

Translating Horror

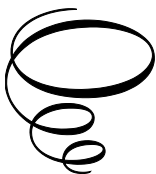
Translating Horror:

Shadows on the Page and Screen

Edited by

Paschalis Nikolaou

**Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing**



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This book first published 2026

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN: 978-1-0364-6537-7

ISBN (Ebook): 978-1-0364-6538-4

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	vi
Introduction: Tales of Translation and Imagination	1
<i>Paschalis Nikolaou</i>	
It Came from Translations!: Horror Fiction for Young French Readers ...	18
<i>Audrey Coussy</i>	
“Do They Float?”: Stephen King’s <i>IT</i> and Its Film Adaptation in Greek Translation.....	41
<i>Angeliki Skiadopoulou</i>	
Translating the Fictional World of H.P. Lovecraft: <i>At the Mountains of Madness</i> into Spanish	58
<i>Robert Szymyślik</i>	
Some Terrors of Translation in Michael Marshall Smith’s <i>The Gist</i>	77
<i>Paschalis Nikolaou</i>	
When Horror and Humour Sing in Unison: Translating Neil Gaiman’s Song “The Problem with Saints” into Polish.....	97
<i>Anna Mach</i>	
Horror on the Page: Translating Multimodal Fiction	116
<i>Thomas Mantzaris</i>	
Notes on Contributors.....	136
Index of Names and Titles.....	139

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Michael Marshall Smith for his incisive comments on a draft of the chapter devoted to his work on *The Gist*, and for sharing some of the correspondence between himself and his collaborators on that project, Benoît Domis and Nicholas Royle. Some of the research for this book was carried out at the Faculty of Philology Library of the University of Łódź, where I was a visiting scholar between October 2024 and March 2025 during my sabbatical leave from the Department of Foreign Languages, Translation and Interpreting of the Ionian University. Justyna Dąbrowska-Nikolaou offered much support in the final stretch of editing this volume. Finally, immense thanks are due to Aleksandra Waliszewska for permission to use one of her paintings for the cover; a visual affirmation, no less, of the several Polish connections found within the pages of *Translating Horror: Shadows on the Page and Screen*.

INTRODUCTION:
TALES OF TRANSLATION AND IMAGINATION
PASCHALIS NIKOLAOU

Stages and directions

Although we intuitively understand this part of human experience to be as old as time, delineating between “horror” and “terror” has proved a challenge for literary scholars and practitioners. In a memorable contradistinction put forward by nineteenth century novelist Ann Radcliffe, “[t]error and horror are so far opposite, that the first expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a higher degree of life; the other contracts, freezes and nearly annihilates them.”¹ This is before we even contemplate some other concomitant nouns (“shock,” “fear,” “suspense”) that further describe intended effects on an audience. “Horror,” as found in the title of this volume of essays, reflects the way the word is present in “horror fiction” and in accounts of a literary genre—rather than immediately differentiating between “terror” and “horror.” Contributors to *Translating Horror: Shadows on the Page and Screen* certainly deliberate on nuances, distinctions, gradations; but they all proceed from a concern, overall, of how aspects of a particular genre are translated, before any emotional state may be segmented and considered in more detail.

Depending on the sources, or the fields of study one draws upon, definitions will exhibit anthropological, literary-historical, psychological or sociological emphases. We may trace the presence of horror in storytelling all the way to our most distant ancestors: J.A. Cuddon points out how the horror story is indeed part “of a long process by which people have tried to come to terms with, and find adequate descriptions and symbols for, deeply-rooted primitive and powerful forces, energies and fears which are related to death, afterlife, punishment, darkness, evil,

¹ Ann Radcliffe, “On the Supernatural in Poetry,” *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal*, vol. 16, LXII (February 1826): 145–52.

violence and destruction.”² Horrific incidents and situations feature in literature from the very start, well before the tragedies of Aeschylus; and we can trace onsets of horror/fantasy in the English tradition as far back as the tenth century, and *Beowulf*. Horror partakes in a gamut of narratives: from tales by the Brothers Grimm, to the 1962 notorious *Mars Attacks* trading cards, to AI-generated content (found, for instance, in Instagram accounts such as “Dead Tempo Visions”³). We are dealing with a genre that has long matured and today is more subdivided than ever before. And while horror may mostly develop in the environs of prose, this is not exclusive, as attested by Anna Mach’s chapter on the elements of horror featured in the work of Neil Gaiman as song writer and lyricist. Nor was prose always the dominant mode: as Cuddon reminds us, it was the playwrights, the Elizabethan and Jacobean tragedians, “deeply interested in evil, crime, murder, suicide and violence [and] in states of extreme suffering: pain, fear and madness”⁴ that provided audiences with the horror “stories” of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Different traditions demonstrate their own proclivities in how horror is introduced to an audience—as the French Theatre of Cruelty, or the German *Schicksalstragodie* show us.

There is a continuing dialogue between prose and drama. From the middle of the eighteenth century especially, we come across numerous dramatizations of earlier Gothic novels, all the way to productions of *Dracula* early in the twentieth century (themselves conversing in various ways with film adaptations of Bram Stoker’s book that followed soon after). The role played by Gothic literature cannot be overstated: in the wake of Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), this tradition was the one that gradually led to the later flourishing of horror—especially since, according to Clive Bloom,

most popular gothic fiction is determined in its plotting by the need for horror and sensation. It was gothicism, with its formality, codification, ritualistic elements and artifice (its very origins as an aesthetic outlook and *literary* condition first and foremost) that transformed the old folk tale of terror into the modern horror story.”⁵

² J.A. Cuddon, “Horror Story,” in *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 4th ed.; rev. C.E. Preston (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 389.

³ Dead Tempo Visions [@deadtempovisions], “Posts.” *Instagram*, <https://www.instagram.com/deadtempovisions/>. Accessed 23 December 2025.

⁴ Cuddon, “Horror Story,” 390–91.

⁵ Clive Bloom, “Introduction: Death’s Own Backyard,” in *Gothic Horror: A Guide for Students and Readers*, ed. Clive Bloom, 2nd edition (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 2–3.

