remembering his mother and that this was supposed to help him fight the stutter:

[I]t rose in his mind again, strange, unbidden, and powerful: *He thrusts his fists against the post and still insists he sees the ghosts*. But this time the voice, his voice, was followed by his mother's voice, saying: *Try again Billy. You almost had it that time*. [...] He shook his head. *I couldn't say that without stuttering even now*". (King, *It* 623).

The mantra is more than a stress reliever for Bill. Sadly, when he was younger, he saw this sentence to reclaim the love of his mother from her perpetual mourning. This scene engenders great sympathy for Bill, especially when it is discovered he shares this hope with no one:

Sometimes, [...] he would [...] think: *He thrusts his fists against the posts and still insists he sees the ghosts*. He thought of that more and more since Georgie had died, although his mother had taught him the phrase two years before. It had taken on a talismanic cast in his mind: the day he could walk up to his mother and simply speak that phrase without tripping or stuttering, looking her right in the eye as he spoke it, the coldness would break apart; her eyes would light up and she would hug him and say, 'Wonderful, Billy! What a good boy! [...]' He had of course, told this to no one. (King, *It* 689)

This fantasy was buried deep in his heart. He told no one and he never gave up the belief that this achievement would wake his parents from their grief, more specifically, his mother (cf. King, 689f). Later, he understands that his "*folks were wrong! They took [the death of Georgie] out on [him] and that was wrong*" (King, *It* 1068). When this realization hits Bill the reader has a similar reaction to Bill having to use the mantra, it is sad and disheartening for a child to be treated like this.

In the first battle Bill repeats this sentence in his mind; it serves to make him stronger and focuses his concentration (cf. King, *It* 1067fff). Bill believes in the power of his mantra and is able to use it as a weapon during his telepathic battle with the creature:

(against the posts) - stop that why do you say that [...]
and still insists he sees the ghosts! - stop it!
[...]
Don't like that do you?
And thinking: *If I could only say it out loud, say it without stuttering, I could break this illusion* (King, *It* 1081)

The mantra is, therefore, one of the symbols which holds the most power for Bill Denbrough.

2.4.3. *Structure & narration*

The novel has always been an experimental form of storytelling. Early novels in English experimented in form, from the epistolary format *Joseph Andrews* and *Pamela* to third person narration in Radcliffe's novels, the way in which a story is told shifted over time. The form is so versatile; it gives authors an opportunity to give voice to a full range of thought and feeling. Whether it is the inclusion of romantic poetry shared between lovers, as in Byatt's *Possession*; the use of historical facts interspersed through the text like Ackroyd's *The Limehouse Golem*; or, Zusak's use of flashbacks in *The Book Thief*, authors are still experimenting with the best way to tell a story and engage readers.

Stephen King's novel, *It*, is a long and complex tale in which he employs multiple narrative devices to fully flesh out the story. King chronicles events as they are happening in the novel's present, however, he also uses flashbacks, diary entries, and historical events are a few of the narrative techniques he uses to weave this supernatural tale. According to Müller, King's novels typically include monologues, through new lines, brackets, italics or no capitalization a second entity is introduced to the story (cf. 149). King once had the idea of writing the thoughts of his protagonists in italics to achieve depth in terms of their feelings, since that moment, he uses this technique frequently (cf. Anton 36). King uses italics to represent the turtle in *It*.

King's use of non-linear narrative structures means the story does not unfold in one straight line. As a result, time periods and places change often even within a single chapter. King employs this technique from the very first page of *It*. George is not only playing with the boat but he is building the boat with Bill at the same time (cf. King, *It* 3-16). King layers the past and present in the narrative to create an interlocking story with two climatic endings occurring at the same time, the adulthood and childhood encounters with the monster happen simultaneously in the book. The chapter "The Ritual of Chüd" (King, *It* 1078), switches between the adult and child versions of the characters as they fight the monster.

A key element in the narrative is the unauthorized town history written by Mike Hanlon, which the narrator states is more of a diary. A third person narrator explains the diary entries and provides context to the reader:

The segment below and all other Interlude segments are drawn from 'Derry: An Unauthorized Town History,' by Michael Hanlon. This is an unpublished set of notes and accompanying fragments of manuscript (which read almost like diary entries) found in the Derry Public Library vault. The title given is the one written on the cover of the loose-leaf binder in which these notes were kept prior to their appearance here. The author, however, refers to the work several times within his own notes as 'Derry: A Look

Through Hell's Back Door. 'One supposes the thought of popular publication had done more than cross Mr Hanlon's mind (King, *It* 149).

This is the only instance where the reader is provided any information regarding the content of the italicized text. For the rest of the novel the reader is left to infer based on the content and context the nature of the text, whether it is a historical point, a flashback, a thought passing through a character's mind, the turtle, or any other narrative device. King does use some variations in italicized font or capitals to assist the reader in understanding the events of the novel. It is striking how King juggles his various typeface choices: font size, italicisation, and capital letters are inserted as needed to shift attention and indicate importance. For instance, italics are mostly used when the section is a memory, a thought, or an additional entity, like the Turtle and It. There are whole sections in which the font stays the same and then there are passages in which it is frequently changed.

King ends a chapter with an unfinished sentence which he completes in the following chapter. He achieves a seamless transition using this framing technique despite a complete change of the scene. For example, "The door opened and Eddie" is the end of subchapter 9, which continues in subchapter 10 with "saw Stan and Richie just coming out" (King, *It* 984). Sometimes, these half sentences mean not only a change in scene but also a change in time, in the previous example the scene changes from adult Eddie to the summer of 1958. King also uses this narrative device to create false expectations on the reader's part. The most striking instance is the following scene: "Her thoughts broke off as she realized that Eddie" going on "comes to her first" (King, *It* 1109). The reader hopes that Eddie might still be alive but then the chapter ends.

King uses a variety of literary devices and forms to weave a page turning, best-selling tale of supernatural evil which keeps readers riveted on every word. His manipulation of these techniques shows he is a true master of the craft.

2.4.4. Themes

Since Stephen King is primarily a writer of horror-related stories, the motif of fear is omnipresent. He states that he "wants the reader to be scared of his work" (Russel, 21). In his work *It*, this is closely linked to transformation, childhood, and belief. In this chapter, special attention will be given to the motif of the greatest fear, and the transformation of the creature, which is related to fear.

The motif of the greatest fear

Fear is a primal emotion. Russel states that reading horror fiction is “an experience of the fear of death without dying”, so, “[r]eaders can see how brave they are without actually risking [their] lives” (Russel 21). Writers have manipulated readers fears for centuries. From the monster Grendel in *Beowulf*, one of the earliest recorded English epics, to the zombies featured in the modern comic book series *The Walking Dead*, the reading public has always devoured horror. Writers explore our rational and irrational fears, from Radcliffe’s innocent women who find themselves in the clutches of unscrupulous men to Jackson’s strange, magical, and lethal rituals in *The Lottery* and *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*. Authors access their readers’ fears in different ways, some choose to use supernatural monsters while others decide on a more psychological approach. Comprehending and examining King’s approach to horror requires understanding how other authors use similar themes.

While the *Harry Potter* series of books is not typically considered part of the horror genre, J. K. Rowling does access many of the same themes throughout her stories. The books take a dark turn in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. A book which not only looks at the consequences of secrets, lies, murder, and revenge, she introduces the true fear to her young readers through the dementors. Unlike horror writers, Rowling gives her intrepid heroes the ability to work through their terrifying experiences. Harry and his fellow students learn about Boggarts in their Defence Against Dark Arts Class. Hermione explains to the class, and therefore, to the reader: “It’s a shape-shifter [...] [and] [i]t can take the shape of whatever it thinks will frighten you the most” (Rowling, 133). It is interesting to note that, like It, nobody knows what a Boggart looks like (cf. Rowling, 133). The true form of It is a mystery until the moment people invade the creature’s lair, where it does not change its form (cf. King, *It* 1043). It might be assumed a Boggart has an initial form but it is not known (cf. Rowling, 133). Professor Lupin further elaborates, a Boggart “does not yet know what will frighten the person on the other side of the door [...] [but] he will become immediately whatever each of us fears most” (Rowling, 133).

There is a significant difference between Boggarts and the creature It. Boggarts are easy to chase away and are generally considered harmless, hence their inclusion on a school curriculum. The person in front of a Boggart merely imagines something funny and applies the spell “Riddikulus!” (Rowling, 134). There is a slight parallel to the Losers Club. The Losers realise the creature’s various forms are not real and if they pretend to be able to fight it they can. The Losers are able to fight the monster by downplaying its abilities and telling themselves

the creature is beatable: “Just an eye! Just a fucking eye! (King, *It* 1054). While there is a correspondence between the two stories in that a group of children learns to defeat some form of monstrous entity, it is slight. The larger concurrence is the shapeshifting to fit a target’s greatest fear.

There is much to fear in the book *1984* by George Orwell. The fear of rats is Winston’s greatest fear (cf. Orwell, pos. 4353). Winston is Orwell’s “everyman”; it is through him the reader fully comprehends the extent of the totalitarian world in which he lives. The novel culminates in Winston’s re-education in Room 101, where a cage filled with live rats is fitted to his face (Orwell 4380ff). Room 101, in the Ministry of Love, contains each person’s worst fear, perfectly calibrated to break down resistance (cf. Orwell pos. 4352). The exclamation: “Of all horrors in the world – a rat!” (Orwell, pos. 2227) says it all. O’ Brien, an agent of the Thought Police, explains: “The worst thing in the world [...] varies individual to individual” (Orwell, pos. 4353). In *1984* the following examples of possible greatest fears were given: “It may be buried alive, or death by fire, or by drowning, or by impalement, or fifty other deaths. There are cases where it is some quite trivial thing, not even fatal” (Orwell, pos. 4353). For *It* non-fatal fears are also dangerous. The parallel between the two stories is quite clear even if the reason for wielding peoples’ fears against them is different. Both *It* and the Thought Police need to follow rules of the form, a rat can never be anything except a rat, but *It* still has supernatural abilities which transcend the form taken. This is best illustrated through murders the creature commits as a clown and spider, two things which would generally be considered benign. In *1984*, Room 101 houses “the worst thing in the world” (Orwell pos. 4364) for everyone. This innocuous and bland room is comparable to the creature from King’s *It*. The creature and the Thought Police use fear as a weapon against chosen targets.

The ways in which Rowling, Orwell, and King incorporate the motif of fear in their stories varies. They all have a transformational entity which targets an individual’s greatest phobia. The ever-changing nature of all these entities enhances the suspense in the story for the reader.

The motif of transformation: It - a hybrid of horror

Stephen King wanted to create a monster which was a combination of popular monsters (cf. Anderson 8) and the biggest fears at the time of his writing the novel: It is the “apotheosis of all monsters” (King, *It* 6). Further in the story King offers a more detailed description: “an evil magic being that could read your mind and then assume the shape of the thing you [are] most

afraid of” (King, *It* 691). It morphs into whatever suits the situation best. This helps the It to reach its’ goals. In the following section, Its’ transformation will be analysed in greater detail.

Throughout the book, It transforms into various creatures. The Mummy, Dracula, the Teenage Werewolf, and Frankenstein’s monster are only a few of them. These monsters are, especially at the time of the book’s publication, known by most people through their corresponding films. As demonstrated in later analysis concerning the new screen adaption, the kind of monsters which are most feared greatly depends on the time. People are often scared by what they see in movies, because they have a concrete image of what they fear. As is often mentioned in the book, people might fear something they experienced in their early childhood. One illustration for an unconscious childhood memory is an infant Mike Hanlon being pecked by a crow in his crib (cf. King, *It* 1034), which causes It to appear as a huge bird when it first approaches him. In addition to the traditional monsters, It also appears as a leprous indigent, referred to as “hobo” in the novel. Most of the time, the monster transforms itself into a frightening representation of the deep-seated fear pulled directly from the mind of the targeted person. For instance, the leper, personifies a combination of illnesses, which is perfectly tailored to Eddie’s hypochondriac nature. It “only mirrors, [...] throwing back at the terrified viewer the worst thing in his or her own mind” (King, *It* 1042). Consequently, the creature is only able to scare somebody if his or her thoughts are filled with fear and sorrow. Bill, who seems to be the bravest of The Losers, is haunted by the memory of his dead brother, Georgie. People are rarely completely fearless, and this is what It uses against people.

Furthermore, It has the ability to slip inside people and control them. The best example of this is the episode with Beverly’s father: “Her father was gone. And suddenly Beverly understood that she was alone in the apartment with It [...] It was here, working through him [...] you let It in” (King *It* 929fff). As Beverly correctly realises, the person who is possessed by It must let the entity inside. King does not explicitly state how this happens. However, one can assume, there is already anger within the person, and so It stokes the emotion further. It possibly uses information gathered from the minds of others. For example, when the monster tells Mr. Marsh where Beverly has been and with whom. While this seems an unpredictable method, the monster generally influences people, especially Mr. Marsh, to do what it wants.

The ability to possess others and reflect deeply held fears are not the monster’s only abilities. The entity is also capable of copying people to frighten and chase its chosen victims or to be convincingly friendly. This is depicted when, as an adult in the mini-series, Ben goes to Beverly’s hotel room to fetch something and, suddenly, Pennywise takes her form and is in the

room with him. Ben only realises he is not interacting with Beverly when part of her shifts into the iconic clown.

The manipulative abilities of the monster are myriad. The entity can imitate the dead. This is easily discernible in the appearance of the long-dead Victor Criss and Belch Huggins to the grown-up Henry. In these cases, probably to calm Henry down and make him trust It: “Henry Bowers began to hear voices [...], - the voices of his old friends, [...] and another voice ... one he did not dare to name. Victor Criss spoke from the moon first. [...] Then Belch Huggins spoke” (King, *It* 626). There are few signs this shocked Henry extremely, like when he eventually screamed when “the moon itself changed and became the face of the clown” (King, *It* 631). Later, when the entity is under the bed in form of Victor, Henry is described to be “calm and unafraid” (King, *It* 632). Another scene in which a similar situation is depicted is when “the driver turned to look at him. It was Belch Huggins. His face was hanging ruin. One of his eyes was gone, and a rotted hole in one parchment cheek revealed blackened teeth. Perched on Belch’s head was the [...] baseball cap he had been wearing the day he died.” (King, *It* 977). Of course, most people are intelligent enough to realise that this person cannot be there if he or she has already been dead for some time. So too does Henry: “‘How you doin, Belch?’ Henry heard himself say. It was stupid, [...] Belch couldn’t be here, dead people couldn’t drive cars [...] Belch didn’t reply” (King, *It* 978). From these scenes one can conclude if the monster wants something from a person, it calms them down by transforming into somebody he or she knows to reassure them. Although Henry knows his friends died twenty-seven years ago, he still talks to It while the entity takes on these forms as if it were perfectly normal. Despite this seeming rationality, readers and viewers cannot disregard Henry’s residence in an institution for the mentally ill. However, King never explicitly states Henry’s degree of mental illness and this omission leaves readers uncertain.

It is not always certain, at least not from the start, which of these manipulative powers the monster is using. For instance, when adult Beverly mistakes Mrs. Kersh’s doorbell for her father’s. Upon answering the door, the elderly woman slowly morphs through disgusting form as eventually ending as Pennywise, the clown. The text is not explicit and leaves the reader wondering, she was a “tall woman in her late seventies. Her hair was long and gorgeous, [...] [b]ehind her rimless spectacles were eyes as blue as the water [...]. She wore a purple dress of watered silk. [...] Her wrinkled face was kind.” (King, *It* 579). Beverly did not notice the transformation for some time and, when she does take note, is uncomfortable with the woman’s appearance: “The tea looked dark, muddy. [...] Her teeth were very bad [,] [...] the women’s

eyes had changed, too. [...] [H]er dress had also changed” (King, *It* 583). The story is not explicit as to whether Mrs. Kersh was alive before the entity possessed her. However, the reader can logically conclude the elderly woman died some time ago as Beverly notices the boards nailed up along the entire house, demonstrating the deserted and neglected properties of the building (cf. King, *It* 587). It cannot be said for certain whether a Mrs. Kersh ever existed; nor, if she lived in this place after Beverly’s father.

However, most of the time, more particularly when the entity targets a person and appears before him or her, It can be seen as Pennywise the Dancing Clown. While clowns exist, ostensibly, to make people happy and laugh, they can also be quite scary. Coulrophobia, the fear of clowns, is quite common. The fact that It first appears as a clown to be more appealing and to seem harmless, and then switching to a more dangerous mode is antagonistic and thus paradox. The monster’s most common prey are children. The clown form is attractive bait as children, generally, love clowns (cf. King, *It* 1044) and active and fanciful environs, circuses and fairs. This is explicit when Pennywise lures unsuspecting children into his trap: “Can you smell the circus? [...] And [do you want] a balloon?” (King, *It* 14). With such alluring descriptions It drags them nearer and nearer before eventually and suddenly springing the trap.

