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The Impact of Family Dysfunction on Childhood Trauma and Women's Agency in Stephen King's *The Shining*

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Dedication

To my biggest champions, my parents.

To my wellsprings of delight and amusement, my brothers.

To everyone who believed in me and encouraged me all throughout this journey.

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Declaration

I, undersigned, do hereby declare that this dissertation has been carried out by me as a partial fulfillment for the Master's degree in English literature and civilization under the guidance and supervision of Mr. Boulegroune Adel, Faculty of Letters and Languages, English Language and Literature Department, Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, Algeria. I further declare that the interpretations put forth in this thesis are based on my own readings, understanding and examination of the original texts. The reported findings that I have made use of are duly acknowledged at the respective place. Also, I declare that this work is not published anywhere in any form.

Signature

Ouriachi Aya

Date: 04/06/2024

Abstract

This dissertation investigates the phenomenon of family dysfunction presented in Stephen King's *The Shining* and its effect on the characters of Jack and Wendy Torrance. One may find it controversial to come to terms with how each character is shaped by their parental abusive past backgrounds. Throughout this study, an attempt will be made in order to illustrate how Jack and Wendy's current psychological crises mirror their past experiences and the defense mechanisms that they employed to cope with them. It also aims to investigate the motives behind Wendy's shift to a more active role. This could be achieved through applying psychoanalytic and psychoanalytic feminist approaches, which incorporate trauma theory and object relations feminism. The study also employs Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday's concept of transitivity in the analysis of the female character. The analysis reveals that strained early relationships with parents could result in traumatic childhood experiences as it also could become a source of resilience and empowerment for women, particularly mothers. Thus, the analysis of the two aforementioned major characters' dysfunctional family experiences constitutes a dual impact.

Key Words: Stephen King, *The Shining*, Family Dysfunction, Childhood Trauma, Female Agency, Psychoanalysis, Psychoanalytic Feminism, Transitivity.

ملخص

تبحث هذه الأطروحة في ظاهرة التفكك الأسري كما تم تقديمها في رواية البريق لستيفن كينغ وتأثيرها على شخصيتي جاك ووينديي تورانس. تتناول الإشكالية المطروحة كيفية تشكل كل شخصية من خلال خلفياتها السابقة من العنف الأسري. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى توضيح كيف تعكس الأزمات النفسية الحالية لجاك ووينديي تجاربهما الماضية وآليات الدفاع التي استخدماها للتكيف معها. كما تهدف إلى التحقيق في دوافع تحول ويندي إلى دور أكثر فاعلية. يمكن تحقيق ذلك من خلال تطبيق منهجي التحليل النفسي والتحليل النفسي النسوي، واللذان يتضمنان نظرية الصدمة وفلسفة العلاقات الموضوعية النسوية. كما تستخدم الدراسة مفهوم التعدية لمايكل هاليداي في تحليل الشخصية النسوية. يكشف هذا التحليل أن العلاقات المبكرة المتوترة مع الوالدين يمكن أن تؤدي إلى تجارب طفولة مؤلمة، كما يمكن أن تصبح مصدراً للصمود والتمكين للنساء، وخاصة الأمهات. وبالتالي، فإن تحليل التجارب الأسرية المفككة للشخصيتين الرئيسيتين المذكورتين يشكل تأثيراً مزدوجاً.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ستيفن كينج، البريق، التفكك الأسري، صدمة الطفولة، القوة الأنثوية، التحليل النفسي، التحليل النفسي النسوي، التعدية.

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General Introduction

The Gothic genre, originating in the late 18th century, constitutes intricate plots, mysterious settings, supernatural elements, as well as isolated and decaying locations. This latter has evolved in the contemporary era to address the complexities and concerns of the modern world. Stephen King, widely known as the "King of Horror," exemplifies this evolution by the blending of traditional Gothic elements with modern settings and psychological horror in most of his works, notably his novel *The Shining*. As a representative of this realm, King has explored the psychological aspects of his characters within an isolated and haunted space, creating a chilling atmosphere.

The Shining is centered on the Torrance family: Jack, Wendy and their son Danny, who are urged by the circumstances to stay at the ominous and remote Overlook Hotel during the winter months. As the family becomes isolated and snowed in, supernatural forces within the hotel begin to manifest, driving the already unstable Jack to madness and putting his family in grave danger. While the family battles their own inner struggles, the sinister supernatural entities of the hotel come to life, resulting in a terrifying tale of psychological horror.

Today, the horror in gothic literature arises not from supernatural entities, but from the very human demons that reside within family relationships. The finest illustration of this would be the fragmented familial bonds, which is present in *The Shining*. This social phenomenon of family dysfunction, characterized by its troubled dynamics and unhealthy environment, can lead to a range of psychological challenges, affecting the lives of all the family members. The phrase "family dysfunction" encompasses a range of difficulties, spanning from breakdowns in communication to more serious issues such as abuse or addiction. Such issues can contribute to critical traumatic experiences.

In the midst of this domestic unrest, women, who are supposed to play a central role in maintaining a safe and secure environment for their children and families as a whole, can also find themselves subjected to the upheaval of family dysfunction. However, when this dysfunction becomes doubled by a troubled past one, a woman's distress may increase and her emotional well-being may be severely drained by the responsibilities of managing a dysfunctional home, limiting her capacity to fulfill her duty as a wife and mother, and assert her self-hood.

The intergenerational nature of family dysfunction and its multi-faceted impact means that these issues can persist across generations. Therefore, addressing and breaking this cycle becomes crucial for the well-being of individuals and families.

Stephen King's novel, *The Shining*, found a great interest among horror fiction readers as well as from literary critics, due to its important themes and stylistic features. Many critics have approached this work from a cinematic critical view. However, a few number of scholars examined it from a literary and academic view. While the novel centers on three major characters, most studies' dealt with trauma with regard to the characters of Jack, the father, and Danny, the son, giving little importance to Wendy, the mother.

In their article entitled, "The Aggressive Jack Torrance in the Shining by Stephen King: the Psychological Analysis," Sahertian, Margono and Englishtina delve into Jack's character using three psychological key theories: Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Lazarus and Folkman's Stress and Coping, and John Dollard's Frustration-Agression theory. Their research focuses on Jack Torrance's psychological state, his primary source of frustration, and instances of his aggressiveness. Finally, the paper concludes that "Jack Torrance cannot fulfill his needs to function properly as a human being. Besides that, Jack

Torrance cannot accomplish his goals in life, which makes him stressed because it pressures and frustrates him" (Sahertian et al.34).

Approaching another scholar's paper by Ana Maria Casandra, entitled "Contemporary Gothic Novels and Stephen King's *The Shining*," where the author examines this work through an evolutionary study of the gothic genre, focusing on the double personality concept applied to characters that have already been altered by previous destructive behavior. She discusses how *The Shining*'s protagonist, Jack Torrance, is already "haunted" by alcoholism; thus, his character is gradually poisoned by his demons. Besides his past, his present is destroying both his life and family. Therefore, gothic image is Jack's interior fight between good and evil. Cassandra states that the supernatural in the story is not the most important part, but it still has an impact. Thus the fear in the book does not come from the monsters in the hotel. Instead, some people change because of their surroundings, and anyone could turn into someone like Jack Torrance (27).

