Lovecraftian Horrors – Space and Literature in Silent Hill

Šimičević, Matea

Master's thesis / Diplomski rad

2018

Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj: **University of Zadar / Sveučilište u Zadru**

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:162:827492

Rights / Prava: In copyright/Zaštićeno autorskim pravom.

Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2025-03-25**

Sveučilište u Zadru

Odjel za anglistiku
Diplomski sveučilišni studij engleskog jezika i književnosti; smjer: nastavnički
(dvopredmetni)

Matea Šimičević

Lovecraftian Horrors – Space and Literature in Silent Hill

Diplomski rad

Zadar, 2018.

Sveučilište u Zadru

Odjel za anglistiku
Diplomski sveučilišni studij engleskog jezika i književnosti; smjer: nastavnički (dvopredmetni)

Lovecraftian Horrors – Space and Literature in Silent Hill

Diplomski rad

Student/ica:

Matea Šimičević

Mentor/ica:

izv.prof..dr.sc. Marko Lukić

Zadar,2018.

Izjava o akademskoj čestitosti

Ja, **Matea Šimičević,** ovime izjavljujem da je moj **diplomski** rad pod naslovom **Lovecraftian Horrors – Space and Literature in Silent Hill**rezultat mojega vlastitog rada, da se temelji na mojim istraživanjima te da se oslanja na izvore i radove navedene u bilješkama i popisu literature. Ni jedan dio mojega rada nije napisan na nedopušten način, odnosno nije prepisan iz necitiranih radova i ne krši bilo čija autorska prava.

Izjavljujem da ni jedan dio ovoga rada nije iskorišten u kojem drugom radu pri bilo kojoj drugoj visokoškolskoj, znanstvenoj, obrazovnoj ili inoj ustanovi.

Sadržaj mojega rada u potpunosti odgovara sadržaju obranjenoga i nakon obrane uređenoga rada.

Zadar, 24. rujna 2018.

1. Introduction

Over the years, in many scientific fields, the issue of space has been heavily neglected. Zieleniec argues, however, that the situation has slightly changed for better, at least until the last quarter of the twentieth century (8). More and more publications have been published regarding the spatiality and therefore it has slowly become acknowledged as a fundamental area for both social analysis as well as social enquiry (Zieleniec 8). Spatiality and the analysis of space are now definitely considered as interesting elements which very often become a part of scientific research regarding various fields of society, architecture or geography. The applicability of space and its' analysis are usually grounded in a theoretical framework and usually provides us with basic insights into the development of social relations as well as with important analytical framework that can be used in future studies (Zieleniec 10). According to Leino spatiality can also be considered as one of the key paradigms which can be used to study new media (2), including video games which is exactly what will be discussed and covered in the following course of this thesis.

This thesis will try to demonstrate and implicate theoretical reading and the analysis of space in the horror video game series of *Silent Hill*. Different aspects of space, as well as spatial theories, will be analyzed in relation to the influence of H. P. Lovecraft's selected narratives. There are many conducted studies dealing with different aspects of video games, but few of them actually deal with the analysis of space of a video game which is a crucial element for the embodiment of the player with a video game and eventually the reason for games' popularity. Through the gameplay, the player can create different emotions and experiences which will eventually affect the player's perception of the video game. The functioning of different levels and elements within these particular games is emphasized and

constructed in relation to Lovecraft's narratives, contributing in such a way to the effect of horror which characterizes these games. The analysis of space provided in this work will be based on the theoretical framework of most significant figures in modern history such as Henri Lefebvre and Yi-Fu Tuan whose theoretical approaches are considered applicable to understand the main concepts of space and its main elements in video games.

The first part of the thesis focuses on the review of key terms regarding video games and their development through history. The second part of the paper deals with the theoretical framework necessary to understand spatial paradigms and concepts of space in general introducing the concepts such as Yi-Fu Tuan's *experiential perspective* and Lefebvre's *production of space* together with the modified *trans-space* considered primarily applicable to video games. Hence, the body of the paper deals with the introduction to literature genres in general and cosmic horror followed by the analysis of both videogames and Lovecraft's chosen stories primarily focusing on various different levels regarding the narrative, sound, mood and atmosphere as well as their interaction within the environment itself.

2. Development of video games industry

The development of computer games started around 1948 with the invention of Cathode-Ray Tube Amusement Device[1], an analog device which projected electronic beams used for playing a game. When it comes to naming the first video game ever, many historical data claim that it was the *Tennis for two* (Rabin 4). This game was a huge hit back in the days and from this point of view, it was very interesting concept to begin with. The game was played on an analog computer connected to an oscilloscope. Two players were supposed to hit the ball across the net and each hit would make a loud noise which shows that this device also

---

[1] Invented in January 25, 1947 and issued on December 14, 1948. The inventors were Thomas T. Goldsmith and estle Ray Mann (Wolf, 2012)

had its own, unique sound effects. However, with the release of Atari's *Pong* in 1970's we can say that the industry of gaming started to develop into a leading industry of our modern time. According to Rabin *Pong* launched its developer Atari into a leader of videogames making and is still one of the most important names in the gaming industry (5).

In 2016 the gaming industry achieved a profit of 99.6 billion dollars which surpasses the profit of both film and book industry[2]. However, Egenfeldt, Smith and Tosca argue that it is not fair to compare the gaming industry with the previous two since the conditions of achieving profit are not equal (12). The movie industry is making a profit not only through movie screening and box office earnings, but also selling DVD's, projecting licence and television broadcasts whereas gaming industry earns money strictly through direct sales to their costumers. Thanks to the Internet and advanced technology such as smartphones, there are some modern ways of extra earnings in the gaming industry as well. This primarily refers to „unpopular" ads that often pop-up on our smartphones and subscription fees needed for online playing which provide their makers with an additional profit.

Besides the profit, the importance of making a good video game testifies the fact that, in average around 100 specialized experts are involved in making and creating sound, graphics, game design etc. for only one video game (Engenfeldt et al. 16). In this case we are talking about the „big names" of the gaming industry also known as big budget „AAA" titles whose name is already established in the gaming industry and every new sequel insures big profit to their developers. Some of the examples are *Call of Duty, Grand Theft Auto* as well as *Silent Hill* and *Resident Evil.* However, the gaming industry is not only about „big" games. The industry is filled with less developed and a lot cheaper, often free video games made by small studios or individuals. These type of games are so-called „low budget" games which often

---

[2]https://newzoo.com/insights/articles/global-games-market-reaches-99-6-billion-2016-mobile-generating-37

look different than others. The individual and unique style is one of the main features of these type of games but unfortunately, they are not making a whole lot of money to their makers.

According to Sindik, children prefer watching TV and playing video games over reading books and listening to the music (7). This data only confirms the fact that playing video games is one of if not the most popular way of spending free time. We can say that playing video games is a common part of our everyday life, whether we play it on PC, console or even on our smartphones. Due to the rapid technology development, the games have become much more complexed and sofisticated resulting in much more realistic simulation of the real life. We must not forget one of the newest technology called *Virtual Reality*(VR) which simulates video games in 3D making the player feel like he or she is really participating inside of the game itself. If the *Resident Evil* is not scary by itself, playing it in 3D will definitely make the player feel like actually being the main character of the game. How successful and popular this new technology is in the gaming world reflects the data that over 100.000 people have played *Resident Evil 7*in only the first year of its release

3.   The 'magic' circle of playing

As briefly demonstrated in the previous chapter, it is obvious that games and culture are closely intertwined. Due to the development of the technology and changes of behaviour and habits in people's lives, playing games, for example on our smartphone while waiting for a bus at a bus station, seem to represent inseparable part of our modern day living. There are not many publications related to the relationship between culture and games, but the one conducted by the Dutch scholar Huizinga in 1938 is definitely worth mentioning. In his book *Homo Ludens,* Huizinga emphasizes the importance of play and its' position in a culture (9). In his concept of the 'magic circle', Huizinga explains this circle as a place in which the play takes place and while inside of that circle, the person who is playing is completely excluded

from the outside i.e. „real“ world (75). Therefore, it could be interesting to implicate his concept in terms of video games.