Gothic fiction has since interbred with many other cultural modes and genres, and indeed, we become increasingly aware of an arena of literary creativity that is truly resistant to definitions and taxonomies. Dani Cavallaro has argued that, in fact, this is quite necessary if we take into account the very objectives of horror writing:

[t]ales of horror, terror and fear resist categorization by cultivating an eerie dialectic between anxiety and desire [...] It is by allowing repressed materials to surface, often abruptly, and by articulating them in ways which defy conservative compartments, that those stories enable dread to operate as a psychodynamic awakener. Consciousness is sharpened by its exposure to the Beyond and by intimations that its maps inevitably exceed the scope of any generic atlas.⁶

From psychoanalytic criticism that expounds, among others, on Sigmund Freud's notion of "the uncanny," or proceeds to examine ways in which Jacques Lacan's symbolic order and imaginary order is represented in horror tales, to applications of Bakhtinian concepts, to Tzvetan Todorov's influential structuralist approach to the fantastic,⁷ the attentions of literary theory have also helped raise the status of writing that deals in horror. Literary movements also suggest new ideas and directions. For instance, as Jim Casey points out, "from a creative standpoint, postmodern fantasy allows for the production of various parallax retellings and expansions."⁸

Memoirs, or histories of the genre written by horror authors can be more practical and direct as they contemplate the craft: early on in *Danse Macabre*, where the primary focus is on literature and films from the 1950s to the 1970s, Stephen King famously produces a hierarchy of three descending levels, elaborating on his intentions thus: "I recognize terror as the finest emotion [...] and so I will try to terrorize the reader. But if I cannot terrify him/her, I will try to horrify; and if I cannot horrify, I'll go

⁶ Dani Cavallaro, *The Gothic Vision: Three Centuries of Horror, Terror and Fear* (London and New York: Continuum, 2002), 16–17.

⁷ See: Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans. Richard Howard; foreword Robert Scholes (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975).

⁸ Jim Casey, "Modernism and Postmodernism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature*, ed. Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 117. Among the examples Casey offers is Anne Rice's 1985 novel *The Vampire Lestat*, which refigures Rice's own *Interview with the Vampire*—an influential work that already draws upon elements of autobiography, memoir, testimony in radically humanizing the vampire figure—by adopting the point of view of the villain of the 1976 novel.

for the gross-out. I'm not proud."⁹ There can be grander ambitions, however: in William Peter Blatty's landmark novel, *The Exorcist* (1971), horror becomes a means to contemplate the existence of God; we come across philosophical investigations in the work of Peter Straub and—with an even more singular focus—Thomas Ligotti. For Clive Barker, one of the genre's most influential exponents, these fictions also help us legitimize our wildest drives by “valuing our appetite for the forbidden rather than suppressing it, comprehending that our taste for the strange, the morbid, or the paradoxical, is contrary to what we're brought up to believe, a sign of our good health.”¹⁰

The popularity of the horror genre increased exponentially in the late 1970s and during the 1980s, owing to the often Dickensian scope of King's prose offerings, milestone collections of stories like Barker's own *Books of Blood* (six volumes, published 1984–1985), and the prolific output of several other genre authors like James Herbert and Dean Koontz—all assisted by dedicated publishers, and advantageous developments in the book trade.¹¹ Drawing on a rich tradition that includes the tales of Edgar Allan Poe and the prose of Lord Dunsany or Arthur Machen (the latter's 1895 novella “The Great God Pan” has been ingrained in the DNA of numerous horror prose works since then: King's 2010 novel *Revival* being one recent example), this generation of writers is equally inspired by the science fiction, horror and monster B-movies of the 1950s and 1960s, EC Comics, and pulp magazines such as *Weird Tales* and *Astounding Stories*—where, among others, several of H.P. Lovecraft's cosmic horror tales appeared initially. Beyond its patent influence in the work of authors such as Brian Lumley, T.E.D. Klein, Dan Simmons or John Langan, the Cthulhu Mythos has had a momentous impact across popular culture, and studies like Michel Houellebecq's *H.P. Lovecraft: Against the World, Against Life* (originally published in French in 1991) also testify to Lovecraft's influence beyond the English-speaking world.¹² At the same time, it would be reductive to suggest that horror writers only read, and

⁹ Stephen King, *Danse Macabre* (New York: Berkley Books, 1983), 25.

¹⁰ Clive Barker, “On Horror and Subversion,” in *Gothic Horror: A Guide for Students and Readers*, 2nd edition, ed. Clive Bloom (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 177.

¹¹ A comprehensive account of this era of horror writing, with a parallel focus on an aesthetic established also through cover design and illustrations, can be found in Grady Hendrix's exhaustive, and engaging, *Paperbacks from Hell: The Twisted History of '70s and '80s Horror Fiction* (Philadelphia: Quirk Books, 2017).

¹² The English edition also features an introduction by Stephen King. See: “Introduction: Lovecraft's Pillow,” in Michel Houellebecq, *H.P. Lovecraft: Against the World, Against Life*, trans. Dorna Khazeni (London: Gollancz, 2008), 9–18.

take inspiration from, each other: after all, we find lines from the poetry of Greek Nobel laureate George Seferis as epigraphs to parts of *'Salem's Lot* (1975) and *IT* (1985) by King.

Horror fiction these days also enjoys a different status than it did in the pulp era: Lovecraft's prose is republished in Penguin Classics and Folio Society editions (in Folio's list, we also find an anthology of *Weird Tales* (2024) edited and introduced by Michael Dirda); in 2022 Faber and Faber released *They*, Kay Dick's lost pastoral horror from 1977; and in 2015 *Little Sister Death* appeared from the same publisher—a posthumous, unfinished novel by William Gay, an author greatly influenced by the southern gothic and horror tradition and, just as much, by Cormac McCarthy. An issue of the British literary magazine *Granta* in 2011 was dedicated to horror, and contributing writers included Paul Auster, Will Self and Don DeLillo.¹³ Forays into the genre by names we associate with literary fiction are certainly more frequent—and ambitious too: David Mitchell revisits the haunted house tale in the genre-leaping *Slade House* (2015); Nobel laureate Olga Tokarczuk's *The Empusium*, originally published in Polish as *Empuzjon. Horror przyrodoleczniczy* in 2022 and drawing on a number of genre tropes (but also on Thomas Mann's 1928 novel *The Magic Mountain*) is subtitled “A Health Resort Horror Story” in the English translation by Antonia Lloyd-Jones.¹⁴ Joyce Carol Oates's *The Accursed* (2013) builds its narrative by accumulating letters, diaries, journals and other “found material,” re-imagining real events in the early twentieth century in Princeton through the lens of the supernatural and posing as the “chronicle” by a fictional historian.¹⁵ This last book, or Mark Z. Danielewski's hefty 2000 tome, *House of Leaves*, are suggestive of the metatextual, multimodal and in some cases ergodic explorations by horror writers, which, as the chapter by Thomas Mantzaris contends, also entail consequences for their translators. Further instances where events of translation are embedded into self-aware textuality, such as Michael Marshall Smith's horror novelette *The Gist* (2013), examined in the present volume by Paschalis Nikolaou, partly owe their impact to how the physical book is included in—rather than merely containing—the story

¹³ *Granta: The Magazine of New Writing* 117 (“Horror”; Autumn 2011). Several periodicals dedicated to the genre do exist of course, for instance, *Cemetery Dance: The Magazine of Horror and Suspense* (1988—, Cemetery Dance Publications) and *Weird Fiction Review* (2010—, Centipede Press).