In his thesis, "The Appeal of Stephen King's *The Shining*," Ruuskanen discusses the application of Sigmund Freud's concept of 'the uncanny' in *The Shining* novel, asserting that Freud's notion of ascribing evil intentions to a person with special powers aligns with Jack's role as a representation of the uncanny, especially as madness is associated with the effect. Also, many of the dangers in the book are strange in a similar way. For instance, the hedge animals, ghosts, objects that seem alive, Jack's actions without thinking, and the idea of Jack as a crazy murderer are all examples of this weird and familiar feeling that shows up in the story (110). Additionally, the writer's analysis shifts towards a Lacanian linguistic interpretation of the Oedipal complex in the novel relying on the linguistic aspects of the characters' relationships. This latter demonstrates that Jack represents the oppressive power of language and endeavours to dominate Danny's language use. For instance, the act of

learning to read is viewed negatively, and Danny's efforts to maintain his childlike attributes are disapproved of by his parents (110).

In regard to Wendy Torrance's character as a representation of the female gothic, scholars were divided into two different perspectives. Some have pointed out to Wendy Torrance's "inability to bring any reassurance or protection for Danny as regards the violence and deviance consuming the paternal figure or later on against the evil forces of the Overlook" (Folio 331). Other scholars, such as Erica Dymond, have perceived such a character as a reflection of "the progressive politics of the 1970s." She argues against the idea that Wendy is a weak character and instead highlights her enormous strengths (36).

While Gothic literature is often associated with supernatural and eerie themes, it actually delves deeply into the internal terrors of the human mind. This research intends to uncover the significant influence of family dysfunction on childhood trauma, and how this, in turn, affects the development and empowerment of the female character in Stephen King's novel, *The Shining*.

Based upon the previously stated contextualization, this study seeks to answer the following major research question: How does family dysfunction in Stephen King's *The Shining* cause childhood trauma and enhance the female character's agency?

This question shall be investigated through the following subsidiary questions:

1. How is the phenomenon of family dysfunction portrayed in *The Shining*?
2. How does childhood trauma manifest itself within the context of the family in the aforementioned novel?
3. What are the defense mechanisms used by the characters to recover their psychological balance in the novel?

4. How is women agency suppressed and then expressed by the dysfunctional family atmosphere in *The Shining*?

The purpose of the study is to shed light on how family dysfunction affects the psychological complexity of the characters, particularly with regard to childhood trauma and the transition of the female character from passivity to agency.

The main objectives of this research could be enumerated as follows:

1. Examining the manifestation of family dysfunction within the Torrance family.
2. Analyzing its psychological effects on the characters' childhood trauma.
3. Exploring the challenges and limitations faced by Wendy Torrance in asserting her agency.

Focusing on specific characters, particularly Jack and Wendy Torrance, the research delves into the consequences of their broken familial bonds and present interactions. The study also explores how Wendy's agency is influenced within the context of family dysfunction. Emphasizing the gothic setting of the isolated Overlook Hotel, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how this environment serves as a significant backdrop, influencing events and character responses, thereby enriching the exploration of family dysfunction's effects on childhood trauma and women's agency.

This study adopts a qualitative method, using a descriptive and analytical research paradigm. It integrates psychoanalytic and psychoanalytic feminist theoretical frameworks alongside the MAK Halliday's systemic functional model of transitivity. The primary data source is Stephen King's novel *The Shining*, while secondary data will be gathered from libraries as well as online database such as E-books, critical essays, academic articles, and academic works relevant to psychoanalysis, psychoanalytic feminist and stylistic theories. This research is both descriptive and analytical. Data that is collected from the primary source take the form of quotes and excerpts from the novel *The Shining*. Data analysis will follow the

descriptive technique procedures in which the researcher describes, explains and interprets selected passages. The research also uses the concept of agency, viewed from a feminist and linguistic perspectives, so as to identify the challenges and limitations faced by the wife, Wendy Torrance, in asserting agency, both through thematic and stylistic assessment. Using Transitivity analysis as a tool, the researcher divides the selected texts from different chapters of the novel into clauses. Each clause is further divided into “Participants”, “Processes” and “circumstances.”

In an attempt to answer the questions put forward, this study will be divided into three main chapters in addition to the general introduction and general conclusion. The first chapter will include the Theoretical Framework, in which a number of theories and concepts will be introduced. The second chapter will provide readers with an in-depth insight into the actions of the characters and their psychological complexities between their haunted pasts and disturbed present. The last chapter will mainly focus on the analysis of the female character’s progress toward agency.

By exploring the intricate dynamics of the Torrance family, this research illuminates the psychological foundations that shape the characters' experiences and behaviors. It underscores how domestic instability can trigger significant psychological effects, particularly on children and women, and examines these themes through the lens of Gothic literature. Additionally, by analyzing Wendy Torrance's evolution and agency, the study offers a nuanced perspective on female empowerment in the face of adversity. This approach does not only deepen the interpretation of King's work but also expands the discussion on the intersection of family and trauma in literature, contributing to a better understanding of the genre, offering valuable insights for scholars and readers alike.

Chapter One: Theoretical Framework

Introduction

This chapter lays the groundwork for the second and third chapters of this study, delving into the interplay between Gothic literature and psychoanalytic theories. It aims to define, exemplify and explain key concepts and ideas within these theories. The initial section defines the Gothic genre, outlining its characteristics and providing an overview of contemporary Gothic literature. As for the second section, it navigates through Freud's insights on repressed memories and dreams, Caruth's examination of delayed experiences and Miller's study of childhood trauma, along with the exploration of the significance and function of defense mechanisms. Moreover, the third section covers the intricacies of Object Relations Theory within the Psychoanalytic Feminism approach, focusing on scholars like Nancy Chodorow and Jessica Benjamin. The subsequent two sections explore dimensions of agency; both feminist and linguistic; before concluding with the theory of stylistics.

1.1. Gothic Literature

Gothic literature emerged in 18th and 19th century Britain, contrasting Neoclassical ideals. It embraced eerie settings and villainous characters like monks or wealthy individuals, mocking the Enlightenment's emphasis on reason (Crow 3, 4). The essence of this genre lies in its intertwining of darkness, romance, and the supernatural to explore the darker aspects of human nature and blur the boundaries of reality. Set in ancient locales such as castles and graveyards, these tales unveil long-buried secrets that haunt the characters (Hogle 2). Ranging from suspenseful "terror Gothic" narratives, where the characters and readers feel anxious because they know something bad might happen, to shocking "horror Gothic," in which the

characters face really violent and scary things, this genre balances between the ordinary and the supernatural, captivating audiences with its suspenseful and unsettling developments (3).