Interestingly, It does not always change forms into what the person fears most. Sometimes Pennywise is the ideal incarnation, especially with most of the young children. However, sometimes the monster is something else first, then changes into the clown. Sometimes, only a partial transformation is required, for example, the leper in the clown suit (cf. King, *It* 323). King does not state explicitly why the monster chooses to adopt various forms with some people in the first place. One assumes a connection with a later event in the novel, when the main characters are adults. Children’s fears are not as complex as adults’ and the young ones are easily lured: “The fears of the children were simpler and usually more powerful. The fears of children could often be summoned up in a single face...and if bait were needed, why, what child did not love a clown?” (King, *It* 1044). This suggests it is probably easier for the monster to frighten children rather than adults.

Obviously, there are differences in fears between various age groups; teenagers are afraid of different things from toddlers. Throughout the book the monster shows itself to small children, between three and seven years old, as far as the reader knows, as the clown only. This might be because the fear in their heads does not have a discernible shape yet, and so, luring is more effective than scaring them. This ties perfectly into the fact that children often do not know what they fear; they just know they are scared. It can be assumed fear as a motivating force

applies to older children from about eight or nine years onwards. However, older children and teenagers, who watch horror films and spend their time in different ways, can readily imagine what they fear in much greater and complex detail. One assumes this is the reason why the monster starts in a form, such as a movie monster, when meeting the soon-to-be-teenagers.

Now, the question arises as to why the monster usually changes back to its manifestation as Pennywise or has some clownish feature. As Bill, Ben and Richie postulate, “[i]t always leaves a trademark (King, *It* 733). Obviously, if the Losers had no opportunity to determine they were seeing the same creature, which they eventually identified as a clown, they would, presumably, neither have talked about it extensively nor begun to piece it together. The clown appearance is, therefore, necessary to the progress of the story. They soon discover the following: “*It* had some real shape[.] [...] To see the shape was to see the secret. [...] [P]ower, like *It*, [is] a shape-changer” (King, *It* 900). When telling each other their stories of the terrifying encounters, they immediately realise the monster adopted a different shape with each of them, but the clown was always present at the core of the apparition. It is unlikely the children would have discovered and connected the occurrences without the clown and, therefore, the entire plot would not have worked. Moreover, as Pennywise the clown, which is a human form, the monster can sneak into places easily. It might be a bit unusual to find a clown walking around, except on fair grounds, but it does not seem improbable to people. This becomes especially clear when young Mike shows The Losers his father’s Derry photo album, in which the clown is in many of the pictures, even those dating back to the mid-seventeen-hundreds (cf. King, *It* 734ff). Further evidence for the lack of suspicion concerning the clown is given when Mike asks people twenty-seven years later what they know about Derry and many of them remember a clown being present at certain incidents. It wants recognition. It wants eternalization.

Sometimes, the monster uses people and refers to them as “dogsbodys” (King, *It* 1043) and lets them execute what it planned but cannot do or does not want to do itself. For example, it wants Henry, the bully, to kill the Losers with the words “[y]ou have to go back, Henry. You have to go back and finish the job. You have to go back to Derry and kill them all. For Me” (King, *It* 631). Tom, Beverly’s husband, is manipulated into bringing Audra to the monster’s lair (cf. King, *It* 1043). It is important to note these individuals were previously angry with the intended victims. This means the monster can only manipulate and inspire people when the basic emotions already exist. The entity is not powerful enough to change people’s previously existing feelings. Otherwise, the monster would have just possessed one of The Losers and had

them kill each other at the outset of the novel. This would take more supernatural power than It has.

While readers and viewers “see” the monster in various forms, the monster cannot be seen in its true form. As explained in the story, the human mind is not capable of It’s real manifestation and the mind shows what is closest to that (cf. King, *It* 1076). In a conversation with Bill, the entity says: “You think you see Me? You see only what your mind will allow” (King, *It* 1080). It is highly strange when the monster appears as a spider-like creature. Thinking of the rest of the book, which is highly complex and extremely imaginative, this almost upsetting. While readers of horror stories know something will happen, based on genre tropes, (cf. Russel 21), they are never certain what form the horror will take, which makes any suspense tactic within the genre successful, even for the most avid of readers. King builds the suspense throughout the story and readers expect the encounter to be odd and particularly horrifying. There is a slight attempt to explain why, implying it is not a spider but the closest the human mind could possibly come to the monster’s form and, therefore, what they see (cf. King, *It* 1076). This is not a satisfying explanation. Its real appearance remains a mystery. In the story, it just says that “It did not dress when It was at home” (King, *It* 1043). Thus, the reader must accept the shape cannot be seen and, hence, not be described.

Although the monster seems to be afraid of the children because they have strong bonds with each other and “extraordinarily imaginative minds” (King, *It* 1044). They are, therefore, hard to fight. It is unclear why it did not kill them in the first place when it appeared to every individual separately. In general, there is no discernible pattern when the monster decides who to kill instantly and who it wishes to frighten, at least for the moment. It is, however, not stated, if the children the monster lured saw it before they died. It can be assumed they did not because in the situations they were all described as greatly surprised. This is another element of fear which It uses often: surprise. The sudden change from a friendly, happy clown to a monster with razor-sharp teeth means children will not respond as they are mostly shocked and, therefore, numbed, which is deadly for them. This is shown best with the murders of the young children. Despite using this technique, the monster later admits to itself “[i]t did not want to change or surprise. It did not want new things, ever. It wanted only to eat and sleep and dream and eat again” (King, *It* 1035). This depicts routine of the monster, the various life phases from hibernation to wake-and-eating-phase. The monster wants to do what it is best at in an easy way.

To pursue this cycle, these tactics and transformations are necessary to catch what It needs to feed. Interestingly, after trapping and capturing, the creature almost never eats an entire human being. Most of the time they are just terribly mutilated. So, it feeds not only on the bodies themselves and fear but it also lives on pain and suffering. The monster does not differentiate between good and bad people when choosing. The entity attacks innocent toddlers and bullies equally. The only recognisable difference is the degree of torture before the monster finally kills the prey. It is described in the book as if the very young ones, Georgie and Edward Cowan, vanish and are murdered rather quickly, while Patrick Hockstetter, who is psychotic and a murderer (cf. King, *It* 864fff), is tormented most abhorrently before his death:

Patrick opened the refrigerator door on his own death. [...] [H]e was simply puzzled [...]. [H]e realized that this was some weird kind of a flying leech. [...] Patrick began to scream and beat at the thing on his arm. [...] Blood – his blood – sprayed [...]. [...] [H]is own terror seemed real enough. [...] He didn't want to die [...]. [It] began to drag him away toward the Barrens. [...] [He] lost consciousness. He awoke only once: when, in some dark, smelly, drippy hell where no light shone, no light at all, It began to feed. (King, *It* 852fff)

Further, from the narrative perspective unnecessary or unimportant characters killed quickly. Alternatively, King just did not focus on describing these situations in detail, such as the one with guard in Juniper Hill: “Standing by Bowers was a thing in a clown suit. [...] But its head was not that of a man or a clown; it was the head of a Doberman pinscher, the only animal [...] of which John Koontz was frightened.” (King, *It* 635). Of course, the monster also wants to harm those who want to harm it, the Losers in particular: “And when it woke It would call them back, yes, back, because fear was fertile, its child was rage, and rage cried for revenge” (King, *It* 1045). They had hurt it (cf. King, *It* 1044) and now the monster wants revenge. As Anderson states, It might “enjoy [...] terrorizing, mutilating, killing and devouring” (112). If it just wanted to kill and feed from them, many of its’ actions would not have been necessary. The monster wants to torture its victims. In a conversation with Bill the entity says: “[L]et us talk while we still can. [...] [W]ait until you break through to where I am! [...] [W]ait for the deadlights! [Y]ou’ll look and you’ll go mad...but you’ll live...and live... and live...inside them...inside Me...” (King, *It* 1083). Throughout the book, King continuously implies the first scares its victims, tortures them more, and then takes their souls to live on, as stated above. The creature incorporates those same souls into its very being. This perspective can be argued when people hear voices of the missing children from the drains. For example, when Beverly is in the bathroom and hears a “whispering out of the drain: ‘Help me...’ [...]. It was a voice [...] of a very young child [...]. [...] ‘We all want to meet you Beverly...’ [...]. ‘I’m Matthew...I’m

Betty...I'm Veronica... we're down here... we're down here with the clown... [...] we float, we change..." (King, *It* 403ff). At the beginning it is not clear if the creature merely imitates the children's voices but it later becomes apparent, as It explains later to Bill, they live on inside the entity.

Concerning the entity's near-original form, the spidery monster, there is one particularly interesting detail. In comparison to the various manifestations outside the lair, which were almost all male or gender-neutral, except when the monster takes form of specific people, this form seems to be female. This is in direct contradiction to when It introduces itself as Mr. Gray to Georgie, and consequently defining itself as a male being: "I will introduce myself. I, Georgie, am Mr Bob Gray, also known as Pennywise the Dancing Clown" (King, *It* 14). By naming the horrible thing "It", the children summarise its' mutability and simultaneous genderless and gendered existence. Stan (cf. King, *It* 1077) and Audra realized the maternity deep down under Derry immediately, his discovery is quite subtle whereas hers immediately catches the reader's eye when thinking: "OH DEAR JESUS IT IS FEMALE" (King, *It* 1043). The characters assume the creature is female due to the egg-sack and eggs in its lair. Considering the fact creatures exist in which the male gives birth, for example seahorses, the question arises if one can assume, from an egg-sack, whether the monster is female.

This entity is a shape-shifting creature whose being cannot be precisely defined. The manipulative strategies it uses, including various kinds of transformations, are a large and complex part of the narrative. The instability and mutability of the monster's appearance and abilities continually surprise reader.

Motif of belief, fantasy and imagination

Imagination is a common theme for Stephen King and he explores it in many of his novels and short stories. More specifically, King focuses his attention on the imaginations of children, especially in *It*. For King, imagination is linked to fantasy and belief, particularly in the novel *It*. King states in *Danse Macabre* that believing something is stored information, and when logic and rationality take over in later years the belief or fantasy becomes smaller (cf. King, *Danse Macabre* 735). Belief includes opening yourself up to potential situations (cf. Russel 3). In the novel, The Losers think about whether something is real rather than discounting it as a delusion. This is evident when Richie tells Bills: "either we imagined that or it was magic, and I gotta tell you, man, I don't think we just imagined it" (King, *It* 375). It would be easier to

discount the entire incident as a figment of their imaginations but the children soldier onwards to save Derry and themselves.

Horror is successful when the characters and the audience believe in the monster (cf. Russel 3). King plays with this belief, not only must the audience believe in the monster but the victims must also believe: "I can take care of them if they only half-believe" (King, *It* 634). It is shown throughout the book that the adults in Derry do not believe, do not care, and often look away. Adults cannot see the horror in front of them, for instance, the blood in the sink that Al Marsh does not see (cf. King, *It* 405) and the many instances when the clown appears in front of adults. This confuses The Losers so much that Stan eventually must ask Bill "Can any grownups at all see It, do you think, Bill?" (King, *It* 876). Bill answers he does not know but he thinks there are some who might (cf. King, *It* 876). Thus, the reader assumes "It protects itself by the simple fact that, as the children grow into adults, they become either incapable of faith or crippled by a sort of spiritual and imaginative arthritis" (cf. King, *It* 916). Despite this, Bill is right that some adults can see It, the Losers themselves are the proof for that years later.

While The Losers still believe in the monster, as an adult, Bill "is concerned that the Losers Club will not be able to defeat Pennywise as adults, because he believes the only way they were able to defeat the creature before was through their innocent faith in the magic power of childhood fantasy" (Tresca, 181). Bill states: We "wished our way out [...] I'm not sure that grownups can do that" (King, *It* 957). Nevertheless, the audience does not know if the adult Losers Club seeing It is an exception because the monster called them back (cf. King, *It* 1089), or if it has to do with their belief and imaginative capabilities. Richie even thinks after their meal in the restaurant that what happened "had been a group hallucination brought on by all the spooky shit they had been talking about. The best proof was that Rose had seen nothing at all" (King, *It* 588). Although he remembers Beverly's parents seeing nothing of the blood as they were children, he tells himself that now it is different because they are adults, which was not logical at all (cf. King, *It* 588). The shift belief in monsters as a child to the more adult explanations of delusion and hallucination marks the end of innocence for these characters.

In the story, it is vital for the children to use their "own intelligence and imagination" (Carter par.12). This includes applying their knowledge to defeat the monster, for instance, when the children theorize about how a silver bullet can kill a werewolf and It morphed into a werewolf should be able to kill it with silver of some sort (cf. King, *It* 863-875). They tested their theory and found it worked: "The silver slugs had worked because the seven of them had been unified in their belief that they would" (King, *It* 899). Belief joined with "their own inner strength" is

a weapon against the monster (cf. Carter par.14). During the battle with the creature, Bill reaffirms his beliefs:

[S]tand, be brave, be true, stand for your brother, your friends; believe, believe in all the things you have believed in, [...] believe that your mother and father will love you again, that courage is possible [...]; no more Losers, [...] believe in yourself, believe in the heat of that desire [...] He suddenly began to laugh in the darkness, not in hysteria but in utter delighted amazement. 'OH SHIT, I BELIEVE IN ALL OF THOSE THINGS!' [...] [S]uddenly he felt power rush through him (King, *It* 1085).

Nevertheless, belief is also one of their weaknesses (cf. Carter par. 14), beginning with believing in the entity itself as this makes them vulnerable to It. Bill closes the book with the following thought: "it is good to be a child, but it is also good to be grownup and able to consider the mystery of childhood ... its beliefs and desires" (King, *It* 1166).

Motif of good vs. evil

Many literary works within the horror genre "concentrate on the conflict between good and evil" (Russel 23). In many kinds of stories, not just those written by horror authors, there is a battle between the Good and the Evil. Fairy tales are a good example this dichotomy, with evil wizards pitted against intrepid heroes and wicked witches plotting the downfall of a good and clever princess. Weston even states that "King's stories, premised as they are on the unambiguous clash between good and evil, have more in common with fairy tales" than with horror, which he thinks may partially contribute to his success. In King's books, the good and the evil are not on the same level, the good is mostly human, as with *The Losers*, and the evil is cosmic (cf. Müller 99). In *It* there is a third force, represented by the Other, that of cosmic balance, which co-exists with the other cosmic entities: It and the turtle (cf. King *It* 1034; 1081). King does not explain what this third force is, only that it is "a mysterious entity that stands beyond and above" (Carter par.9). The Other's presence is sensed by *The Losers* and by the creature itself during their first encounter (cf. King, *It* 1044). The creature calls it "the Another" (King, *It* 1042). However, the third force does not interfere in the face-to-face struggle between the good and evil forces within the book, but it can be heard stating "*you did real good*" (King, *It* 1122) after the final battle. It might be assumed that the Other created the turtle and It.

While horror stories chronicle the eternal struggle of good versus evil, evil frequently triumphs. In King's works, evil mostly wins the day (cf. Gresh, Weinberg 251), however, that is mostly because of coincidence (cf. Müller, 99). *It* is an exception. The Good, personified by *The*

Losers, kills the monster, however, they suffer significant losses in Stan and Eddie, and Mike is injured (cf. King, *It* 1138). According to Müller, King describes the evil in explicit terms to let the reader fully experience it (cf. Müller 102). Anton says King summarises all his monsters in *It* (cf. Anton 135). Thus, “the Evil is initially centered in the totalitarianism of a single [...] figure” (Magistrale, *Why SK still matters* 358), who takes on many forms: “Pennywise, the clown [...] remains the central avatar of all the monstrous identities contained in *It*” (Magistrale, *Why SK still matters* 358). Consequently, this creature could be considered the most evil monster in the King Universe. There, the evil is “typically part human and part supernatural” (Magistrale, *Why SK still matters* 359), which is true of Pennywise.

King breaks the mould in *It*. He reverses traditional horror tropes to create a timeless story of friendship and innocence. The novel is much beloved by film audiences and reader alike. It is as much a story of coming of age as it is about the eternal cosmic struggle between the forces of good and evil.

Motif of anthropomorphism in *It*

The use of anthropomorphism in films and literature is not uncommon. People ascribe human characteristics to a variety of objects and beings, there are many reasons for this from a literary perspective. However, from a horror genre perspective, the question as to how this both satisfies and challenges the mental constructs of readers. Anthropomorphism appears rather often, rarely do readers ever consider this as extraordinary, because it is already pervasive in the arts and entertainment industries. In the horror genre, there might not be sufficient research within this segment. However, parallels can be drawn with academic work concerning anthropomorphism in other literary and entertainment genres.