According to Salen and Zimmerman, the concept of the 'magic circle' can assurely be taken as a good starting point in understanding the gameplay or the space in which that gameplay takes place (9). This space can be imagined as a place in which the player has to obey rules that have to be followed and executed within a certain time without taking into consideration everything that happens outside of that circle. Of course, this behaviour of following rules is common in our society in „real life“, but if we look on this concept from the video games point of view, not all rules that we follow in our society are considered rules in video games and vice versa. Salen and Zimmerman also argue that there are situations in which boundaries between play and „real“ life can easily be replaced with one another. That is one of the reasons why this concept of 'magic circle' is applicable into the world of gaming. Whenever a person is involved in playing a video game, that person alone decides how much of the outside world will be available inside of their own 'magic circle'. The person can easily decide to discard every norm or rule from the outside world and make a clear cut between the 'magic circle' he or she is within and the 'real' world. Hence, it is noticeable that the formation of this so-called magic circle is solely individual and cannot be generalized. However, it's existence is unquestionable and is definitely present within the world of gaming.

Touching upon this theoretical framework, Juul argues that the concept of the circle should be replaced with another concept – the concept of the 'puzzle piece' (63). Since the technology and therefore gaming has become an inseparable element of our lifestyle, the concept of 'puzzle piece' seems even more appropriate and much more up-to-date than the previous one. Based on this concept, our society and lifestyle can be seen as a puzzle and gaming is only one piece of that puzzle that fits into its' own place. However, every individual decides for itself how big that piece of the puzzle will be and how much space of the whole

puzzle it will take. In other words, each individual decides how much time and place video games will take in his or hers life and how important that place will be for themselves. Regarding space and attempts to understand some basic definitions and concepts of spatiality, in the next chapter some of the most reliable concepts and spatial theorists will be analyzed. Through their definition of space and concepts of spatiality, some implications will be used to understand the spatiality in certain video games, which is one of the main goals of this paper after all.

4. Theoretical framework

When thinking about space, we primarily think about certain rooms, houses, landscapes or cities which we encounter and interact with on our daily basis. However, if we rely on Relph, space can be defined as an entity that cannot be directly described or analyzed (7). The notion of space has been an inspiration to a lot of scientists and researchers, but the formulation of only one framework which could be applied to understanding space in general, is not quite possible. According to Relph there are several different basic types of space that we can distinguish (8). The first one deals with unselfconscious and pragmatic experience, while the second refers to self-consciously experienced space. However, the lived or experienced space cannot be neglected since it can be crucial in understanding space. Of course, lived and experienced space is not all the same and it differs from categories or place relationships since not all humans act the same and not all cultures have the same customs.

The first type of space, pragmatic or primitive, involves the most primitive and unselfconscious behaviours we conduct without any reflection. It is structured to create our basic exeprience which further develop as we grow old. By the movement of our body, humans learn and develop basic human senses such as knowing what is right and what is left or how to move forward and backward. Senses also help a human to learn what is within and

beyond reach or hearing and seeing, providing basic orientation dimensions needed for experiencing space (Tuan 389). Experienced or perceptual space is the one centered around not only our basic body senses but also our living environment. According to Matore „we do not grasp space only by our senses…we live in it, we project our personality into it, we are tied to it by emotional bonds; space is not just perceived…it is lived." (qtd. in Relph 10). It can be said that space is not just an empty room, but it is created and constructed by our own personality, objects, imagination and movement. The situation is similar in video games as well. A room within the video game cannot simply be treated as an empty space because it is pre-ordered to contain certain information and objects which serve to automatically activate the players imagination together with the movement in order to complete the story i.e. the gameplay and finally reach the goal of the game itself. Of course, the experience of the player can definitely determine the time and way of completing certain tasks which shows the importance of experience which is a bit further elaborated in the following chapter.

4.1. Yi-Fu Tuan's experiential perspective

According to Tuan the experience is an important part of every human being; it is a fusion of thoughts and feelings (10). Knowledge based on the experience helps the person to interpret and construct the reality. The experience that is mentioned does not refer to years of living but it refers to a whole range of human senses such as touch, taste, vision and hearing. These senses activate visual perception and indirect mode of symbolization while experience is directed to the external world. Experience, together with senses actually enables the humans to establish and maintain the sense of space. Through movements and body interaction humans can perceive space they find themselves in (Tuan 12). Changing the direction and moving from one room to another, the human is directly experiencing the space and thanks to

the ability of eyesight, humans can experience and acquire space in three dimensions. Along with movement, touch and visual perception allow us to construct reality as a world of objects rather than some ordinary patterns (Tuan, 390). The ability to recognize certain objects and ability to think about them enables us to perceive the relations between objects and eventually – space. If the main character is moving through space and runs into a certain symbol, sign or an object, the player can immediately connect its meaning to a certain expectations thanks to his or hers' previous real-world knowledge of certain symbol or sign meaning. For example, when the character moves through space and stumbles upon the blinking traffic light, the player will automatically assume that something is not how it is supposed to be and that something is wrong which will probably result in players' reinforced attention and 'standby' behaviour. This is an example of the role of experience in real life which can also be transferred and can affect the perception of the player inside the virtual world as well.

Tuan also argues that a „place is a special kind of object" (12) whereas space is created by the capability of movement. Through the movements directed by places and objects, humans can experience various locations which are defined by or linked with a variety of objects. Tuan also raises a question if the humans can construct spatial experience through skin sensitivity as well (14)? The answer is that they can. However, it is limited. If we look at the real world situations in which a person is interacting with various objects on a daily basis, we can agree with Tuan that skin sensitivity does contribute to the human spatial experience. However, if we take this theory into the virtual world, we can say that the situation is similar but the experience is a bit different. While playing a certain video game, a person can construct the notion of space through the movements of the character. However, when that character is interacting with a certain object inside of the game, a person who is playing that game cannot physically feel that object but based on his or her real-world experience can assume the texture, weight and other features of that certain object. When James Sunderland

in *Silent Hill 2* takes a piece of paper that serves as a letter from his deceased wife Mary, we as players can identify with his senses of touch since we already know the basic structure, material and weight of one piece of paper. Thanks to this experience, the person who is playing the game can easily connect with the virtual character and create the feeling of an actual participation inside of that virtual space.

In order to define or understand certain spatial paradigms or the analysis, Tuan argues that we need to use our thoughts, data and language. He argues that „the study of space is thus the study of people's spatial feelings and ideas in the stream of experience" (Tuan 388). However, not all intellection of space has to be so abstract. Hence, if we connect our experience with the space we are directly in, that space might replicate our future intentions or current mood. Nevertheless, this notion is not equally applicable to all human beings. People are different and therefore each human is unique by his or hers individual perception of space. According to Tuan the constructed space i.e. the space that is providing us with cues for our behaviour is not the same for all individuals or groups of people (389). The reason for this might be in the different cultures people belong to and customs they are taught to obey. If some existential space is meaningful within a certain culture, it does not imply that it is meaningful to the members of some other group or culture (Relph 12). For instance, 'thumbs up' sign in most countries and cultures is considered as a positive sign saying 'everything is alright' message, but in countries such as Afganistan or Iran that gesture has rude and above all negative connotation. Therefore, we can conclude that the experiential experience of space is primarily constructed individually and it is definitely interwined with culture. Culture defines how we look at a certain object, movement or experience, whether it is a positive or a negative one. This all helps us construct and perceive the space around us which we usually bring with us when interacting with virtuality including video games.