1.1.1. Romantic Gothic Fiction

Other American writers who helped shape Gothic literature include Charles Brockden Brown whose writing was influenced by William Godwin's stories and ideas, but he also focused on topics like persecution, crime, and social oppression, while promoting Enlightenment ideas like freedom and democracy (Botting 75). In contrast, Nathaniel Hawthorne's romantic stories lean more towards realism. He focuses on family and society complexities instead of crime and mental illness like Brown. Hawthorne's work demystifies Gothic ideas and superstitions to explore the light and dark sides of human relationships (76). On the other hand, Edgar Allan Poe also explores the twists of imagination in his dark tales. He takes the Gothic elements of darkness and decay and uses them to portray the inner struggles of troubled minds and distorted visions. Poe's stories delve into extreme mental states and excessive imagination, blurring the lines between nightmares and reality. Unlike other writers of his time who tried to explain mysteries logically, Poe's stories often leave the borders between reality, illusion, and madness unclear. He explores themes of delusion and fears of death through devices like doubles, mirrors, and scientific ideas. (78)

1.1.2. Gothic Literature and Psychoanalysis

The intersection of literature and psychoanalysis has a long and intricate history, with psychoanalytic critics uncovering the hidden desires and fears embedded within literary texts, particularly within the Gothic genre (Punter 307). This genre is particularly a fertile ground for psychoanalytic interpretation not only due to its lasting popularity but also for its reflection of fundamental psychoanalytic themes and concerns (308). The Gothic genre and

psychoanalysis share a symbiotic relationship, both stemming from common human anxieties and societal changes (309). Freud developed intricate models detailing the human psyche, including the topographical and structural models, which delineate the unconscious, conscious and pre-conscious realms, as well as id, ego, and superego components. These frameworks, alongside concepts such as dream interpretation and repression, provided robust analytical tool for understanding Gothic literature (310).

Gothic literature serves as a mirror reflecting society's fears and anxieties, ranging from hidden traumas, concerns about social class and gender roles to unease about scientific advancements (Lloyd-Smith 6, 7). Furthermore, Gothic landscapes are great for psychoanalyzing, like when characters go deep into dark places that represent their unconscious minds and face their deepest fears and desires. Architectural features, such as doors and walls, often symbolize the breaking of boundaries during moments of crisis. According to Jung's theory of individuation, characters in Gothic stories often go through a process of self-discovery, confronting their inner struggles in hidden places before coming out stronger and more whole (Yang and Healy 7).

These tales often provide a unique perspective on notions such as the “sublime” as elucidated by Burke, which occurs when the mind is overwhelmed by an object or a feeling evoked by it, to the extent that it suspends rational thought (Smith 19, 20). Another concept is the “uncanny”, as theorized by Freud, where familiar situations gain unfamiliar connotations inexplicably (Cavallaro 4). The Gothic genre, influenced by Freudian psychoanalytic theories and their roots in Immanuel Kant's philosophy, explores how its stories shape perceptions of the subconscious. It suggests that these narratives offer a unique perspective on the sublime and the uncanny, departing from traditional viewpoints while still maintaining a critical outlook. Freud's examination of the uncanny, particularly its connection to aesthetics and the sublime, is integral to understanding the Gothic genre's intersection with broader

philosophical and psychological inquiries into human experience. By integrating Freudian concepts, the Gothic genre enriches its exploration of the sublime and contributes to ongoing discussions about human consciousness and existential mysteries (Andrew Smith 148, 149).

1.1.3. Gothic Male and Female

Gothic narratives of the 18th century serve as a lens through which the inherent conflict within patriarchal structures is exposed. Patriarchy, characterized by the dominance of men over women, is challenged within these narratives, revealing its imperfections. This critique is evident in various aspects of the stories, including their aesthetics, character portrayals, and linguistic choices. Central to these narratives are familial tensions stemming from the power dynamics between genders. As societal awareness grew regarding the flaws within patriarchal systems during the 18th century, women began to assert themselves more visibly and assertively. This shift in societal dynamics is reflected in Gothic literature through the portrayal of unsettling occurrences (Williams 99).

Gothic tales exhibit distinct characteristics depending on the gender of the author. Male-authored tales often observe protagonists with detachment, portraying them as enigmatic or menacing rather than sympathetic, and present supernatural events as factual. In contrast, female-authored Gothic stories seek rational explanations for such phenomena. Moreover, male Gothic narratives typically end tragically for the protagonist, while female Gothic tales tend to conclude positively with the protagonist finding solace in marriage, symbolizing a balance between rationality and emotion, and civilization and nature (Williams 103). Additionally, male Gothic narratives often conclude ambiguously, leaving characters grappling with psychological wounds and the looming possibility of further unsettling events. Survivors endure ongoing suffering with no guarantee of a positive resolution, steeped in themes of horror and violence. Characters often struggle to convince others of supernatural

threats, with women frequently central to the afflictions depicted, occasionally causing discomfort for readers due to explicit sexual themes and aberrant behavior that border on the inappropriate (104). Also, these narratives frequently depict women's virtue as under threat or violated, reinforcing male dominance. Plots often center on endangering women's purity, leading to punishment. Examples include Antonia's rape and demise in Matthew Gregory Lewis's *The Monk* and Rosemary's manipulation in Ira Levin's *Rosemary's Baby*. Female characters embody societal expectations of femininity and sexuality, often leading to their downfall, as seen in Charles Perrault's tale *Bluebeard*. These narratives emphasize the unsettling nature of women's roles as mothers, reflecting societal fascination with female sexuality and childbirth (105).

Ideas about men being in charge and women seen as less important are prevalent in Gothic stories. R. Howard Bloch's analysis maintains that these ideas go back to the early Christian church, where men were told that they were better than women. In those times, some church writings taught that when a man looks at a woman, she loses her goodness. This idea puts men in control, with their gaze deciding how valuable a woman is, and it keeps negative feelings about women going. Bloch suggested that the way Male Gothic stories are written goes back to these old church ideas, showing that even today, people still think this way about men and women (Williams 109).

From the late 18th and early 19th century, Ann Radcliffe, often called the "Shakespeare of Romance Writers" and the "Queen of the tremendous," ruled the Gothic scene, crafting "Female Gothic" tales that earned her fame and fortune. Her novels inspired generations and set the genre standard, despite facing some bias (Davison 84). Likewise, many other women writers went beyond spooky castles, using the genre to explore mistreatment of women trapped at home. This subversive tactic enabled them to address societal issues like male authority and gender inequality avoiding the attention of "less important" novels. The Female

Gothic became a platform for challenging the status quo, where female protagonists faced dangers reflecting real-life struggles, making their plight relatable and unsettling in a new way. This marked a shift from the typical Gothic themes of male authors, offering a powerful voice for women through chilling narratives (85).