¹⁴ Olga Tokarczuk, *The Empusium: A Health Resort Horror Story*, trans. Antonia Lloyd-Jones (London: Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2024).

¹⁵ Joyce Carol Oates, *The Accursed* (New York: Ecco Press, 2013).

being told. Cavallaro notes how often the “material construction” of dark narratives,

echoes the messages they articulate. Gothic figures of fragmentation, disorder and excess are frequently mirrored by textual bodies that reject organic unity in favour of a multiplicity of viewpoints and styles, pastiche, collage and quilting. These provide a representational correlative for the polymorphousness of fear itself.¹⁶

Especially when confronted with layered and ambitious narrative structures like those discussed in previous pages, the translator of horror must then be able to address challenges beyond the ones typically anticipated in genre fiction (for instance, readability, world-building, the rendering of genre conventions and cultural markers), and be prepared to recognize the literary ambition and inventiveness that distinctly attends many modern horror texts.

Language(s) for translating horror

The Castle of Otranto or *Frankenstein* have existed in other languages for centuries; equally, it is the fact of translation that allows English readers to experience the idiolect of, for instance, South Korean author Bora Chung and her particular brand of genre-defying horror stories in the 2021 collection, *Cursed Bunny*.¹⁷ But before specific translation approaches are appraised, it is helpful to revisit the notion of literary genre in this context. B.J. Woodstein, in *Translation and Genre*,¹⁸ draws on Gledhill and Ball who argue that “[a] particular genre category refers to the way the individual fictions which belong to it can be grouped together in terms of similar plots, stereotypes, settings, themes, style, emotional affects, and so on [...] such categories function as important guides to our viewing choices and practices.”¹⁹ At the same time, Woodstein rightly points out that texts and conventions associated with a genre slip across boundaries and that any definition of it will depend also upon the cultural and historical context. Nevertheless, genre “can be seen as a shortcut, helping authors to know how to write a particular type of text, or assisting readers

¹⁶ Cavallaro, *The Gothic Vision*, 211.

¹⁷ Bora Chung, *Cursed Bunny*, trans. Anton Hur (Stockport: Hornford Star, 2021).

¹⁸ B.J. Woodstein, *Translation and Genre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

¹⁹ Christine Gledhill and Vicky Ball, “Genre and Gender: The Case of Soap Opera,” in *Representation*, 2nd edition, ed. Stuart Hall, Jessica Evans and Sean Nixon (London: Sage), 347. Quoted in Woodstein, *Translation and Genre*, 3.

to choose works that they might enjoy, or providing translators with tools for transforming the book into another language.”²⁰ *Skopos theory*, and positions by several of its proponents, such as Christiane Nord,²¹ further connect to the topic of genre: in the sense that writers, translators and publishers must pay close attention to the aim and function of a text. Literary translators, Woodstein therefore argues, “must understand genres and ideas of genres in both the source and target cultures in order to be able to analyse the texts they are working on and then to translate them”²²—considering carefully, along the way, appropriate strategies for achieving the same effects in the translated work. The chapters by Robert Szymyślik and Angeliki Skiadopoulou in this volume include deliberations on the value of some skopos tenets in translating works from the horror genre.

We may even contemplate, with John Frow, translation as a metaphor, presenting a way to “think about relations between the levels of setting, genre, and text: texts translate (activate, perform, but also transform) the complex meanings made available by the structure of the genre, which in turn translates the information structurally embedded in the situation to which it responds.”²³ It is also imperative to acknowledge the reciprocal relationship between horror and translation. Translation has played a role in the historical development and evolution of the genre, as elucidated by several contributors to *Translating Horror: Shadows on the Page and Screen* (for instance, Audrey Coussy’s essay offers a significant illustration of the French reception of horror fiction for young adults written in English, including subsequent production from French authors).

More examples could be added, attesting to the varied nature of such exchanges, and to how close translation and the workings of influence often are: Honoré de Balzac, in admiration of Charles Maturin’s gothic romance *Melmoth the Wanderer*, wrote in 1835 *Melmoth Réconcilié*, a philosophical sequel novella. Polish author Jan Potocki incorporated Gothic elements and earlier models in his French-language *Manuscript trouvé à Saragosse*, published 1815. French symbolists drew much inspiration from Charles Baudelaire’s 1856 translations of Poe’s tales. And notions about translating literature may echo in further receptions, too: prefacing the Greek edition of *The Fungi from Yuggoth*, a cycle of poems by Lovecraft written in 1929–1930, Makis Panorios concedes that, given the

²⁰ Woodstein, *Translation and Genre*, 58.

²¹ Christiane Nord, *Translating as a Purposeful Activity: Functionalist Approaches Explained*, 2nd edition (London and New York: Routledge, 2018).

²² Woodstein, *Translation and Genre*, 9.

²³ John Frow, *Genre* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 16.

inherent untranslatability of poetry, the paradigm of Baudelaire's free verse renditions of Poe was emulated to maintain the spirit and atmosphere of Lovecraft's poetic work.²⁴

When it comes to receptions of the horror genre, the role of the editor should not be underestimated either. For example, it is mostly through anthologies that readers in Franco's Spain came across stories originally featured in pulp magazines such as *Horror Stories*, *Terror Tales* and *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. In a survey of publisher and translator strategies, as they developed parallel to censorship instructions (mostly on deleting or softening the sexual components), Cristina Gómez Castro argues that the anthologies of translated stories appearing in the 1970s were successful in that both genres, horror and science fiction, became "well known in the country and encouraged some Spanish writers to engage in the production of similar material, as a process of *pseudotranslation* that confirms their importance in the recipient culture."²⁵ The example of actual science fiction and fantasy pseudotranslations in other literary traditions, such as that of Hungary,²⁶ is further evidence that pseudotranslations, even when they are published with commercial motives in mind, may still contribute to the transplantation of a genre and its conventions inside another tradition: introducing new themes and models into a target culture.