4.2. Lefebvre's Production of Space

Another important author and spatial theorist, Henri Lefebvre has also developed the spatial theory primarily based on the theory of everyday life. At the beginning of his reflection on spatiality, Lefebvre argues about the conceptual triad which consists of the spatial practices, representations of space and representational space (33). Spatial practices consist of elements such as production, reproduction and characteristics that define social formation. Various different codes, symbols and ideas shape and create the second part of this triad whereas the directly lived space of the artists, writers or philosophers present the third part i.e. the representational space. According to Zhang, from this triad emerges Lefebvre's triadic model of space: conceived, perceived and lived (220). In order to explain this notion of the triadic model in the graphic and interesting way for easier understanding, we should call upon Zhang's example of three cameras (222). If we imagine three cameras filming the same video game, the first camera serves to collect various data or numbers such as the length of the room or the height of the man inside that room and represents the conceived space. The second camera which is filming the movement of the man i.e. the character within the game, gestures, body language and so on represents perceived space whereas the third camera focused on different emotions of the player behind the controls and his inner subjectivity fits into the lived space of the subject being filmed. Therefore, three cameras filming the exact same event are focused on completely different parts of that event generating different data, yet at the same time refer to whole space they all represent (222). Eventually, it can be concluded how these three levels of space do not juxtapose, but completely overlap.

Lefebvre's definition and the notion of space could also be implemented in understanding the space in video games. According to Taylor the experiential aspect of video games, in comparison to the other two aspects, is pretty ignored and neglected. In order for the space of

the video game to become representational, it is crucial that the interface of the game itself becomes naturalized (18). The reason for this type of need lies in the fact that video games as such are spaces both observed and engaged directly. Therefore, we can say that video games are primarily experiential spaces. The games' narrative and its' space, as well as the player's position, are very important elements in experiencing any space in video games, regardless of the games' form or space limits (Taylor 19). From the phenomenological point of view, there is no existence of space without constituating representational i.e. lived space. The person has to become a part of the character, whether acting as one or playing with one in order to create the story. Only through real involvement with the character a sense of the space can be created and experienced. Whatever occurs during the involvement creates mood, evokes an emotional response and constructs a story surrounding the actions or inactions of the character itself (19).

It goes without saying that the complete involvement of the person in the space of the video game requires the complete immersion into the games' world. Even though the player of the video game uses a physical interface such as a keyboard or a controller, the players' mind and attention must be directed into the space inside of the video game in order to perceive that space and reach the best possible immersion. In other words, the immersion has to be so deep that the player must feel like actually going through the same situations like the character he or she is in control with. Therefore, in order to reach full immersion, the perceived space must become lived..

4.2.1. Trans-space in video games

In an attempt to implicate Lefebvre's concept of space on video games, the term *trans-space* must be mentioned. According to Wade, trans-space is based on the notion of Lefebvre's triad of conceived, perceived and lived space (78). Just as it can be seen in the previous chapter,

perceived space can be briefly defined as one's interpretation of the surroundings. For example, a person who is playing *Silent Hill* on PC might be aware of the fact that no matter how scared the game might be, it is just a game. The players' consciousness will be aware of the player's surroundings and will interpret it as just a video game. On the other hand, if the player is playing *Resident Evil* using VR technology, the player's conscious might be „tricked" due to the 3D surroundings and therefore the player's interpretation of the games' space will be more realistic, emotional and in this case much scarier.

According to Wade conceived space is produced by all video games through their graphical representation (78). It is the space filled with already pre-defined limitations and measurements resulting in highly abstract or hyper-realistic spaces. Highly abstract can refer to spaces which do not exist in the real world and are made especially for the benefits of the game such as the *Racoon City* in *Resident Evil,* while hyper-realistic can include buildings that are based on some real-world architecture like for example buildings in *Silent Hill* which are based on the image of the typical American small town community. Even though it is highly influenced by both conceived and perceived space, lived space is often treated as a separate entity in which everyday and extraordinary take place (Wade 78). The lived space theory can also be implemented in the world of gaming for several reasons. First, the video games can easily become lived space due to the fact that an average player spends a great amount of hours playing a certain game. More hard-core players can even spend up to ten to twelve hours playing only one single game like very popular MMORPG *World of Warcraft.* Furthermore, each day there are more and more video games that simulate everyday situations in life such as *The Sims* in which a player has to complete ordinary everyday tasks such as eating, sleeping, working etc. Also, we cannot discard the fact that in order to play a certain video game, physical components are needed and those components, usually in a form of

console or PC are located inside the lived space of our home, whether in a living room or bedroom (Wade, 78).

The triadic model presented above allows the fluidity of the movement between spaces giving this *trans-space* ability to inhibit one or more types of space simultaneously (78). For instance, a person can physically sit in the living room and play *Silent Hill* on PC, but at the same time be mentally immerged into the virtual space going through different obstacles and psychological boundaries present in the game itself. Therefore, it can be suggested that *trans-space* actually serves best to understand the spatiality in a virtual environment. In virtual worlds, the individuals create perceptual space by manipulating and interacting with objects, while at the same time experiencing that virtual world through their senses (Saunders, Rutkowski, van Genuchten and Vogel 3). By building their metacognitive reflection through the interactions involved inside the virtual space, the individuals create a completely new cognitive space. Thus, it is obvious that in order to create new mental representations of virtual place, perceptual and cognitive space must be intertwined and not completely separated (Saunders 3). Individuals who are inexperienced in interaction with virtual objects within the virtual world, have not yet developed their metacognitive representation and therefore require a certain period of time to adjust. Saunders et.al. also argue that only experienced users who already possess mental representations of virtual space can adjust their cognitive abilities to use and evaluate virtual objects in an appropriate way, for a complete immersion (4). It is also important to keep in mind that long before the virtuality and video games, people often immerged into the imaginary world of books. Long before computers and consoles, people relied on their literary knowledge only the lucky ones could afford. Many writers used their skills of writing to depict certain images and imaginations that served others to move from and shortly forget about their everyday problems and life situations. From this

point now, we can say that video games often serve as an expansion or better yet visual presentation of various genres which used to be present only in books and novels.

5. Defining the genres in literature

Hence, when thinking about genres, especially those in literary work, it is important to have in mind that no literary work, unlike video games, will completely belong to a certain category. Fowler argues that the writers often mix genres that are available at that moment to create a single literary piece (37). Due to the lack of fixated categories, it is almost certain that genres possess the small potential of taxonomy. Therefore, we can say that because of the absence of fixed and pre-determined differences between genres, as well as their abilities to borrow elements from another - similar genre, genres cannot be treated as clearly determined and unchangeable categories.

Furthermore, if we look at literary genres, they can be imagined as a sort of contract between the writer, publisher and the reader (Ognjanović 18). While creating a certain genre, the writer has to have in mind at least three factors such as; the history, i.e. the tradition the chosen genre belongs to as well as present and the future, that is the reader who comes in contact with already predetermined expectations. According to Juvan readers' genre identification and knowledge about a certain genre, effects their decision about reading that text as well with what expectations they approach the reading (5). Ognjanović concludes that alongside the motives of writing, the *differentia specifica* of one genre is also its' aesthetic intention to which it serves and expectations it is suppose to create (27). The spectre of expectations does not only imply to the effect one genre can create (e.g. fright in horror), but also the experience of the deed based on the connotation of the subgenre or an author whose name is already established as a synonym for certain genre such as H.P. Lovecraft for *cosmic* horror. In those

cases, the approach to genre principles are already defined enough to create a certain expectations on the behalf of the audience.

Since it is a genre with an emphasized aesthetic intention related to the perception of the reader and its' effective cause (evocation of shock or dread) on the reader, the theory of reception is primarily applicable to defining the genre of horror (Ognjanović 27). The genre of horror is often reproduced through the evocation of tradition, intense and surprise while playing with the readers' expectations. The mentioned effect is visible throughout the development of the genre as such and it can be traced from English romance, over gothic to horror defined in the works of E.A.Poe or H.P.Lovecraft. Therefore it is important to define the evolution of the horror genre which will be covered in the following chapter.