The Female Gothic was a genre where women writers explored how womanhood affected things like love, romance, and what it means to be feminine. They looked at how society expected women to act, especially in things like marriage and being a mother, and questioned whether these roles were fair. Instead of just being about spooky stories, the Female Gothic was about challenging the way society saw women. At the time when this was happening, the middle class was growing, and things at home were changing too. Women writers used the Female Gothic to talk about their worries about these changes. They saw that women were being pushed into certain roles and losing opportunities to do other things. Thus, the Gothic genre, with its focus on the darker side of modern life, became a way for these women to talk about what was happening in society, especially at home. These stories showed women struggling against the rules that contested, which reflected the changes happening in society at the time. Even though women were starting to have more of a say in public discussions, they were still often kept out of important roles. The Female Gothic gave them a way to talk about their experiences and criticize the way things were changing (Davison 86).

1.1.4. Gothic Setting

The buildings and landscapes in Gothic stories are often more than just background scenery, serving as integral components that convey political, psychological, social, and cultural themes (Yang and Healy 1). For instance, in Gothic literature, the landscapes create a feeling of uncertainty, loneliness, and instability, challenging the way things have always been and making readers think about their fears. Natural elements like storms, fog, and dark

forests add to this feeling by confusing the characters and showing that they cannot control or understand everything around them (5). However, it is not just nature that is unsettling—man-made structures like castles and mansions also play a big role. Instead of showing human power over nature, these buildings are shown as falling apart and easily invaded by evil or supernatural forces. In Gothic stories, traditional institutions like churches or fancy homes are often shown as corrupt or decaying, turning the idea of what is sacred or noble on its head. Even places like cemeteries or crypts are portrayed as dirty and haunted, adding to the overall feeling of decay and moral corruption in the genre (6).

In Britain, where Gothic architecture was native, old castles and churches—whether they were still standing or falling apart—were a big inspiration for writers. For example, in stories, you might find descriptions of old, overgrown ruins or creepy windows in churches, which are common features of Gothic buildings. They were drawn to motifs like knights and honor, religion, and spooky stuff like ghosts and magic. Poets like Edward Young, Robert Blair, and Thomas Gray, who later got called the Graveyard School by critics, were masters at capturing a feeling of sadness and decay in their poems. They talked about old buildings falling apart to show how everything in life eventually ends. Their use of words and images became really important in Gothic novels, adding to the creepy atmosphere and themes that make them unique (Byron and Townshend 86).

During the 19th century in Britain, there was a noticeable integration of Gothic elements into narratives characterized by more realistic settings and writing styles, indicating a shift towards narratives set in everyday life. Traditional Gothic motifs like medieval backgrounds and evil aristocrats did not have the same scary effect in a society where the middle class was dominant. Instead, the focus shifted to mysteries and horrors found in ordinary places like homes, factories, and cities. Rather than ancient castles, it was now family secrets and urban landscapes that were haunting. Criminals took on the role of villains,

portrayed as clever and corrupt but still human. Prisons, social injustices, and rebellious individuals were seen not as symbols of romantic rebellion but as real threats to society and home life (Botting 80).

Gothic literature often explores themes familial dynamics, power struggles, and the intricate relationships between fathers and daughters. It frequently portrays male authority figures and villains in settings like old castles, houses, ruins, and complex cities, which serve to challenge both the protagonists and readers by defying societal norms. Even though Gothic literature uses these recurring themes, it is still able to change and fit with different cultures. The same characters and images can mean different things depending on where and when the story takes place. This ability to adapt helps Gothic stories stay relevant and speak to the fears and desires of different groups of people (Botting 13).

1.1.5. Modern Gothic

In the 20th century, Gothic literature, which often involves dark, eerie themes, still included demonic elements. This was particularly noticeable in widely read books and movies like *The Exorcist*, *The Omen*, and *Rosemary's Baby*. However, in modern times, these stories often emphasize themes of bodily possession and dramatic decay, representing fears of feeling vulnerable and losing control. This shift occurs within a context where traditional cultural norms and boundaries are either declining or actively contributing to these fears (Roberts 44).

During the 1960s, Gothic stories were either set in old times or had a creepy vibe in everyday places. Some were like the old-fashioned Gothic tales, especially ones centered on women. Simultaneously, a fresh strain of horror literature arose, featuring terrifying occurrences in contemporary, mundane settings, defying conventional spooky story conventions. Pioneering works such as Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Ira Levin's *Rosemary's Baby* revolutionized the genre by transplanting horror into modern contexts. They did not just

have ghosts; they added vampires, werewolves, and other scary creatures. Notably, the acclaimed author Stephen King played a significant role in this evolution by grounding his narratives in reality through references to contemporary brands and cultural phenomena. Additionally, modern scary tales introduced novel and peculiar threats, such as lethal flora, malevolent domiciles, and enigmatic creatures. In essence, contemporary Gothic literature blends the familiar with the supernatural in diverse and gripping ways (Roberts 38).

Hence, the consumption of Gothic literature reflects both individual and collective needs, with contemporary works addressing societal concerns such as political turmoil, technological progress, and changes in social values, particularly regarding gender, sexuality, and race (Hogle 260).

1.2. Psychoanalytic Concepts

Psychoanalysis, as pioneered by Sigmund Freud, examines how childhood trauma shapes adult psychology through the lens of his trauma theory. Building on Freud's work, contemporary thinkers like Cathy Caruth and Alice Miller have expanded the understanding of trauma and its delayed responses, emphasizing its lasting effects on mental health and the intricate ways in which defense mechanisms operate to protect the individual from re-experiencing pain.

1.2.1. Trauma Theory

Trauma studies are about understanding how really tough experiences affect people mentally and emotionally. It looks at how we talk about these experiences and how they shape who we are as individuals and as a society. People who study trauma use different ideas from psychology, culture, and history to explore how these experiences are shown in stories, movies, and other forms of art (Richter 360). The casual use of “trauma” for any stressful

experience has made it hard to understand its specific psychological impact. A good definition of trauma emphasizes that it is not just an event but the lasting harm it causes. From a psychoanalytic viewpoint, trauma happens when overwhelming experiences make it hard for the mind to cope, leading to feelings of helplessness and dysfunction in the body's automatic responses (Ringel and Brandell 42). According to Laplanche and Pontalis, trauma is a really big event that overwhelms someone, making it hard for them to deal with it. This can cause lasting emotional issues and even lead to violent behavior. Problems that keep coming up in someone's life might be signs of trauma from early on, even before they could talk about it. Freud, in his studies, explained how powerful instincts can influence an individual's behaviour, which challenges the idea that we are always rational (Alayarian 59).

1. 2.1.1. Freud: Repressed Memories and Dreams Manifestations

The concept of trauma in psychoanalysis traces back to Sigmund Freud's work on hysteria with Josef Breuer in the late 19th century. They identified how external events could trigger hysterical symptoms (Ringel and Brandell 42). Freud's contributions challenged conventional ideas of individual responsibility and gender roles, highlighting the societal and familial influences on psychological distress. Trauma occurs when mental defenses are breached, leaving individuals exposed to overwhelming stimuli. Effective treatment involves restoring meaning and integrating traumatic experiences into the patient's life for healing and well-being (Alayarian 60).

