

The Music of the Abyss: Nature in Howard Phillips Lovecraft's *The Music of Erich Zann*

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Silence and peace come over you if you begin to comprehend the darkness. Only he who does not comprehend the darkness fears the night. Through comprehending the dark, the nocturnal, the abyssal in you, you become utterly simple.

C.G. Jung¹

1 – Prologue

This article should probably have been written in German because I wish to write about a secret, *the* secret, to be exact, which Erich Zann tried to tell the narrator of *The Music of Erich Zann*, emphasizing that it can only be expressed in German. However, contrary to expectations, it is not the language itself that is at stake here, but the emanation of the German soul it expresses. The Austrian composer Arnold Schönberg wrote in a letter to Alma Mahler:²

¹ Carl Gustav Jung, *The red book* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010), 251.

² Schönberg is referring to the works of Igor Stravinsky and Maurice Ravel in this quote.

But now comes the reckoning! Now we throw mediocre kitsch mongers into slavery again, and they will need to revere the German Spirit and learn to worship the German God.³

The “German Spirit” seems to correspond to Hegel’s “spirit of the times” (*Zeitgeist*). And Schönberg wrote this letter at a time that could be described as the time of fulfilled prophecy. The prophet whose prophecy comes true is of course Hegel/is of course Kant. It is impossible to put it differently, and although comparing these two philosophers is a considerable simplification, I focus on the similarities in their philosophies of aesthetics. The aesthetic revolution which begins with Kant’s *Critique of the Power of Judgment* and Hegel’s *Lectures on Aesthetics* is also an integral part of modernism.⁴ The “German God” from Schönberg’s letter thus appears to be a god of modernity.

2

The music of Erich Zann is one of those short stories by Howard Phillips Lovecraft which somehow elude the standard approach to his works.⁵ On the one hand, it may be included in the so-called “Cthulhu mythology.”⁶ The term was coined by August Derleth and today it is most often used to describe Lovecraft’s works. However, literary scholars point out that Derleth allegedly misrepresented the literary legacy of Lovecraft. In addition to literary forgeries, Derleth also (ingeniously) referred to (his view of) Christianity in his discussion of Lovecraft’s literary mythology.⁷ The term “Cthulhu mythology,” though still in use, seems to be obsolete, and Lovecraft’s prose is now seen as much more diverse. On the other hand, *The music of Erich Zann* lacks many characteristic features that make up a “classic” Lovecraftian text. There is no confrontation with the unknown in this short story, which usually leads to madness or the death of the protagonist. Respectively, even before one is confronted with the unknown, the reader is provided with a description of malevolent beings that is filled with adjectives. For a reason.⁸ Houellebecq observes that:

³ *Schoenberg’s Correspondence with Alma Mahler*, ed. Elizabeth Keathley, Marylin McCoy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 128.

⁴ Cf. Bartosz Kowalczyk, “Podwaliny modernizmu” [Foundations of Modernism], in: *Szkice o modernizmie* [Essays on Modernism] (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Silva Rerum, 2019), 9-18.

⁵ Krzysztof Grudnik points out that the author claimed that this story was one of the best he had ever written. Krzysztof Grudnik, *Okultyzm i nowoczesność. Studium literaturoznawcze* [Occultism and modernity: A literary study] (Gdynia-Kraków: Black Antlers, 2016), 314.

⁶ The core of Lovecraft’s mythology is made of works which Michel Houellebecq calls “Great Texts.” Michel Houellebecq, *H.P. Lovecraft: Against the world, against life*, trans. Dorna Khazeni (New York: Abrams, 2019), 45-46.

⁷ Cf. Sunand Tryambak Joshi, *H.P. Lovecraft: A life* (West Warwick: Necronomicon Press, 1996), 638-640. Cf. Mikołaj Kołyszko, *Groza jest święta* [Terror is sacred] (Chojnice: Phantom Books, 2014), 83-85.

⁸ That is why Lovecraft was often considered to be a bad writer. However, Michel Houellebecq claims that this was a literary strategy: “no one has ever attempted to imitate these passages where he sets aside all stylistic restraint, adjectives and adverbs pile upon one another to the point of exasperation, and he utters exclamations of pure delirium such as: ‘Hippopotami should not have human hands and carry torches ...’ This can be proven *a contrario* by his pronouncement regarding the work of a peer: ‘[Henry] James is perhaps too diffuse, too unctuously urbane, and too much addicted to the subtleties of speech to realize fully all the wild and devastating horror in his situations.’” Houellebecq, *H.P. Lovecraft: Against the world, against life*, 94-95.