5.1. The birth of genre: from gothic to cosmic horror

For over two decades now, the gothic genre has been a subject of scientific interpretations. Scientists, sociologists, writers, movie and video games directors often use it as a never-ending source of inspiration for their work and creations. According to Kožul, the gothic genre sort of reflects behaviours and reactions of people from the time of big social changes that occured during the late 18th and early 19th century (1). The French revolution strongly affected the notion of class as well as the identity of the society in which the gothic novels were closely connected with the concern about societal hierarchy that rapidly changed. When it comes to gothic literature, it is widely known that Horace Walpole (1717 – 1797) is considered the creator of the first *gothic* novel named *The Castel of Otranto* published in 1764.

According to Balk, the earlier versions of gothic literature were usually set in castles, monasteries or labyrinths containing hidden passages, secret rooms etc (3). However, in later

Gothic novels the setting was continually expanded so the plot of the gothic novels usually took place in an abandoned warehouses, libraries and even houses (4). The setting in gothic novels did not only rely on the buildings but also on open spaces. Therefore, Balk states that gothic structures are usually surrounded by the gothic environment as well. The surrounding mostly involves big, mysterious landscapes and fields rich with flowers, usually sunflowers. Steep mountains or cliffs followed by the bad weather such as storm or thunder are also considered a characteristic of the environment in gothic novels (5). It is also important to mention the mood in gothic novels which is created and modified by various descriptions of smell, thoughts, feelings and sounds. These elements are all used to create a certain mood on the behalf of the reader and as a result, evoke a certain feeling usually fear or dread. Regarding the present used in writing, Balk also states that the „gothic stories were mostly set in the past and presented to the audience as accounts that could not be verified or proven false" (6).

Nowadays, the gothic elements are often used as an inspiration in modern society, especially in the movie and gaming industry. The gothic plot usually includes characters that often reassess their personal boundaries, as well as the boundaries of the society they are in. These elements can be traced in *Silent Hill 2* video game in which the main character James Sunderland requestions his psyche and personal boundaries with his „own conscience to consult" (Balk 16) which will be explained more thoroughly further in this study. Thus, it is obvious that genres change and evolve over the years together with the societies and technology, but still holding on certain elements that define them.

According to Ognjanović, Edgar Alan Poe performed the final step in establishing the horror we are nowadays familiar with by creating the short story; the most appropriate form for conducting the gothic intentions with the main goal to produce a strong, unique and focused impression of the reader (49). That is why the length of the story is considered

important and short stories result with a much bigger effect on the reader, without losing its' emotions and the stream of thoughts. These two opposed literary forms, novel and short story, had a breaking role in the evolution of horror as a genre. The short story, however, holds an advantage in transferring emotions to the reader. While reading a short story, the reader can completely interpret and absorb writers' intention without worrying about getting tired or interrupted. Therefore, it can be concluded that the genre of horror we are used to reading in this modern times, can be defined as a genre which is specifically determined to evoke different individuals' cognitive and emotional effect. One of the best representatives for this type of writing is without a doubt Howard P. Lovecraft.

6. H. P. Lovecraft and cosmic horror

The gothic novel does not only rely on the horror that evokes fear and dread, but also includes other themes, such as cosmic horror. According to Ognjanović, cosmic horror puts an emphasis on evoking what collides with forces whose proportions significantly overcome the power of human understanding and control (193). Even though those forces can contain shapes that are human like or familiar to humans, such as storms or epidemic, it is presented in such a way that reaches something transcendent making it extremely unrealistic with fantasy features. The mystery alone, presented in cosmic horror, uses a direct way to evoke horror which requestions humans' place in the universe. Humans' intellect is one of the main motives closely connected to the cosmic horror. The horror presented in this type of horror stories, often requestion the constraints of human powers and abilities to deal with cosmic forces that manage their existance (Ognjanović 194).

As one of the main figures and representatives of cosmic horror is considered to be Howard. P. Lovecraft. According to Kneale, Lovecraft's writings and short stories had a major influence on modern horror genre (106). His work often engaged his readers to think about

life and places that are often beyond human presentation and understanding. Lovecraft's concept of horror story was pretty unconventional and different from 'regular' stories of that time such as ghost stories. His different approach to writing, science and fantasy is still considered as the main reason for development in regard to former tradition of horror the genre (Ognjanović 311). Lovecraft often criticized anthropocentricity of fantasy stories in his time which usually just reflected simple stories masked as something extraordinary or out of this world. Unlike many other story writers from his time, Lovecraft puts an emphasis on an atmosphere instead of action claiming that „the final criterion of authenticity is not the dove-telling of a plot but the creation of a given sensation" (3). The atmosphere is the main *emotion* which has to be present in a „weird story":

> The true weird tale has something more than a secret murder, bloody bones, or a sheeted form clanking chains according to rule. A certain atmosphere of breathless and unexplainable dread of outer, unknown forces must be present; and there must be a hint, expressed with a seriousness and portentousness becoming its subject, of that most terrible conception of the human brain – a malign and particular suspension or defeat of those fixed laws of Nature which are our only safeguard against the assault of chaos and the demons of unplumbed space. (Lovecraft 3).

The difference between Lovecraft and other writers of the horror genre is obvious since unlike others, Lovecraft's stories are not based on contradistinction of what is already familiar to us humans, but is based strictly on scientific findings of the legitimacy of the world we live in (Ognjanović 314). Lovecraft often believed that no matter how fantastic or unimaginable the stories might be, they always have to based on scientific elements which sort of justify their existance. The fact that Lovecraft was a confirmed atheist (Kneale 109)

can also justify his believes since he, as a 'mechanist materialist' primarily believed in universe strictly shaped in accordance with principles and laws determined by the 19th-century science. Lovecraft touches upon the connection of mankind and the fear of unknown closely related to creating the notion of the unreal and spiritual world, resulting in saturation primarily based on scientific facts:

> Thephenomenon of dreaming likewise helped to build up the notion of an unreal or spiritual world;and in general, all the conditions of savage dawn -- life so strongly conduced toward a feeling ofthe supernatural, that we need not wonder at the thoroughness with which man's very hereditary essence has become saturated with religion and superstition. (Lovecraft 2)

As it can be seen, the center of Lovecraft's writings and by all means cosmic horror as well, is the atmosphere and the mood created by the story. The perfect cosmic horror must contain elements that scare the reader, but at the same time making them aware that monsters can eventually be defeated. However, the monsters that are present in Lovecraft's stories, as horrible as they might be, are not the main objects of fear (Saijamari 7). The monsters present in Lovecraft's stories can primarily be interpreted as simply the symbols of human fear, that is – the fear of the unknown! This is what makes Lovecraft quite different from other writers of horror because the image of a ghost or a vampire can never be scarier to human's brain than the fear of unknown – the fear of something physically intangible. The fear of something that is not controllable and is present primarily in our brain and emotions. However, we cannot disregard the element that probably contributes the most to the monstrosity of the story – its' narration. According to Saijamari, the horror of the story mainly relies on the monstrousness of the narrator itself as well as the transformation of a human into something different,

something unknown to the mankind (8). This can also serve as a short introduction to the importance of narration and its' setting in H. P. Lovecrafts's stories which will be covered in the following chapter.

6.1. Connecting the narrative settings of H.P.Lovecraft's stories to Silent Hill

According to Storhaug-Meyer Lovecraft's narrative technique was mainly constructed around the concept of the unknown (1). His narrative technique mostly used the concept of the unknown and his texts were primarily based on the mystery about characters, the narrator as well as the reader whose identity can only be revealed by discovering the unknown. However, the narration of the unknown is defined by Lovecraft as the main element, or the centre of „weird fiction" due to its' above all, cosmic nature. The narrative in a horror story introduces the image of the unknown, slowly transforming it into the sensation that eventually evokes the readers' feelings and emotions. However, Lovecraft states that the narration of the unknown usually encounters two problems; first, how is it possible to communicate with something that is unknown without making it known and second touches upon the issue of how long does the unknown has to last?! (4) As a solution to the first problem, Lovecraft suggests that the creation of the atmosphere is crucial. A well created atmosphere is very important because it allows the creation and presence of something within the text, without directly pointing out to its' existence. (5).