Freud expands upon his earlier notions of trauma's impact on the mind. He introduces the concept of traumatic neurosis, wherein traumatic events disrupt our sense of self when our usual mental defenses fail. Freud emphasizes the "compulsion to repeat," where individuals may continually revisit or relive traumatic memories as a means of grappling with their emotional turmoil. He suggests that these memories often surface in dreams as the mind's

attempt to process the trauma. Freud underscores the therapeutic value of discussing these memories with a therapist, as he believes that through dialogue, patients can begin to comprehend and integrate their traumatic experiences into their lives more effectively (Richter 362).

Trauma-related dreams often revisit the initial traumatic event rather than fulfilling desires, suggesting that their purpose may be to manage fear rather than solely pursue pleasure or avoid discomfort. Contrary to common belief, dreams do not always serve the function of wish fulfillment. Patients with neurosis resulting from accidents or childhood traumas may experience compulsive repetition of traumatic experiences in their dreams. This compulsion is often reinforced in therapy as patients recall repressed memories. While dreams typically tend towards wish-fulfillment, those involving the repetition of trauma may not follow this pattern and can occur independently of therapy. Observations of war neuroses support this notion, indicating traumatic reactions influenced by internal conflicts within the ego (Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 26, 27).

1.2.1.2. Caruth: Delayed Responses

Trauma is typically understood as the reaction to a sudden or intense violent incident that is initially incomprehensible but resurfaces later through flashbacks, nightmares, and repetitive experiences (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 91). Traumatic experiences, besides causing psychological suffering, present a paradox wherein the direct witnessing of violence can lead to an inability to fully comprehend it. This paradox suggests that immediacy might manifest as a delayed understanding. The repetitive nature of traumatic events, which evade conscious awareness but persistently intrude upon perception, implies a deeper connection to the event beyond mere observation or understanding (92).

Caruth explores Freud's concept of trauma through a poststructuralist perspective. She contends that language and history struggle to fully capture traumatic experiences, which remain elusive and disconnected from understanding. She highlights the indirect nature of experiencing trauma, often revealed through fragmented symbols and themes in narratives. These symbols reflect the bewildering nature of traumatic memories and their impact on both personal and historical understanding. Drawing on Freud and Lacan, Caruth argues that trauma resurfaces to haunt us, creating a tension between our desire to comprehend the past and our cognitive limitations. From a scientific viewpoint, she suggests that trauma triggers a universal response of speechless terror, making it challenging to organize into coherent narratives. Additionally, Caruth extends the concept of traumatic memory to encompass collective and cultural experiences, emphasizing their shared impact on society across time (Richter 364).

The idea that trauma can be passed down through generations suggests that a group's traumatic experiences from the past can still affect people within that group today. This connects individual and collective trauma, showing how it can have universal effects on how we see ourselves and remember things, especially when it comes to feeling disconnected from ourselves or our memories. Caruth's way of looking at trauma highlights how trauma creates a gap in time and makes it hard for us to fully understand what happened. Trauma is so difficult to grasp that it feels like something missing from our consciousness, always there but impossible to fully comprehend. This challenges the idea that we can accurately represent traumatic events in history because they are just too overwhelming to fully capture (Richter 365).

1.2.1.3. Miller: Childhood Trauma

Childhood experiences, as Alice Miller contends, can profoundly influence adult life, manifesting as feelings of loneliness or neglect. Even seemingly affectionate parents may unintentionally create challenges due to their own unresolved issues. However, despite outward success, some individuals may carry deep sadness from their past (Miller 5). Miller underscores the importance of children feeling understood and respected, echoing the views of psychologists like D.W. Winnicott, Margaret Mahler, and Heinz Kohut. Parental attunement to emotions and encouragement of independence are crucial for healthy development. Yet, parents who lacked support in their own upbringing may struggle to provide it, perpetuating a cycle of unmet needs (7). The childhood experiences of rejection or belittlement profoundly affect individuals' emotional and relational patterns in adulthood. Resentment towards emotionally unavailable or unaccepting mothers often emerges, influencing adult interactions by perpetuating the rejection felt in childhood. This unresolved childhood mistreatment can lead individuals to unconsciously project similar behaviors onto others, making them feel inferior despite a pleasant outward demeanor (108).

1.2.1.4. Defense Mechanisms

Defense mechanisms are unconscious psychological strategies utilized to shield oneself from internal distress. These tactics can manifest through diverse thoughts, emotions, or actions and typically persist from early childhood into adulthood. Distinct defense mechanisms correspond to various stages of development (Auchincloss and Samberg 50). The concept of defense mechanisms originates from Sigmund Freud, the pioneer of psychoanalysis. He posited that our minds possess mechanisms to shield us from sources of anxiety or discomfort. These defenses may manifest as symptoms or aspects of our personality. When they fail to function effectively, direct feelings of anxiety may arise (51).

Since Anna Freud's seminal work identifying nine defense mechanisms (regression, repression, reaction formation, isolation, undoing, projection, introjection, turning against the self, reversal, and sublimation), the field of psychoanalysis has advanced significantly in recognizing the defensive nature of various behaviors. This list has been extended later by Bibring et al. to thirty-nine defenses, categorized into basic (first order) and complex (second order) types (Siegal 792). A notable defense mechanism is displacement, which involves redirecting an impulse towards a different target. For instance, an inappropriate violent urge directed at one's father could be shifted to manifest as hostility toward other men or authority figures (Baumeister, et al. 1093). Moreover, Freud's idea of denial includes everything from rarely ignoring obvious facts around us almost like a psychosis, to often being unwilling to face the truth about certain events (1107). Also, sublimation involves redirecting an instinct into an activity that is unrelated to its original goal. This process involves taking an antisocial or unacceptable desire and channeling that energy into activities that are socially valued (1103). In addition, rationalization involves rendering unacceptable attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors more acceptable by offering them a socially sanctioned interpretation (Bowins 9).

1.3. Psychoanalytic Feminism

Feminists have shown significant interest in psychoanalytic theory, using it in diverse ways to develop feminist theory. This interest contrasts sharply with the hostility towards Freud prevalent in the feminist movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, spearheaded by figures like Betty Friedan and others who viewed Freudian theory as oppressive to women. Within psychoanalysis, the response to feminist critique has been mixed (Chodorow 165). One of the common approaches of psychoanalytic feminism is Object-relations feminism, drawing from the British object-relations theory, which focuses on self-other relationships and the development of the self through conscious and unconscious experiences. Although this

school has not traditionally addressed gender differences, feminists argue it can be applied to gender development. According to this perspective, men and women develop different selves and gender identities due to being parented primarily by women. Women develop a self that is connected to others and has a rich inner self-object world, which fosters mothering capabilities. Men, on the other hand, develop a more separate and defensive self, leading to a repressed inner self-object world (184).