HPL's aim was objective terror. A terror unbound from any human or psychological connotations. He wished, as he said himself, to create a mythology that "would mean something to those intelligent beings that consist only of nebulous spiraling gases." Just as Kant hoped to set the foundation of a valid ethical code "not just for man but for all rational beings," Lovecraft wanted to create a horror capable of terrifying all creatures endowed with reason.⁹

The music of Erich Zann is but a promise of such a description. An old man writes down his story, but a sudden gust of wind makes the pages fly out of an open window and ultimately the narrator, and consequently the reader, is not able to learn the truth. Thus, the identity of the mysterious creature with which the musician was fighting remains a mystery.

3

The story is a retrospective account of past events. The narrator reminisces about a time when, as a student of metaphysics, he rented a room in a house on Rue d'Auseil. Already during the first night in his new apartment, he heard music, which – as it turned out – was coming from the room of another tenant – Erich Zann, a rather inconspicuous mute old man from Germany, whom the narrator considered to be a genius violin player. Fascinated by the unearthly, passionate, and wild melody, the narrator asks Zann if he could listen to him play. Zann agrees to play for him, but the music is not as haunting and intriguing as the "night music," which was, in the words of the narrator: "a kind of a fugue, with recurrent passages of the most captivating quality (...)." ¹⁰ The narrator is disappointed that what Zann played for him differs from the music he heard at night. He hums the notes he remembers but the musician becomes angry and scared. He waves his hand, making the narrator stop, and looks nervously towards the curtained window "from which one could look over the terminating wall at the declivity and panorama beyond."¹¹ The old man asks the student to move to another room, where he will no longer be able to hear the music at night.

The narrator could hear the old man's music only once more, and the circumstances were unusual to say the least. A terrible scream could be heard from Erich Zann's room.¹² When the musician opened the door, the narrator could see that he was visibly distressed. The violin and the bow were on the floor. The old man asked the student to sit down and wrote a few words on a piece of paper.

The mute implored me in the name of mercy, and for the sake of my own curiosity, to wait where I was while he prepared a full account in German of all the marvels and terrors which beset him.¹³

⁹ Houellebecq, 87.

¹⁰ Howard Phillips Lovecraft, *The music of Erich Zann* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014), 3.

¹¹ Lovecraft, 4.

¹² "(...) an inarticulate cry which only a mute can utter, and which rises only in moments of the most terrible fear or anguish." Lovecraft 5.

¹³ Lovecraft 5-6.

Zann wrote for an hour, but before he could finish his account, he turned, trembling, towards the window. The narrator could hear the music coming from the outside. The musician picked up the violin and began to play passionately, as if trying with all his might not so much to drown the music coming from the outside out but to ward it off.

Then, the plot picks up momentum. Zann's music becomes more and more demonic and mysterious forces rush into the room. A gust of wind blows Zann's handwritten papers out the window, and then extinguishes the candles. The narrator tries to find the musician in the dark and he touches his face: "his blue eyes were bulging, glassy and sightless."¹⁴

4

The nature of this mysterious force has been analyzed by many different scholars. Krzysztof Grudnik refers to Lacanian typology:

In Lacanian psychoanalysis, "the endless abyss," where the self disintegrates (the self as a symbolic construct) corresponds to the Real. [...] The function of the music in the story is difficult to determine. [...] Nevertheless [...] there is an affinity between music and the Real; music is touched by the Real.¹⁵

The window, and in fact the street (Rue d'Auseil, whose name refers to *au seuil* – "on the threshold"¹⁶), is for Grudnik a barrier that separates the symbolic order from the Real, that is, an order which cannot be symbolized.

This is an initial, and of course valid, interpretation. Furthermore, Benjamin Noys, to whom Grudnik refers,¹⁷ argues that:

It is this "chaos in the symbolic" that Lovecraft's fiction constantly delineates, doing so through the concept Žižek identifies as the "imaginary Real", in which we find "a kind of image that endeavors to stretch imagination to the very border of the unrepresentable."¹⁸

Grudnik concludes after Noys that:

[Noys] argues that the Real is unrepresentable and thus "we could note the recourse to the piling of adjectives, an excess of signifiers, veil and unveil, at the same time, the monstrous unspeakable <<thing>."¹⁹

¹⁴ Lovecraft 8.