There are multiple definitions of anthropomorphism. However, the context and field of study influences how one understands the overall concept. According to Epley, Waytz & Cacioppo, “[a]nthropomorphism describes the tendency to imbue the real or imagined behaviour of nonhuman agents with humanlike characteristics, motivations, intentions, or emotions” (864). This explanation seems logical and widespread. Applying this definition to *It*, means the creature morphs into a human being when it chooses to appear as Pennywise, the clown, which is an extension of Epley, Waytz & Cacioppo’s definition. Mullin, on the other hand, cites the Greek origins of the word in his definition “concept used to describe and critique ways in which humans modeled (sic) the appearance and actions of nonhuman beings, particularly gods, after themselves” (Mullin 744). Mitchell, on the other hand, says it is merely a “similarity between

humans and nonhumans” (114). In attempting to apply these definitions to the creature *It*, the reader is aware that other forms beside the one of the clown have anthropomorphic features, for instance, a werewolf, essentially an anthropomorphic construct, wearing clothes (cf. King, *It* 390). These definitions all share the fundamental criteria of transferring human characteristics to nonhuman beings and objects. Thus, the term anthropomorphism can broadly be described as an attribution of human traits, emotions, and behaviour to something nonhuman.

Braitman’s explanation might also be taken as a definition. His definition, “employing human concepts and abilities to classify behaviours across the ontological divide between [entities] and us” (Braitman 483), goes further than assigning characteristics to nonhuman agents or objects. Braitman claims anthropomorphic characteristics can be used to create categories and organize the world on very human terms.

One of the most outstanding justifications for using anthropomorphism is its emotive power. Humans are known to make more and better sense of subjects with human characteristics, such as emotions (Epley, Monteleone, Gao & Cacioppo 410). This is because people argue that “nonhuman[s] are sentient” and, therefore, it is permissible to allow them human thinking (Stebbins 113). People frequently use “what we know to explain what we don’t” (Guthrie 58). This is often used to describe the behaviour of nonhuman agents. An animal or nonhuman behaves in a specific way, a person then projects human thoughts and emotions onto the nonhuman agent to draw a conclusion about the agent’s behaviour and motivations. In King’s *It* there is an added layer of complexity as King turns the common literary device on its head, the children can indeed describe and name some transformations of the entity, especially those which are human, however, they cannot explain the reason for the behaviour of the creature. Meaning, *It* is difficult to classify and understand, from a human perspective.

Novels and films take advantage of anthropomorphism to create suspense, horror, and uncanniness. As Meullemans and Abraham highlight, in fiction the strangeness or weirdness that comes from something seemingly familiar within unexpected context’ can be eerie (1). Talking animals are an example of this (Meullemans and Abraham 1). Caporael and Heyes think it is due to humans’ knowledge about human mental states which determines what is believed about animal mental states (59). These beliefs reinforce assumptions and create an image. The horror genre takes advantage of this phenomenon as well. Humanising entities is a common literary device, where the merging of, for instance, animal and human creates horror (Mullarkey 21). The creature in *It* lies at the nexus of human being, animal, and an unidentifiable cosmic entity. This intersection point creates something indescribable and truly

horrible in the minds of readers. This simply shows that taking a known concept and changing it can confuse and surprise. However, Braitman's definition is often inverted in horror literature and films where anthropomorphism is used to confuse and frighten.

Readers of *It* experience the creature changing between forms repeatedly. Popular examples of anthropomorphism in horror literature are hybrids and animal behaviours. Werewolves are hybrids, who change from human to animal and exhibit human mental states even when in their most horrific animal form. Vampires, however, exhibit animalistic tendencies, like blood sucking, in a distinctly human form. The creature is a hybrid, as it morphs and displays human behaviours. However, it exhibits animal behaviours in a human form when it lures and traps children to eat later, like a spider. (cf. King, *It* 35). Today, it seems ordinary to converse easily about strange and mythical creatures in literature, and their transformational habits, but any discussion of anthropomorphism would be incomplete without mentioning the horrors the human imagination has conjured because of its system of explanation and classification.

Anthropomorphism provides an opportunity to investigate the combination of human and nonhuman beings (Shakelford 47). This means there are hardly any limits to the author's fantasy. Incorporating beings which do not exist is always a challenge because what people do not know they cannot imagine. Nevertheless, they can mix known objects and subjects to create something new. Knowing this helps film makers and authors to create fantastic stories, in all definitions of the word fantastic. However, the horror and suspense techniques rooted in anthropomorphism can backfire. In King's novel, *It*, the reader is not able to imagine this worst and final form of the creature and this creates an anticlimactic end to the story and challenges film-makers.

2.4.5. *Characters*

Stephen King's complex and detailed characters bring the story of *It* to life. The reader will realise soon that the people in the book are not described and telling from their past all at once, but that this is scattered through the entire book and the audience gets to know the characters little by little, because the descriptions are broken up and given from various perspectives. Each character, even groups of characters, are portrayed with extraordinary individuality; their unique characteristics offering peculiar and special insight into the supernatural entity which has plagued Derry for centuries. Characterisation is essential to the screen adaptations, writers and directors translated King's characters to screens small and large, with varying effectiveness. However, to understand whether the film industry accomplished the feat of translating

characters from page to screen, one must first understand King's characters as they were written, including the seven main characters, the creature, and groups of characters, such as the bullies, the people of Derry, and mothers.

Furthermore, King has a background story for every entity in his stories. More than once, the reader might wonder if a side character in *It* might become important later or occur again because their description is so detailed. He connects seemingly unimportant details throughout the narrative of *It*. Some people might not even notice as the details are so minute.

The Cowan family is a good example of the highly detailed and complex background with which he endows most secondary or tertiary characters. When the remaining members of The Losers Club meet as adults Mike give them a precise of the events in Derry since their departures (cf. King, *It* 511-521). He mentions a two-year-old boy, named Frederick Cowan, who was "[f]ound in an upstairs bathroom, drowned in the toilet" (King, *It* 517). Later in the book, while Eddie is running away from Henry Bowers he overtakes a small child on a tricycle (cf. King, *It* 802). This small detail serves several functions in the narrative, it shows the reader how small Derry is as a town, it gives the reader a better impression of the time difference between the adult and childhood narratives, and it provides the colour which makes the story come to life. The full incident connects to Cowan family to The Losers not only by running across them but also through the creature:

[T]he kid's name, in fact, was Richard Cowan, and he would grow up, marry, and father a son named Frederick Cowan, who would be drowned in a toilet and then be partially eaten by a thing that rose up from the toilet like black smoke and then took an unthinkable shape [...] (King, *It* 802).

Of course, it might be interesting to read what really happened to the boy in greater detail, but it is of no further interest for The Losers' journey. One could say these details could be left out as they do nothing to further the plot. On the other hand, these details make the story seem more real and bring the characters to life. This example with the Cowan boy is one of the shorter examples. However, longer ones take the form of lengthy stories, which contribute admittedly to the overall story but could be told with fewer details. This includes, for instance, the story of Adrian Mellon (cf. King, *It* 17-40), the affair of Claude Heroux and the Silver Dollar (cf. King, *It* 903-916), and the life of Patrick Hockstetter (cf. King, *It* 844-858). Undoubtedly, the first two stories show dramatic events which are likely connected with It. Additionally, these stories help the reader to understand the timeless nature of the creature.

George Denbrough

Every story starts somewhere, and this one regardless of format, screen or print, begins with George Denbrough. In the fall of 1957, when the tale begins, George is six years old. His parents are Zack Denbrough and Sharon Denbrough. His brother is Bill, the hero of the story. On the very first page of the novel George is chasing a paper boat in a rain storm: “A small boy in a yellow slicker and red galoshes ran cheerfully along beside the newspaper boat” (King, *It* 3). The reader does not receive much more information about the child. While the book is short on physical description, King definitely conveys how much George loves his big brother, Bill, who calls him Georgie: “[T]he feeling which filled him at the moment was clear and simple love for his brother Bill ... love and a touch of regret that Bill couldn’t be here to see this and be part of it” (King, *It* 5). Moreover, the loving gesture of kissing his brother on the cheek also emphasizes George’s bond with his brother (cf. King, *It* 11). Otherwise, the reader only gets a glimpse of George’s room (cf. King, *It* 250f).

George’s actual, living presence stops on the same day he is introduced because he was taken, injured and, eventually, killed by the entity in the sewers. While the boy is careful, according to the narrator, he is naive, as children often can be. King demonstrates this wariness through George’s initial interaction with the clown: He “drew his hand reluctantly back [from the drain]. ‘I’m not supposed to take stuff from strangers. My dad said so’” (King, *It* 13f). However, It finds a loophole, after introducing himself and he sets Georgie at ease by saying they are no longer strangers, implying his parents conditions are met, and taking the boat would be allowable (King, *It* 14f). However, as the reader is well aware, as no well-intentioned person speaks to a child from inside a sewer, this is a trap: “[t]he clown seized his arm [...] and George Denbrough knew no more” (King, *It* 14f). After this incident George appears only in memories and as one of the creature’s many disguises.

The Losers Club

The novel *It* follows The Losers Club, from its formation in the childhood narration to their eventual disbandment in adulthood. This cluster of characters consists of six boys and one girl, who are children around eleven years old, and on the threshold of puberty. They are all outsiders; each of them having a characteristic which makes them undesirable in some way. These small differences between them and the “normal” children are a major factor in how close their bond is with each other. This bond is a large part of their success against the monster during that fateful summer.

The childhood meeting of all seven characters seemed to be pure coincidence at the time. However, they will wonder at a later point whether everything was predestined:

Is something really stapling the past and present together here, or am I only imagining it? [...] In that instant it all seemed to come clear to [Ben] – it came in a grisly flash of light and he realized that the vote they had been taken was a joke. There was no turning back, never had been. They were on a track as preordained as the memory-track [...] (King, It 552).

The characters begin to feel they were meant to meet that summer, however, the reader will never know if this is truly the case. Near the beginning of the narrative one of The Losers has the following thought: “There was an intuitive flash: *We’re drawn into something. Being picked and chosen. None of this is accidental. Are we all here yet?*” (King, *It* 372). For the reader, this friendship is forged organically by a group of children not accepted by their family or peers. The group was originally quite small, consisting only of Bill and Eddie, whose relationship was close: “Bill’s friend – his only real friend – was a kid named Eddie Kaspbrak” (King, *It* 227). Sometimes they were accompanied by Richie Tozier, “who Bill sometimes chummed with” (King, *It* 229). Richie brought Stan into the group, making them a quartet. However, they were never as close as they were the summer in which they fought the monster.

Ben, Beverly and Mike did not have any friends. King described Ben as being used his own company: “Ben Hanscom had no sense of being lonely because he had never been anything but” (King, *It* 180). Beverly gives voice to her feelings only as an adult when admitting the boys were her only friends (King, *It* 952). Mike was as equally friendless as the other two: “he suspected, in a vague way, that he was missing some things – a wider communication with kids his own age perhaps” (King, *It* 682). All three children happened meet up with The Losers Club by sheer coincidence. Ben met Bill and Eddie upon coming out of his hiding place after being chased and tortured by Henry (cf. King, *It* 199-212): “The dam builders were still there. One of them was indeed Stuttering Bill Denbrough. [...] Stuttering Bill looked around sharply and saw Ben standing there” (King, *It* 221f). There is a tentative overture of friendship made through a smile and a banal question: “Ben smiled tentatively, and Bill smiled back. The kid was fat, but he seemed okay. [...] ‘You play in the Barrens a lot?’ Ben asked” (King, *It* 242f). Bill invited Ben to come down again tomorrow (cf. King, *It* 243) and it was done, The Losers had a new member in Ben. When Eddie watched his friends, Bill, Ben, Richie and Stan, he thought “[t]hey felt right together” (King, *It* 311). Although they were not complete yet the group was quickly

establishing itself. When Mike was chased by Henry and his friends, he fled to the Barrens where the Losers Club frequently met:

[H]e realized that there were kids there, six of them. They were spread out in a straight line and there was a funny look on their faces. It wasn't until later, when he'd a chance to sort out his thoughts, that he realized what was so odd about that look: it was as if they had been expecting him. 'Help' [...] Bill said: 'The B-Barrens are ours. You k-k-kids get out of here,' Mike managed as he limped towards them. [...] Bill began to throw [rocks] at Henry[.] [...] 'Ch-ch-charge them,' Bill said [.] [...] [After the fight the bullies] started away, [...] not looking back. [...] Bill looked from Mike to Richie. Richie met his eyes. And Bill seemed almost to hear the click – some final part fitting neatly into a machine of unknown intent. [...] *We're all together now*, he thought, and the idea was so strong, so right, that for a moment he thought he might have spoken it aloud. But of course there was no need to speak it aloud; he could see it in Richie's eyes, in Ben's, in Eddie's, in Beverly's, in Stan's. *We're all together now*, he thought again. *Oh God help us*. Now it really starts. *Please God, help us*. (King, *It* 711-717)

Before Mike would complete the lucky seven, Beverly was invited to the Barrens with Richie and Ben after the cinema. Beverly had never been to the Barrens before that day (King, *It* 369f.). In a very short time, their small group of friends developed out of classmates and slight acquaintances. This friendship, forged in the abandoned space on the outskirts of Derry, was to be the life line and support system for this gang of misfits as they faced off against a most dangerous entity.

After The Losers chased down and injured the creature, which was only part of their nightmare, each of them went their own way. Mike states: "For one reason or another your parents moved away [...]. My parents stayed" (King, *It* 525). Bill, for example, "moved to Bangor about two years after his brother died and moved to Portland when [he] was fourteen" (King, *It* 134). Richie "and his family had moved away from Derry in the spring of 1960 (King, *It* 70). Leaving Derry and, consequently, each other was not intentional. However, they would never meet each other again as children, and, due to Stan's suicide they would never be altogether again. After the blood-promise, Bill thinks: "All of us. All of us are here. *And he sees them, really sees them, for the last time, because in some way he understands that they will never be together again, the seven of them – not this way*" (King, *It* 1140). As an adult, Bill has a similar thought before the final battle with the creature: "*That was the last time the seven of us were together ... the day Stan made those cuts in the Barrens. Stan's not here; he's dead. And this is the last time the six of us are going to be together. I know it, I feel it*" (King, *It* 924). And Bill realises, twenty-seven years after their first triumph over It, they never met as the larger group ever again: "[T]hey really never did all get together again. Four of them quite often, sometimes five,

and maybe six once or twice. But never all seven” (King, *It* 1141). It is strange, how a friendship so close can fade as quickly as it emerged. Regardless of their intense bond as children, they forgot all about each other as adults. After the final battle with the creature, they talk about their friendship: “[W]e are all there.’ ‘But nothing lasts forever,’ Richie said. [...] ‘Except maybe for love,’ Ben said. ‘And desire,’ Beverly said. ‘How about friends?’ Bill asked [...]. Bill put his hands out and they joined theirs with his and stood there for a moment, seven who had been reduced to four but who could still make a circle” (King, *It* 1138). However, the reader is not privy to the future of The Losers and whether they made good on the promise to remain friends.

The Losers do not even think of each other after they leave Derry. Bill, for instance, tells his wife Audra, after Mike’s call that he “[hasn’t] thought of Derry itself in twenty years. Not the people [he] chummed with – Eddie Kaspbrak, and Richie the Mouth, Stan Uris, Bev Marsh ...” (King, *It* 139). Not one of them remembered Mike Hanlon when he called them. Forgetting childhood memories is a common phenomenon to a certain degree but in this case they forget more than one thinks they would. This is linked to the fact that all The Losers, except Mike, left Derry. Bill formulates it as “having a case of amnesia so bad you don’t know you’ve got it” (King, *It* 139), especially when it makes someone forget their friends. The Loser’s memories come back, little by little, after Mike’s call and after arriving in Derry. Bill said the moment Mike mentioned Derry, “it was like a door opened inside me and some horrible light shined out, and I remembered who he was. I remembered Georgie. I remembered all the others. All this happened” (King, *It* 139). Derry is also responsible for their memory loss: “in Derry such forgetting of tragedy and disaster was almost an art” (King, *It* 4), and the Losers do not escape the process, not even Mike after the final battle (cf. King, *It* 1150).

The narrative is mostly related to the exploits of The Losers. Everything else, for instance flashbacks, historical fact, and other parallel plots are inserted in between the main plot points concerning The Losers. Russel draws special attention to the fact that novels often contain the internal monologues of characters, and consequently, “[c]ertain elements of the plot work better on paper than on the screen” (Russel 13). Underpinned by the individual character’s thinking and detailed information, the reader experiences The Losers deep friendship as it unfolds. Accordingly, the reader learns how the members of the Losers Club relate to each other and why through a third person narrator, which gives the reader special insight into the minds of all the characters. One of the best examples of this in the text concerns Richie and Beverly: “Richie liked Bev a lot. Well, he liked her, but not *that* way. He admired her looks [...], but mostly he liked her because she was tough and had a good sense of humour. Also, she usually had

cigarettes. He liked her, in short, because she was a good guy” (King, *It* 357). Through King’s use of the third-party narrator, the reader learns about all the characters and is confined to the thoughts and feelings of a single character as he or she interacts with his or her fictional world. However, much of what the narrator tells or shows the reader does not translate well to the screen, as Russel states.

