

Introduction

Ramsey Campbell's (b. 1946) debut in the world of horror fiction proved to be a turning point in the history of horror fiction. Horror fiction, which attracted masses highly during the tenure of the famous American horror fiction writer H. P. Lovecraft (1890-1937), began to lose its impression after the death of Lovecraft and the situation continued for many years. The famous American (by birth Indian) critic S.T. Joshi has noted the stagnant state of horror fiction: ". . . for at least decades after the death of Lovecraft, horror fiction in America was at a low ebb" (Joshi 11). Following the death of Lovecraft, three significant events took place in the history of horror fiction; the ending of Pulp Magazines, debut of Paperback Books, and arrival of Digest Magazines. The sad end of the Pulp Magazines (magazines produced from recycled paper having catchy covers) in the 1950s especially, after the Second World War gave a setback to the horror genre. The onset of Paperback Books and Digest Magazines helped science and detective fiction to flourish and to dominate people for a long time. The books of science and detective fiction published in Paperbacks allured masses largely. This situation persisted in England as well. In this country also the horror fiction after the Second World War did not flourish as the forefront genre of popular fiction. Of course, the weird works of Shirley Jackson (1916-1965) and Robert Aickman (1914-1981) in America and England respectively attracted masses towards horror fiction. But it did not achieve its glory as it achieved during the tenure of H. P. Lovecraft. Consequently, lovers and readers of horror fiction yearned for the best weird work as they enjoyed the best weird works of Arthur Machen (1863-1947) and Algernon Blackwood (1869-1951) in the past. According to critics writers of the same era were also in dilemma whether to produce pure horror fiction

with supernatural elements or to be a part of an array of science and detective fiction writers? Ramsey Campbell emerged at this critical juncture with his story collection *The Inhabitant of Lake and Less Welcome Tenants* (1964). The story collection not only introduced him to the world of horror fiction but also established his closeness to the traditional horror fiction. This story collection quenched the appetite of lovers and readers of horror fiction who longed for traditional and supernatural horror amid science and detective fiction. Though Campbell in his latter career of writing switched from traditional horror fiction and introduced Campbellian horror fiction, his first publication attested his love and respect for popular fiction in general and traditional horror fiction in particular. Thus, Campbell's debut in the world of horror fiction is significant and with the passage of time Campbell has become a significant writer of horror fiction. Hence the research is undertaken to focus on *Ramsey Campbell As A Writer of Horror Fiction*.

Campbell has written consciously within horror genre and has gone to explore a variety of themes. His roots of horror writing are found in his formative years. In this context, his life- sketch may prove helpful.

- **Life-sketch of Ramsey Campbell:**

John Ramsey Campbell was born on Friday, 4 January, 1946, in Liverpool where he spent most part of his life. Shortly, after his birth, the married life of his parents slowly deteriorated and resulted in separation, however, in the same house. His father occupied the top floor of the house and his mother occupied the bottom. His mother tried for divorce as Campbell recalls:

Divorce wasn't easy in those days, not least because my mother was a Catholic. I accompanied her as she trudged from lawyer to lawyer in a futile quest for legal aid to help her make a case for a divorce on the grounds of mental cruelty. Soon the refusals convinced her that the lawyers were conspiring to thwart her, perhaps on instructions from the police, since my father was a policeman; many people in Liverpool (which she hated) were in on the secret too (Campbell 17).

The deteriorated relationship of his parents terrified him as a child. He captures the stamped terror of his heart:

I used to hear his footsteps on the stairs as I lay in bed, terrified that he might come into my room. Sometime I heard arguments downstairs as my mother waylaid him when came home, her voice shrill and clear, his blurred and utterly incomprehensible, hardly a voice which filled me with a terror I couldn't define (Campbell 18).

Campbell's taste of terror developed when he read a copy of *More Adventure of Rupert*. The tale *Rupert's Christmas Tree* haunted his nights. As Campbell states:

The tale that haunted my nights, however, was *Rupert's Christmas Tree*, in which Rupert acquires a magical tree that decamps after the festivities and returns to its home in the woods... the small high voice from the tree, the creaking that Rupert hears in the night... I think I got my start in the field right there (Campbell 53- 73).

Campbell uses an image of a tree as a mechanism of horror to exhibit his skill in creating the atmospheric horror in his novels such as *Midnight Sun* (1990), and *The Darkest Part of the Woods* (2002). It becomes clear when Heather cries in *The Darkest Part of the Woods*: “something’s living in the tree. One of you, Sam, brings out the bucket and the rest of it as well... I don’t know exactly. I don’t care. All I know is I don’t want it in the house” (Campbell 158).