¹⁵ Grudnik, *Okultyzm i nowoczesność. Studium literaturoznawcze*, 313-314.

¹⁶ Grudnik, 312.

¹⁷ Grudnik, 314.

¹⁸ Benjamin Noys, *The Lovecraft "Event"*, [online:] www.academia.edu/548596/The_Lovecraft_Event [date of access: 29 March 2021]

¹⁹ Grudnik, *Okultyzm i nowoczesność. Studium literaturoznawcze*, 314.

The relation between Lovecraft's style and the concepts of Lacan is indeed well-founded, perhaps too well-founded in twentieth-century philosophy. In fact, however, it is a valid perspective – after all, entities that elude symbolization – beings that cannot be described by means of language – may be found in abundance in Lovecraft's works.

This notwithstanding, Grudnik, drawing on Burleson's findings, appears to go too far in his interpretation. Let me quote Burleson directly:

It is significant that Erich Zann's music is described as a "kind of a fugue," (...). It is sufficient to point out that just as a musical fugue consists of multiple themes interwoven in certain ways, the story at hand has at least three "textual" themes similarly employed: the setting of the rue d'Auseil, the music of Erich Zann, and the weird externality or alienage of whatever influences may lie beyond Zann's curtained window.²⁰

Apparently, however, both authors struggle with defining the function of music in the story, and this function (contrary to what Grudnik claims) can be clearly defined. I will return to this question later on in this article. It is enough to point out at this point that Burleson, guided by his intuition, almost arrives at a correct conclusion in his etymological analysis of the concept of music. Just before he moves away from this question towards other issues at hand, Burleson writes: "The old man is inseparable from <<his>> music, which of course is of the Muses."²¹ This seemingly laconic statement is nevertheless very important. First of all, it evokes an important context which, although it may be found in all of Lovecraft's works, seems to be treated marginally. But we will come back to that as well.

5

In the monograph *Szkice o modernizmie* [Essays on modernism] (2019), I write the following about Lovecraft's works:

The abyss [...] with which Zann struggles seems to be a pure and perfect emanation of the essence of German idealism, and thus the essence of modernity. The musician tries to ward it off with his music.²²

I have interpreted the abyss as modernity because I have misinterpreted some fragments of the text and made some incorrect assumptions.

First, the old man claims that what he fears can only be described in German.²³ This seems to suggest that whatever is lurking outside the musician's window can only be described using concepts that exist only in German. After all, (in the words of Deleuze)²⁴ concepts are

²⁰ Donald R. Burleson, *Lovecraft: disturbing the universe* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2009), 69.

²¹ Burleson, 72.

²² Kowalczyk, *Szkice o modernizmie*, 59.

²³ Lovecraft, *The music of Erich Zann*, 6.

²⁴ Cf. Michał Herer, "Tysiąc plateau – książka osobliwa" [A Thousand Plateaus – a unique book], in: Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, *Tysiąc plateau* [A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia] (Warsaw: Bęc Zmiana, 2015), IX.

the essence of philosophy, and it is hard to find a more German philosophy than German idealism.

Secondly: Erich Zann belongs to a world which is, as it were, created outside of language, both because of his profession and because of the nature of his disability.²⁵

Thirdly: it is a mistake to assume that the old man is hiding from modernity in one of the largest cities in Europe (we assume that Rue d'Auseil is in Paris). After all, urbanization and modernity go hand in hand and, in some respects, reflect the same phenomenon.

Fourthly: The fact that the narrator is a student of metaphysics matters, but it is wrong to assume that all forms of metaphysics are associated with German idealism.

And fifthly, the reader should not assume that they know who Erich Zann really is. It is a mistake to assume that the old man is what he appears to be, but I will refer to this question later in this essay.