Upon arriving in Derry, the group bonds again. Discussing their lives since they last saw each other and pointing out commonalities between them becomes the focus of their first meeting as adults. Mike points out an interesting fact about them as adults:

‘[T]here’s one other thing we six have in common. I wonder if any of you have realized what that is.’ It was Bill’s turn to open his mouth and shut it again. ‘I’m not *sure* I know,’ Bill replied, ‘but I *think* w-we’re all childless. Is that ih-it?’ There was a moment of shocked silence (King, *It* 528).

From their stories, it is obvious that some of them really want children and stopped using birth control, but had not yet found success (cf. King, *It* 528). The reader assumes this might be related to *It* and The Losers’ promise to fight the evil should it ever rise again. As Bill says, “it doesn’t prove a thing. But it certainly suggests a link [...]” (King, *It* 535). The group focuses the discussion on why they are childless but never resolves the issue to their, or the readers’, satisfaction.

Every one of The Losers who left Derry became successful in their careers, more than the average person. They “had quit being losers. Mike stayed behind and was still behind.” (King, *It* 621). Mike pointed out that the six who left their hometown completely turned their lives around and forgot about where they started:

‘All of you forgot what happened here, and your memories of that summer are still only fragmentary. And then there’s the passingly curious fact that you’re all rich.’ [...] ‘Bill Denbrough, a successful novelist [...]. Beverly Rogan, who’s in the rag trade [...].’ [...] ‘Rich, you may just be the most successful disc jockey in the United States [...]’ [...] ‘Eddie, [...] you’ve got a healthy limousine service [...]’ [...] ‘Ben, you’re probably the most successful young architect in the world.’ [...] ‘Stan Uris, who was the most successful young accountant in Atlanta’ (King, *It* 523ff)

Mike, by contrast, has an average life (cf. King, *It* 20). This might be one of the reasons why they are all extremely shocked by Mike’s call. Regardless of their individual successes, they are all isolated from each other. They failed to remember the events of that summer and to keep their group together, making their promise harder to keep.

In general, the reader might have the feeling that the protagonists are older than described. Besides some naive behaviour, all of them seem mature for their age, especially Bill. This may be because none of them have a healthy family life. Each of them experiencing some aspect of abuse, which causes children to grow-up far faster; for example, Bill's parents ignoring their child, Eddie's mum creating his hypochondria, Beverly's father being violent, and Ben's mean aunt. The children often had to care for themselves. Which prepared them to fight the creature as they had to make their own plans and decisions. The adults in their world were unreliable and could not be counted on to help or care.

The Losers club faced the creature twice. The first time, they did not manage to kill It, which they would only discover years later. However, the second time they defeated the monster. This begs the question, what changed when they became adults. Obviously, they were older, but their strategies were different. In the first encounter they came prepared with weapons, hoping to physically injure the creature. They believed the sling shot and silver bullets would help them defeat It. While they bring along weapons in the second encounter, as adults, they realize the telepathic injuries the creature sustained at the time were likely the more debilitating. Bill and Richie changed tactics and focused on mentally injuring the creature.

The Losers deep bond and belief in themselves and their actions are what enables them to be successful against the evil supernatural entity under Derry. Their friendship and shared memories allowed them to recognise the monster's weak spots, act to target them, and, eventually, kill It. Without this deeply shared childhood bond, and the promise they made to each other on the Barrens, it would not have been possible.

William Denbrough

William Denbrough, called Bill, is the main protagonist of the tale. The reader sees Bill through the eyes of his friends. Richie thinks of Bill as "the tallest [of the Losers], and [...] the most handsome. [...] Bill was also the strongest of them – and not just physically. [...] Bill's strength ran deep and might manifest itself in many ways. [...] Bill was *good*" (King, *It* 372f). Beverly notices Bill's "clean hands, his blue eyes, the fine red hair" (King, *It* 873). From an appearance perspective Bill is only compared to the other Losers, which means the reader has no objective measure for his attractiveness. What the reader can infer is Bill is a young boy whose appearance inspires confidence in his friends.

With this glowing description of boyhood charm, one might wonder how Bill becomes part of The Losers. Bill's long-standing issue is stuttering, "[s]ometimes he didn't stutter at all. In school, however, it could become so bad that talking became impossible for him" (King, *It* 10), and the children in the school yard laugh at any defect. He is often referred to as Stuttering Bill by adults and children alike (cf. King, *It* 3). He would speak "only when absolutely necessary" (King, *It* 239). The only situations he could speak without the stutter were when he felt like somebody else, for example, when riding his bike Silver, he felt like "[h]e was the Lone Ranger" (King, *It* 235) and "[t]he words came out deeper than his normal speaking voice – it was almost the voice of the man he would become" (King, *It* 234). Bill imitated others without stuttering. He was unaware of these occurrences. It was Ben who noticed, one day after hearing Bill copying one of the bullies: "Bill hadn't stuttered at all when he was mocking the way Henry Bowers talked" (King, *It* 143). Due to the stuttering, which was seldomly found in Derry, Ben recognized Bill immediately when he heard him talking in the Barrens, because Bill was "the only 'stuttering freak' he knew from Derry school" (King, *It* 212).

Bill was ten years old and sick in bed when he lost his little brother to the evil being living under Derry (King, *It* 3). Although he stuttered before Georgie's death, it was mild (cf. King, *It* 142), but worsened afterwards (cf. King, *It* 143). His mother once said a car accident was to blame for the speech problem (cf. King, *It* 10f), but "George sometimes got the feeling that his Dad – and Bill himself – was not so sure" (King, *It* 11). A few years later the stuttering lessened with the help of a speech therapist and, eventually, vanished (cf. King, *It* 142f).

What Bill lacked in terms of speech he made up for with writing. George realized this quite early and realized the ability to describe something, to make another person see it, was a special ability. When thinking about how to tell Bill of his boat adventure the little boy thought that he

would try to describe it to Bill when he got home, but he knew he wouldn't be able to make Bill *see* it, the way Bill would have been able to make *him* see it if their positions had been reversed. Bill was good at reading and writing, but even at *his* age George was wise enough to know that wasn't the only reason why Bill got all A's on his report cards, or why teachers liked his compositions so well. *Telling* was only part of it. Bill was good at *seeing*. (King, *It* 5)

This is the first reference in the book to Bill's writing. However, when the reader meets the Losers as adults, a book written by Denbrough is mentioned in passing, *Werewolves*, read by Stanley Uris' wife (cf. King, *It* 43). While the Losers have not been in touch for many years the reader gets the impression Stan habitually reads Bill's novels: "Stan had the new William

Denbrough novel, not even out in paperback yet in his hands. There was a snarling beast on the front of the book” (King, *It* 53). At this point, it is not clear if Stan and his wife are aware that William is Bill, Stan’s childhood friend.

As an adult, Bill is “a bald man wearing glasses” (King, *It* 53), this is how he is pictured on the back of his books (cf. King, *It* 53). It is emphasized, that “[h]e is tall. And has a certain presence” (King, *It* 129), which is one of the first hints that Bill has leadership-qualities as an adult. His career is described as part of a retrospective introspection:

[A] poor boy from the state of Maine who goes to the University on a scholarship. All his life he has wanted to be a writer, but when he enrolls [sic] in the writing courses he finds himself lost without a compass in a strange and frightening land. [...] [H]e wants to write novels about the grim lives of the poor in blank verse (King, *It* 128).

Summarising his university career, Bill was not very successful, according to his professors (cf. King, *It* 128ff). Bill “has written one locked-room mystery tale, three science-fiction stories, and several horror tales which owe a great deal to Edgar Allan Poe, H. P. Lovecraft, and Richard Matheson” (King, *It* 128). This description has a strong biographical connection with King, who performed and wrote similarly to Bill. Writing is not only a career for Bill, it is also his main method of coping with the death of George (cf. King, *It* 130). Eventually, he writes a novel in his final year of college and sells it to a publisher: “[t]he man who was once known as Stuttering Bill has become a success at the age of twenty-three” (King, *It* 131f.) Later, when the Losers meet in Derry, Mike notes: “Bill Denbrough, a successful novelist in a society where there are only a few novelists and fewer still lucky enough to be making a living from the craft” (King, *It* 523).

Bill later marries Audra Phillips. She is a movie-star and older than he is (cf. King, *It* 132). The marriage was critically observed, “[t]he gossip columnists g[a]ve it seven months” (King, *It* 132), because she is depicted as a beautiful woman while he is average:

The age difference apart, the disparities are startling. He is tall, already balding, already inclining a bit toward fat. He speaks slowly in company, and at times seems nearly inarticulate. Audra, on the other hand, is auburn-haired, statuesque, and gorgeous – she is less like an earthly woman than a creature from some semi-divine super race (King, *It* 132).

While attraction and love are not based solely on physical appearance, the fictional world in *It* wonders at the couple’s long-term compatibility. Before getting to know Audra, Bill had an

non-committal relationship with his agent Susan Browne (cf. King, *It* 132). In describing his feelings for Susan Bill says he loved, but “[h]e d[id]n’t love her in that really good way, but he cares [...] for her” (King, *It* 133). However, upon leaving Maine to write the screenplay for one of his novels he meets Audra, as she is part of the cast (cf. King, *It* 133). With her it is different than with Susan, Bill tells Audra: “When I met you [...] you caught me” (King, *It* 135). When Mike calls to reassemble The Losers, they have already been married for eleven years (cf. King, *It* 138). Despite the long-term and committed nature of their relationship, Bill never confided in Audra the entire story of his childhood, including his brother Georgie’s murder, his friends, and the battle against the evil under Derry (cf. King, *It* 137ff). He eventually tells her the basic details, including the murder of his brother and the promise The Losers made to each other that fateful summer (cf. Kin, *It* 137ff).

The similarities in appearance between Audra and Beverly, Bill’s early love, is described by Tom, Beverly’s husband: “[S]he looked a lot like Beverly: long red hair, green eyes, tits that wouldn’t quit” (King, *It* 644). This could be interpreted as both women fit an overall type which Bill finds attractive. However, it could also be a reminder of his childhood and his deep bond with Beverly and Bill may have, unconsciously, chosen a woman who looked like his childhood friend: “He thought of Audra, and for the first time it occurred to him that she looked like Beverly. He wondered if maybe that had been the attraction all along, the reason he had been able to find guts enough to ask Audra out [...]. He felt a pang of unhappy guilt ... and then he took Beverly, his childhood friend, in his arms. Her kiss was firm and warm and sweet” (King, *It* 952f). Despite cheating on Audra with Beverly when he is back in Derry, he returns to Audra in the end. He cares for her when she goes into catatonic shock and does everything to wake her again. Their professions of love are found in the epilogue: “‘I love you,’ she said. [...] ‘I love you too,’ he said. ‘And what else counts?’” (King, *It* 1066). This happy outcome was not predictable for the reader. When the reunion of Bill and Beverly is described it seemed as if they realise they were meant to be together:

Cheating on his wife. He tried to get this through his head, but it seemed both real and unreal at the same time. [...] She looked at him, eyes bright, cheeks flushed [...]. [...] He took her in his arms and was overwhelmed by the feeling of rightness [...]. [...] I’m not cheating on Tom, or trying to use you to get my own back at him, or anything like that. For me, it would be like something ... sane and normal and sweet. But I don’t want to hurt you, Bill. Or trick you into something you’ll be sorry for later.’ [...] ‘Friends don’t t-trick each o-ther[.]’ [...] ‘Be my friend ... I love you, Bill.’ ‘I love you too’” (King, *It* 954f).

It is not clear from the details of the story, nor from the epilogue, whether Bill and Audra discuss his infidelity. It can be assumed that Bill will just discount his adventure with Beverly as part of the entire exceptional battle-situation with It, from which he will presumably never tell Audra anyway. However, it appears the issue was put to rest with the “And what else counts?” (King, *It* 1066).

The reader is not given many details about Bill’s life, outside of the events of the book. Good grades are mentioned in passing. The reader is left to assume George and Bill played together before their relationship was tragically cut short. The reader does not know what Bill does after school, whether he plays an instrument, has a paper route, or plays baseball. The only explicit knowledge the reader has of Bill’s life is that he likes to play in the Barrens, which is one of the main settings in the book. There he was either alone, or “with Richie, more frequently with Eddie” (King, *It* 233), and later with the rest of the Losers Club. Outside of the brief mention of his university career, the story skips nearly everything in between childhood and the present in the book. The reader has no idea of the state of Bill’s relationship with his parents, which was terribly strained after George’s death (cf. King, *It* 248). Bill suffered severely from being almost forgotten and ignored by his parents in the wake of the tragedy (cf. King, *It* 247ff). The boy wondered much about “the aftermath of George’s death, the way his parents seemed to ignore him now, so lost in their grief over their younger son that they couldn’t see the simple fact that Bill was still alive” (King, *It* 239). If they talked to him, they were mostly angry with Bill, or annoyed, and did not listen to him. For example, when Bill sees his father in George’s room and has a strong longing to comfort his father, who dismisses his son with the words ““Go on, buzz off”” (King, *It* 249). They also did not care too much about what the boy does, this is described when Bill bought Silver, a bike which was much too large for the boy:

*A big Schwinn, twenty-eight inches tall. ‘You’ll kill yourself on that Billy,’ his father had said, but with no real concern in his tone. He had shown little concern for anything since George’s death. Before, he had been tough. Fair, but tough. Since, you could get around him. He would make fatherly gestures, go through fatherly motions, but motions and gestures were all they were. It was like he was always listening for George to come back into the house (King, *It* 226).*

The situation inside the family unit was described as everyone merely performing the perfunctory duties and nothing more: “Bill could feel the coldness” (King, *It* 689).

It is apparent Bill had a difficult childhood, due to his stuttering, his brother’s death, and the coldness of his parents. The latter two difficulties are direct impacts of It on Bill’s life. Despite

the difficulties he lives a successful life. With respect to Bill's marriage to Audra, while he may have initially been attracted to her because she looked like Beverly, he ultimately fell in love with her personality. Bill find he still genuinely loves her after seeing his first love once again. After the final fight, Bill thinks about writing all of what happened to the town of Derry and The Losers (cf. King, *It* 1166).

Eddie Kaspbrak

Eddie is introduced as Bill's friend (cf. King, *It* 227). He is, as all the others, eleven years old. His hypochondria, the constant fear and imaginary state of being ill, is what defines him as one of the Losers. Eddie's phobia is acquired because of his mother, Mrs. Sonia Kaspbrak, and her anxiety surrounding the death of her husband. She lost her husband, Frank, when Eddie was three years old (cf. King, *It* 819) and raised her son alone (cf. King, *It* 817), and she is overcautious when it comes to her only son. She justifies the purposeful creation of Eddie's neurosis as a health precaution: "[S]ometimes it was better for a child - particularly a delicate child like Eddie - to *think* he was sick than to really *get* sick" (King, *It* 819f). Eddie must trick his mother so he does not end up in the hospital for minor issues (cf. King, *It* 247).

She told Eddie he was "*not like other people*" and has "*a very weak system*" (King, *It* 89). Even when she received a note from the coach in his school that her son is "a little small for his age, but otherwise he's absolutely normal [...] [and] your family physician [...] confirmed" (King, *It* 91), she would not accept the basic fact of Eddie's overall good health. The best example of her abnormal level of protection, which borders on Munchausen's by Proxy syndrome, is convincing her son he has asthma (cf. King, *It* 793). Mr. Keene, the pharmacist, told Eddie that due to "being so tight and stiff" (King, *It* 790), it causes "his muscles [...] to work *against* the lungs" (King, *It* 791). When Mr. Keene tells Eddie that his "*lungs* don't have asthma; [his] *mind* does" (King, *It* 794), Eddie's belief in his mother's statements is unshaken. "HydrOx Mist", Eddie's asthma medication, was "nothing but a combination of hydrogen and oxygen, with a dash of camphor added to give the mist a faint medical taste" (King, *It* 238). Eddie is so convinced of his mother's assertions he brings on a panic attack in the Barrens after an encounter with Henry and the other bullies; the attack was so real and intense the other Losers thought he was about to die due to the attack and his empty aspirator (cf. King, *It* 231): "He started heaving for air, his hands opening and then snapping shut like weak traps, his respiration a fluting whistle in his throat" (King, *It* 231). It would seem the combination of hypochondriasis

and Munchausen's by Proxy syndrome created a powerful psychosomatic effect. Even as an adult meeting up with the rest of the Losers Club he still carried an aspirator (cf. King, *It* 496).