Campbell’s mother – being a writer contributed a few short stories to a Yorkshire Magazine before the Second World War and also wrote her large autobiographical novel during the war – nourished and developed his literary taste for horror fiction in particular. She also enjoyed horror and suspense films and took her son to see many of the best films of the 1950s and 1960s. When later, in his life, Campbell began writing stories she continued to encourage him of which Campbell writes with a pride: “My mother had been the first to encourage my work, and particularly to encourage me to finish stories- in other words, to give me invaluable self- discipline” (Campbell 8).

Campbell came across the issue of *Weird Tales* in a New Agent’s Window. Its cover depicted a bird-like creature shrinking in terror of two monstrosities with huge human skulls and little bodies: “If the cover looked like that, what extraordinary things would the magazine contain?” (Campbell 53-73). Campbell felt that he found the sort of fiction he wished to write. The interest continued and its seeds were sown: “In 1953 my mind was already bent on improving on the terrors” (Campbell 53-73). At ten, Campbell bought his first science magazine titled *Astounding* and began collecting all the science fiction he could find. Books

published by Arkham House gathered his attention and nurtured his interest as he went on collecting the books.

The year 1957 proved to be a turning point in Campbell's life when he finished writing his first book *Ghostly Tales*. Campbell had faced difficulties in publishing the book as he records:

Ghostly Tales, that first book of mine, bounced from publisher to publisher. Sometime it ended up with a children's book editor, one of whom told me it made her feel quite spooky sitting at her desk. (Childish the book may have been, but it wouldn't be for children even now.) (Campbell 53-73).

But Tom Boardman who used to publish science fiction responded:

We should like to take this opportunity of encouraging you to continue with your writing because you have definite talent and very good imaginative qualities. It means a lot of hard work to become an author but with the promising start you have made there is every possibility that you will make the grade (Campbell 53-73).

This is an encouraging rejection letter. This collection of twenty stories was influenced by M. R. James and by Dennis Wheatly. It was finally published in 1987 as a special issue of *The Crypt of Cthulhu*, a Lovecraftian journal. In 1960, Campbell happened to read a collection of Lovecraft's stories titled *Cry Horror*. This encouraged him so much that he began writing pastiches of Lovecraft. In the same year he sent some of the stories to a young friend of Lovecraft, August Derleth. Derleth had started Arkham House, a small press in 1939 to publish Lovecraft's

fiction. Derleth responded with a 'two-paged single space letter'. He commented on the lacunas of the stories and urged Campbell to find his own style. Campbell took it as the most important letter of his career and started rewriting the stories.

The Church in High Street is Campbell's first published story. It appeared in Derleth's anthology, *Dark Mind Dark Heart*. About this S. T. Joshi comments:

Derleth extensively rewrote the tale, but Campbell did not object to the procedure: he was thrilled by merely being included in a volume published by Arkham House, and moreover he learned much about the craft of writing from Derleth's revisions (Joshi 14).

When Campbell became eighteen, Arkham House published his first book entitled *The Inhabitants of Lake and Less Welcome Tenants* in 1964. This volume reflects Lovecraft's influence on Campbell and it shattered the small world of horror introducing Campbell to the whole world as a powerful writer of horror. Meanwhile Campbell faced family crises. His relationship with his father grew worse. Campbell pens the experience:

In my teens I sometime came home at the same time as my father, who would hold the front door closed from inside to make sure we never met face to face. Very occasionally, when it was necessary for him to get in touch, he would leave me a note, for some reason in French (Campbell 53-73).

Campbell's mother severely suffered from schizophrenia and made his life a living nightmare. His maternal grandmother, who accompanied

Campbell from his childhood, died in 1961. Next year Campbell left school and joined as a tax officer for the Inland Revenue. Four years later, he left the job and joined in Liverpool public libraries. At this time, in 1966, his mother went to the hospital for an operation. She became unbearable to the staff and even attempted to sue the surgeon. Her lifelong paranoia worsened and their relations became estranged as she accused him of plotting something against her. *The Face That Must Die* (1979) is based on his mother's paranoia. The character of his mother is also reflected in *Obsession* (1985) in which Robin, a doctor, faces her increasingly neurotic mother.

In 1967, Campbell met Rosemary Prince, a colleague in the libraries and a musician, and they were engaged. But Rosemary's parents terminated the relationship. They thought Rosemary was superior to Campbell.