6

The decisive experience, so difficult to talk about, it is claimed, for those who have had one, is not even an experience. It is nothing more than the point at which we touch the limits of language. (...) Where language stops is not where the unsayable occurs, but rather where the matter of words begins. Those who have not reached, as in a dream, this woody substance of language, which the ancients called *silva* (wildwood), are prisoners of representation, even when they keep silent.²⁶

The above passage from Giorgio Agamben's *The Idea of Prose* may provide an alternative perspective, or, indeed, a more focused perspective in the process of reading Lovecraft through the prism of Lacan's philosophy. In such a context, the concept of the Real would be redefined. We would have to recognize that what we call the Real is not in fact outside the symbolic order, but rather its foundation.²⁷ In other words, it gave rise to, essentially symbolic, reality. Bruno Schulz seems to share this view. In *The Mythologization of Reality*, Schulz thus writes about poetry:

when the word, released from such coercion, is left to its own devices and restored to its own laws, then a regression takes place within it, a backflow, and the word then returns to its former connections and becomes again complete in meaning - and this tendency of the word to return to its nursery, its yearning to revert to its origins, to its verbal homeland, we term poetry.²⁸

²⁵ This observation in itself is not incorrect, it is actually, as it will turn out later, extremely important. However, its interpretation is incorrect.

²⁶ Giorgio Agamben, "The Idea of Matter," in: *Idea of Prose*, trans. by Michael Sullivan, Sam Whitsitt (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), 37.

²⁷ Other Lacan scholars argue the same.

²⁸ Bruno Schulz, *The Mythologization of Reality*, trans. by John M. Bates, [online:] <http://www.brunoschulz.org/mythologization.htm> [date of access: 19 July 2021].

He further writes:

Our most sober concepts and definitions are distant offshoots of myths and ancient stories. There is not even one of our ideas that is not derived from mythology, a mythology that has been transformed, mutilated, remoulded.²⁹

The above observations can be summarized thus: the paradigm in which language is not secondary to reality, but creates it, is characteristic of the 20th century – it may be found in psychoanalysis (including Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalysis), phenomenology, neo-positivism, structuralism, post-structuralism, and pragmatics. Schulz and Agamben are probably the closest to the phenomenological perspective: they point to the extreme limitation of symbolic attributes, which allows one to experience the original nature of different phenomena. However, Agamben indicates that we have not so much reached the end of language, but the end of the matter of language and the ambiguity of the term “matter” is paradoxical. It turns out that something as immaterial as language can materialize, although, understandably, this should not be surprising. In *The Mythologization of Reality*, Schulz writes about it openly (“The old cosmogonies expressed this in the maxim ‘in the beginning was the Word’”³⁰), suggesting that the word, the meaning, and the myth are material:

When we employ commonplace words, we forget that they are fragments of ancient and eternal stories, that, like barbarians, we are building our homes out of fragments of sculptures and the statues of the gods.³¹

Similar connotations may be found in Agamben’s essay. Indeed, language has no end; it only has a foundation against which a reckless traveler can hit their head.

7

A small suggestion hidden in one of the descriptions provides key information about the story’s greatest mystery. However, before we answer the most important questions – What haunts Zann? Who is Zann? – we should focus for a moment on the (many different) functions of music in the story. For one, there is “night music,” which the narrator describes as utterly different from everything that he has heard before: “the playing grew fantastic, delirious, and hysterical, and yet kept to the last the qualities of supreme genius which I knew this strange man possessed.”³² Respectively, when Erich Zann played a concert for the narrator during the day the music was different, so unlike the “strange melodies”³³ that he heard in his room at night. It is in the description of this “daytime” concert that the term “fugue” appears, which was later employed as a dominant structural and narrative feature in the interpretation

²⁹ Schulz.

³⁰ Schulz.

³¹ Schulz.

³² Lovecraft, *The Music of Erich Zann*, 6.

³³ Lovecraft, 5.

of the entire story, for example, in Burluson's and Grudnik's texts. It should be emphasized that this term appears in the story only once, in reference to the "daytime" music. The fugue is a classic form with a clearly defined structure. Lovecraft thus seems to emphasize the difference between the "daytime" and "night" music – the latter is definitely more chaotic but also more important in the context of the entire story. This difference corresponds to the differences between classical and modernist music (or art in general). The fugue is associated with Bach and baroque music, while Zann's "night" music is associated with Schönberg and does not rely on classical compositional patterns. Schönberg's dodecaphonic music, is – also in the light of his letter – essentially modernist. Erich Zann should be thus read in a similar manner – as an aspiring modernist.

There is also the third type of music – it is described in the climax of the story. It is the music coming from the outside through the window; it appears to the narrator to be extremely subtle, quiet, and coming from afar.³⁴ The two types of music could not be more different. Zann's crazy and strange music is so unlike the sweet calm melody. In fact, two completely different worlds are confronted here: the modern world and the unknown, or rather forgotten, world of nature.