After the death of Eddie's mother, her ghost, or more accurately her voice in his head telling him all the dangers in the world, haunts him still. Events in which Eddie takes part abound with references to his health and what his mother might think, mostly, these are confined to instances where Eddie identifies something as unsafe. However, his extreme hypochondria influences some of his perceptions, for instance, hearing his mother's voice shouting: "*Eddie, get out of the taxi! They give you cancer!*" (King, *It* 102). The reader's general perception of Eddie is as cautious, fearful, and insecure due to his hypochondria skewed view of the world.

As an adult, he is described as "a short man with a timid, rabbit sort of face. Much of his hair was gone; what was left grew in listless, piebald patches" (King, *It* 86). He is beginning to turn grey in his thirties (cf. King, *It* 90). At the initial meeting of the adult Losers in Derry his appearance is described:

"Eddie – it was weird but true – had grown up to look quite a little bit like Anthony Perkins. His face was prematurely lined (although in his movements he seemed somehow younger than either Richie or Ben) and made older still by the rimless spectacles he wore [...]. His hair was short, worn in an out-of-date style that had been known as Ivy League in the late fifties and early sixties. He was wearing a loud checked sport coat [...] ... but the watch on one wrist was a Patek Philippe, and the ring on the little finger on his right hand was a ruby (King, *It* 497).

From a career perspective, Eddie "owned a limousine company in New York" (King, *It* 499) and "drove rich people around [...] for a living" (King, *It* 88). Mike summarises Eddie's career: "'Eddie,' [...] 'you've got a healthy limousine service in a city where you just about have to elbow long black cars out of your way when you cross the street. Two limo companies a week go smash in the Big Apple, but you're doing fine. [...]" (King, *It* 524). This emphasizes the luck Eddie needs to survive and succeed in such a saturated market.

While Eddie is successful in business, he struggles with romantic relationships. After each failed relationship, Eddie returned home to his mother. The narrator describes Eddie's relationships and each return home in bald terms: "As a young unmarried man he had left his mother three times and returned home to her three times. Then, four years after his mother had died [...], he had returned home for a fourth and final time" (King, *It* 94). Eddie eventually marries Myra, a woman who is, unfortunately, like his mother. His wife is depicted as much taller than Eddie and extremely obese (cf. King, *It* 87). Even though the couple wants children

they remain childless, according to the physician they consult, this is due to Myra's weight issues (cf. King, *It* 528).

The colloquial expression is a girl will lend up marrying a man like her father. Eddie bucks the trend and marries someone like his mother. When he realizes the resemblance between his wife and mother, he is unsure of what to do:

[S]hortly before actually proposing marriage, he had taken a picture of Myra which she had given him and had put it next to the one of his mother, who died of congestive heart-failure at the age of sixty-four. At that time of her death Eddie's mother had topped the scales at over four hundred pounds [...]. [...] But the picture of her which he put next to Myra's picture had been taken in 1944, two years before he had had been born [...]. In 1944 his mother had been a relatively svelte one hundred and eighty pounds. He had made that comparison, he supposed, in a last-ditch effort to stop himself from committing psychological incest. He looked from Mother to Myra and back again to Mother. They could have been sisters. The resemblance was that close (King, *It* 92).

Otherwise, she is portrayed as a charming woman without much relationship experience (cf. King, *It* 92), who was loved by Eddie (cf. King, *It* 94), and called "Marty" (King, *It* 98).

Despite his love for her, Eddie contemplated ending his relationship with Myra after realizing the similarities between he and his mother. Eddie eventually stayed in the relationship out of habit (cf. King, *It* 92f). Like his mother, Myra caged him (cf. King, *It* 93) and "Eddie needed to be protected from his own dim intimations of possible bravery" (King, *It* 93). Eddie is strong and courageous if he believes in himself and the reader sees this explicitly in the final encounter with the creature (cf. King, *It* 1096). Their relationship is characterised by insecurity and control. If all else failed for Myra "[t]ears were her final defense" (King, *It* 94) to get what she wanted. This is another habit his wife shared with his mother. However, his mother used this approach differently than Myra, more "cynically" and "more than a defense [...], they had been a weapon" (King, *It* 94). While Eddie has been exposed to this type of emotional manipulation for his entire life, it never fails to succeed with him. The tears of his wife and mother were often the reason for his capitulation.

The women in Eddie's life make him feel guilt, even if a situation is not his fault or he acted in a reasonable manner. Eddie wants to fulfil the promise he made to the rest of The Losers and return to Derry. However, his thought process is laden with guilt because he may hurt Myra's feelings. The reader sees this twisted, anxiety ridden thought process play out in Eddie's mind:

Dear God, if You are there, please believe me when I say I don't want to hurt Myra. [...] But I promised, we swore blood, [...] I have to do this ... 'I hate it when you shout at me, Eddie,' she whispered. There you go, Eddie – you hurt her again. Why don't you just punch her around the room a few times? That would probably be kinder. And quicker (King, *It* 95).

While Eddie is an adult, he is torn by the thought of hurting someone he loves by leaving, even if only for a brief period. The call of The Losers and the blood oath they swore that fateful summer is equally important to him. Eventually, he liberates himself from the guilt trap when Myra seemed to further resemble his mother (cf. King, *It* 97): “old and fat and crazy” (King, *It* 97). This realization does more than free him to follow The Losers. The new lens through which he views his wife kindles a new well-spring of feelings for her in Eddie’s mind “he felt that he could love her safely” [...] [and might have] finally decided it was all right to love her” (King, *It* 98). He could not say how much this had to do with leaving and probably not coming back ever again (cf. King, *It* 98f).

While Eddie is portrayed as a rather anxious and submissive character, he never fears becoming lost (cf. King, *It* 1037). Eddie was the navigator of The Losers: “if you wanted to know which way to go, you asked Eddie” (King, *It* 1037). He was the guide through the abandoned sewers (cf. King, *It* 1037f). Participating in the entire battle against the creature forces Eddie to conquer his anxiety. In this encounter, Eddie is brave when fighting the entity, especially in the first battle, where he actively helped to triumph over It (cf. King, *It* 1053f). Regardless of his brave acts, Eddie eventually dies at the creature’s hands and is the only member of The Losers to meet such a fate:

The spider stirred [...]. Eddie heard It cry out in terrible triumph, and a moment later, Richie’s voice burst clearly into his head: (*help! I'm losing it! somebody help me!*) Eddie ran forward then, yanking his aspirator from his pocket [...]. ‘*Here, have some of this!*’ [...] [H]e triggered the aspirator into one of Its rubby eyes. He felt-heard Its scream [...]. [T]hen he struck It, he felt Its noisome heat baking into him; he felt terrible wet warmth and realized that his good arm had slipped into the spider’s mouth. [...] Its jaws closed and ripped his arm off at the shoulder. Eddie fell to the floor, the ragged stump of his arm spraying blood [...]. He could feel everything running out of him along with his life’s blood [...]. He supposed he was dying [...]. Eddie closed his eyes [...] and [...] he died (King, *It* 1096ff).

While Stan’s suicide is sad, Eddie’s death is especially tragic. He survived the first battle and decided to fight again. He overcame his fears and coped with the emotional manipulation his mother and wife wielded against him. The reader may not have imagined another of The Losers

would die, especially one brave enough to fight the creature in the sewers. King turned the established pattern in the book on its head with this action. At least, Eddie died with a smile on his face and peacefully:

[H]e felt so *lucid*, so *clear* [...]. [A]ll of the impurities flowing out of him so he could become clear, so that the light could flow through, and if he had had time enough he could have preached on this, he could have sermonized: *Not bad*, he would begin. *This is not bad at all*. ‘Richie, [...] [d]on’t call me Eds,’ he said, and smiled. He raised his left arm slowly and touched Richie’s cheek. (King, *It* 1097f)

His friends were clearly devastated (cf. King, *It* 1097). The rest of The Losers decide Eddie’s death will not be in vain (cf. King, *It* 1105): “Eddie’s dead and we’re going to kill It, if It’s still alive” (King, *It* 1106). After the final battle is concluded, The Losers want to remove Eddie’s body from the sewers, however, they quickly realize this is an impossible task: “‘Put him down,’ Beverly said. ‘He can stay here’. [...] ‘Maybe this is where he’s supposed to be. [...]’ They put him down, and Richie kissed Eddie’s cheek.” (King, *It* 1129).

The reader never learns what happened to Myra after Eddie’s death, not even how she was informed of her husband’s passing. Nobody knew what happened under the town except the remaining five members of the Losers Club. Even they started to forget after leaving Derry. The reader may assume authorities have informed her that Eddie died in the flooding, which was what the people in Derry witnessed above the ground but did not know it was the reaction to the battle (cf. King, *It* 1132).

Richard Tozier

Richard Tozier, his friends call him Richie, is an eleven- year old boy, [g]oing on twelve” (King, *It* 67) in the summer of 1958 (cf. King, *It* 67). He is the son of Wentworth and Maggie Tozier (cf. King, *It* 352f). Richie’s father is introduced to the reader as “a pleasant-looking man with a rather thin face. He wore steel-rimmed spectacles, was developing a bald spot at the back of his head, and would die of cancer of the larynx in 1973” (King, *It* 351f). The reader receives considerably less information about Richie’s mother. King tells his readers that she is not fond of horror movies or rock n’ roll music (cf. King, *It* 352; 595).

Richie’s parents are elusive. King is parsimonious with the information he gives to readers. This is not the case with Richie himself. King embroiders a rich tapestry for his readers. The reader knows, for instance, that while Richie is smart he has behavioural problems: “Richie got A’s and B’s in his schoolwork, but [...] Richie regularly got C’s and D’s in deportment. His

father really raked him about it and his mother just about cried every time Richie brought home those poor conduct grades, and Richie would swear to do better, and maybe he even would ... for a quarter or two” (King, *It* 307). The boy grabs the reader’s attention by his constantly running mouth, and that is how he earns the monikers “Richie the Mouth” (King, *It* 139) and “Richie ‘Trashmouth’ Tozier” (King, *It* 152). His mouth is the reason why he often finds himself in trouble, in the classroom, in the school yard, and anywhere else he may happen to be at that moment. The boy was attacked by the bullies more than once (cf. King, *It* 229), which, was according to Bill, “partly Richie’s own fault; he was not known as Trashmouth for nothing” (King, *It* 229). In addition to his sarcastic swaggering, Richie is depicted as not being able to whisper, which is inconvenient (cf. King, *It* 229): “The trouble was, Richie didn’t *have* a low voice” (King, *It* 229).

Richie’s dream in life was to “become the world’s greatest ventriloquist” (King, *It* 308). He had several voices in his head, imitations and characters, all creations of his imagination (cf. King, *It* 308). However, the difference between each of his characters is suspect, Eddie thought Richie may have difficulty succeeding in the world of ventriloquism because all the voices sounded the same (cf. King, *It* 308), “pretty much like Richie Tozier” (King, *It* 308). When he introduces himself to Ben, he says: “Richie Tozier is my name, doing Voices is my game” (King, *It* 308). Richie seems to be on the outside when the book starts, he does not seem to have any close friends, the description of his friendship with Bill is quite telling in this regard “who Bill sometimes chummed with” (King, *It* 229) and Bill tells Ben in the Barrens that ““Richie [T]ozier usually [c]omes down, too”” (King, *It* 243). Due to his inability to “keep still for more than a minute at a time” and his general failure to “keep his mouth shut at all” (King, *It* 307), Richie was often in some sort of trouble. The abandoned space on the edge of town was a place of freedom for Richie because “[d]own here in the Barrens that didn’t get him in much trouble” (King, *It* 307). And the easy acceptance he found with The Losers gave him the unexpected opportunity to be himself. The summer of 1958, the year The Losers first faced off against the monster, strengthened the friendship between Bill and Richie.

It is Eddie who describes Richie to the reader: “Ben, Eddie saw, was looking at Richie with a mixture of awe and wariness. Eddie could understand that. He had known Richie Tozier for four years, and he still didn’t really understand what Richie was about” (King, *It* 307). The reader has the general feeling that Richie is not well liked because of his slightly caustic personality. He is “a boy who wore glasses, a thin boy with a pale face” (King, *It* 65), which is why the bullies, uncreatively, call him “*four-eyes*” (King, *It* 65). Also, he is sometimes called

“Bucky Beaver” because he “had huge front teeth” (King, *It* 186). A richer description of Richie is provided from Ben’s perspective:

Tozier was a scrawny kid who wore glasses. Ben thought that without them Tozier probably saw every bit as well as Mr Magoo; his magnified eyes swam behind the thick lenses with an expression of perpetual surprise. He also had huge front teeth that had earned him the nickname Bucky Beaver. He was in the fifth-grade class [...] (King, *It* 186).

Richie achieves good grades and speaks cleverly (cf. King, *It* 70). His personality is outgoing and prominent. The varying descriptions of Richie suggest he was a bit of a class clown. His appearance was peculiar, which he attempted to make up for by being funny and witty. His jokes and other voices could be interpreted as protecting his inner-self. Richie’s external shell of buffoonery and wit protects a very soft-hearted boy. He invites Beverly to the cinema and greets her with “Hello, sweetheart” (King, *It* 357). When Eddie dies, Richie openly mourns the loss of his friend in the desolate sewers under Derry (cf. King, *It* 1098).

More than twenty years later, Rich, as he is now known, is a “disc jockey in California” (King, *It* 500). Bill is amused to learn he is now known as “the Man of a Thousand Voices” (King, *It* 500), because as a child, Richie’s Voices were so bad (cf. King, *It* 500). In the radio business his loud voice and provocative speeches made him famous. He does not wear glasses anymore (cf. King, *It* 496), but contact lenses (cf. King, *It* 71). Upon recognising Richie, Bill thought: “*He probably wears contacts now – he would. He hated those glasses*” (King, *It* 496). Rich is noticeable as an adult because “[t]he tee-shirts and cord pants he’d habitually worn had been replaced by a suit” (King, *It* 696), which looked very expensive (cf. King, *It* 496). Everything about him is different; from his nickname to his clothing. There is nothing Rich left unchanged about himself, including his characteristic voices, which have only become better and more numerous.

When Mike called Rich, a strange thought came to his mind while packing for his trip to Derry: “[I]t occurred to him that it was as if he had died and had yet been allowed to make all of his own final business dispositions” (King, *It* 61). Rich feels as though he might not come back from this trip. He is uncertain and this is out of character for the new man he has become. This distinct lack of confidence causes him to think meanly of himself and of who he was before leaving Derry: “*You’re not Rich ‘Records’ Tozier down there; down there you’re just Richie ‘Four-Eyes Tozier and you’re with your buddies and you’re so scared*” (King, *It* 65). Going back to Derry is like a trip back to the past for Rich. It is a trip back to who he was before. After

the final battle Richie went back to California immediately the next morning (cf. King, *It* 1146) and to the person he worked so hard to become.

Stanley Uris

Stan is the first of The Losers introduced as an adult as his is the first number Mike calls twenty years after George's death (cf. King, *It* 41fff). He is married to Patricia Uris (cf. King, *It* 40), who finds him dead in the bathtub after he commits suicide. The reader assumes this is because Mike told him It is back (cf. King, *It* 59f). Stan does not tell his wife what he and Mike discussed (cf. King, *It* 54). Instead, he tells Patty he will take a bath (cf. King, *It* 54). According to his wife, this is unusual behaviour, and this alarms the reader (cf. King, *It* 54). Stan's death is depicted as follows:

The water in the tub was bright pink. Stanley lay with his back propped against the rear of the tub. His head had rolled so far back on his neck that strands of his short black hair brushed the skin between his shoulder-blades. If his staring eyes had still been capable of seeing, she would have looked upside down to him. His mouth hung open like a sprung door. His expression was one of abysmal, frozen horror. [...] He had slit his inner forearms open from wrist to the crook of the elbow [...]. He had dipped his right forefinger in his own blood and had written a single word on the blue tiles above the tub, written it in two huge, staggering letters (King, *It* 59f).

The audience is not told why Stan wrote "It" on the tiles, but readers assume he wanted to tell the Losers Club why he had committed suicide. However, they do not need this information. They deduce it from the fact that he killed himself directly after the call (cf. King, *It* 509f). Moreover, Mike mentioned to Bill that Stan sounded abnormal on the phone (cf. King, *It* 144). Before taking Mike's call, Stan suffered from nightmares (cf. King, *It* 52). This is presumably because of his suppressed memories of Derry and the creature.