In 1970, Campbell's acquaintance with Jenny Chandler proved to be fruitful and offered him somewhat relaxation from his mother's troublesome paranoia. Jenny was a daughter of A. Bertram Chandler, a science fiction writer. Campbell and Jenny frequently met each other and finally married on New Year's Day in 1971. She and his children – Tasmin Joanne (b. 1978) and Mathew Ramsey (b.1981) - have filled up the lacuna of happiness which he expected from his parents. Shortly, after his honeymoon, Campbell went to his father, dying in the hospital. The elder Campbell fell from stairs at the fire place manufacturers, where he worked as a clerk after retiring from the police. The son and the father came face to face first time in decades. A few days later the elder Campbell died.

Campbell had already begun reviewing movies for B.B.C Radio Merseyside in 1969. He left the job of the library in 1973 to become a full time fiction writer and movie reviewer. In the same year Campbell's second story collection *Demons by Daylight* appeared. It shows Campbell consciously repudiating Lovecraftian influence and was trying to aim something new. The stories in this collection centered on a single character's moods and sensations. Abnormal states of human mind drew his attention and later on, in his novels, Campbell successfully exposed these states of human mind. This mode of writing tempted S.T. Joshi to compare Campbell to E. A. Poe (1809-1849).

In his acute exploration of abnormal states of mind Poe achieved heights of psychological terror that perhaps only Campbell has come close to equalling (Joshi 8).

Demons by Daylight received positive remark from the most famous writer and critic T.E.D. Klein. He wrote *Ramsey Campbell: an Appreciation*, which he sent to Campbell in 1974 (It was published in 1977). Campbell found the article as an encouragement which helped him to continue writing stories and his third collection *The Height of the Scream* appeared in 1976.

Having successfully established as a short story writer Campbell decided to write a novel. His attention to this field was diverted by his American agent, Kirby McCauley. And Campbell wrote *The Doll Who Ate His Mother* in 1975 and published in 1976. Campbell penned his second novel *The Face That Must Die* in 1979. The novel is based on his mother's paranoia. This novel also jumped from publisher to publisher and returned with a note of rejection. It commented on the novel as horrible and unpleasant. Finally, it was published in 1976 with significant

editing. Campbell produced his next novel *To Wake the Dead* in 1980. During these years his mother's paranoia increased. And she was unable to take care of herself: "she slept downstairs on the couch, because people came into her bedroom and pushed her out of bed" (Campbell 30). And: "It took me a while to notice she was no longer changing her clothes" (Campbell 31). The condition of the mother became critical day by day: "One night ...she phoned me in terror, saying that the room was full of people watching her" (Campbell 53-73). She died in the hospital in 1982. Campbell felt guilty and responsible for her death and negligence: "I feel she died of my neglect and of my having destroyed her memories" (Campbell 35). Earlier Campbell had left Liverpool and settled in the suburb of Wallasey.

With the success of *To Wake the Dead* Campbell devoted his career in writing novels that made him famous and award winning writer. Campbell has published twenty two novels (up to 2006). His all novels including *The Nameless* (1981), *Obsession* (1985), *Midnight Sun* (1990), and *Silent Children* (2000) have shone brightly on the horizon of horror fiction. During this span, his collections of short stories, namely *Waking Nightmares* (1981), *Scared Stiff* (1986), *Cold Print* (1993), and *Dark Feasts* (1987) dominated the market to remind that Campbell has not lost his mastery over his favorite genre.

This most accomplished writer has to his credit some prestigious awards. *The Parasite* received the August Derleth Award for the best novel in 1981. *Alone with the Horrors* (1983) won the world Fantasy Award and the Bram Stoker Award from the Horror Writers Association. Campbell has also published three novelizations of horror films – *The*

Bride of Frankenstein (1977), *The Wolfman* (1977), and *Dracula's Daughter* (1977) under the house name Carl Dreadstone.

In addition, Campbell has proved himself as an anthologist of horror fiction. *Superhorror* (1976), *Tales of the Cthulhu Myths* (1980) and *Uncanny Banquet* (1992) are Campbell's famous anthologies. Campbell and Stephen Jones have edited five Annual volumes of *Best New Horror* (1990-1994). These are generally regarded as the best anthologies of weird tales.