The vital relationship of the cinematic medium and horror writing, the way in which one artform shadows the other is already hinted at in the subtitle of this present volume; various other visual media are implicated beyond cinema, however. Recent studies such as Anna Bogutskaya's *Feeding the Monster: Why Horror Has a Hold on Us* illustrate through examples from film, TV, social media and music videos, how pervasive horror characters and aesthetics have been in mainstream pop culture, and in validating the significance of being in contact with fear and revulsion for our psychological development.²⁷ Meanwhile, the emergence of the

²⁴ See: Makis Panorios, "Πρόλογος," in *Οι Μύκητες από τον Γιοργόθ*, trans. Panagiotis Skagiannis (Athens: Aiolos, 1992), 21.

²⁵ Cristina Gómez Castro, "The reception of science fiction and horror story anthologies in the last years of Francoist Spain: Censoring aliens and monsters in translation," in *Translations in Anthologies and Collections (19th and 20th Centuries)*, ed. Teresa Seruya et al. (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2013), 218.

²⁶ See esp. Anikó Sohár, "The Cultural Importation Process of Popular Genres: The Case of SF and Fantasy in Hungary (1989–1995) from the Point of View of Translation Studies" (PhD diss., Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 1997).

²⁷ Anna Bogutskaya, *Feeding the Monster: Why Horror Has a Hold on Us* (London: Faber and Faber, 2024).

horror genre from the margins in twenty-first-century cinema is surveyed in *Post-Horror: Art, Genre, and Cultural Elevation* (2021) by David Church.²⁸ Indeed, while we routinely ponder this relationship in terms of big or small screen adaptations of a literary text, a more complex evolution and parallel history is observable from a point onwards and we register themes, modes and media wildly cross-fertilizing: to offer just one example, the screenplay of John Carpenter's *In the Mouth of Madness* (1995) takes inspiration from reader culture, and more specifically Stephen King's popularity, as it marries the plot of a horror author gone missing—along with the manuscript of his new novel—to Lovecraftian tropes (the film's title itself echoes that of Lovecraft's novella, *At the Mountains of Madness*). On the flipside of this coin, we find *Consumed*, the 2014 debut novel of film director David Cronenberg, a key exponent of body horror. The prose bears the hallmarks of his cinematic preoccupations to such an extent that in the blurb, Bruce Wagner pronounces that the book exists as a “seamless continuation [...] of [Cronenberg's] novelistic film oeuvre. With this book, Cronenberg has become the definitive heir, not just of Kafka and Borges, but of Cronenberg himself.”²⁹ (Unsurprisingly, a screenplay is rumoured to be in development.) At several points in Don DeLillo's short novel *Point Omega* (2010), the main characters experience and discuss a (very real) art installation video by Douglas Gordon. First shown in 1993, *24 Hour Psycho* is a slowed-down (approximately two frames per second) version of Alfred Hitchcock's 1960 film adaptation of the 1959 novel by Robert Bloch, lasting precisely twenty-four hours, and its implications echo across *Point Omega*'s plot. Another installation of note, Cornelia Parker's “Transitional Object: Psychobarn” (2016), further suggests the dynamic interplay between artistic modes. The piece is a scaled-down recreation of the façade of the house in *Psycho*, also simultaneously underscoring its visual kinship to Edward Hopper's 1925 painting “House by the Railroad,” which served as a source of inspiration for the set design of the film.

From the vantage point of translation theory, these relationships are more obviously registered through the last of Roman Jakobson's three types of translation, the one he calls “intersemiotic” and which involves “rendering the verbal sign or into another, nonverbal system of symbols”³⁰

²⁸ David Church, *Post-Horror: Art, Genre, and Cultural Elevation* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021).

²⁹ David Cronenberg, *Consumed*, back cover (New York: Scribner, 2014).

³⁰ Roman Jakobson, “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation,” in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (London: Routledge, 2000 [1959]), 114.

—with Jakobson himself citing film adaptation as an example.³¹ In recent years, wide-ranging research on the translation of multisemiotic and multimodal works (ones that combine text with other semiotic elements, e.g. music or images) has engaged more persistently the particularities of transferring semiotic devices that coexist in hybrid literary objects, and the strategies involved in the translator's effort to achieve an analogous result in the target text.³²

At this point, we should also recognize the proximities to adaptation studies. Robert Stam argues that translation already offers a productive metaphor for adaptation because adaptation “suggests a principled effort of intersemiotic transposition, with the inevitable losses and gains typical of any translation.”³³ The horror genre provides a valuable corpus, often manifesting a host of intertextual and intervisual relations: there are untold adaptations of King's fiction for the screen, or cinematic returns to Blatty's *The Exorcist*, drawing from both the original novel and the aesthetic of William Friedkin's first film version of 1973. Classic works like *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* are continuously adapted to suit the sensibilities of new generations of filmgoers. New iterations often reflect the sociocultural moment as well as the style and thematic inclinations of the directors involved: to return to Cronenberg, he applies his brand of body horror to an adaptation of George Langelaan's story, “The Fly” (which was first adapted into a B-movie starring Vincent Price in 1959). Following a failed experiment to teleport a steak, the dialogue between scientist Seth Brundle and his romantic partner, Veronica, reminds us that translation is part of the language of science. It also foreshadows the horrific transformation he will undergo: “So, what have we proved?” she asks. “The computer,” Brundle retorts, “is giving us its interpretation—of a steak. It's, uh translating it for us; it's rethinking it rather than ‘reproducing’ it, and something's getting lost in the translation.”³⁴

³¹ Jakobson, “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation,” 118.

³² For three key publications here, see: Luis Pérez-González, “Multimodality in Translation and Interpreting Studies: Theoretical and Methodological Perspectives,” in *A Companion to Translation Studies*, ed. Sandra Berman and Catherine Porter (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 119–31; Rachel Weissbrod and Ayelet Kohn, *Translating the Visual: A Multimodal Perspective* (London and New York: Routledge, 2019); Monica Boria et al., eds., *Translation and Multimodality: Beyond Words* (London and New York: Routledge, 2020).

³³ Robert Stam, “The Theory and Practice of Adaptation,” in *Literature and Film*, ed. Robert Stam and Alessandra Raengo (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 25.

³⁴ *The Fly*, directed by David Cronenberg (20th Century Fox, 1986), 0:24:39 to 0:24:53.