Despite being successful in business and happily married, Stan lacks confidence as an adult. A doctor assumes a psychological reason might be responsible for the couple's infertility (cf. King, *It* 47-51). Stan feels that he is responsible but he cannot determine why, "I wake up [...] and think, 'My whole pleasant life has been nothing but the eye of some storm I don't understand' (King, *It* 52). And after the call, unfortunately, he does not dare face the creature again (King, *It* 59f).

Stan, sometimes called "Stan the Man", is eleven years old when The Losers find each other. Despite his inclusion in The Losers, he is part of the backdrop of the story. His parents are Donald and Andrea Uris (cf. King, *It* 44). He is Jewish, and according to Bill, many people do

not like him for that reason alone (cf. King, *It* 299). Stan is also described as not practising his religion (cf. King, *It* 299). As a boy, he is described being “always broke” (King, *It* 299) and he “looked small, slim, and preternaturally neat – much too neat for a kid who was just barely eleven”, “he looked [...] like the world’s smallest adult” (cf. King, *It* 299). The reader is introduced to him as a child when Bill and Ben are playing on the Barrens and they discuss Stan. Eventually, the reader learns about Stan’s passionate love for bird-watching and categorisation (cf. King, *It* 431ff). It is his ardent love for his hobby, ornithology, which also helps him to defeat the creature by believing in his concrete and well-cultivated knowledge of birds (cf. King, *It* 437). Stan’s belief in his own abilities and knowledge helped to defeat the monster when The Losers were children. The boy was also the one who insisted on the blood oath (cf. King, *It* 1139ff). Bill described the scenario to his wife Audra:

Bill was looking at his hands. ‘Stan did it,’ he said. ‘Cut our palm with a silver of Coke bottle. [...] ‘I can remember Stan doing his own hands last, pretending he was going to slash his wrists instead of just cutting his palms a little. I guess it was just some goof, but I almost made a move on him ... to stop him. Because for a second or two there he looked serious.’ (King, *It* 141).

Stan’s high level of involvement in the blood oath seems odd to the reader, as he experiences a high degree of doubt. This mock suicide attempt foreshadows Stan’s eventual death in terms of a linear timelines. However, it recalls the reader’s mind to Stan’s loss at the beginning of the narrative, reminding the readers of the full extent of The Losers’ casualties.

Stan is the only one of the Losers who does not feel only frightened when meeting It. According to Stan, the creature “had *offended* him” (King, *It* 441), because its occurrence in the Standpipe was not rational (cf. King, *It* 441).

[T]hose dead boys who had lurched and shambled their way down the spiral staircase had done something worse than frighten him: they had offended him. Offended, yes. It was the only word he could think of, and if he used it they would laugh—they liked him, he knew that, and they had accepted him as one of them, but they would still laugh. All the same, there were things that were not supposed to be. They offended any sane person’s sense of order (King, *It* 440f).

Stan thought he might be able to live with fear but not with offense as it “it opens up a crack inside your thinking” (King, *It* 441). Additionally, the audience learns later only Stan discovered the entity was female: “*It was pregnant then and none of us knew except Stan, oh Jesus Christ YES, it was Stan, Stan, not Mike, Stan who understood, Stan who told us*” (King, *It* 1077). Regardless of this major childhood epiphany, the reader is not informed whether Stan

can recall this fact as an adult. In the end, Stan is mentioned for the last time in the summary the Losers' epic journey: "It's over, and all it's cost us is our friendship and Stan and Eddie's lives" (King, *It* 1151).

Benjamin Hanscom

Benjamin Hanscom, "Haystack" (King, *It* 297) to some of The Losers, is eleven years old. His mother, Arlene, raised her son alone and was very strict (cf. King, *It* 187f). As an adult Ben describes his childhood self as "fat and we were poor" (King, *It* 83). Richie states: "I call him Haystack, [...] like Haystack Calhoun, the wrestler" (King, *It* 360). Bill sympathizes with Ben's plight, thinking "the fattest kid in any school has his or her own sort of unhappy notoriety" (King, *It* 232) when he sees him in the Barrens. His massive size is what draws the bullies' attention; they often call him "tits" and "fatboy" (King, *It* 173fff). The boy was ashamed of his body and wore "baggy sweatshirts" to hide his weight (King, *It* 173). Ben is the one who is the most dramatically injured by Henry and the bullies when they cut an "H" into his belly (cf. King, *It* 202). His size and intellectual pursuits have made him a target in the schoolyard and beyond.

Ben is often in the library because he loved the building, reading, and he had no friends (cf. King, *It* 181f). The library's glass corridor was one of the reasons Ben was inspired to become an architect (cf. King, *It* 182). His architectural talent is introduced when he builds a dam in the Barrens (cf. King, *It* 243ff). Ben followed his dreams and became a well-known architect, according to the *Time* magazine, in the novel, maybe "the most promising young architect in America" (King, *It* 72). Ben experiences a degree of professional and financial success; however, he is unsuccessful in love.

Twenty years later, Ben is not married, nor in a serious committed relationship. Ben fell in love with Beverly during the summer they faced the creature (cf. King, *It* 172). He even wrote her a poem:

Your hair is winter fire,
January embers.
My heart burns there, too. (King, *It* 194)

Despite Ben keeping his writing of the poem a secret, after the rock fight Beverly "smiled at him gently, and in that moment, she became sure of something she had only guessed before – that it had been Ben Hanscom who had sent her the postcard" (King, *It* 369). Beverly assures Ben she loves him, but she loves all of them, and this is allowed because they are children (cf.

King, *It* 964). Although Ben really likes Beverly, “Richie suspected if Beverly fell for [Bill], or “got a crush on him,” [...] Ben would not be jealous” (King, *It* 372f). While Ben might not be overtly jealous, he still harbours something akin to that feeling when he thinks to himself: “*But you’ll never love her the way I do. Never.*” (King, *It* 897). The reader catches Ben more than once dreaming about Beverly, for instance, when he fantasizes about the kiss on his cheek she gave him for standing up for her: “he would play the moment when she kissed him over and over again in his mind” (King, *It* 419). The story might have a happy end for Beverly and Ben eventually. Even while Bill and Beverly spent the night together, Bill thought “[i]t should have been Ben with [Beverly] [...]. I think that was the way it was really supposed to be” (King, *It* 957), Ben and Beverly get a second chance after the battle, when she accompanies him (cf. King, *It* 1146). Ben’s unrequited boyhood love may form part of the reason he is unsuccessful romantically.

As an adult Ben looks much different: “lanky, sunburned, dressed in a chambray shirt, faded jeans, and a pair of scuffed engineer boots. There were faint squint-lines around the corners of his eyes, but nowhere else. He looked perhaps ten years younger than his actual age, which was thirty-eight” (King, *It* 73). The Losers question his changed appearance (cf. King, *It* 497ff), and Ben tells the group he lost weight after an embarrassing encounter with his sports coach, who bullied him (cf. King, *It* 503-509). Despite losing weight, some physical characteristics have not changed in the past twenty years: “His face was the same, and his hair, although graying and longer, was combed in the same unusual right-side part.” His “clothes clung easily to a body which was slim and narrow-hipped” (King, *It* 497). Ben, ultimately, seems to be a creature of habit, from his clothes and his hair to his love of Beverly.

[Beverly Marsh\(/Rogan\)](#)

Beverly Marsh, she later marries Tom Rogan and takes his last name, is the only girl in the Losers Club. She is frequently called Bev by her friends and Bevvie by her father. Like the others, she is eleven years old at the time of the first encounter with the monster. She is described wearing poor, ill-fitting clothes: “penny-loafers”, “a cheap sweater” and a “too-big skirt” (King, *It* 171). The quality of her clothing is likely because Beverly and her family do not have much money (cf. King, *It* 412fff). She is physically described as having “gray-blue eyes, [...] naturally red lips” and “freckles across her nose” (King, *It* 357). The summer she played with The Losers she became more aware of her body and dressed a more feminine

manner (cf. King, *It* 828f). Despite all The Losers being the same age, Beverly is the first to become body conscious. This could be influenced by her relationship with her father.

Her mother, Elfrida, works in a restaurant, is briefly mentioned. Her parents do not have much money (cf. King, *It* 412fff). Beverly seems to have a loving relationship with her mother, often telling each other telling that they love each other and hugging (cf. King, *It* 413). Her father Al Marsh, with whom she has a strange and violent relationship, is the janitor at the Derry Home Hospital (cf. King, *It* 406). He is described as “a big man, who was now losing the auburn hair he passed on to Beverly” (King, *It* 406). Beverly’s father “did not drink, [and] he did not smoke” (King, *It* 406). His vice seems to be violence, especially against Beverly (King, *It* 406fff). His justification is that he “worr[ies] a lot” (King, *It* 407) about her. Despite interrogating her, telling her he worries, and physically hurting her she loves him (cf. King, 408ff), but she hates him at the same time (cf. King, *It* 926). Beverly also feels that he loves her and he “*was* capable of love” (King, *It* 409). Despite the fact that physical violence can never be justified, he is convinced that “he never hit[s] her when [she] didn’t deserve it” (King, *It* 407). In his opinion, “[d]aughters [...] need more correction than sons” (King, *It* 409). The brief mentions of Elfrida, Beverly’s mother, attest to the type of relationship father and daughter have in the novel. Beverly’s mother realises the violent relationship between her daughter and her husband, suspecting that he touches her (cf. King, *It* 414). Although Al Marsh has not touched his daughter sexually (cf. King, *It* 414), the reader assumes his thoughts are tending in this direction. This is reinforced for the reader when Beverly encounters Mrs. Kersh as an adult, It morphs from Mrs. Kersh to Beverly’s father: “*I worry about you, Bevvie ... I worry a LOT!’ [...] ‘I beat you because I wanted to FUCK you, Bevvie, that’s all I wanted to do, I wanted to FUCK you, I wanted to EAT you’*” (King, *It* 585). Of course, these are only assumptions on the part of the reader. This may have been Beverly’s greatest fear of which It intended to take advantage. However, when she was a child, and her father was possessed by the creature, the conversation was quite intimate and possessive: ““What have you let [the boys] do to you?” [...] ‘Take your pants off.’ [...] ‘Take them off, Bevvie. I want to see if you are intact.’” (King, *It* 929). At this moment, “It was [...] working through him” (King, *It* 929). Beverly realises “It might only have used the tools that had been there just lying around, waiting to be picked up” (King, *It* 930). Therefore, Mr. Marsh might have sexual thoughts toward her. It worked with the available material and emotions but Beverly’s father, without It did not act on those thoughts.

Although she loved Bill as a girl (cf. King, *It* 402), she married Tom. She made career as a designer (cf. King, *It* 107), in this field she met her husband, who fostered her talent (cf. King, *It* 107ff). Tom was immediately drawn to her appearance: “[A] gorgeous woman, slim but abundantly stacked. Hips weren’t so great, maybe, but she had a great ass and the best set of tits he had ever seen” (King, *It* 107). Despite the violent experiences of her childhood, she still meets and marries a man who has the same fundamental character and tendencies as her father (cf. King, *It* 1062). Beverly stays with Tom, even after the first instance of abuse (cf. King, *It* 111), because she is utterly under his control (cf. King, *It* 11ff). When meeting The Losers for the reunion, she is described as “stunningly beautiful woman” (King, *It* 497), and has “red wavy hair” (King, *It* 108). However, when speaking with Beverly about Bill’s wife, the actress Audra Philipps, Tom compares the two. However, Beverly states Audra is taller than her and prettier (cf. King, *It* 644). This is an attestation of Beverly’s mental state, as she compares herself unfavourably to others.

Before the final battle she and Bill become close once again. Beverly confesses to Bill that Tom is violent with her. Her night with Bill forces the realization that she will never return to her husband (cf. King, *It* 655). However, as Tom dies at the creature’s hands there is no need to initiate the lengthy legal proceedings for divorce (cf. King, *It* 1043). Although having a strong connection with Bill as adults as well, she does not want to destroy Bill’s relationship with his wife (cf. King, *It* 955), so she gives Ben a chance by taking his invitation to come with him after the battle (cf. King, *It* 1146). Ultimately, this is the best end for Beverly, as it leaves her free to make choices and take control of her future romantic life.

Michael Hanlon

Michael Hanlon is the man behind the story, at least as an adult. As a child, he was the last to complete the lucky seven. As a result, Mike is not prominent in the main narrative. He is eleven years old during the summer of 1958. His “face was bookish and timid” (King, *It* 151), he was “a boy who had been about five feet three, trim, and agile” (King, *It* 494). As a boy, he had a rather isolated childhood, helping in the fields (cf. King, *It* 278) and goes to a different school, Neibolt Street Church School (King, *It* 682). Nevertheless, The Losers all know him because “he was the only Negro child” in town (King, *It* 682). Despite his isolation from The Losers, through school and personal circumstances, there is one thing which ties Mike and the rest of The Losers together: Henry Bowers and the rest of the bullies.

Mike's father and Henry's father are in conflict and this starts Mike off on the wrong foot with Henry (cf. King, *It* 680f). This was because Henry's father "associated his financial, physical and mental decline with the Hanlon family" and taught his son that "all niggers were stupid" (King, *It* 680). Thus, Henry learned to hate Mike and he was "number one on Henry's personal Hate Parade" (King, *It* 680). This conflict between the two boys escalated to the point where Henry killed the Hanlon's dog (cf. King, *It* 681ff). This act serves to demonstrate the extraordinarily violent nature of Henry's relationship with Mike and his family and it also shows Henry's ruthlessness.

Mike counts himself as lucky the other six children are in the Barrens to help him when Henry and his friends follow him: "Henry Bowers, Victor Criss, Belch Huggins, Peter Gordon and [...] Steve Sadler [...] were chasing a winded Mike Hanlon through the trainyard and toward the Barrens about half a mile away" (King, *It* 686). Mike saw the children near the gravel-pit (cf. King, *It* 711) and it was like "they had been expecting him" (King, *It* 712). They recognized Mike and started to throw rocks at the bullies because the Barrens were their territory (cf. King, *It* 712f). The bullies are outnumbered by The Losers and the bullies escape the barrage of rocks one by one, until only Henry remains (cf. King, *It* 715ff). After the rock fight the children realize they belong together (cf. King, *It* 717). This fateful meeting fills the last space in The Losers; the Lucky Seven.

Mike tells the others about the town's history. He knows the stories from his father who "succeeded in conveying his own interest in the layers of Derry's history to his son" (cf. King, *It* 280). Additionally, Mike brings his fathers' photo album to the group, in which they see many photos of the clown and the photographic records spans a great deal of Derry's history (cf. King, *It* 735ff). Mike is instrumental in The Loser's Club gaining knowledge about their foe.

As an adult, Mike takes the lead; assuming Bill's childhood role. Mike stayed in Derry. He experienced the re-emergence of the creature when children started to once again go missing (cf. King, *It* 150f). He is the one who kept an eye on all the other members of the former Losers Club, in fact, he is really the only one to remember them all and the events which brought them together (cf. King, *It* 510). Bill is the first to recognise Mike, when he sees the man who was "skinny [...] and the lines on his face said that he was on the darker side of forty instead of only thirty-eight or so" (King, *It* 494). Mike's life in Derry had aged him prematurely and it also prevented him from achieving success like the others.

Interestingly, after the final battle Mike, who was always well informed and remembered all the details, began to forget what happened (cf. King, *It* 1151). This suggests that a higher power, which might have created the turtle, is involved. Narratively, it shows that the ordeal is over, it is time to forget and move on.

The Bullies

While there are other groups of school yard bullies in the novel, Henry Bowers and his gang are the toughest in town. The group consists of Belch Huggins, Victor Criss, and Patrick Hockstetter. They are “the worst kids in Derry school” (King, *It* 229). Henry is the leader of this small band of bullies; “the real brains of the combination” (King, *It* 78).

Henry Bowers is a twelve-year old who causes a large amount of trouble (cf. King, *It* 174). The narrator describes Henry to the reader:

Henry’s hair was cut in an angry-looking flattop short enough for his white scalp to show through. He Butch-Waxed the front with a tube he always carried in the hip pocket of his jeans, and as a result the hair just above his forehead looked like the teeth of an oncoming power-mower. An odor of sweat and Juicy Fruit gum always hung about him. He wore a pink motorcycle jacket with an eagle on the back to school (King, *It* 174).

The boy “had already begun to lose his teeth when he was fourteen” (King, *It* 627), and when he was grinning, “teeth that were already beginning to rot” were the frontispiece of his smile (King, *It* 697). Instead of being in the sixth grade, as his age would suggest, he was in Ben’s class (cf. King, *It* 173).