Touching upon the second problem related to the duration of the unknown, Lovecraft denotes that the unknown should not be completely explained by the story itself, but should stay mysterious and sustained. Through the Lovecraft's narration of the unknown it can be concluded that he often highlighted the importance of creating the mysterious atmosphere in his texts through which he slowly introduces the reader with the image of the unknown, but at the same time enables the reader to activate imagination primarily based on the human

emotion of fear without revealing the complete image of the „unknown". As De Luque states, characters in Lovecraft's stories often own their own symbolic *Real* (6). This is in many cases determined by traditions, social conventions or locations that the author created, often based on real places such as New England or the Antarctic. However, there are also places that have been specially invented for sole purpose of the story but also based on real world locations, for example Arkham, Innsmouth or Miskatonic University. Furthermore, De Luque argues that there are moments in Lovecraft's narration where the uncanny appears and those moments are usually identified as the imaginary *Real* (6). This approach to writing can also be defined as Lovecraft's unconscious way to reflect and release his own, personal ideological beliefs that he transfers into his texts underlying his narrative release. Lovecraft gave a lot of attention in his work to the basic human emotion – fear, which he believes is the strongest emotion of the mankind, especially the one from the unknown claiming that „the oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown" (Lovecraft 2).

Since according to Storhaug-Meyer the key element of Lovecraft's texts and plots is usually one character who experiences the encounter with the unknown (44), it could be implied into the plot of *Silent Hill* video game series as well, which will be covered in one of the following chapters.

Just like in the text which can be applied in the video games as well, the way the narrator introduces and leads the text highly affects the reader's perception of the text itself (Storhaug-Meyer 6). Rimmon-Kenan suggests that Lovecraft's texts are usually under the influence of the narrator who is often diminished by their perception and participation in the story itself (97). This feature of Lovecraft's stories can also be seen in *Silent Hill* video games. In these games the main character is also the narrator who often uses his own thoughts to direct the story, that is the player, affecting the players' emotions, perception and especially

participation. Just like Storhaug-Meyer's theory suggests, the Lovecraft's texts provide guidance for the reader using natural strategies that can be used to resolve and discover the unknown. This theory can be applicable in interaction between the video game and the player as well. Similar to how Lovecraft uses strategies known to humans in order to resolve the unknown, the main character or the narrator in *Silent Hill* guides the player to discover various elements within the game which eventually lead to the resolution itself.

Since the Lovecraft's literary opus includes a big number of stories, only few of the chosen texts could perhaps serve as a representative pieces of this thesis. However, before the analysis itself it is important to denote that Silent Hill franchise does not only consist of the first three sequels (*SH, SH2* and *SH3*). Beside these three the franchise includes *Silent Hill 4: The Room (2004), Silent Hill: Origins (2007), Silent Hill: Homecoming (2008), Silent Hill: Shattered Memories (2009)* and *Silent Hill: Downpour (2012)*. The given list is not completely the part of the analysis due to belief that only certain sequels of this videogame depict true, genuine sensation and gaming experience infused with genuine, realistic emotions of fear, dread, adrenaline and pleasure. That is why this thesis will try to analyse different elements of spatiality in chosen sequels of *Silent Hill* videogames as well as possible Lovecrafts' influence that can be seen in various features as well such as mood, emotions or sound. This analysis will be conducted in the following paragraph.

7. Comparison between Lovecraftian stories and Silent Hill

According to Perron video games serve as stimulants of the human emotions that can be experienced in real life as well (4). As it has already been mentioned, emotions, together with a fear of the unknown and atmosphere are considered as one of the main characteristics of Lovecraft's literature. Therefore, *Silent Hill* can serve as an excellent example in which these elements can be identified as well. Perron refers to it as „more psychological in nature, more

about atmosphere, intending to convey a tone of dread, anxiety, and helplessness (3). If a person has ever read a single story written by H. P. Lovecraft, the importance of creating the atmosphere, sound and emotions of the story will immediately be clear. It is therefore obvious that both Lovecraft and *Silent Hill* share the same elements 'guilty' for their success – they are built upon the emotions of fear and dreading atmosphere. Unlike many other horror genre videogames, *Silent Hill* has always been considered different due to its' more psychological approach. The main goal in the game itself is not to directly kill another human creature that has turned into a zombie for example, or a creature that is seen as a threat but to achieve a feeling of fear, dread, loneliness, helplessness and above all, darkness. The last mentioned element - darkness does not refer only to situations or spaces where the ability to see is reduced, but along with the sound, determines the atmosphere.

Since the main part of *Silent Hill* games include gameplay surrounded by darkness, the feeling of fear is therefore much more intensive. Fear of the dark has always been one of the basic and most common emotion all human beings possess, individually differentiating in the level of that fear. According to Wells, this type of fear is number one on Stephen King's list of things humans are mostly afraid of (11). In *Silent Hill* this element is highly present because most of its' gameplay is developed in the dark with an addition of fog adding another level of frightment. The specific and constant element of the dark is partially the reason for *Silent Hill's* success in the eyes of the audience and pretty sure that without that element, the game would not be the same and would not be able to transfer such atmosphere and emotion it deserves. In *Silent Hill* „fear could be defined in terms of what you don't see makes you feel afraid" (Beuglet, qtd. in Perron 32) or if we use the Lovecraftian term – the fear of the unknown! The fear of not knowing what will happen next or who or what will cross our way is pretty frightening. Therefore, both *Silent Hill* and Lovecraft's stories can be considered as

masters of their craft for being able to keep the reader or the player the constant state of dread for hours.

Darkness is present in most of Lovecraft's stories, but one in which this element is truly visible and almost 'palpable' is *The Rats in the Walls*. Hence, in 1923 the main figure of the story named Delapore buys and restores the property that once belonged to his family De la Poer called Exham Priory. Very soon after moving into his newly restored property, Delapore starts hearing strange noises that sounded like rats scratching the walls. He also owned several cats but one named *Nigger Man* was special because he possessed an ability to sense other creatures when nobody else would. Delapore soon discovers the past of his family realizing that they were nothing more than slave-owners who would eventually kill their slaves and eat them. Delapore could not make peace with that revelation and since he was the last living member of his entire family, he tried his best to avoid the destiny of his whole family and overcome their cannibalistic behaviour. However, very soon after his son dies leaving Delapore in pain and weakness he attacks and murders one of his friends after which he is put in a mental hospital.

Throughout the whole story, the atmosphere is pretty dark, just like Lovecraft intended. There are various situations in which darkness is truly highlighted like, for example, when Delapore discovered a sort of cave beneath his house with a bunch of bones and skulls.

> After ploughing down a few steps amidst the gnawed bones we saw that there was light ahead; not any mystic phosphorescence, but a filtered daylight which could not come except from unknown fissures in the cliff that overlooked the waste valley (Lovecraft 252).

Reading the story and entering the mind and the soul of the main character, there is plenty of confusion and inability to completely understand the story and its' development as well as the difference between reality and a dream itself. In many situations the story i.e. the plot of the story highly resembles those that can be found in *Silent Hill*. In *Silent Hill: Origins*, for example, the character Alessa is often tortured by her own dreams in which she encounters terrible things such as mutilated bodies, flying monsters or skinless dogs. Delapore's dreams on the other hand did not include such graphic horror, but rather repulsive, or in the narrator's words „hideous" creatures:

> „I retired early, being very sleepy, but was harassed by dreams of the most horrible sort. I seemed to be looking down from an immense height upon a twilit grotto, knee-deep with filth, where a white-bearded daemon swineherd drove about with his staff a flock of fungous, flabby beasts whose appearance filled me with unutterable loathing" (Lovecraft 247).