1.3.1. Object Relations Feminism

With the rise of object-relations theory, the mother's role in psychoanalytic thought became central, surpassing the previously dominant father figure. This shift has been a focal point for recent feminist theory. Melanie Klein pioneered this "mother-centered" psychoanalysis and the object relations school, but her work has been largely neglected by American psychoanalytic feminists. Dorothy Dinnerstein's *Mermaid and the Minotaur* is an exception, though it didn't achieve the prominence of Nancy Chodorow's *The Reproduction of Mothering*, which criticizes Klein for her instinctual determinism. Chodorow, a key feminist object-relations theorist, prefers non-Kleinian theory for its emphasis on social experiences. While Klein focused on infants' fantasies about their mothers, later theorists like D. W. Winnicott stressed the social interactions between mother and child (Doane and Hodges 7). Chodorow contends that object-relations theory explores the construction of the self through relationships, both in development and daily life. It does not rely on abstract concepts like Eros but instead extends Freud's and Melanie Klein's theories to define the relational ego as unconscious representations of relationships and self-relationships. The quality of care in early experiences shapes the psyche, with images of these experiences becoming integrated into the self. Object-relations theory views psychological development as essential for navigating the world. It emphasizes that individuals are formed through internal relations with

the social world, rejecting the notion of pure constraint or complete elimination of the individual. Instead, it highlights the mutual constitution of selves through relationships and challenges individualism that separates self from others or views others merely as projections or instruments of the self's needs (149). Thus, a significant part of object-relations feminism lies in exploring the ambivalent nature of women's psychological qualities, recognizing both strengths and pitfalls. They acknowledge the tension between empathy and autonomy, and how the roles of mothering can simultaneously fulfill and constrain women (186).

1.3.1.1. Nancy Chodorow: The Reproduction of Mothering

Chodorow's theory emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between psychological development and interpersonal experiences, particularly in early life. This dynamic leads to gendered patterns of selfhood formation, especially for females. Female development involves identifying with the mother and internalizing aspects of herself, resulting in a dense network of mutual identifications between mother and daughter. This emotional connection between mother and daughter shapes the daughter's sense of self, contributing to her development of flexible ego boundaries in adulthood (Burack 72). Moreover, in male development, boys distance themselves from their mothers instead of identifying closely with them. Despite feeling emotionally connected, boys often feel anxious about their mothers. They try to become more like men by following general expectations of masculinity rather than forming close emotional bonds with their fathers or other male figures, who are often absent. This leads to boys focusing on becoming independent individuals rather than feeling a strong sense of connection to others as part of their identity. Chodorow emphasizes that mothering extends beyond mere pregnancy and childbirth; it includes all aspects traditionally associated with motherhood. This contrasts with the concept of fathering, indicating the rich complexity of mothering in society. She focuses on the concept of “reproduction of

mothering," which involves social, economic, political, and ideological dimensions. She's not just interested in describing women's roles in the private sphere, but also in understanding how these roles shape psychological development and the greater inclination towards affiliation seen in women compared to men (72, 73).

1.3.1.2. Jessica Benjamin: Intersubjectivity and Mutual Recognition

In our inner world, we interact with others mentally by accepting, rejecting, relating to, or distancing ourselves from them as if they were mental objects. Freud discovered this idea through his concept of the dynamic unconscious. However, Freud's theory mostly focuses on the individual mind and does not pay enough attention to real relationships with others. It is important to understand both our inner thoughts and our interactions with the outside world. Intersubjective theory becomes more meaningful when we consider it alongside Freud's idea of the unconscious mind. In intersubjective theory, a key idea in the development of the self is the need for recognition. People form their sense of agency and identity by receiving acknowledgment from others. Recognition is a two-way process; it involves how others respond to us and how we see ourselves in their responses, even extending to how we relate to non-living things (Benjamin 21). In her book, *The Bonds of Love*, Jessica Benjamin emphasizes the important role of mothers in child development, which is sometimes overlooked. She highlights how mothers do many different things for their children, like taking care of their physical needs and helping them recognize themselves as individuals. This idea of mutual recognition, where both the child and the mother see each other as separate but connected, is really important in how children develop according to intersubjective views (23).

1.3.1.3. The Female Oedipus Complex

Chodorow challenges the traditional idea from Freud that girls always turn away from their mothers towards their fathers, which is called the Oedipus complex. She contends that this dynamic is not universally applicable, a groundbreaking assertion she made in 1978, sparking significant discourse within psychoanalytic circles. Her perspective resonates with feminist critiques of Freud's theories regarding women (Bueskens 98). She examines the necessity for boys to establish distance from their mothers as a crucial step in developing a sense of masculinity. This process of separation is vital for boys to individuate and define their identities distinct from their mothers. Conversely, due to perceived similarities between mothers and daughters, there may be less societal pressure for daughters to undergo such separation (100).

On a similar vein, Jessica Benjamin confirms that we might need to rethink key psychoanalytic ideas, like the Oedipus complex, which Freud thought was crucial for understanding how boys and girls develop differently, but does not fully grasp the complexities of gender roles (Benjamin 134). She argues that, in psychoanalytic theory, ideas about gender differences often stem from the notion of one gender exerting dominance over the other. The Oedipal model, which posits that the father shields the child from the mother's self-centeredness, reinforces this concept. Despite its intention to foster acceptance of differences, it disproportionately emphasizes the role of the father, potentially fostering one gender's domination over the other rather than mutual respect. While the father is acknowledged as significant before the Oedipal stage, there are uncertainties regarding whether he genuinely facilitates the child's liberation during this phase. During this stage, boys not only cease to identify with their mothers but actively reject them and anything perceived as feminine, portraying the mother's nurturing qualities as a threat to independence. (135)

1.4. Agency

Defining agency is not an easy task because it involves tricky questions like whether someone intends to do something and what exactly roles like “Agent” mean in language. Some people argue about whether these roles are basic or if they come from the specific details of certain events. Also, it is tough to bring together ideas from different areas like linguistics, sociology, and philosophy because they look at things differently (Duranti 453).

Donald Davidson's idea of agency focuses on intentionality. He says a person is the agent of an action if it can be described as intentional. Davidson thinks certain events count as actions if they are done on purpose, even if they are not fully understood (Yamamoto 13). However, defining intentionality solely as conscious planning poses challenges because many of our actions occur automatically, particularly in familiar situations where we operate without conscious deliberation. Our control over actions extends beyond mere power; it encompasses the ability to reflect on our choices and consider alternative courses of action, even if we felt constrained at the time. Agents are entities that engage in actions affecting themselves or others, with varying degrees of intentionality and objectives (Duranti 454).

Scholars understand that agency, or the ability to act, is really important and complicated, even though it is often not clearly defined and sometimes simplified too much (Ahearn 112). They are looking at the differences between being an “actor” and being an “agent.” An actor follows rules, while an agent has power to change things in the world. They talk about different kinds of agency, like having power or having a plan, even though these often mix together in real life. Some people think agency is not just about individuals but can include groups and things like language and tools. Anthropologists say it is really important to understand that different societies have different ideas about agency, which are connected to how they see people and how things happen (113).