Henry is a ruthless boy who killed his own father as soon as he had the chance (cf. King, *It* 973f). Henry’s angry and revengeful attitude may have influenced It’s choice of him as a dogsbody. The reader sees Henry once again as an adult, he is in a hospital for the mentally ill called Juniper hill (cf. King, *It* 627). He has been interred after being “convicted of killing his father” (King, *It* 627) and because he is generally thought to have committed all the child murders around the time (cf. King, *It* 627). The procedure did not take long:

[T]hey were desperate to close the books on that summer’s blood and horror; [...]. They wanted him to confess everything, he understood after a while. Henry didn’t mind. After the horror in the sewers, after what had happened to Belch and Victor, he didn’t seem to mind about anything. Yes, he said, he had killed his father. This was true. Yes, he had killed Victor Criss and Belch Huggins. This was also true, at least in the sense that he had lead them into the tunnels where they had been murdered. Yes,

he had killed Patrick. Yes, Veronica. Yes one, yes all. Not true, but that didn't matter. Blame needed to be taken (King, *It* 628).

As quickly as that, Henry found himself forever installed at Juniper Hill. He took the blame for everything, partly because blame needed to be assigned and because he had gone beyond all caring. The time inside the mental health institution changed Bowers' appearance. Bowers is described as:

[F]at, the skin had an unhealthy tallowy hue; sagging; cheeks had become hanging jowls that were specked with stubble", "[w]avy lines [...] were engraved in the shelf of the forehead above the bushy brows. [...] The eyes were small and mean inside discoloured pouches of flesh - bloodshot and thoughtless. It w going on seventy-three. But it was also the face of a twelve-year-old boy as the face of a man being pushed into premature age, a man who was thirty-nine (King, *It* 944).

Henry is fundamentally altered because of his interactions with the creature. The monster was inside his head, killed his friends, and exposed him to untold horrors. He never recovered from the experience.

Henry's closest friends were Victor and Belch, "a fellow named Reginald Huggins, only everyone called him Belch" (King, *It* 78). Belch was "almost comically big, already six feet tall at twelve, weighing maybe a hundred and seventy. He had gotten his nickname because he was able to articulate belches of amazing length and loudness "(King, *It* 567). He "had been big and not really fat" (King, *It* 567), "clumsy and mean" (King, *It* 567), and seemed as if could not control his own limbs (cf. King, *It* 568f). Victor Criss, also twelve years old; always wore his hair "combed back in an Elvis pompadour and gleaming with Brylcreem" and had his "shirt-collar turned up hoodstyle" and "engineer boots" (King, *It* 176). The boys made a terrifying trifecta, seeking to make their names by bullying others.

Henry's followers do not question his authority, but they do not stand behind his every decision. Henry genuinely intends to horrifically injure Ben: "both Belch and Victor stopped laughing. They looked nervous ... almost scared. [...] *All of a sudden they don't know what he's going to do*" (King, *It* 201). After Henry saying he would carve his name into Ben's stomach, his sidekicks "began laughing [...]" and Ben suddenly understood that Victor and Belch were laughing because *they* were relieved. It was obvious to both of them that Henry couldn't be serious. Except Henry *was*" (King, *It* 202). This shows that not even his friends are never sure what he is capable of doing. However, if Henry goes too far they stop listening to him (cf. King, *It* 202f): "Belch and Victor weren't holding him anymore. In spite of Henry's command, they

had drawn away. They had drawn away in horror” (King, *It* 203). It appears as if Henry is the only one who wants to do more than scare people.

However, one of the scariest of the bullies is Patrick Hockstetter. His life and early struggles are explained and assist the reader in understanding his psychology, to some extent (cf. King, *It* 844-855). The reader is generally shocked to learn his history and about his behaviour. Hockstetter “was twelve, the son of a paint salesman. His mother was a devout Catholic who would die of breast cancer in 1962, four years after Patrick was consumed by the dark entity which existed in and below Derry” (King, *It* 844). He was slightly overweight with a round face (cf. King, *It* 799). His IQ is slightly below average, and he “understood the concept of ‘rules’ perfectly, but he was a psychopath (cf. King, *It* 844f). However, Patrick likes to see things suffer (cf. King, *It* 850f). He had “no sense of hurting” and “no real sense of being hurt” (King, *It* 845). According to Beverly, “Patrick was crazy, crazier than Henry” (King, *It* 842). Although she did not know why exactly. Hockstetter’s unbalanced and psychopathic mental state is illustrated best by his murderous tendencies, he killed everything from flies to household pets. However, the most shocking murder he committed was his baby brother, Averie, when he was five (cf. King, *It* 799; 846-851). His shocking killing spree ends at the hands of the creature.

The bullies do not fear consequences at all, which is proven in an argument with Mr. Gerdau: “There was no fear in his face because he was the grownup and Henry was the kid. [...] Henry gave him a good hard push” (King, *It* 801f). The bullies clearly have no respect for adults. As The Losers make their way to It’s lair, Henry, Victor and Belch follow at Henry’s insistence. However, Henry’s egoism costs him his two best friends. The creature decapitated Victor and “peeled the left side of [Belch’s] face down to the skull” while morphing into Frankenstein’s monster, and Henry saw it (King, *It* 981). In the end, before the final encounter with It, only Henry is left. The reader meets Victor Criss again, “whose head had been torn off somewhere beneath Derry twenty-seven years ago” (King, *It* 632f) when the clown emerges under Henry’s bed and takes the shape of the dead boy (cf. King, *It* 632f). Belch is the form the entity takes when picking up Henry in a car, “[h]is face was a hanging ruin. One of his eyes was gone, and a rotted hole in one parchment cheek revealed blackened teeth. Perched on belch’s head was the New York Yankees baseball cap he had been wearing the day he died” (King, *It* 977), also, “most of Belch’s nose was gone” (King, *It* 979). Henry does not really realise these two apparitions are not his friends but the forms It takes in order to make him compliant.

It

“[H]ow scared I am doesn’t matter, because it’s going to come anyway.”

~ Ben Hanscom (King, *It* 83)

Appearance & behaviour: manifestation as Pennywise the clown & other creatures

The creature introduces itself as “Mr Bob Gray, also known as Pennywise the Dancing Clown” at the beginning of the story while speaking to Georgie, Bill’s younger brother (King, *It* 14). Pennywise has “a pleasant voice”, “yellow eyes”, sometimes seen as silver, “funny tufts of red hair on either side of his bald head”, sometimes seen as “wild tufts of orange hair” and “a big clown-smile painted over his mouth” (King, *It* 13;33). Comparisons with the clowns Ronald McDonald and Bozo are made throughout the children’s interactions with It (cf. King, *It* 13). A clown in a storm drain is strange, however, the audience does not know the figure is a monster until it “pulled George toward the terrible darkness” and ripped his arm off (King, *It* 15). From that point forwards, the creature manifests several forms as it is a shape-shifter. In choosing the ideal form, the creature accesses and uses the secret fears of the targeted individuals. An evil clown like Pennywise is an oxymoron. It is a contradiction in terms that “someone who theoretically expresses kindness and inspires laughter becomes a malevolent being who causes fear” (Renard, par.2). The contradiction is at the heart of the narrative. The seemingly perfect Maine town hiding a dark and sinister being. Caring mothers who look the other way when something bad happens to their children. King uses contradiction to great effect in this narrative.

Pennywise, the Dancing clown is the form the entity chooses frequently. It is in this form that the creature is most recognizable and it is “the first and the best developed form” according to Renard (Renard par. 3). Its trademarks are balloons, white gloves and “a baggy suit with [...] big orange pompom-buttons down the front and the floppy yellow bow-tie” (King, *It* 191). The suit was silver and It had “oversized orange shoes on his feet” (King, *It* 217). When the Losers are adults the creature has a more sinister appearance. It had empty sockets where its eyes should have been and the face was full of white greasepaint (cf. King, *It* 556). The entity casts no shadow, putting it firmly in the realm of the supernatural (cf. King, *It* 218; 671). The creature is always surrounded by a smell mixed of sweets and death (cf. King, *It* 15; 219). The clown-form, or some attributes, help the children to recognise they all saw the same thing, which they call “It”. For instance, when Richie and Bill see the werewolf with the jacket, “[t]here was no

zipper on the thing's jacket, instead there were big fluffy orange buttons, like pompoms (King, *It* 390).

Each of The Losers encounters the creature in a different disguise, like the Creature from the Black Lagoon (cf. King, *It* 269), a leper (cf. King, *It* 323), a mummy (cf. King, *It* 217), blood and voices from the drain (cf. King, *It* 403fff), dead boys in the Standpipe (cf. King, *It* 728), moving pictures (cf. King, *It* 347), a werewolf (cf. King, *It* 676), and the moon (cf. King, *It* 631). The many forms the creature takes are a sign of its power. The creature makes promises in the sewer just before it dies, "*money, fame, fortune, power*" and everything they want if they do not follow through with killing it (King, *It* 1120).

There are many types of shape-shifters in myth and legend. The Losers set about researching their foe in the library and find a wealth of information on the topic:

Glamour, he said, was the Gaelic name for the creature which was haunting Derry; other races and other cultures at other times had different words for it, but they all meant the same thing. The Plains Indians called it a manitou, which sometimes took the shape of a mountain-lion or an elk or an eagle. These same Indians believed that the spirit of manitou could sometimes enter them [...]. The Himalayan called it *tallus* or *taelus*, which meant an evil magic being that could read your mind and then assume the shape of the thing you were most afraid of (King, *It* 691).

Nevertheless, when taking on a shape, it had to conform to certain rules inherent in the shape: "*the only thing It had in common with the stupid old turtle and the cosmology of the macroverse outside the puny egg of this universe was just this: all living things must abide by the laws of the shape they inhabit*" (King, *It* 1035). This means shape-shifting may just as disadvantageous as it is advantageous (cf. King, *It* 1035). Therefore, hurting It, as a werewolf, by using silver slugs worked because of the children's' belief that it would work because, at least in stories, a werewolf could be defeated by silver (cf. King, *It* 890-900). "[W]hat was physical could be killed" (cf. King, *It* 1084) by combining "the force of that Other; it was the force of memory and desire; [...] the force of love and unforgotten childhood" (King, *It* 1120). This is desire and belief made real. They believed with every fibre of their beings and brought about the destruction of the monster.

Origins & needs

As a child, Mike wondered how long the creature might have existed (cf. King, *It* 745). In *Derry: The First Interlude*, Mike summarises what he found in books and conversations:

Here in Derry, anything could be. I think what was here before is still here – the thing that was here in 1957 and 1958; the thing that was here in 1929 and in 1930 when the Black Spot burned down by the Maine Legion of White Decency; the thing that was here in 1904 and 1905 and early 1906 – at least until the Kitchener Ironworks exploded; the thing that was here in 1876 and 1877, the thing that has shown up every twenty-seven years or so. Sometimes it comes a little sooner, sometimes a little later ... but it always comes. [...] It always comes back (King, *It* 153).

Many people know something about the strange occurrences in Derry, several townsfolk know about the clown, but nobody says anything (cf. King, *It* 160; 669). Derry has a habit of looking away, even when it comes to the recognition of small facts.

The nature of the creature is a cyclical one. This is something The Losers identify early. The creature's needs created its cyclical habits, "*It existed in a simple cycle of waking to eat and sleeping to dream*" (King, *It* 1034). The question of what the creature eats is a vital one. "*Derry was Its killing-pen, the people of Derry Its sheep*" (King, *It* 1034). The creature mainly "preys on isolated children [...] being ignored by the adult[s]" (Magistrale, *Hollywood's SK* 187). After luring, catching, and killing the children, It only partially feeds off their flesh (cf. King, *It* 916). The young victims live on inside the creature as his Legion and he feeds off their continued existence (cf. King, *It* 158). The entity does not only live off the children's flesh but also from their faith (cf. King, *It* 916). Children are more capable of faith than adults, hence It feeds on them rather than adults (cf. King, *It* 916). The monster likes it best when the children are imaginative (cf. King, *It* 1034), "*flesh gone stiff with exotic terrors and voluptuous fears*" (King, *It* 1034). The creature speaks to its victims as it consumes them; it wants them to know it is their biggest nightmare and lists their weaknesses (cf. King, *It* 557). The creature also feeds from shock and fear, which makes It even stronger (cf. King, *It* 1045). Thus, the creature "feeds on human pain, hate, and above all, fear" (Carter par. 13). According to Müller, the evil nourishes from the good (cf. Müller 99). A further contradiction in King's narrative, creating a richer and more oxymoronic tapestry around the monster and the town of Derry.

The creature refers to itself as his own "fadder" (King, *It* 583), his "name was Robert Gray, better known as Bob Gray, better known as Pennywise the Dancing Clown" (King, *It* 583). The creature loves this joke, "my fadder" (King, *It* 583). This might suggest that Pennywise refers

to himself as his father because he has no real father. Alternatively, the creature may want to confuse Beverly and drop small hints as to with whom she is speaking. Furthermore, the creature emphasizes that it likes to fool people. During the encounter with Mrs. Kersh, Beverly can read “IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE” on the balloons the creature holds (King, *It* 586). “It came from *Outside* and no one had to claim responsibility for It” (King, *It* 601). The reference to space has a twofold function, to serve as an identification of its origins but also gives Derry a reasonable way to abdicate responsibility. The former statement is confirmed by the vision Richie and Mike had in the smoke-hole:

[T]hey were about to see the coming of It. [...] The vibration took on a voice – a rumbling roar that built to a shattering crescendo of sound. [...] The clouds in the west lit with a bloom of red fire. It traced its way toward them, [...] and then, as a burning, falling object broke through the cloud cover, the wind came. It was hot and searing, smoky and suffocating. The thing in the sky was gigantic [...]. There was an explosion then [...]. It, [...] the new arrival in the world (King, *It* 775f).

In the vision, the boys were in the past and realised the entity was from far away, from outside out of the sky (cf. King, *It* 776-781). However, this does not entirely agree with the story It tells, which the turtle confirms: “*Before the universe there had only been two things*”, the turtle and It (King, *It* 1034), presumably created by the Other (cf. King, *It* 1082). It itself states: “*I am eternal. I am the Eater of Worlds*” (King, *It* 1080). This entity is described god-like because it cannot be named and its real shape can neither be seen or borne by humans (cf. Müller 95f). King’s only task here is to give the creature a final form; the spider-like entity, which ultimately disappoints the reader because the author is not able to live up to the expectations he created through the story (cf. Anton 107). This is unfortunate for a reader, who has invested time and effort into understanding the story.

Parental figures

The parents and adults in the story *It* might seem neglectful, especially in comparison to today. However, parenting was different in the 1950s and as the bulk of the narrative takes place in 1958 the predominant style of parenting is reflected by the characters. In the novel, adults and parents do not care what is happening and are unable to protect their children. The mothers and father of the children presented in the book are either hard-working with no time for their children, overprotective, or they do not care what their children do. “[O]ne way of in which the seven children are brought together in this [story] is by virtue of parental neglect or cruelty”

(Magistrale, *Hollywood's SK* 185). Bill's parents are cold-hearted and rather careless after George's death. Eddie's mother wants to protect her son so badly that she lies to him about his health. Richie's parents, especially his mother, know little about their son and attempt to talk him out of his hobbies. Beverly's father is violently physically abusive towards her. Henry's father teaches his son that racism and hatred are normal and acceptable. The only parents who might be considered good parents are Ben's mother, who did everything to raise her son alone and Mike's parents, who teach him duty and obligation but let him have fun. Ben's mother, who is one of the most loving parents, is unmarried and, therefore, her son has no father figure. She is also partly responsible for Ben's weight issues. According to Anderson, Jessica Hanlon, Mike's mother is the best one, but she is humourless and strict (cf. Anderson 112f). Stan Uris' family is hardly mentioned. There is no traditional, perfect family within the narrative.

All the parents in Derry are unable to watch and protect their children (cf. Anderson 114). While they do love their children, "there are no concrete examples of adult panic or serious resolve surrounding the disappearance of so many young people" (Magistrale, *Hollywood's SK* 185). The Losers' parents did not know their children had set out to fight the monstrous creature in Derry. Anderson points out many mothers try to protect their children from mundane happenings, but in terms of the truly dangerous ones, for example "schoolyard bullies and domestic violence", and It, they fail (cf. Anderson 115). The children learn early they cannot expect help from their parents. Many mothers in the story did not watch their young children in the garden or beds, as a result, some of them disappear. Regardless of these losses, mothers are never referred to as victims by the narrator (cf. Anderson 115). The narrator neglects the mothers as much as they neglect their children.

2.5. The comparison of the book and the screen adaptations

The value of this analysis lies in the demonstration of the immense difficulties inherent in the transformation of a book into a screen adaption. Films adapted from lengthy stories cannot feature every detail because of the limited time. Moreover, some events, surroundings and creatures are difficult to portray accurately due to budget-problems or they are difficult to represent.

At the time of the filming of the television miniseries, nobody suspected there would be a remake. Regardless of the lack of planning, the new movie was released in the same year the creature would have awoken, based on the twenty-seven-year cycle in Derry. The original mini-

series and the film differ from each other to a certain extent. Naturally, some changes needed to be made in order not to replicate the original.