These dreams often represent situations difficult for the player as well as the reader to comprehend immediately which often results in mixed emotions of disgust, horror and darkness. Both the reader and the player are faced with a different type of feelings since they are aware that their main characters are just dreaming but the feelings of disgust and helplessness as well as fear are inevitable. Perron notices that the main protagonists of *SH: Origins, SH1, SH2* and *SH3* are very similar to those in Lovecraftian stories since they all are facing the darkness difficult to grasp which often leads them (and us) to the bare edge of imagination leaving everybody confused (35). It could be said that the element of darkness in *Silent Hill 2* is primarily James and his mind. His mind and feeling of guilt is the main darkness he faces with along with nightmares he has to go through. „The door that wakes in

darkness, opening into nightmares" is a message to James written on the wall of the building. It suggests that nightmares James is troubled with are actually the result of darkness troubled by his own conscience. Everything that happens in the game is considered nothing more than pure demonstration and projection of James' current state of mind created by deep depression. The letter that James receives from Mary, his wife, at the beginning of the game was nothing more than the product of his imagination. Later in the game the letters on the letter disappear leaving James with nothing but an empty envelope suggesting us that the letter from Mary actually never existed but it was only the creation of James' delusion adding more confusion and mixed emotions to us players. Darkness, however, is not the only feature or element *Silent Hill* shares with Lovecraftian stories.

The one most interesting and possibly most occurring is definitely the one that involves cults, primarily those related to religion. The cult even appears in *The Rats in the Wall* when the narrator explains the history of the De La Poer family concluding that his family was also a member of some sort of cult. He even mentions the existence of the inscriptions that were still visible in the sub-cellar containing the letters of the cult named *Magna Mater* whose main goal, as to many other cults, was to spread the darkness and dark thoughts into their followers:

> (…) unmistakable letters as "„DIV…OPS…MAGNA…MAT…" sign of the Magna Mater whose dark worship was once vainly forbidden to Roman citizens (Lovecraft 242)

In another story, *The Horror at Red Hook* Lovecraft slightly reveals the image and the philosophy of *Magma Mater* cult as well as the possible look of their leader, the goddess of fertility named Shub-Niggurath. It also becomes visible that Lovecraft emphasizes the fact

that this cult is primarily connected to Satanism and that the members of this cult are considered nothing more than Satan's babies:

> Satan here held his Babylonish court, and in the blood of stainless childhood the leprous limbs of phosphorescent Lilith were laved. Incubi and succubae howled praise to Hecate and headless moon-calves bleated to the Magna Mater. (Lovecraft 327)

Furthermore, *The Shadow over Innsmouth* is according to Petterson „one of Lovecraft's most famous and revered novellas" (4). The plot of the story is set in New England and the main protagonist is Robert Olmstead. One day, Olmstead decides to take a small tour by the countryside and very soon discovers the small town named Innsmouth. Innsmouth is set by the sea and the rumors about his residents soon catch Olmsteads attention. After arriving to Innsmouth, Olmstead immediately notices something weird in its' residents as well as a terrible fishy smell that is present throughout the whole town.

> Well, there must be something like that back of the Innsmouth people. (…) There certainly is a strange kind of streak in the Innsmouth folk today – I don't know how to explain it, but it sort of makes you crawl. (810)

This scene is similar to one from *Silent Hill 2* in which James arrives on the peer above the beach. Standing next to an open car, James reads the letter from Mary and that is how the game actually begins. Just like Olmstead, very soon after James notices weirdness in the town of Silent Hill and stumbles upon weird acting humans such as the woman on the graveyard. The woman tells him that Silent Hill is a weird town and that something strange is happening there which intrigues the player for the story covered in mystery. Back in Innsmouth,

Olmstead notices the weird appearance of the residents and later finds out that a certain secret cult is responsible for the current state of the town and its residents. The devil-worship cult that went by the name „The Esoteric Order of Dagon" which in a very short notice became responsible for the greatest influence on the town, together with their leaders Mother Hydra and Father Dagon.

> „Yield up enough sacrifices an' savage knick-knacks an' harbourage in the taown when they wanted it, an' they'd let well enough alone. Wudn't bother no strangers as might bear tales aoutside – thai is, withaout they got pryin'. All in the band of the faithful – Order o' Dagon – an' the children shud never die, but go back to the Mother Hydra and Father Dagon what we all come from onct – *la! La! Cthulhu fhtagn! Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah-nagl fhtagn"* (834)

The resemblance between this cult of Dagon and *Silent Hill's* cult „The Order" is not only present in the name itself. According to the story of Innsmouth, which is also visible in the quote above, „The Esoteric Order of Dagon" take human sacrifice in order to complete their goal and ideology which is exactly what „The Order" did with Alessa hoping she would become the mother of God. Furthermore, both cults are involved in various ceremonies in which they contribute their victims to their God(s). Mutter stated that in *The Shadow over Innsmouth,* the reader can easily identify with the narrator, especially when describing the events and the encounters with the „other" (6). Unlike *Silent Hill* in which we can physically see the look of the other creature or the monster, in Lovecraft's stories we must rely purely on the narrator and his guidance. The gods in *The Nameless City* for example, which is one of the stories in *Mythos* series are slowly discovered by telling us that „they were of the reptile kind,

with body lines suggesting sometimes the crocodile, sometimes the seal (…) their heads presented a contour violating all known biological principles" (146).

Lovecraft's *Cthulhu Mythos* is probably the most popular work in which the resemblance of the cult present there is close to *The Order.* Like it has already been said in *The Horror at Red Hook,* it is noticeable that the Satan is the followers' guide and the God they worship together with their priests. Like in almost any religion, priests are the main figures behind their beliefs whose only mission is to gain as many followers as they can with the main goal to become more powerful and obeyed. In *Silent Hill* it is high priestess Dahlia Gillespie or Michael Kaufmann in *Silent Hill 3* and in *The Call of Cthulhu* it is the great priest Cthulhu who is behind the secret cult and the one who will rule the world once again:

> This was that cult, and the prisoners said it had always existed and always would exist, hidden in distant wastes and dark places all over the world until the time the great priest Cthulhu, from his dark house in the mighty city of R'lyeh under the waters, should rise and bring earth again beneath his sway. Someday he would call, when the stars were ready, and the secret cult would always be waiting to liberate him. (366)

Just like any other religion, *The Order* believes that they are the only true religion that exists and that others are nothing more but a simple distraction of the reality. The fact that the *Cthulhu Cult* exists in real life is the proof how Lovecraftian stories can be taken seriously and how much of an influence can his writing have claiming that „Lovecraft's vision is ours" (10). Just like *The Order*, the *Cthulhu Cult* have their own „holy" book they follow. Their „bible" simply named *Cthulhu Cult* contains their strong beliefs telling the reader at the bare beginning to „be forewarned, this tome gets into the more treacherous areas of reality, consciousness, belief, and sorcery (4). It is also interesting how the element of darkness is

also highly present even in the real-world guidance book for the followers of this cult, highlighting again the Lovecraftian importance of darkness. The message simply suggests that „we must be the darkness we wish to see in the world" (6). The *Cthulhu* cult does not only appear in Lovecraft's *Cthulhu Mythos* but it is present in other stories as well, such as *At the Mountains of Madness*. The Lovecraft suggests that the pre-human race or the members of the cult he referred to as *Old Ones* were some sort of alien creatures who landed in the South Pacific:

> With the upheaval of new land in the South Pacific tremendous events began. Another race – a land race of beings shaped like octopi and probably corresponding to the fabulous pre-human spawn of Cthulhu – soon began filthering down from cosmic infinity and precipitated a monstrous war which for a time drove the Old Ones wholly back to the sea (..,.) Later peace was made, and the new lands were given to the Cthulhu spawn whilst the Old Ones held the sea and the other lands (774).