1.4.1. Linguistic Agency

Linguistic anthropologists study language as a form of social action, focusing on how meanings are created together in conversations. They look closely at how people use language in small interactions to understand how society is made up of these interactions. They see language as actively creating social reality, not just reflecting it (Ahearn 111). These scholars study how language structures and reflects social and cultural realities, particularly focusing on how speech influences individuals and communities. They contribute significantly to the understanding of agency, the capacity for individuals to make choices and act independently within social structures (124). They look closely at different parts of language, like how we use grammar, pronouns, and take turns when speaking. They also study how people tell stories, solve arguments, and talk over each other. By examining these aspects, they can figure out what makes communication work well in some situations and not so well in others. They show how culture is shaped by the way people use language every day, influenced by the society they live in. This means that the way we talk and understand each other is connected to the culture we are a part of. While this explanation focuses on specific parts of linguistic anthropology, it is important to know that linguistic anthropology also looks at other important topics like how language beliefs and attitudes affect society, how languages change and mix together, and how people use more than one language. These areas are studied separately but are also connected to understanding how language influences our social world (125).

1.4.2. Feminist Agency

While feminism has been talking about agency for a long time, recent talks have been more about resistance as a kind of agency. But some people say this makes agency too simple by only focusing on resistance. Feminist theorists talk about how there is a tension between

showing how gender roles limit people and inspiring women to fight back by remembering times when they resisted. However, if we only see agency as resistance, we miss other ways people can act beyond just fighting back (Ahearn 115).

Unlike some studies in other areas that focus on how people resist certain norms or expectations, researchers in language and gender look at how people's language use is a form of social action. Even if they do not always use the word "agency," these researchers explore how language practices are influenced by social structures, helping us understand the concept of agency better. Many important books and collections of studies, such as those by authors like Victoria L. Bergvall, Mary Bucholtz, Anna Livia, Kira Hall and Deborah Tannen, show us how gender roles and identities are shaped by the way people talk and interact with each other (Ahearn 125).

1.5. Stylistics

Stylistics delves into the intricate ways language shapes meaning across various forms of writing, such as narratives and poetry. Stylisticians are scholars who scrutinize these dynamics, employing diverse analytical tools to unravel the construction of texts. They explore elements like phonetics, lexical choices, sentence structures, semantic nuances, and real-world usage, recognizing their interplay in conveying the overall message (Nørgaard et al. 1). Stylistics has branched into multiple sub-disciplines, drawing from feminist theory, cognitive psychology, discourse analysis, and more. It has proven to be an invaluable resource in language teaching and learning, especially for second language learners. Globally, stylistics occupies a prominent position in English literature departments and is integral to many modern creative writing courses, thanks to its emphasis on language creativity and inventive techniques (Simpson, *Stylistics* 2). Thus, "Stylistics is a method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to language." For stylisticians, linguistic features are

essential, offering insights into a text's function and serving as a gateway to its interpretation. Stylistics provides a way to explore language, particularly its creative use. Therefore, engaging with stylistics deepens our understanding of language and enhances our ability to analyze literary texts. By examining language, we gain valuable insights that greatly enhance our comprehension of literary works (3).

1.5.1. Feminist Stylistics

Feminist Stylistics is a way of looking at language in writing that is different from the traditional way. Instead of just focusing on the words themselves, it looks at how social and economic factors influence the language and how people understand it. It says that women's writing often means something different from men's because of things like how it is made and how it is sold. It also says that gender, whether someone is male or female, shows up in writing at certain times, and looking at those moments can help us see things differently. This way of looking at writing is not just for stories and poems; it is for things like ads and news too. The goal is to find and fix unfairness and bias based on gender. It is important to understand that "gender" is not just about being a man or a woman; it is more complicated than that. Even though there are risks in using the idea of "gender," it is still helpful for understanding how society shapes ideas about being feminine or masculine (Mills 13).

1.5.2. Transitivity

Halliday proposes that language operates through three metafunctions: the ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions. Transitivity falls within the ideational function of language (179). It delves into how language constructs a "mental picture of reality" and facilitates human understanding of both external events and internal experiences. Transitivity achieves this by articulating various processes within clauses, which consist of processes,

participants, and circumstances represented by the verb, noun, and adverbial clauses, respectively. Processes encompass actions, speech, mental states, or existence and can be classified into six categories: material, mental, relational, verbal, and existential (Simpson, *Language, Ideology and Pint of View* 88). Material processes encompass ‘actions’ or ‘doing’, and two participant roles. The first is the ‘Actor’, a necessary element representing the agent performing the expressed action. The second is an optional ‘Goal’, denoting the person or entity affected by the action (89). Mental processes, distinct from external actions, involve internalized activities such as perception, reaction, and cognition. These processes are defined by the roles of SENSER (the perceiving, reacting, or thinking entity) and PHENOMENON (the perceived, reacted to, or thought-about object). Mental processes can be categorized into perception (e.g., seeing, hearing), reaction (e.g., liking, hating), and cognition (e.g., thinking, understanding). This internalized nature contrasts with external actions (90). Relational processes involve the state of being. These processes come in three types: (1) intensive, which asserts “x is a”; (2) circumstantial, stating “x is at/on a”; and possessive, indicating “x has a” (91).

At the intersection of 'material' and 'mental' lie behavioral processes, which depict external actions stemming from internal states, such as expressions of consciousness (e.g., laughter) and physiological conditions (e.g., sleep). At the junction of 'mental' and 'relational' lies the domain of verbal processes, where symbolic relationships are constructed within human cognition and expressed through language, exemplified by speech acts like stating and implying (e.g., the 'verbal' clause "we say" introducing reported speech). Finally, at the boundary of 'relational' and 'material' are the existential processes, which pertain to the recognition of existence or occurrence (Halliday 107).

Mills discusses the significance of syntactic choices in portraying character representation, particularly in feminist stylistics. She suggests that character agency, whether

passive or active, is reflected in the language used to describe them. Active characters are depicted through a variety of processes, especially material-action-intention processes, indicating their control over their decisions and actions. Conversely, characters with many internalized mental processes may appear introspective, while those with predominantly externalized mental processes may seem incomplete. Characters portrayed through supervention processes may appear out of control. Moreover, this method can also be used to question the construction of apparently assertive characters, examining whether their behavior aligns with the syntactic choices and if they maintain control in various aspects of their lives (Mills 112).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter establishes the theoretical framework essential for understanding how the two central characters confront their past trauma in Stephen King's *The Shining*. The first section provides a general background on the Gothic genre, defining its characteristics and offering a brief overview of modern Gothic fiction. The second section delves into Trauma Theory, initiated by Freud and expanded by others, exploring concepts such as 'repressed memories,' 'delayed responses,' and 'defense mechanisms'. Additionally, the chapter explains Object Relations Theory within the context of psychoanalytic feminism, focusing on Nancy Chodorow's and Jessica Benjamin's perspectives on the role of motherhood in shaping a child's sense of self. The final section explores the concept of "Agency" from both linguistic and feminist dimensions. Finally, "Stylistics" approach is examined, with a particular focus on the Transitivity model.