Ramsey Campbell is sixty three years old and has dominated the field of horror for last thirty years. Mike Ashley praises Campbell for his contribution in horror fiction: "Ramsey Campbell now stands supreme amongst Britain's writers of horror and supernatural fiction" (Ashley 3). Campbell's devotion to horror fiction is made clear when he says:

I began writing horror fiction in an attempt to imitate what I admired, and as I learned some basic craft, to pay back a little of the pleasure which the field gave me. I have stayed in it because of its scope. So far it has enabled me to talk about any theme I want to examine, and I don't believe I have reached its boundaries by any means. In a sense I am saying merely that all my fiction is horror fiction... (Campbell 7).

Campbell looks at horror fiction as a vehicle for expressing his views on human life and society. He also finds horror as a medium for conveying his moods, conceptions and images. According to Campbell horror fiction is more than mere 'popular fiction': "He resolutely claims that it is far more than mere 'popular fiction', and that it must have literary dimensions if it is to be worth of writing or reading" (Joshi 19). His

novels are the blend of literary dimensions and aspects of popular fiction. How Campbell's work surpasses Genre fiction will be discussed in the concluding chapter. Campbell believes that his whole efforts are to expose a dormant evil that lurks beneath the veneer of everyday life. How Campbell exposes evil lurking in human world, with his mechanisms, themes, technique and style placing them in a modern setting will be discussed in next chapters examining his select novels.

Campbell has enriched horror fiction and his contribution to this field is noteworthy. However, many horror fiction writers in Britain have contributed to develop the genre and have attracted masses. Rich and varied history of horror fiction denotes a long tradition of horror fiction. Surely, with old and new icons of horror, themes, subjects, and settings horror fiction still dominate human mind. A brief survey of this fiction will help to understand the journey of horror fiction from the remote past to the present day.

- **History of British Horror Fiction:**

The horror-tale is as old as human thought and speech themselves (Lovecraft 2).

Man's interest in the 'unknown', the 'other' is reflected in oral as well as in written literature. Though this genre emerged in the eighteenth century, it has its roots in the history of mankind. The sagas, fire-tales, bed-tales, fairy tales are packed with supernatural elements. Witches, vampires, ghosts and ghouls have rested and lasted long on the lips of bards, mothers and grandmothers. Even in Jacobean revenge dramas and in Elizabethan dramas including many of Shakespeare's tragedies such as *Othello* (1603) horror is reflected. Webster's dramas, *The White Devil*

(1612), and *The Duchess of Malfi* (1623) contain elements of horror. As H. P. Lovecraft notes:

In Elizabethan drama, with its *Dr. Faustus*, the witches in *Macbeth*, the ghost in *Hamlet* and the horrible gruesomeness of Webster we may easily discern the strong hold of the demonic: on the public mind; a hold intensified by the very real fear of living witchcraft, whose terrors, wildest at first on the Continent, began to echo loudly in English ears ... (Lovecraft 4).

The main history of genre horror lies in the literary gothic. The word 'gothic' originally refers to the 'Goths', an early Germanic tribe, such as the Visigoths. 'Gothic' also refers to the architectural style popular in Western Europe from the twelfth century to the sixteenth century and subsequently revived in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. This type of architecture is characterized by the use of high pointed arch and vault. The gothic novel is a type of prose fiction located in a gloomy castle furnished with dungeons, subterranean passages. The gothic novel made use of ghosts and supernatural occurrences.

The fifty years span, from Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) to Charles Robert Maturin's *Melmoth, the Wanderer* (1820) including the work of Ann Radcliffe (1674-1823), Mathew George Lewis (1775-1812), Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810) and their followers, is known as the span of gothic novels. *The Castle of Otranto* depicts a story of Manfred that takes place in an old castle. Miss Akin's *Sir Bertrand* (1773) depicts Bertrand's encounter with a coffin of dead lady in an old ancient castle. Ann Radcliffe's the most famous novel *Udolpho* (1794) transplants a young French woman to an ancient castle

where she is held but she escapes with the help of a fellow prisoner. William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794), *St. Leon* (1799), Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1817), and *Melmoth, the Wanderer* lacked the exotic setting of the earlier romances but presented a brooding atmosphere of gloom and terror. *Caleb Williams* and *St. Leon*, non-supernatural novels handle the theme of the extension of life. *Frankenstein* is one of the horror-classics novels. The novel tells us of the artificial human-being made from corpse's fragments by Victor Frankenstein, a young Swiss Medical student. This intelligent monster is rejected by mankind because he owns a hideously loathsome form. The monster becomes an enemy of Victor Frankenstein. *Melmoth* is the tale of an Irish Gentleman who obtains an extended life from the Devil at the price of his soul. Ghosts, vampires, haunted castles and many other devices were repeated again and again in the gothic novels that Jane Austen's parody of these novels, *Northanger Abbey* appeared in 1818.