As with fiction, the horror films originating in non-anglophone cinematic traditions come with sociocultural and stylistic preoccupations of their own: from the Swedish-Danish silent-era fictionalized documentary *Häxan* (1922; comprising vignettes from the history of witchcraft, superstitions, and demonology), to Japanese horror films like *Ju-On* (2002), to new angles on the vampire figure as found, for instance, in Swedish director Thomas Alfredson's *Låt den rätte komma in* (2008, from the novel by John Ajvide Lindqvist), or in the 2014 Iranian film *Dokhtari dar šab tanhâ be xâne miravad* (*A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night*, director Ana Lily Amirpour). Ensuing inquiries³⁵ do not merely refer to how such films are later subtitled or dubbed for English-speaking audiences, but also encompass remakes in the language (in the case of *Låt den rätte komma in*, an English-language version, *Let Me In*, was directed by Matt Reeves four years later; Lindqvist's novel was also adapted into a 2022 limited television series).

Prior to that, translation has always been part of the release and dissemination (and, later, archiving and restoration) of films—with priorities and approaches varying across the history of cinema. For example, before the advent of dubbing, several films like the 1931 Universal Pictures *Dracula* were actually filmed *twice*: Tod Browning, in this case, was shooting the film during the day, with nighttime filming by director George Melford happening in the same sets but involving other actors, for a Spanish-language version. This second-born twin, catering for Spanish-speaking audiences, is considered by many to be the better version of the two—precisely *because* it came second: Melford applied what he saw in Browning's earlier filming process to his own version, and effected considerable improvements.

Earlier still, as Enno Patalas reminds us with regards to F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu*³⁶ (whose distance from *Dracula* as source material was not sufficient to avoid legal action for copyright infringement from Stoker's widow), the 1922 expressionist masterpiece actually survived in diverging edits, fragments, and prints, despite a German court ruling that all copies of the film were to be burned. The various prints were often in dialogue with one another as national borders were crossed: Patalas points out that the second French version of *Nosferatu*, dated 1926 or 1927, preserved by

³⁵ In this direction, it is worth examining the essays that comprise the fourth part of the edited volume *Horror: A Companion* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2019), titled "National and Cross-Cultural Horror in the Twenty-First Century."

³⁶ *Nosferatu: Eine Symphonie des Grauens*, directed by F.W. Murnau (Jofa-Atelier Berlin-Johannisthal, Prana-Film GmbH, 1922).

Herni Langlois and the Cinémathèque française, is the one that eventually reached New York's MoMA in 1947. There, as was the norm,

the foreign-language intertitles were translated into English. In the process, the names of the characters (which in the French version had roughly approximated the German names) were changed to the names of the characters in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, which the film of course is based on. In this it followed the first American version of the film. Orlok thus became Dracula, Hutter became Jonathan Harker, Knock (who has been Knox in the French version) – Renfield, Bulwer – van Helsing..., and Wisborg became Bremen.

This is the form in which the film returned to Europe, first to London and the National Film Archive and thence to Germany, to a distribution company which was, in the 1960s, performing a valuable role in making 'Weimar cinema' available to a wider public. This company translated the English titles back into German, retaining the altered names. When copies were needed for export into francophone countries they translated the German titles (which had been translated from the English titles, which themselves had been translated from the French) back into French.³⁷

More than a century after Murnau's film, and the intriguing back and forth of translations which ensued, a 2024 iteration of *Nosferatu* from director Robert Eggers³⁸ reminds us of horror as also part of the broader culture of recycling that now characterizes the film industry, and an overlap we notice between remakes and adaptations.

It is important to keep in mind, however, that it is not only in intersemiotic translation, from one system of signs to another, where adaptive practices propagate, or intersect with translation. To stay with the example of *Dracula*, the case of early, variant versions in Swedish and Icelandic of Stoker's novel is quite instructive. Introducing his 2022 English translation of the first, *Mörkrets makter*, Richard Berghorn relates how the discovery of this adaptation, a Swedish text by one "A-e" (who remains unknown to this day) almost twice as long as the original, has confounded researchers who

strongly suspect that parts of the Swedish version may have been adapted from one or more of Stoker's early drafts of the classic novel, or in any case have been inspired by the same, because so many details are consistent between *Mörkrets makter* and Stoker's work notes. To make it even more intriguing, the text is riddled with Anglicisms even in the parts

³⁷ Enno Patalas, "On the Way to *Nosferatu*," *Film History* 14, no. 1 (2002): 25.

³⁸ *Nosferatu*, directed by Robert Eggers (Focus Features, Universal Pictures, 2024).

not found in the 1897 *Dracula*, similar to a poorly translated text not originally written in Swedish.³⁹

Conversely, the Icelandic version, whose title (*Makt myrkranna*) translates as *Powers of Darkness* in English, just as the Swedish title does, was published a year after Stoker's novel and is an abridgement roughly half the size of the original.

Berghorn argues that beyond the names being changed in the Swedish *Mörkrets makter* (for instance, Mina Murray becomes Wilma Murray and Count Dracula becomes Count Mavros Draculitz) the work "cannot be a straight translation of an early draft"⁴⁰ either, given the number of added sub-plots and episodes, some apparently inspired by historical events that took place soon after the publication of Stoker's original. Berghorn's translating of the Swedish adaptation back into the language of Stoker's original *Dracula* presents its own challenges: as editors S.T. Joshi and Martin Andersson point out in their "Notes to the Translation," the numerous Anglicisms and instances of Swenglish in *Mörkrets makter*, especially in the newly added passages, imply that these probably emanated from access to an English draft of *Dracula*; while on the other hand, sections that exhibit a low frequency of obvious Anglicisms suggest to us that these parts were actually original to the Swedish text, directly composed by "A-e."⁴¹ Joshi and Andersson, alongside Berghorn, also make a point of frequently consulting the 1897 English original in the course of the translation of *Powers of Darkness* being finalized, "for passages that occur in that novel as well, on the principle that this must be Stoker's prose [...] As far as possible [his] preferences (such as 'any one' and 'Buda-Pesth') have been retained."⁴² In the process of translating an adaptation back into English, this kind of return to the source is poignant in itself.

Ultimately, these proliferating, palimpsestic Draculas, textual and cinematic, are of great interest to reception and adaptation studies alike; they are particularly illuminating of the ways in which adaptation

³⁹ Richard Berghorn, "Dracula's Swedish Cousin: A Great Literary Mystery," in *Bram Stoker – Powers of Darkness: The First Dracula*, ed. S.T. Joshi and Martin Andersson; trans. and introd. Richard Berghorn (Lakewood, CO: Centipede Press, 2022), 14.

⁴⁰ Berghorn, "Dracula's Swedish Cousin," 36.

⁴¹ S.T. Joshi and Martin Andersson, "Notes on the Translation," in *Bram Stoker – Powers of Darkness: The First Dracula*, ed. S.T. Joshi & Martin Andersson; trans. and introd. Richard Berghorn (Lakewood, CO: Centipede Press, 2022), 64–5.

