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Nota di contenuto	Intro -- Contents -- Abbreviations -- Introduction -- King, His World, and Its Characters -- Interpreter of the Postmodern Condition -- King's Brand of Horror -- 1. The Gothic in King's Works -- Abnormal and Repressed Sexuality (the Vampire) -- Hubris and Death (Frankenstein's Monster) -- The Gothic Double (the Werewolf) -- The Gothic Melodrama (the Ghost) -- 2. Myths and Fairy Tales in King's Works -- The Hero as a Generic Hybrid (Roland the Gunslinger) -- The Antihero as a Generic Hybrid (Randall Flagg) -- Adapted and Revised Myths and Fairy Tales -- Mythical and Fairy-Tale Themes -- 3. Literary Naturalism in King's Works -- Free Will and Responsibility -- Genetic and Sociological Determinism -- Cosmological Determinism and Fate -- Metafictional Determinism -- Conclusion -- Appendix: A Note on Previous Criticism -- Bibliography -- Index.
Sommario/riassunto	In a thoughtful, well-informed study exploring fiction from throughout Stephen King's immense oeuvre, Heidi Strengell shows how this popular writer enriches his unique brand of horror by building on the traditions of his literary heritage. Tapping into the wellsprings of the gothic to

reveal contemporary phobias, King invokes the abnormal and repressed sexuality of the vampire, the hubris of Frankenstein, the split identity of the werewolf, the domestic melodrama of the ghost tale. Drawing on myths and fairy tales, he creates characters who, like the heroic Roland the Gunslinger and the villainous Randall Flagg, may either reinforce or subvert the reader's childlike faith in society. And in the manner of the naturalist tradition, he reinforces a tension between the free will of the individual and the daunting hand of fate. Ultimately, Strengell shows how King shatters our illusions of safety and control: "King places his decent and basically good characters at the mercy of indifferent forces, survival depending on their moral strength and the responsibility they may take for their fellow men."

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