The emergence of Mathew Phipps Shiel (1865-1947), Bram Stoker (1847-1912), Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1994), and John Buchan (1875-1940) strengthened horror fiction. In the novel *The purple Cloud* (1901) Shiel describes with tremendous power a curse which came out of the Arctic to destroy mankind. His story collection *The House of Sounds and others* (2005) tells of a creeping horror and menace trickling down the centuries on a sub-Arctic island off the coast of Norway.

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) and *The Lair of the White Worm* (1911) are landmarks of horror. *The Lair of the White Worm* deals with a gigantic primitive entity that lurks in a vault beneath an ancient castle. *Dracula* is about a vampire that dwells in a horrible castle in the Carpathians but finally leaves the castle and migrates to England with a

view of populating the country with fellow vampires. *Dracula* became so popular that it evoked many similar novels of supernatural horror. Some of the novels are *The Beetle* (1897) by Richard Marsh (1857-1915), *The Door of the Unreal* by Gerald Bliss. John Buchan's novel *Witchwood* (1927) depicts a survival of the veil Sabbat in a lonely district of Scotland.

Highly culminated period from 1880 to 1940 of horror fiction is known as the Golden age of weird fiction. Distinguished horror writers Arthur Machen (1863-1947), Lord Dunsany (1878-1957), Algernon Blackwood (1869-1951), and M. R. James (1862-1936) enriched the fiction. In the episodic novel *The Three Imposters* (1895) Machen deals with powerful sequences about horrors in the Welsh Mountains. *The Novel of the White Powder* (1895) is one of the best horror tales that shows the physical transformation of a man into a hideous monster. Machen's short stories *The Great God Pan* (1890) tells of a singular and terrible experiment and its consequences. A young woman is made to see the vast and monstrous deity of Nature through surgery of the brain cells; turning her mad. After a few days she dies. Lord Dunsany in his early collections of stories *The Gods of Pegana* (1909), and *Time and the Gods* (1906) abandoned rudeness and ugliness of diurnal reality and created imagery world of gods, demigods, priests, and heroes.

Blackwood's fiction includes both novels and short tales which express his dissatisfaction with the mundane world. *The Centaur* (1911) is a story about a man who encounters with a herd of centaurs in the Caucasus Mountains. Blackwood's short stories are manipulation of supernatural elements. *The Willows* published in 1907 presents a nebulous creatures encountered by two travelers sailing down the

Danube. *The Wendigo* (1910) portrays a vast forest demon about which lumbermen from north woods whisper at night.

A noted academic and scholar M. R. James introduced the ghost stories. His animalistic, violent, and vengeful ghosts pursue helpless victims for no greater sin. *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary* (1904), *More Ghost Stories* (1911), and *A Thin Ghost and others* (1925) are his story collections. James gave birth to the psychological ghost stories in which ambiguity played a very important role.

William Hope Hodgson (1877-1918) produced a small but substantial body of work during his short life. The novels *The Boats of the Glen Carrig* (1907) and *The Ghost Pirates* (1909) are set at sea. *The Boats of the Glen Carrig* deals with the adventures of a ship's crew when they find themselves near an unknown island, surrounded by shoals of seaweed. *The Ghost Pirates* describes a ship 'taken over' by sailors from another dimension. *The House on the Borderland* (1908) focuses on evilly regarded house and *The Night Land* (1912) deals with the condition of the earth in future after the death of the Sun.

The array of horror writers continued in England. Writers like Walter de la Mare (1873-1956), Oliver Onions (1873-1961), Robert Aickman (1914-1981), Brian Lumley (b. 1937), Clive Barker (1952), and Kim Newman (b. 1959) enriched horror fiction with their contributions. Mare's fiction including novels and short stories handle supernatural elements. The novel *The Return* (1910) deals with body invasion. His unforgettable short story *Seaton's Aunt* (1923) shows vampirism. His famous short story *The Tree* tells us of a frightful vegetable growth in the yard of starving artist and the most popular tale Mr. *Kempe* depicts a mad critical hermit in a quest of human soul. Oliver wrote contemporary

novels and thrillers in addition to ghost and horror stories. His short horror novel *The Beckoning Fair One* (1911) is one of the ghost stories. His story collections *Ghosts in Daylight* (1924), *The Collected Ghost Stories* (1935) made him famous. Aickman also reputed himself as a writer of ghost stories but his short fiction explored a number of supernatural themes. His story collections *Cold Hand in Mine: Eight Other Stories* (1975), *The Wine Dark Sea* (1988) and the novel *The Late Breakfasters* (1964) placed Aickman among the array of British horror writers.