⁴² Joshi and Andersson, "Notes on the Translation," 66.

can be a transpositional practice, casting a specific genre into another generic mode, an act of re-vision in itself. It can parallel editorial practice in some respects, indulging in the exercise of trimming and pruning; yet it can also be an amplificatory procedure engaged in addition, expansion, accretion, and interpolation [...]. Adaptation is frequently involved in offering commentary on a sourcetext. This is achieved most often by offering a revised point of view from the “original” [...].⁴³

The chapters that comprise this book

Translating Horror: Shadows on the Page and Screen aims to contribute to growing research on specific genres in translation. The prominence of world-building and the priority of effecting a particular emotional response in such writing, as discussed in the chapters by Szymyślik and Skiadopoulou, and the transemiotic and multimodal tendencies intimated in the chapters by Mantzaris, Coussy, and Mach, already suggest to us specific challenges for the language specialist who engages with products of an often prolific dialogue between genres, modes, and media (for instance, the chapter by Mach investigates ways in which elements of humour and the splatter subgenre weave together in song lyrics by Neil Gaiman). Most chapters consider developments that transpire from the contact between literary traditions that translation fosters, as well as dynamics that emerge as horror texts travel between major and minor languages (English to Greek in the chapters by Skiadopoulou and Mantzaris, English to Polish in the chapter by Mach), but also between major languages (English to Spanish in the chapter by Szymyślik, and in Coussy’s, English to French).

The impact of recent technological advances is also explored: starting with Mark Z. Danielewski’s *House of Leaves*, published at the turn of the century, Mantzaris engages the multimodal constitution of some twenty-first-century horror writing and how it demands new skills of the literary translator, as well as collaborative settings that should further involve those responsible for layout and book design at the publisher. We often come across significant overlap between objectives of translation and those belonging to more adaptive practices: the chapter by Skiadopoulou analyzes particular shifts that occur as Stephen King’s *IT* reaches (translated or subtitled) the Greek reader and cinemagoer; the audiovisual dimension is also considered by Coussy while discussing the various disseminations of anglophone horror fiction for young adults. This wide-

⁴³ Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 18–19.

ranging survey of the consumption of key series of books by French audiences also observes manifold adjustments made with regards to titles or visual peritexts. Aspects of typography and book design are equally engaged in Nikolaou's chapter, which focuses on thematizations of translation and the presence of both fictional *and* actual translators between the covers of a novelle by Michael Marshall Smith. "The Gist" features the main character of a translator gradually possessed by a book written in an undecipherable language. Smith's tale gains from being succeeded by a translation into French, and then one back into English, using the French text as its original. In this chapter, but also the ones by Mantzaris and Coussy, we witness translation participating in literary experiment, and horror moving towards multimodal structures and self-aware plots.

The manifold relations of horror and translation investigated across this volume afford us a lens through which further areas of research can be approached: the translation of children's and young adult literature (Coussy), audiovisual translation (Skiadopoulou), or song translation (Mach). The chapters comprising *Translating Horror: Shadows on the Page and Screen*, frequently engage an essential overlap between translation, reception, and adaptation studies. And so, beyond particular problems of interlinguistic transfer, many of the pages that follow reveal attendant stimulations and stirrings that should lead to new compositions and creativity in the genre: stories where borders become too permeable for comfort and where translation itself turns to a source of doubling, anxiety, and fear. In this manner, we may encounter further scenes of uncontrolled proliferation or terrifying transpositions, of divided selves and perilous alterity. These scenes would very much still be, to recall the verdict by Clive Barker quoted earlier in this introduction, "a sign of our good health."

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IT CAME FROM TRANSLATIONS!: HORROR FICTION FOR YOUNG FRENCH READERS

AUDREY COUSSY

Introduction

Following an editorial boom of horror fiction for adult readers in the early 1970s, the first series for young readers appeared in English during the 1980s and early 1990s, with notable best-sellers *Point Horror* (1979–2014), *Goosebumps* (1992–1997 for the original series), *Fear Street* (1989–1997), and *Bone Chillers* (1994–1998). This is not to say teenagers were not reading horror before that: some bought the American EC comics that took the 1950s publishing industry by storm,¹ while others dived into popular novels like Stephen King’s *Carrie*, published in 1974—King had become the usual gateway to the genre for these readers.² They could also quench their thirst for literary thrills with fantasy and Gothic novels; after all, as Cosette Kies points out, “as a literary genre, horror is usually said to have begun with Gothic literature in the eighteenth century.”³ It can be argued as well that horrific elements have always been part of children’s literature, as Peter Hunt notes: “Children’s literature is rooted in (and has been deliberately directed towards) stories *not* calculated to protect childhood from horror. [...] Thus folk- and fairy-tales routinely contain examples of murder, dismemberment, death and sexual violence and a

¹ See: Michael Goodrum and Philip Smith, *Printing Terror: American Horror Comics as Cold War Commentary and Critique* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021).

² Cosette Kies, “The King of Dark Fantasy: Stephen King and Teens,” in *Presenting Young Adult Horror Fiction* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), 145–64.

³ Cosette Kies, *Presenting Young Adult Horror Fiction*, 10.

good deal more.”⁴ Katherine Shryock Hood⁵ highlights these roots in her historical contextualization of horror fiction for young readers in *Once Upon a Time in a Dark and Scary Book: The Messages of Horror Literature for Children* (2018), and Chloé Germaine Buckley offers a more condensed account in her entry on YA horror⁶ for Matt Cardin’s encyclopedia *Horror Literature Through History* (2017). The 1980s-1990s horror series for young readers, however, marked a turning point. Before them,

there was little teenage-specific *popular* fiction available. Whilst the more confident and able readers might turn to Stephen King (or more recently Terry Pratchett) for their popular fiction with an edge of horror, there was nothing for far too many young readers who would, it was feared, abandon reading fiction forever (or at least limit it to the pages of the tabloid press). The *Point Horror* series claimed to be a serious attempt to provide high-quality genre writing for the teenage reader.⁷

Their great commercial success created “a cultural phenomenon”⁸ around YA and children’s horror, and cemented it as a genre made easily identifiable by the peritext (e.g. book covers, titles, and back covers). While young readers embraced these series, adults’ reactions were mixed: “Publishers and booksellers naturally welcome the boost to sales and revenue, and many parents and teachers are pleased to see children buying, borrowing and *reading* books, whatever their provenance. But other groups are less sanguine. [...] Anxieties have been expressed about the

⁴ Peter Hunt, *Children’s Literature* (Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 15. Hunt goes on to mention chapbooks, and cautionary tales written by evangelical authors (seventeenth–nineteenth centuries).