8

Lovecraft does not hide anything in *The music of Erich Zann*; yet, he carefully conceals his clues. Lovecraft is not, as he was once described, a mediocre writer, and he demonstrates his insight and profound knowledge of the modern paradigm in this and other stories. These passages, in which, as Houellebecq states, he writes like a madman and breaks all stylistic rules, in fact reveal ruptures in the structure of language, which gives way to the wild and the primary. As such, the ruptures in the structure of the symbolic order through which the Real enters are exposed as well. Such an approach to language may also be found in the works of Wittgenstein and Lacan. The modern world thus appears to be a linguistic construct, made of, as Schulz suggests, fragments of old tales. Their original meaning is lost – it has not survived to modern times. If anything, it is mutilated meaning, devoid of its fundamental connotations, and therefore completely illegible. Lovecraft in his texts seems to refer to, and miss, this lost world of harmony, whose fragments and particles we interpret today as "cosmic horror." This longing can be seen in Lovecraft's early text *Poemata Minora*, in the section entitled *To Pan*, in which the lyrical I describes their meeting with Pan in a dream. The final stanza is particularly important:

All too soon I woke in pain
And return'd to haunts of men
But in rural vales I'd fain
Live and hear Pan's pipes again.³⁵

³⁴ Lovecraft, 310.

³⁵ Howard Phillips Lovecraft, *Poemata minora: Volume II* (Providence: The Providence Press, 1902), [online:] https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Poemata_Minora,_Volume_II [date of access: 19 July 2021].

This tangible expression of the feeling of alienation and passion for mythical stories suggest that the mysterious being should be sought in the sphere of original meaning – unfortunately, now we only have remnants of this once epic story.

For Lovecraft, the mysterious being was associated with Erich Zann. And Erich Zann was described thus: “He was a small, lean, bent person with shabby clothes, blue eyes, grotesque satyr-like face, and nearly bald head.”³⁶ The musician looked not so much like a man who resembles a satyr, but rather like a satyr dressed in human clothes. Since Lovecraft used his extraordinary imagination in his fantasy and horror stories, we can rely on our imagination and argue that Erich Zann was, in fact, a satyr who had left his home and learned to live among people.³⁷ This, in turn, allows us to conclude that the mysterious being Zann is afraid of is Pan.

9

Lovecraft’s 1927 essay *Supernatural Horror in Literature* provides his readers with a unique insight into the writer’s literary inspirations. Explaining the idea behind weird fiction, Lovecraft reviews the works of his famous predecessors, including Herman Melville and Edgar Allan Poe. Lovecraft argues that a good horror story should, above all, convey a certain atmosphere, emphasizing that this atmosphere should be perceived on a macro-scale – on a cosmic scale. To describe this absolute and utter horror, which transcends human understanding, Lovecraft uses the term cosmic panic. The meaning of panic is clear: the experience of dread, which paralyzes or leads to temporary (or permanent) madness, is so common that it can certainly be viewed as one of Jung’s archetypal experiences. Horror literature eagerly explores this type of fear. In *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, Lovecraft refers to authors who explored this issue literarily, pointing to the mythical source of fear. One of Edward Frederic Benson’s short stories seems to resonate quite well with the theme of *The music of Erich Zann*. The protagonist of the story describes to his friend an extraordinary experience that changed his life. When he was alone in the woods, he suddenly heard “the sound quite distinctly of some flute-like instrument playing the strange unending melody.”³⁸ The melody was not based on repetitive phrases. High notes, used as a point of climax, were repeated over and over again:

It came from the reeds and from sky and from the trees. It was everywhere, it was the sound of life. It was, my dear Darcy, as the Greeks would have said, it was Pan playing on his pipes, the voice of Nature.³⁹

³⁶ Lovecraft, *The music of Erich Zann*, 4.

³⁷ Such a reading seems to be in keeping with the principles of the so-called Occam’s razor. Having selected the solution with the fewest assumptions, we should simply accept the fact that if Erich Zann resembles a satyr, then he probably is one.

³⁸ Edward Frederic Benson, “The man who went too far”, in: *The Room in the Tower and Other Stories*, (London: Mills & Boon, 1912), 222.

³⁹ Benson, 223.