Brian Lumley, Clive Barker, and Kim Newman are contemporaries of Ramsey Campbell. Lumley's novels *The Burrowers Beneath* (1974), *The Transition of Titus Crow* (1975) and *Elysia* (1989) are Cthulhu Deities novels. Barker with his novels *The Damnation Game* (1985), *Books of Blood* (1984-1985), *The Hellbound Heart* (1986), and *Cabal* (1980) became famous on the horizon of horror literature. Newman wrote his novels under the pseudo name of Jack Yeovil. His novels *Bad Dreams* (1991), *Jago* (1991), and *Anno Dracula* (1992) placed him in the realm of horror fiction. Newman's less widely known novels are *The Quorum* (1994), and *Sevenstars* (2000). His famous short story collections are *Famous Monsters* (1995) and *Where the Bodies are Buried* (2000). Apart from British Horror Fiction, there is a long tradition of American Horror fiction. Hence, it is necessary to take a brief survey of American Horror fiction.

- **History of American Horror Fiction:**

In the history and development of horror genre, contribution of American horror fiction writers cannot be neglected. In fact, American horror fiction writers have not only enriched the genre but also influenced

many foreign writers including Ramsey Campbell. Though E. A. Poe (1809-1849) and H. P. Lovecraft (1890-1937) developed and flourished horror fiction, the contribution of Nathaniel Hawthorne is very memorable. His horror novel *The House on the Seven Gables* (1851) is the first haunted house novel. But Hawthorne produced romantic and romantic historical novels. Actually, he debuted on the horizon of genre fiction with his romantic novel *Fanshawe* (1828). It was Edgar Allan Poe who made others to look at horror fiction as a literary form. His horror tales *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839), *The Tell-Tale Heart* (1843), and *The Black Cat* (1843) are still remembered by scholars, critics, and readers. H. P. Lovecraft, a significant figure in the history of horror fiction, devoted his entire career to the supernatural horror genre. Though this master of horror genre in his latter career stuck to cosmic horror, his earlier works *The Outsider* (1921) and *The Rats in the Wall* (1929) attested his contribution to the conventional horror genre. His works *The Call of Cthulhu* (1926) and *At the Mountains of Madness* (1936) are famous for cosmic horror. His contribution to the horror genre is so memorable that his work is recognized as Lovecraftian fiction. As it is mentioned earlier that horror fiction in America after the demise of Lovecraft struggled to survive. However, the entry of Shirley Jackson (1916-1965), Robert Bloch (1917-1994), William Blatty (b.1928), and Ira Levin (1929-2007) enriched horror fiction. Jackson produced a small but alluring weird work remarkably *The Lottery* (1948) and *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959). It is the latter novel which created history in the world of horror fiction and became a milestone in the genre. Levin's *Rosemary's baby* (1967) created horror as it underlined the theme of body invasion by the supernatural entity. This theme reappeared in many horror novels thereafter. American horror fiction took a great swift after 1940 onward. Robert Bloch's novels *The Scarf* (1947) and *Psycho* (1959)

reminded readers of E. A. Poe's works. It can be pointed out that the field of non-supernatural strengthened with the debut of these two novels of Bloch. Blatty's novel *The Exorcist* (1971) not only changed his literary career but also showed the impact of supernatural horror on masses. Thomas Tryon (1926-1991) and Thomas Harris (b.1940) produced a small weird work but their novels are outstanding works of horror genre. Tryon's novels *The Other* (1971) and *Harvest Home* (1973) brilliantly depict rural horror. These novels attested horror as largely or wholly internal and it is a product of a disturbed mind. Harris's novels *Black Sunday* (1975), *Red Dragon* (1981), and *The Silence of the Lamb* (1988) explored horror of human mind.