Since the late 1970s King's stories could be seen on screen (cf. Magistrale, *Hollywood's SK* 171). The first of his films "translated into made-for-television adaptations – the longer teleplays belong to a television genre called the miniseries" (Magistrale, *Hollywood's SK* 171). In 1980, King began to write *It*; a task for which he needed more than four years (cf. Kasprzak 159f). After selling the rights, film makers decided a miniseries would make more sense because of the length of the book. The original show appeared on the small screen in 1990 and was directed by Tommy Lee Wallace in the USA (cf. Kasprzak 160; 165). It was a great success and presented on the prime-time television (cf. Magistrale, *Hollywood's SK* 174f). Wallace did his best to represent King's narrative structure as faithfully as possible with the help of flashbacks. The resulting television experience was one of the most accurate screen adaptations of King (cf. Kasprzak 161f). Therefore, it has the same flaws as the book, namely that "the long narrative builds to a final climatic confrontation [...], but then simply implodes" (Magistrale, *Hollywood's SK* 188). The anticlimactic conclusion to both the miniseries and the book disappoint both audiences.

Wallace's version uses specific camera angles, for example, extremely low angles and close-ups, to follow the proceedings (cf. Browning, *SK SS* 21). The special effects and the forms of *It* were considered above average and cinema level at the time, except for the spider in the end (cf. Kasprzak 164). According to Browning and many viewers, the end is one of the most disappointing of King's films (cf. Browning *SK SS* 23). This is unfortunately because of lower television budgets (cf. Kasprzak 164). According to Magistrale, the budget for a television miniseries is "five times smaller than the average Hollywood feature film" (Magistrale *Hollywood's SK* 176). However, small budgets fostered creative special effects solutions (cf. Browning, *SK SS* 23). According to audiences and critics, this was a highly successful adaptation.

Muschietti's production of the cinema film was released in the fall of 2017. The producer "opted for the [...] retro-80s world, as if Pennywise the evil clown can only be approached through the viewer's memory of prior sources" (Luckhurst 24). The entire world, including cinema films, clothing, and music change due to this time-shift. The forms the creature uses are also highly time dependent. In Wallace's version, as in the novel, everything was based on the pop-culture of the 1950s. In the new film, the mummy and the teenage werewolf are replaced by modern

art and the charred corpses of Mike's parents. Common to both adaptations are Eddie's leper and Beverly's sink spurting blood.

The original adaptation uses flashbacks, while the new film handles the past through a linear retelling and dividing the book into adult and childhood sections. Although being more accurate, the original film version may be more confusing for a person who has not read the book. In the new film, the shape-shifting of the creature is realised in a way the audience can see it instead of the original stop-motion technique. Moreover, in the new film cursing and smoking is present, as well as vulgar and explicit references, for example the leper talking about blow-jobs. The mini-series entirely omits these. Of course, there are many subtle differences which do not alter the storyline. For instance, in the old version Bill and George's mother plays *For Elise* but plays a different song in the new one. Or, in the mini-series Eddie's mother slim but in the new film she is portrayed in line with King's original description. Events which are important in the book but left out in both film versions are the dam-building, The Ritual of Chüd, the turtle, and the sexual bonding. Both adaptations are successful without the inclusion of these events but it is frustrating to King fans that some of the real essential parts are not realised.

Characters and their realisations & most prominent differences between the book and it's screen adaptations

People tend to imagine scenes as they read. They create pictures of the characters in their minds. Everybody has a slightly different picture of each character. Film makers have the demanding task of choosing actors who fit the description as accurately as possible, otherwise, the reading audience is likely to be disappointed. Two different actors have portrayed each character as a child over the last three decades. Different film makers found aspects of these actors salient to the portrayal of the character.



Fig. 2: SC Bill (OV)



Fig. 3: SC Bill (NV)

The actors which have played Bill in both adaptations capture the essential qualities of Bill very well. The character's personality shines through the actors' portrayal. Notably, the stutter in the second film is well done. The scene before George leaves to play in the rain is depicted differently in the film versions. The mini-series portrayed the conversation accurately. In Muschietti's version, the relationship between the brothers is depicted in a more loving manner. Other relationships in the book are depicted differently on film. Bill's wife Audra is depicted as harsh in the book, whereas, she is a soft, loving woman in the mini-series.

An important part in the book is the blood oath. In the mini-series, they do not cut their palms, however, Bill still initiates the oath. In the new film the palm cutting is included, again, introduced by Bill which further diminishes Stan's role.



Fig. 4: SC Eddie (OV)



Fig. 5: SC Eddie (NV)

Eddie is described as fearful and cautious in the book. The mini-series realised this quite well and conveys the cautious nature of the child. In the film, Eddie seems to be not only fearful but also hysterical.

In King's book, Eddie is married to a woman who strongly resembles his mother. He also had several failed relationships. In the mini-series, Eddie is desperately lonely and inexperienced. Only shortly before entering the creature's lair, he admits that he never had a girlfriend and is still a virgin. Considering Eddie's death, it is sad to see he never truly loved anyone.

Richard Tozier



Fig. 6: SC Richie (OV)



Fig.7: SC Richie (NV)

The actors of both films do a great job in representing Richie's joking around and speaking at the wrong time. The boys do look quite different, but both have striking look. Both actors wear large glasses, which are one of his signature features.

Stanley Uris



Fig. 8: SC Stan (OV)



Fig. 9: SC Stan (NV)

In both film adaptations, Stan is in the background, even more so than in the book. The boy does not speak much and there are very few scenes in which he is featured.

Ben Hanscom



Fig. 10: SC Ben (OV)



Fig. 11: SC Ben (NV)

Ben Hanscom is represented differently in both films. In Wallace's version the boy is much more mature and autonomous and seems older than he is in the new film. This might be because the character is heavier set. Brandon Crane, who plays Ben in the mini-series, appears taller while Jeremy Taylor, the actor in the new film, is chubbier. In the new film, Ben takes on the group's historian taking over major aspects of Mike's role.

Beverly Marsh(/Rogan)



Fig. 12: SC Beverly (OV)



Fig. 13: SC Beverly (NV)

The actresses who portray Beverly are significantly different from each other. Emily Perkins, who plays Bev in the mini-series, looks like she could be eleven years old. Although she appears quite young, she is mature. On the other hand, in the new film, Beverly is much more womanly and mature. She conveys the spirit of King's description.

One of the more prominent features of the 2017 adaptation is that Bev's father is depicted as sexually abusive as opposed to violent (cf. Weston 28). In the book, the physical abuse is the

focus and the sexual thoughts are in Al Marsh's head. The new film has Al Marsh acting on both the violent and sexual impulses.

Both adaptations do not address the boys losing their virginity to Beverly. This seems quite early for this type of sexual exploration in children. Film makers would at least be heavily questioned for their decision to include this event. Beverly is everyone's first love in the book but not the films.

The love-triangle between Beverly, Ben, and Bill differs in the two film adaptations. In the miniseries, Bill and Beverly fall in love at first sight, which is not the case in the book. However, the book does not contain the kiss shared between Beverly and Bill as children which is in the new film. Neither adaptation handled this relationship accurately. The mini-series depicts Ben and Beverly finding each other after the final encounter with the monster and leaving together for a shared future.

Mike Hanlon



Fig. 14: SC Mike (OV)



Fig. 15: SC Mike (NV)

Mike's life is nothing like the book in the 2017 adaptation. Mike's parents died in a fire and he is home-schooled in the film. His role is diminished by Ben's assumption of the historian role.

The Bullies



Fig. 16: SC Bullies (OV)



Fig. 17: SC Bullies (NV)

In both screen adaptations Patrick Hockstetter has a small role. The bullies look very different the two versions. In the 2017 film, Henry is not so much of a typical bully but more a pure psychopath. It is a combination of Henry and Patrick's personalities. In the 1990 version, there is only bullying behaviour. He is the typical schoolyard tormentor.

It



Fig. 18: SC Pennywise (OV)



Fig. 19: SC Pennywise (NV)

The clown is represented differently in both adaptations. Tim Curry is Pennywise, the Dancing Clown in the mini-series and is described as “a mixture of camp, threatening, sadistic pleasure [that] draws on the same ability that he showed as Frank-N-Furter in the Rocky Horror Picture Show” (Browning, *SK SS* 20). Due to his work as a voice actor, Curry injects a level of fear few others would have been able to do (cf. Browning, *SK SS* 20). In the scene in which Georgie speaks to Pennywise, the clown is not threatening until his voice changes from pleasant to snarling. In the new film, it is opposite. Pennywise's voice is pleasant but the clown is scary from the start. Moreover, the clown's name, Robert Gray, is not mentioned in Muschietti's version at all. Wallace gave the clown a typical colourful costume in the original miniseries. In the new adaption, the costume looks as described in King's novel. His balloons and the phrase,

“you’ll float too”, are prominent in the 2017 film. In the creature’s lair the people float and are not inside spider webs. This new representation is more appropriate for the clown’s slogan.



Fig. 20: SC suit (OV)



Fig. 21: SC suit (NV)

The spider-like creature in the final battle of the mini-series is one of its biggest flaws. It might be like the one King described but it looks like it is plastic. Which is not particularly horrifying. This diminishes the climax of the story, like the book.



Fig. 22: SC spider (OV)



Fig. 23: SC spider close-up (OV)

In general, both films are not able to depict the telepathic battle which takes place between the monster and The Losers. This is understandable as it is hard to depict a scene which relies on internal thoughts and multiple viewpoints. Nevertheless, physically injuring the creature is common to both adaptations. The original miniseries is less dramatic. The first fight gets lost amidst the flashbacks and the interaction with the adulthood story. In the new version, The Losers use different weapons and tactics to fight the creature. The way the children fight the creature may differ from the book but they succeed.

What is generally unclear, but more so in the new adaptation, are the distinctions between the well-house, the house on Neibolt street, and the cement cylinder, also called a morlock-hole by the children. In the new adaptation these are conflated and made into one.

Critics have compared the two versions extensively, especially at the time of the release of the film in 2017. Child compares the two versions in *The Guardian*:

Released in 1990 in two parts by ABC in the US, the first *It* is a troubling beast. Frankly, if there was ever a good case for a remake, this was, well, it. While Curry's performance is among his most memorable, the films suffer from the lower production values inherent in television movie-making at the time. The acting is pretty shonky in places, and the giant spider that *It* transforms into for the climactic battle is one of the most infamous examples of terrible special effects work ever seen on any screen, big or small. By contrast, the new *It* feels loved by its makers. Muschietti gives a glimpse into the dark heart of each member of the Losers Club, the gang of outsiders who decide to rid the small town of Derry, Maine, of the hideous Pennywise. Most of us, while growing up, came into contact with a Henry Bowers, the sociopathic local bully who terrorises the geeks and freaks of Derry in King's book. And while the movie personifies the torment and horror of teenage existence as a burlesque clown, we can all recognise the feeling of always having to keep an eye out for danger. This *It*'s chills feel genuine and earned (Child par. 3f).

Stephen King stated that although it is very different he liked the new screen adaption very much, partly because it was different from his book. King has also said he approves of all the changes that were made to get this result (cf. Kyriazis par. 9). All in all, each adaptation has its own charm. Interestingly, most viewers like both versions.

3. Conclusion

It is complex novel, which leaps from the page due to the in-depth characterisation, specific structure, and detailed descriptions. Numerous motifs, events and other aspects are taken from King's personal experience and this enhances the descriptions of everything in the novel. King uses similar aspects, motifs and kinds of characters repeatedly, with which he creates and further builds up within the King Universe. Horror stories profit from the reader's imagination. King incorporates motifs of childhood, belief, transformation, and anthropomorphism. He is aware of how effective these motifs are when it comes to scaring readers and creating a connection with the characters.

King's books are successful because of his unique writing style. However, when turning a novel into a film changes are often necessary due to budget and realisation possibilities. These changes may often affect the story, which presumably disappoints people who read the book beforehand, but does not make the film a negative experience. Choosing actors, especially for the protagonists, can be quite a task because readers might have imagined the person differently. Due to King's elaborate descriptions, one might assume it is easy to find an actor who fits perfectly, however, this is never the case.

The two film versions can be compared, considering changes in the story and technical possibilities, but in the end both film versions are well made and appreciated by the King audience. When it comes to King's works, it might be impossible to find a complete in-depth analysis of his works. In examining the most interesting aspects of *It* some insight has been gained into the highly complex world of Stephen King.

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5. Appendix

Table of Figures

This lists the pictures which were used from the mini-series (OV) and the new film (NV). The pictures were screenshotted directly and the minute it was taken is given. The pictures are original except from cutting them in size and making the dark pictures lighter, so that they can be seen nicely.

Figure	Title	Minute/source	Film version
Figure 1	Poster (NV)	http://www.monkeysfightingrobots.com/it-review-the-tale-of-two-different-movies/ (New Line Cinema)	NV
Figure 2	Bill (OV)	38:40	OV
Figure 3	Bill (NV)	01: 04: 41	NV
Figure 4	Eddie (OV)	38:38	OV
Figure 5	Eddie (NV)	01: 09: 29	NV
Figure 6	Richie (OV)	39:59	OV
Figure 7	Richie (NV)	01:16:15	NV
Figure 8	Stan (OV)	39:56	OV
Figure 9	Stan (NV)	01:09:42	NV
Figure 10	Ben (OV)	25:33	OV
Figure 11	Ben (NV)	16:27	NV
Figure 12	Beverly (OV)	38:39	OV
Figure 13	Beverly (NV)	45:35	NV
Figure 14	Mike (OV)	01:03:20	OV
Figure 15	Mike (NV)	19:30	NV
Figure 16	Bullies (OV)	25:01	OV
Figure 17	Bullies (NV)	01:06:17	NV
Figure 18	Pennywise (OV)	11:15	OV
Figure 19	Pennywise (NV)	50:13	NV
Figure 20	suit (OV)	30:20	OV
Figure 21	suit (NV)	50:24	NV
Figure 22	spider (OV)	2:56:32	OV
Figure 23	spider cose-up (OV)	2:57:16	OV

Abstract

The world of Stephen King is highly complex and sprawling. He is one of the best-known authors in the world. There is much to discuss with respect to his numerous books, short stories, and essays and his prolific writing career. This thesis focuses on the novel *It*, however also other works by King will be analysed for their influence on the novel and the screen adaptations. The narrative structure, links to King's life and other works, and how the story translates to the screen are the main areas of focus.

Creating a shared understanding is crucial to this analysis, and so, many terms are defined and discussed at the outset. King's stories seem realistic because he is inspired by what he experienced. The connections among his works are multitudinous and can be found throughout the narrative and the entirety of the King Universe. His unique writing style means it is likely his stories will be made into films, which is a frequent occurrence. In the case of *It*, television executives acquired the production rights and aired a miniseries in 1990. Recently, the novel has been adapted to a major motion picture. Screen writers, directors, and actors have quite a task before them, translating the rich tapestry created by an author to the screen. Thus, differences between the novel and the film versions will be extensively discussed inclusive of information about why the details were changed and how this might affect audiences. The conclusion will summarise the findings.

German Abstract

Die Welt von Stephen King ist sehr komplex und umfangreich. Er ist einer der bekanntesten Schriftsteller unserer Zeit und es gäbe in Hinsicht auf seine Karriere, seine unzähligen Bücher und Kurzgeschichten unendlich viel zu thematisieren. Diese Diplomarbeit konzentriert sich auf das Werk *Es*, und zwar nicht ausschließlich auf den Roman, sondern auch auf die dazugehörigen Filmadaptionen. Hauptsächlich wird die Struktur der Geschichte, Verbindungen zu Kings Leben und zu einigen anderen Werken, sowie die Verfilmung erörtert.

Um diese Analyse verständlich zu machen, muss zuerst eine Basis geschaffen werden, indem bestimmte Begriffe und der Kontext erklärt werden. Seine Geschichten sind von tatsächlichen Ereignissen inspiriert und erzielen darum beim Leser eine große Wirkung. Wer Kings Universum kennt und darauf achtet, erkennt die durchgängigen Verbindungen zwischen seinen Werken und autobiografischen Details. Durch seinen einzigartigen Schreibstil sind seine Geschichten beliebtes Filmmaterial. Im Falle von *Es* wurden sogar bereits zwei erfolgreiche Verfilmungen produziert, die erste 1990 und ein Remake im Herbst 2017. Für alle Beteiligten war und ist es, da ein zweiter Teil der Neuverfilmung folgt, eine Herausforderung die detailreichen Beschreibungen von King in einen Film zu verwandeln. Der Unterschied zwischen dem Roman und den Verfilmungen wird in Hinsicht auf die Modifizierung der Geschichte und dem daraus resultierenden Effekt auf die Zuschauer besprochen.