The man who went too far was published almost ten years before *The music of Erich Zann* but it is not the only text that might be a point of reference for Lovecraft's story which he mentions in his essay. Lovecraft also refers to a text by one of his masters, the Welsh writer Arthur Machen, who is the author of the acclaimed horror story entitled *The Great God Pan*. Lovecraft thus describes the disturbing experiment that triggers the plot:

A young woman, through surgery of the brain-cells, is made to see the vast and monstrous deity of Nature, and becomes an idiot in consequence, dying less than a year later.⁴⁰

Commenting on the esoteric connotations of Machen's prose Marco Pasi writes:

As we will see, in this story the ancient Greek god serves as a symbol of a spiritual reality that lies beyond our senses, to which esoterics and mystics of all times have yearned to gain access.⁴¹

William James famously argued that we only have access to reality conditioned by empiricism, because we experience the world through our senses. This leads to a disturbing hypothesis. Even if the senses have direct access to the world of things (after all, phenomenology refers to visible phenomena), their interpretation is biased because our consciousness operates in the symbolic. If it is to be real, contact with the world of things should take place outside the symbolic. Language becomes a veil of reality behind which there lies material truth, but also unsayable (inexpressible through symbols) horror.

The goal of the controversial experiment which lies at the heart of *The Great God Pan* is to actually switch off those areas of the brain that seem to be responsible for the symbolization processes, so that the patient can see through the veil of reality.⁴² In *The music of Erich Zann*, the veil of reality drops probably because, due to his disability, Zann exists on the border between the symbolic and the real, and his subjectivity is very limited in relation to symbolic structures.

10 – Epilogue

In the short stories by Benson and Machen, as Pasi observes, Pan symbolizes opposing the ongoing modernization processes or perhaps even civilization. Even though he fills people with horror (though other contributing factors should also be considered), he stands for a post-lapsarian longing of the "Paradise lost." In psychoanalytical terms, it is a longing for unity with the unconscious, the realm of instincts, which humanity can no longer suppress⁴³ – they return to regain control over the world just like the Great Old Ones in Lovecraft's stories.

⁴⁰ Howard Phillips Lovecraft, *Supernatural horror in literature*, (Abergele: Wermod and Wermod Publishing Group, 2013), 122.

⁴¹ Marco Pasi, "Arthur Machen's Panic Fears: Western Esotericism and the Irruption of Negative Epistemology", *Aries*, no. 7 (2007), 69.

⁴² Arthur Machen, *The Great God Pan*, [online:] <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/389/389-h/389-h.htm> [date of access: 19 July 2021].

⁴³ Cf. Grudnik, *Okultyzm i nowoczesność. Studium literaturoznawcze*, 298.

Interestingly, both Marco Pasi and Krzysztof Grudnik point out that the “rebirth of Pan” takes place in early modernism.⁴⁴ It probably fills the empty space left after Nietzsche declared God dead. Pan is predominantly reborn in literature, not only in horror literature, which – paradoxically – is the sphere of the symbolic. Indeed, in his preface to Alberto Caeiro’s collection of poems, which, as the poet observes, may be read as a continuation of Walt Whitman’s poetic philosophy, Ricardo Reis writes: “Rejoice, all you who bemoan the worst disease in History! The Great Pan is reborn!”⁴⁵

We should also reflect on the categories used to describe the works of Lovecraft, Machen, Benson and Blackwood, and instead of the popular category of “supernatural horror” we should use a term that would identify the source of this horror. The category of “natural horror” seems right, given that contemporary horror literature is also moving in a similar direction.⁴⁶ However, the answer to this question should be explored in a different essay.

translated by Małgorzata Olsza

⁴⁴ Pasi, “Arthur Machen’s Panic Fears: Western Esotericism and the Irruption of Negative Epistemology”, 69. Grudnik, *Okultyzm i nowoczesność. Studium literaturoznawcze*, 296.

⁴⁵ Ricardo Reis, “Przedmowa” [Introduction], trans. by Wojciech Charchalis, in: Fernando Pessoa, *Poezje zebrane Alberto Caeiro* [Collected poems of Alberto Caeiro], trans. by Gabriel Borowski (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Lokator, 2020), 19.

⁴⁶ For example, in the works of Jeff VanderMeer, or even some short stories by Stephen King.

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KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT:

The article analyzes Howard Phillips Lovecraft's short story *The Music of Erich Zann*, with a view to presenting the conflict between modernity and nature in Lovecraft's works. The text in question, along with supplementary texts, provides information that allows us to reformulate the perception of Lovecraft's works, or more precisely, the category of "supernatural horror."

MODERNISM

nature

*modernity***NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:**

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