Already mentioned signing on the wall also reminded on the situation from *Silent Hill 2* when the main protagonist James stumbled upon the message on the wall which could be a message from the cult named „*The Order*". The message was of course covered in mystery and primarily confusing forcing the player to think about possible senders of that message. The message was covered in darkness and the only way to see that message was by adding light to the wall with the help of James' flashlight. Furthermore, the message was a bit frightening and evoke unsettling atmosphere because it seemed to be written by someone's blood and by hand and definitely most frightening was the fact that the message sounded like it was sent from someone close to James. The message said that „If your really want to see Mary you shoud just DiE. But you might be heading to A different place than MARY. James (*Silent Hill 2)*.

At the first sight it looks like a message from *The Order* telling James that Mary is dead and James should die too if he wants to meet her. However, if take a deeper analysis of the message we can see that the message is signed by James himself. This could mean that there is no other sender of this message, but James' conscience to him. Also, the message tells us that James is heading to a different place than Mary which could be interpreted as James going to hell because after all, he is responsible for Mary's death.

The psychological approach in *Silent Hill 2* is probably one of the reasons why this game is so interesting and confusing at the same time. Throughout the whole game, James is facing already mentioned character named Pyramid Head who at first seems to be the member of *The Order* whose main goal is to murder James. The encounters with Pyramid Head are quite scary and often results in many unanswered questions. However, after a certain time it can be concluded that Pyramid Head is nothing more than simply the punisher of James's sins and even evokes the question of his existence; is the Pyramid Head even real or it is just the projection of James' deluded mind!? This is the element of that psychological approach which reveals a lot of confusing elements that can be connected primarily through the gameplay. Perron refers to the Pyramid Head as to the executioner of James's past who eventually succeeds in making James realize his sins (69). James then recalls his deeds saying „I was weak. That's why I needed you…Needed someone to punish me for my sins…I know the truth and now it's time to end this". Later it is shown the scene in which James recalls his arrival to Mary's hospital room bringing her flowers which she rejects telling him how disgusting she is and how she does not deserve the flowers. James apparently could not bare the state she was in and decided to ease her pain by smothering her with the pillow. In James's mind, this was the act of euthanasia but it became obvious that he was not mentally strong enough to carry that burden convincing himself that he only did it because he hated Mary accusing her for taking his life. At first James admits that he killed her because he wanted to

ease her pain but soon he changes his mind claiming that he only did it because he hated her. This change of mind can be interpreted as James's consolation for the act of murder. His conscience has trouble dealing with his acts and that could be the reason why he himself is trying to justify his acts. Perhaps James was unhappy for being aware that he is losing his wife and there is nothing he can do to save her which eventually lead him to this terrible act. The psychological state of the main protagonist is very much emphasized by the element of the sound. Similar to the horror film, horror genre video games are scary as much as the music or sounds in it. It could be said that sound is crucial in raising the level of attention or fear which will be more explained in the following paragraph.

However, the story of *Silent Hill 2* could be without a doubt the best sequence of all *Silent Hill* series because it nourishes that strong, psychological approach which makes it confusing, breathtaking, stunning on one hand and scary, horrific and terrified on the other which is no different than the stories written by H. P. Lovecraft.

7.1. Listening to fear in Silent Hill

According to Roux-Girard regarding video games, the sound is crucial in establishing the mood of the gameplay (192). The sound must be present or even increased in order to raise the level of attention of the player due to the limited visual perception of the game environments itself. Furthermore, when it comes to the horror genre video games, the sound and its' importance become much more emphasized since the sound is basically one of, if not the most important mechanisms through which the emotions, including fear is transferred and generated. It can be said that music or sounds in video games serve multiple purposes; the creation of the atmosphere/mood is probably the most important, but it also serves as a tool for communicating emotions. Unlike in any other media, such as movies or songs, the music

in video games also serve that functional purpose for inducing the player either in the right or wrong direction. For instance, the scene from *Silent Hill 2* in which James stumbles upon the radio and immediately after switching ON, loud white noise appears which seem to get louder even though James has not touched the volume button. This scene startles the player, primarily because of the sudden and loud sound coming from the radio but that dread does not disappear since the radio and its' characteristic static sound is present throughout the whole game. After some time, the sound of the radio static becomes obvious „alarm" for location and close encounters with the enemies.

   Nevertheless, Biggs states that sound can also serve as a tool for perceiving space that surrounds us as well as alarm system (20) which never fails to warn us about (un)usual or out-of-norm sounds. „Since our bodies automatically respond to sound" (Biggs 21) we could say that it is not just ears we hear with, but also our entire body, emotions or memories. Regarding the emotion of fear caused primarily by the sound, *Silent Hill* video games certainly take a high position in the video games history. One of the major characteristics of *Silent Hill* games is certainly the gameplay in which there is not much of music as such, but various sounds are present throughout the whole series. Some of those sounds have become characteristics of this series such as the sound of footsteps or static radio. However, these and many other different sorts of sounds are not just elements to be present, but they all serve a purpose regarding the gameplay and especially the emotions transferred to the player behind the controls. For example, the scene from *Silent Hill 3* in which the sudden and loud sound of knocking on the door appears, without the visual image of that action and along with the fact that Heather is the only person alive in that restroom, evokes a strange feeling of scare combined with adrenaline. Even though the sound of knocking on the door is freakish by itself, the wish to explore the source of that knocking and discover the person (or thing) behind it, makes the player investigate further even though there is awareness of even scarier

findings. However, comparing this sound with the sounds from previous two sequels, Roux-Girard states that regarding the cause of the sound in *Silent Hill 3*, the sound is considered ambiguous since it sort of forces the player to connect and reconstruct the relations between this and previous two sequels (203).

Listening to silence and hearing nothing else then the characters' footsteps evokes chills and definitely prepares us for something even worse that is coming. The only „problem" is the fact that due to the thick fog and weird sounds, the player has no visible cues available to guess what the next encounter will be so this element can easily be connected to Lovecraftian major characteristic – the fear of the unknown! This emotion constantly keeps the player in the state of attention building the fearsome atmosphere to its peak in which the previous state transforms into the emotion of genuine fear. Interestingly enough, the main person responsible for the sound in *Silent Hill* Yamaoka explained that when making sound engine for the series, he had a goal to create something that would primarily surprise the player and challenge his or hers imagination resulting in physical reaction of the player in terms of unease and apprehension (Perron 93). That is exactly what this game has accomplished and that element, along with its' magnificent story and gameplay has launched this franchize into the history as one of the most important accomplishments in the gaming industry.

8. Conclusion

In this thesis, we tried to explain the importance of space and spatiality in analyzing different elements from a scientific point of view with a primary focus on the game studies and phenomenology. Since playing games has obviously become the inevitable part of human life in almost every culture, it should not be therefore ignored in studying humans' everyday habits. The experience of living using our basic human senses such as vision or hearing enables us to create and shape the sense of space. Certain experience can certainly help us

transfer the knowledge into the virtual world as well. However, we must keep in mind that space in video games are both directly engaged with and observed simultaneously which requires the player to focus directly on the space within the video game in order to reach complete immersion. The notion of conceived, perceived and lived space introduces us to the perception of space grounded on individuals' perception of space with the help of conscience. Through their graphical representation, video games include conceived space which is an inevitable part of our lived space. Therefore, due to the fluidity of the movement, video games take the position of *trans-space* i.e. possess the ability to move between more than one physical space.

However, long before the development of the gaming industry, the imagination of humans has been activated primarily through book and novels. Similar to the effect of playing the video game, reading novels also requires activation of senses, primarily vision as well as hearing depending on the ability of the writer to transfer it to readers' imagination. H. P. Lovecraft is considered the master of transferring different emotions to his readers, especially the emotion of fear and dread and in the world of gaming, that master is definitely *Silent Hill*. There is a quite number of similarities between these two masterpieces and they primarily refer to the elements of atmosphere, narrative, sound and the fear of the unknown. The latter element seems to be the most highlighted one because both of the analyzed subjects nourish that psychological approach of not discovering every detail needed for complete understanding, but they leave the imagination of the reader i.e. gamer, to „connect the dots" and bring his or hers own conclusion. Also, both of the subjects are successful in keeping their readers and players in the constant state of dread and attention which again highlights that psychological approach of confusion whether something is real and happening or simply the product of protagonists head. Nevertheless, both Lovecraft and *Silent Hill* can be considered masters of their craft because of the ability to keep their audiences' attention even

after many years of their publishing. They are without a doubt the unique pieces of human literary and gaming culture and pretty sure they will be able to keep that position for many years to come.