⁵ Katherine Shryock Hood, *Once Upon a Time in a Dark and Scary Book: The Messages of Horror Literature for Children* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2018).

⁶ Chloé Germaine Buckley, “Young Adult Horror Fiction,” in *Horror Literature Through History: An Encyclopedia of the Stories That Speak to Our Deepest Fears* (2 vols.), ed. Matt Cardin (Santa Barbara: Greenwood/ABC–CLIO LLC, 2017), 168–74.

⁷ Michael Wilson, “The Point of Horror: The Relationship Between Teenage Popular Horror Fiction and the Oral Repertoire,” *Children’s Literature in Education* 31, no. 1 (2000): 2.

⁸ Kevin McCarron, “Point Horror and the Point of Horror,” in *Frightening Fiction*, ed. Geraldine Brennan, Kevin McCarron and Kimberley Reynolds (London and New York: Continuum, 2001), 19. YA (Young Adult) generally refers to the editorial category of readers aged between 12 and 18. I will use YA and teenager synonymously throughout this chapter.

potentially harmful effects on young people of getting the horror habit.”⁹ The genre was also disparaged for its marketing strategies borrowed from popular fiction in general and mass-market publishing, which aim at selling books at affordable prices while trying to capitalize on as large an audience as possible. These reservations, however, did not prevent the internationalization of YA and children’s horror.

In France, the genre benefited from a new business model adopted by the publishing industry after 1945 for both children’s literature and popular fiction, in the concentration of publishing houses and the ensuing competition between them, the development of strategies to foster reader loyalty, globalization of the publishing market, and significantly higher print runs.¹⁰ Translation and seriality played a major part in the development of this brand new literary genre, or what Gérard Genette would call a brand new “architext.”¹¹ Traditionally, French literature has leaned more towards suspense and fantasy (*fantastique*) than horror, with key authors from the early twentieth century like Guy de Maupassant, Marcel Aymé, and Maurice Level; while young French readers have been introduced to their works during middle- and high-school, they were not the intended audience in the first place. This all changed in the mid-1990s when French publishers created children’s and YA horror series, based almost exclusively on translations from English. Like their American counterparts, these series successfully defined and disseminated the genre in the French literary landscape. By doing so, they went against the rule dominating children’s literature at the time, which Geneviève Brisac, editor at L’École des loisirs (a major publisher in the field), perfectly summarized in 1999: “Contrary to what goes on in the rest of the publishing industry, [in children’s literature] anything disturbing or provoking is set aside, so as not to

⁹ Kimberley Reynolds, “Introduction,” in *Frightening Fiction*, 1–2.

¹⁰ See: Mathilde Lévêque, “Littérature de jeunesse,” in *Histoire des traductions en langue française – XX^e siècle*, eds. Bernard Banoun, Isabelle Poulin and Yves Chevrel (Lagrasse: Verdier, 2019), 981–1052; Sophie Heywood, “Modernising and Moralising: Hachette’s Mass-Market Fiction Series for Children, 1950s–1960s,” *Strenæ*, no. 11 (2016). <https://doi.org/10.4000/strenae.1640>; Irène Langlet, “Littératures de genre,” in *Histoire des traductions en langue française – XX^e siècle*, 947–80.

¹¹ Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 1: “By architextuality I mean the entire set of general or transcendent categories—types of discourse, modes of enunciation, literary genres—from which emerges each singular text.”

unsettle the reader.”¹² The three French series I will study hereafter epitomize this time-specific phenomenon, its main characteristics and star authors, as well as the translation strategies adopted both inside the text and around the text.

A brand new field for children’s literature: R.L. Stine’s *Goosebumps/Chair de poule*

Scholastic debuted *Goosebumps* in 1992, but it was not the first horror series aimed at non-adult readers. The same publishing house had previously launched the YA series *Point Horror* in 1979, and Pocket Books had followed in 1989 with *Fear Street*. What distinguished *Goosebumps* was its even younger readership: the series was conceived for children between the age of 8 and 12 by its future sole author, R.L. Stine, and Joan Waricha, co-founder of Parachute Press which developed the series.¹³ As Patrick Jones underlines in his book on Stine, “there was nothing even remotely like *Goosebumps* on the market: it was a brand new field.”¹⁴ Journalist Sally Lodge points out that the unprecedented success of *Goosebumps* would then give other publishers “a frame of reference and a sales handle” for middle-grade horror fiction, making the genre “easier to classify and to market.”¹⁵

After a foray into humour writing for children under the pen name Jovial Bob Stine with works such as *How to Be Funny: An Extremely Silly Guidebook* (1978) and *Bananas Yearbook* (1984), Stine had become well-known by 1992 as an author of YA horror fiction, thanks to the novel *Blind Date* (1986) which successfully launched *Point Horror*, and his series *The Babysitter* (first title published in 1989) and *Fear Street* (created in 1989). In his 1997 autobiography *It Came from Ohio!: My Life as a Writer* co-written with Joe Arthur, Stine recalled the conversation with Waricha that planted the seed for *Goosebumps*: “Maybe younger

¹² Raymond Perrin, *Fictions et journaux pour la jeunesse au XX^e siècle* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2014), 15 (my translation): “Contrairement à ce qui peut se passer en littérature générale, ce qui dérange et provoque est mis de côté: il ne faut pas inquiéter.”

¹³ Patrick Jones, *What’s So Scary About R.L. Stine?* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1998), 150. Jones notes that word-of-mouth amongst children was so positive that even first graders (6 years old) were attracted to the series.

¹⁴ Jones, *What’s So Scary About R.L. Stine?*, 149.