American living horror fiction writers Anne Rice (b.1941), Peter Straub (b. 1943), Dennis Etchison (b. 1943), Paul Wilson (b.1946), Stephen King (b.1947), and T. E. D. Klein (b.1947) have enriched horror fiction by producing unforgettable novels. Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) and its three sequels *The Vampire Lestat* (1985), *The Queen of the Damned* (1988), and *The Tale of the Baby Thief* (1992) link her to the legacy of traditional horror fiction writers. Peter Straub's novels *Julia* (1975), *Shadowland* (1980) are famous supernatural horror novels. Apart from novels, Straub has written many horror stories. *The General's Wife* published in 1982 is one of the famous Straub stories. *The Fog* (1980) and *Shadowman* (1994) are famous novels of, Dennis Etchison. His story collections *The Dark Country* (1982) and *Red Dreams* (1984) have glorified horror fiction. The novels *The Keep* (1981), *The Tomb* (1984) and *Nightworld* (1992) are worthy contributions of Paul Wilson to horror fiction. Like Wilson, Stephen King's horror novels *Salem's Lost* (1975), *The Shining* (1977) and *The Stand* (1978) have carried forward supernatural horror. Klein's small but effective horror fiction emerged with urban horror. His one long novel *The Ceremonies* (1984) is a fine illustration of urban

horror. American horror fiction still flourishes as writers like M. John Harrison (b.1956), Patricia Cornwell (b. 1956), B. E. Ellis (b. 1964) and Mark. Z. Danielwski (b. 1966) are contributing to enrich the genre. Campbell's disciple Poppy. Z. Brite (1967) has become one of the chief contributors to develop and enrich horror fiction in America. Thus, like British horror fiction, American horror fiction has long tradition which fascinates scholars, critics, and readers. Among British and American horror fiction writers Ramsey Campbell has proved himself as the supreme writer of horror fiction and his employment of icons/mechanisms of horrors have allured masses and they have offered him wide publicity.

- **Ramsey Campbell's icons of horror**

Campbell employs a variety of icons/mechanisms of horrors in his novels. The most important element of horror fiction which is found in gothic and traditional horror fiction is a monster-- a spirit, a vampire, a zombie, a werewolf, a witch, a mummy or some more horrible creature. Campbell has utilized old gothic and traditional elements of horror which are employed in *To Wake the Dead* (1980), and *The Influence* (1988). *To Wake the Dead* focuses on invasion of human body by a spirit. The spirit of Peter Grace lodges within the protagonist Rose's body and furthermore it settles in the body of her unborn child. Campbell published *To Wake the Dead* under the new title *The Parasite* in the same year in America. But *The Parasite* has a different ending than *To Wake the Dead*. *The Influence* awakens horror when the ghost of Queenie takes over the body of her grandniece, Rowan. The novels *The Claw* (1983), *The Obsession* (1986), and *Ancient Images* (1989) carry on supernatural elements of horror. *The Claw* presents a story of the Knight Family which becomes the victim of a haunted claw which is made of metal. This haunted claw,

as the story develops, changes the personalities of the members of the family. Though the novel ends happily, its supernatural characteristics hover in reader's mind. *The Obsession* explores characters response to the mysterious letter that promises them to fulfill their wishes. Though the novel involves Roger and others, it is a tragic story of Peter Priest who gets obsessed with the mysterious letter *Ancient Images* underlines Campbell's love for horror movies. Having a supernatural touch, the novel presents the quest of the protagonist for the lost horror film *Tower of Fear*. The quest reveals horrible realization and bitter truth about the Redfield land.

The haunted house or castle is the oldest element of horror in gothic Fiction. The Gothic castles and houses nourished horror with its secret passages and unused halls. Campbell uses this oldest gothic element in his some novels placing them in modern settings. Campbell's dilapidated and unused houses amid cities and towns resemble gothic houses and equally arouse horror. Campbell's first novel *The Doll Who Ate His Mother* (1976) (new edition of the novel appeared in 1993) is a haunted house novel in which a group of five people undertake a quest to locate Chris Kelly, a cannibal with the supernatural origin. This Kelly is a serial killer and has killed the brother of the protagonist Clare Frayn. The quest leads the group to the unused house located in the heart of the city. In the house the group learns the truth that discloses Kelly's plight. *Nazareth Hill* (1997) presents the haunted house. This haunted house becomes a cause of decaying relationship between a father and his teenage daughter. The novel also explores the history of Nazarill at which witches are supposed to have performed rituals. Like haunted houses, haunted forests and haunted book stores have nested in Campbell's novels as icons of horror. The haunted forest in *The Darkest Parts of the*

Wood (2002) becomes menacing and operates very cruelly with the Price family. *The Overnight* (2005) portrays a haunted bookshop which becomes the doorway to a hell unlike any other. This shop becomes the place of the mysterious things where book shelves are found meddled every night and even the computer screen works when the machines are off. Campbell shows the impact of supernatural powers on human beings. This impact leads them to destruction and decay.