Works cited

1. Balk, D. (2011). The immortality of Gothic Literature. *Utrecht University.*
2. Caballero, Rosario (2008) Theorizing about Genre and Cybergenre. *CORELL: Computer Resources for Language Learning 2, 14-27*
3. De Luque, J. L. (2013). Communal Decay: Narratological and Ideological Analysis of H. P. Lovecraft's fiction. *Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Córdoba. Campus de Rabanales.*
4. Egenfeldt-Nielsen, S., Smith H. J. and Tosca P. S. (2013). *Understanding Video Games: the essential introduction.* New York: Routledge, Taylor and Franscis Group
5. Hall, E. T. (1966). *The hidden dimension.* Doubleday: New york.
6. Huizinga, J. (2016). *Homo Ludens: a study of the play-element in culture*. Angleico Press.
7. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Konami
8. https://www.giantbomb.com/pre-rendered-backgrounds/3015-1804/
9. Javed, A. (2003). Silent Hill; Walkthrough. http://www.ign.com/faqs/2004/silent-hill-walkthrough-451463. Visited on: 20.6.2018.
10. Juul, Jesper (2008).The magic circle and the puzzle piece. *Universität Potsdam Philosophische Fakultät. Institut für Künste und Medien.*
11. Juvan, M. (2005). Generic Identity and Intertextuality. *CLC Web: Comparative Literature and Culture* 7 (1).
12. Kneale, J. (2006). From beyond: H. P. Lovecraft and the place of horror. *Cultural geographies* (13). p. 106-126
13. Kožul, A. (2015). Psihoanaliza i gotski horor. *Sveučilište u Zagrebu.*
14. LaValle, S. (2017). Virtual Reality. *Cambridge University Press*
15. Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space.* London. Blackwell Publishing.
16. Leino, T. O. (2013). From Game Spaces to Playable Worlds. *The Philosophy of Computer Games Conference.* Bergen

17. Lovecraft, H. P. (1973). *Supernatural horror in literature*. New York: Dover Publications.

18. Lovecraft, H. P. (2000).*The Annotated Supernatural Horror in Literature*. Ed. S. T. Joshi. NewYork, NY: Hippocampus Press.

19. Matore, G. (1962). *L'Espace Humain*. La Columbe: Paris.

20. Mutter, L. E. (2013). Explaining the Unexplainable: A New Cultural Outlook on H.P.Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos. *Pell Scholars and Senior Thesis*. Paper 92.

21. Newzoo (2016). 2016 Global Games Market Report: An Overview of Trends & Insights. *https://newzoo.com/insights/articles/global-games-market-reaches-99-6-billion-2016-mobile-generating-37/* [2017-02-10].

22. Nielsen, L. D. (2013). In the mood for Horror. *A Game Designers Approach on Investigating Engagement, Involvement and Immersion in Horror Games.*

23. Ognjanović, D. (2014). *Poetika horora.* Novi Sad: Orfelin.

24. Perron, B. (2011). Silent Hill: The Terror Engine. *University of Michigan Press*.

25. Rabin, S. (2010). *Introduction to Game Development*. Boston, MA: Course Technology Cengage Learning

26. Relph, E. (1976). Place and Placeness. Pion Unlimited, 207 Brondesbury Parl: London

27. Rimmon-Kenan, S. *Narrative Fiction*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: Routledge, 2000.

28. Roux-Girard, G. (2011). Listening to Fear: A Study of Sound in Horror Computer Games. *Game Sound Technology and Player Interaction: Concepts and Developments.* Ed. Mark Grimshaw.

29. Saijamari, M. (2002). *H.P.Lovecraft and the Creation of Horror*. Kevat

30. Salen, K. and Zimmerman, E. (2004). *Rules of Play—Game Design Fundamentals*. London:The MIT Press.

31. Saunders, C. Rutkowski, AF. Genuchten van, M. Vogel, M."Virtual Space and Place: Theory and Test". *MIS Quarterly* 35 (4). JM Orrego. pp. 1079-1098

32. Shields, R. (1999) *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle*. London: Routledge.

33. Sindik, K. (2011). Kako roditelji percipiraju utjecaj medija na predškolsku djecu? *Medij. istraž., 18,* 5-32.

34. Storhaug-Meyer, H. (2010). The Morphology of the Unknown; The narrative Technique of Howard Philips Lovecraft. *The University of Oslo.*

35. Taylor, N. L. (2002). Video Games: Perspective, Point-of-view, and Immersion. *University of Florida.*

36. Tuan, Y. (1974). *Topophilia*. Englewood Cliffs, N. J: Prentice Hill.

37. Tuan, Y. (1977). *Space and place: The perspective of experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

38. Wade, A. (2009). „Spatial Typologies of Games". *Computer Games Between Text and Practice*. D. Compagno and P. Coppock (eds). Rome: Nuova Cultura. pp. 77-82.

39. Wells, Paul. 2002. *The Horror Genre: From Beelzebud to Blair Witch*. London: Wallflower.

40. Wolf, J. P. M. (2012). *Encyclopedia of video games : the culture, technology, and art of gaming.* Santa Barbara, Calif. : Greenwood.

41. Zhang, Zhongyuan (2006). What is lived space? *Ephemera br.* 6(2), 219.-223.

42. Zieleniec, A. (2007). *Space and Social Theory.* London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Lovecraftian Horrors – Space and Literature in Silent Hill

Abstract

In this thesis, we tried to analyze and theoretically read spatiality and the elements of space in chosen *Silent Hill* video games. Also, we tried to analyze similarities between *Silent Hill* and chosen texts of H. P. Lovecraft. The elements analyzed primarily refer to those elements which set the mood, atmosphere and affect player's and reader's perception and experience. The analysis confirmed the similarities between the two subjects and the fear of the unknown showed to be the element that is highly present in both, evoking different emotions on the behalf of the audience such as fear, dread and constant tension. The aim of this thesis was to implicate different different spatial paradigms on video games primarily based on the experience of playing *Silent Hill* and reading H. P. Lovecraft's texts. The analysis was conducted through the methodological approach known as the content analysis for more precise understanding of the theory and its' immplication.

Key words: Silent Hill, H. P. Lovecraft, space, spatiality, emotion, fear

Lovecraftianovi Horori – Prostor i Literatura u Silent Hill igrama

Sažetak

U ovom radu nastojalo se analizirati i teorijski iščitati prostor i elemente u odabranim *Silent Hill* video igrama. Također se nastojalo povezati sličnosti između elemeata prikazanih u *Silent Hill* igrama sa odabranim tekstovima H. P. Lovecraft-a. Prventsveno se to odnosi na elemente koje određuju i utječu na čitaoca odnosno igrača, poput atmosfere, zvuka i narativa a analiza je pokazala kako zajednički elementi između dvoje subjekata zapravo postoje. Strah od nepoznatog pokazao se kao najvažniji element koji u publici izaziva razne osjećaje poput straha, napetosti i neizvjesnosti. Cilj ovog rada je pokušati primijeniti različite prostorne paradigme na video igre temeljeno prvenstveno na iskustvu igranja *Silent Hill-a* i iščitavanja tekstova H. P. Lovecraft-a. Analiza je provedena metodološkim pristupom analize sadržaja koja pridonosi razumijevanju teorijskih dijelova rada i primjeni istih.

Ključne riječi: Silent Hill, H. P. Lovecraft, prostor, teorija prostora, emocije, strah