¹⁵ Sally Lodge, “Life After *Goosebumps*: In the Wake of R.L. Stine’s Sizzling Chiller Series, The Kids’ Horror Genre Assumes Monstrous Proportions,” *Publishers Weekly*, December 2, 1996.

kids would like to be scared too,' Joan suggested. 'Maybe you could write a series of scary books that are also funny. You know. Plenty of thrills and chills, without the gore and the blood.'"¹⁶ With this readership in mind, Stine started working on the series; he even came up with its name thanks to an ad he saw "in *TV Guide* to promote horror films which read 'It's GOOSEBUMPS Week on Channel 11!'"¹⁷ The first *Goosebumps* (*Welcome to Dead House*) was quickly followed by *Stay Out of the Basement*, *Monster Blood*, and *Say Cheese and Die!*—all published the same year, and all selling hundreds of thousands of copies. After the ninth volume, *Welcome to Camp Nightmare* (1993), a new *Goosebumps* would come out every month. By the end of the original series in December 1997,¹⁸ Stine had written sixty-two titles and sold millions of copies monthly.¹⁹

Stine was able to sustain such an intense publishing schedule thanks to a tried formula summed up by Timothy Morris in his chapter on *Goosebumps* and serial fiction for children: "One novel is pretty much like the next. Every one has to be just different enough to offer a modest justification for its separate existence, but not too different."²⁰ Each title was about a hundred and twenty pages, with short chapters featuring a lot of dialogues and brief paragraphs; these chapters almost always ended on a cliffhanger, as an easy way to build suspense and inspire dread. The end of the first chapter of *Vampire Breath* (1996) is a classic example of this strategy:

Cara turned in her chair to the doorway.
Tyler swallowed hard.
We all heard them now.
The heavy, thudding footsteps.
"A real one!" I shrieked. "It's a real werewolf!"
All three of us screamed.

¹⁶ Joe Arthur and R.L. Stine, *It Came from Ohio!: My Life as a Writer* (New York: Scholastic, 1997), 114.

¹⁷ Jones, *What's So Scary About R.L. Stine?*, 149.

¹⁸ A new series titled "Goosebumps 2000" was launched in January 1998 and discontinued two years later, followed by "Goosebumps HorrorLand" (2008–2011), "Goosebumps Hall of Horrors" (2011–2012), "Goosebumps Most Wanted" (2012–2016), and "Goosebumps Slappy World" (since 2017).

¹⁹ Timothy Morris, *You're Only Young Twice: Children's Literature and Film* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 64.

²⁰ Morris, *You're Only Young Twice*, 68.

CHAPTER 2

“Give me a break,” the werewolf said.
Of course it wasn’t a real werewolf. It was Tyler’s dad.²¹

This example also illustrates how Stine always injected humour to defuse the tension, especially during the first half of the novel; as the story unfolded, however, the sense of threat would become prominent. No more pranks or mistaken identities. Just real danger.

What kind of horror delights could be expected from a *Goosebumps* book? The story always featured a protagonist, boy or girl, aged between 10 and 12 years old, whose ordinary life was established in the first pages of the novel; they went to school, had hobbies and friends, parents, and siblings—usually younger and very annoying. Young readers could therefore easily identify with the main character and their daily life. Stine played on this defining trait of children’s literature the better to scare readers with the sudden intrusion of a supernatural element, in the form of a menacing creature; the young heroes and heroines were faced with giant sharks, ghosts, mummies, scarecrows, werewolves, and other evil forces. Using such archetypal figures of the horror genre enabled Stine to create a threat that was easily recognizable, instantly scary, and distant enough from reality so as not to traumatize children. That was his intention from the start: “I wanted *Goosebumps* to have the same kind of feeling you get on a roller-coaster ride. Lots of thrills. Lots of wild twists and turns. And a feeling of being safe the whole time.”²² In that sense, he was more interested in achieving what Stephen King has called the “‘gross-out’ level”²³ of horror; this level of the genre stays on the surface of fear, never inducing true terror in the readers or viewers. There was a plethora of “gross” monsters and moments in the series, be it a blob-like substance called “monster blood” threatening to devour everything that came its way (*Monster Blood*, 1992), or a boy obsessed with worms suddenly finding them everywhere—on himself, in his surroundings, and even in his food (*Go Eat Worms!*, 1994). This was also reflected in the peritext, with covers featuring the monsters themselves and the slime-like logo of the series. In fact, the spooky illustrations played an important part in establishing this new field of horror, as Scholastic editor Jean Feiwel

²¹ R.L. Stine, *Vampire Breath* (New York: Scholastic, 1996), 4–6.

²² Arthur and Stine, *It Came from Ohio!*, 114.

²³ Stephen King, *Danse Macabre* (New York: Gallery Books, 2010), 3. The other two levels are fear, and terror—the latter being the most refined and hard to achieve.

recalled in a recent interview: “Tim Jacobus’s *Goosebumps* covers were criticized for being too scary, which we ignored.”²⁴

The series quickly became an international phenomenon thanks to its translation in thirty or so languages. Two editions in French, each providing different translations, co-existed at the time: one in Quebec (published by Éditions Héritage Jeunesse), and one in France (Bayard Poche)—the latter will be the focus of my study. In March 1995, three years after the creation of *Goosebumps*, Bayard Poche published the first titles of *Chair de poule* (the French equivalent of the English expression): *La Malédiction de la momie* (translated by Jean-Baptiste Médina), *La Nuit des pantins* (translated by Charlie Meunier), and *Dangereuses photos* (translated by Daniel Alibert-Kouraguine). These were respectively volume 5, 7, and 4 of the original series; the French publisher may have picked them because they sold especially well in English, and they offered an interesting variety of monsters, increasing the chances of success for the very first series of children’s horror fiction published in France. Bayard Poche, like Scholastic, wanted to provide to a similar readership (aged between 8 and 12) an analogous horrific experience based on scary archetypal monsters, and chills and thrills mixed with disgust. The French editions kept what Raymond Perrin identified as *Goosebumps* major assets,²⁵ namely the short chapters, the easy-to-follow storyline, the first-person narrative, and Stine’s simple and effective style.

Bayard Poche took more liberties with the peritext in order to establish the distinctive identity of *Chair de poule* as a horror series for children. While *Goosebumps* titles featured the catchphrase “Reader beware—you’re in for a scare!” on their back covers, the French translations echoed this sentiment in the form of a longer warning inserted after the title page:

Avertissement ! Que tu aimes déjà les livres ou que tu les découvres, si tu as envie d’avoir peur, *Chair de poule* est pour toi. **Attention, lecteur !** Tu vas pénétrer dans un monde étrange où le mystère et l’angoisse te donnent rendez-vous pour te faire frissonner de peur... et de plaisir ! (“Warning! Whether you are discovering the pleasure of reading or you already love books, you have come to the right place if you want to be scared. Reader, beware! You’re about to enter a strange world where mystery and fear await you, the better to scare you... and delight you!”)

This short text instantly set the mood and conditioned the reading experience: children were conscious of diving into these books at their own risks, and

²⁴ Sally Lodge, “R.L. Stine Welcomes ‘Stingtonglers’ and Marks a Goosebumps Milestone,” *Publishers Weekly*, August 2, 2022.

²⁵ Perrin, *Fictions et journaux pour la jeunesse au XX^e siècle*, 399.