Campbell uses conception of cosmic horror in *The Hungry Moon* (1987) and *The Midnight Sun* (1990). In *The Hungry Moon* an evangelist, Godwin Mann, who is from California, comes to Moonwell where a local horror-the supernatural entity- is kept under control by rituals. Mann enters the cave and frees the entity. It emerges with his body and begins to destroy the town with darkness and violence. The novel is a fine etching of helplessness of human beings against a cosmic entity. *The Midnight Sun* centers on the ice-monster. The protagonist Ben Sterling gets fascinated by the ice- monster and ends his life in the horrible way. The people of the town also suffer and turn blind. Though the novel underlines the struggle between human beings and cosmic entities, it shows humanity's efforts to fight with such entities.

Ramsey Campbell utilizes serial killers as icons of horror. *The Face that Must Die* (1979) presents a resentful and disturbed man John Horridge who turns a serial killer. In *The Count of Eleven* (1992) Jack Orchard feels that he is at the mercy of luck in the form of numbers especially 11 and 13. He gets obsessed and turns to be a serial killer. *The Last Voice They Hear* (1998), *Silent Children* (2000), and *Secret Story* (2006) move around serial killers. *The Last Voice They Hear* displays the flowering of the family abuse into a violence in which a child suffers and

turns to be a serial killer. This child is Ben Davenport. When he grows up, he cruelly kills elder couples. In *Silent Children* Hector Woollie is presented as a child serial killer who secretly kills small children and buries them under the floor of the house which he happens to build or renovate. *Secret Story* deals with a serial killer Dudley Smith. His loathsome and fearful deeds manifest horror. Smith is one of the cruelest serial killers ever depicted by Campbell.

Apart from supernatural elements and serial killers, murderers, mysterious people and groups of such people operate as icons of horror in some of the novels of Campbell. *The Nameless* (1981), moves around a nameless group which kidnaps small children and hypnotize them according to its hidden doctrine. The novel exposes a tragic life-story of Barbara Waugh whose daughter is kidnapped and hypnotized by the nameless group. *The Long Lost* (1993) is a story of the mysterious sin-eater Gwendolen Owain. She is a professional sin-eater who is frightened of dying with the sins. In order to escape from her sins, she secretly distributes them by offering self made cakes at the annual barbecue organized by David Owain and his wife. People, who took part in the barbecue, undergo disasters after eating her cakes. The novel exposes the ancient and supernatural nature of Gwendolen Owain. *Pact of the Fathers* (2001) presents the group of fathers who for their own benefit secretly kill their own daughters. The novel superbly presents the struggle of Daniella Logan amid the horrible world created by people on whom she depends on for her safe life. *The One Safe Place* (1996) is a different kind of horror novel which shows Campbell's interest in urban horror. It focuses on the conflict of two families—Travis and Fancy. In this novel Campbell skillfully narrates aftereffects of crime and violence on children. The most discussed novel *Incarnate* (1984) moves around an

experiment on dreams conducted in Oxford eleven years before by Stuart Hay. The novel focuses on life of five characters who participated in the experiment. Campbell depicts condition of each character eleven years after the experiment. *Needing Ghosts* (1990) a short novel also moves around dream and reality. Campbell presents the story of Simon Mottershead that baffles readers. Before focusing on Campbell's fiction critically, it is necessary to ponder over popular fiction or genre fiction

In the realm of modern horror fiction, there are few living writers whose work is sufficiently rich and variegated to justify a full-length critical study. It is not my place here to engage in a polemic for or against some of the more popular figures in the field; but I can say with confidence that Ramsey Campbell, although by no means the most widely known living writer of horror fiction, is worthy of study both because of the intrinsic merit of his work and because of the place. Ramsey Campbell is a British horror fiction writer. He is author of more than 40 books and collections, and has co-edited five editions of Best New Horror with Stephen Jones. Campbell has won four World Fantasy Awards, 10 British Fantasy Awards, and the Horror Writers Association's Lifetime Achievement Award. Fiction Horror Thrillers. Save for later. Ray Bradbury was identified as a science fiction and fantasy writer once he came to prominence, but he started off writing horror. He wrote for Weird Tales magazine in the 40s, and his first collection published in the mid 40s, Dark Carnival, was almost entirely horror. Ramsey Campbell is a British writer considered by a number of critics to be one of the great masters of horror fiction. T. E. D. Klein has written that "Campbell reigns supreme in the field today", while S. T. Joshi has said that "future generations will regard him as the leading horror writer of our generation, every bit the equal of Lovecraft or Blackwood".