Chapter Two: Psychological Root and Impact of Family Dysfunction on the Characters' Childhood Experiences in Stephen King's *The Shining*

Introduction

On the surface, *The Shining* presents the story of the troubled Torrance family. As the story progresses, it becomes clear that the family's dysfunction stems from traumatic past events. This chapter delves into the backgrounds of Jack and Wendy Torrance, exploring their development throughout the story. Employing trauma theory, this analysis will illustrate how Jack and Wendy's early life traumas influence their adult behaviors as depicted in *The Shining*. The focus of this study will be on how their traumatic upbringings led to deeply damaged family relationships later in life. Furthermore, this section will examine how Jack and Wendy respond to specific triggers, emphasizing the importance of flashbacks and suppressed memories in compounding their trauma.

2.1. The Context of the Novel: The Dysfunctional Parents Controversy

Family serves as the primary environment where children first learn about the world around them. It provides essential psychosocial needs like love, support, and mutual respect, which are crucial for the development of well-adjusted personalities. Nonetheless, some families experience dysfunction that disrupts their harmonious functioning. Lamar points out that dysfunctional families are characterized by various forms of abuse and neglect, including physical, emotional, verbal, ritualistic, and sexual abuse, along with harmful communication and relationship patterns. Such negative experiences during childhood can impede normal growth and development, depriving children of the nurturing, stability, and protection they need for sound physical and emotional well-being (LaMar 8).

Stephen King's *The Shining* attests to the phenomenon of family dysfunction through the Torrance family. First, the main character of the novel, Jack, is depicted as an alcoholic with anger issues, leading him to straining his relationships with his wife, Wendy, and son, Danny. On the other hand, Wendy, though loving and protective, is haunted by Jack's volatile nature and constantly living in fear, while Danny's psychic abilities make him vulnerable to the Overlook Hotel's malevolent forces. This fractured family unit is poignantly reflected in a thought from Wendy:

> Ominous quiet, yes, that phrase was the real thing, anyway. The stiff, tense meals where the only conversation had been please pass the butter or Danny, eat the rest of your carrots or may I be excused, please. The nights when Jack was gone and she had lain down, dry-eyed, on the couch while Danny watched TV. The mornings when she and Jack had stalked around each other like two angry cats with a quivering, frightened mouse between them. It all rang true; (dear God, do old scars ever stop hurting?) horribly, horribly true. (King 163)

As the family settles into their isolated winter caretaking duties, the hotel's sinister influence exacerbates their existing tensions, leading to Jack's descent into madness, increased fear for Wendy, and a fight for survival for Danny. The toxic blend of personal demons and supernatural horrors creates a chilling portrait of a family on the brink of collapse.

For clear reasons, Jack Torrance can be seen as a Gothic villain, yet this deeply developed character is also a tragic hero. In addition to alcohol addiction, Jack faces issues such as a troubled family background and a broken personality. Stephen King himself views Jack Torrance as a dysfunctional individual who continuously seeks a geographical change hoping for a fresh start (Strengell 97). The opening chapter presents Jack Torrance as an ostensibly normal man attending a job interview, throughout which Jack tries to conceal his

traumatic history and his past dependency on alcohol. Although he manages to impress Ullman, the hotel manager, the reader gains insight into his inner thoughts, which expose the fragility and vulnerability brought about by his past experiences.

Jack secures the position as a caretaker of a hotel, hoping it will help him deal with his problems and finish his writing. Despite having been sober for over a year, Jack struggles with alcoholism and harbors a violent streak, highlighted by a past incident where, in a drunken state, he breaks his three-years-old son Danny's arm. In a moment of frustration, when accidentally messes up his father's writing, Jack forcefully spins Danny around to discipline him, his large adult fingers tightly gripping the small flesh of the boy's forearm, enclosing it in a clenched fist (King 22). This incident plays a significant role serving as a precursor to his descent into madness and violence throughout the novel. Despite Jack's bad feelings afterward, he continues to fail to control his behavior and actually extends to hurting other people. For instance, during his teaching career, Jack experiences a pivotal moment where he engages in a conflict with a student who damages his car in retaliation for being removed from the debate team, which eventually leads to Jack's dismissal from the job. This shows that Jack cannot control his anger, even when he is not drinking, because "[h]is temper [is] like a vicious animal on a frayed leash" (44).

Jack also has a drinking partner, Albert Shockley, and both struggle with their attempts to quit drinking following a car accident. One evening, while driving intoxicated at high speeds, they narrowly avoid hitting a child's bike on the road, an event that significantly shakes Jack. This near-disaster serves as a crucial wake-up call for Jack, highlighting the severe consequences his drinking has on his life and marriage. Despite a strong desire to change, Jack finds himself deeply caught in addiction again, illustrating the depth of his struggles and the disintegration of his life (King 46).

Jack is aware of his short temper and often feels remorseful about it. Even when Wendy tries to explain away his behavior to Danny's doctor, claiming Jack did not really mean to hurt their son, Jack himself interrupts to confess: “I broke his arm turning him around to spank him… I meant to do it. I guess someplace inside I really did mean to do that to him. Or something even worse” (King 160). Thus, Jack's issues extend beyond his struggles with alcohol and aggression; he also grapples with profound feelings of sadness and inadequacy. He is a multifaceted character harboring both vengeful and self-destructive impulses, at times even contemplating suicide. This is hinted at when Danny, who can read his father's thoughts through his “shining” ability, momentarily perceives a notion far darker and more daunting than “DIVORCE,” which is “SUICIDE” (35). However, rather than directing harm towards himself, Jack often ends up causing harm to his family.

Initially, the hotel boosts Jack's mood and creativity (King 115), but as its malevolent presence grows, it exploits his past trauma, leading to his descent into madness and prompting vivid recollections of his father's abuse. Influenced by the supernatural forces, Jack attacks his family, mirroring his father's abusive behavior.

On the other hand, Wendy's portrayal as a victim of her husband's violence does not absolve her of responsibility within the dysfunctional setting. In fact, her submissiveness in the novel deeply worsens the family's dysfunction, creating an environment where Jack's alcoholism and violent tendencies go unaddressed. Thus, by avoiding confronting Jack about his issues, she allows his destructive behavior to continue unchecked, leading to a cycle of dysfunction within their family. This is evident when Wendy acknowledges her part in putting her son in danger, as “she wonder[s] just how he [is] supposed to survive with her and Jack for parents” (King 20). By prioritizing the illusion of harmony over her own needs and the safety of her son Danny, Wendy inadvertently exposes her family to emotional and psychological harm. Her failure to assert boundaries and hold Jack accountable not only

undermines her own well-being but also contributes to the overall deterioration of their family unit, ultimately amplifying the horror of their ordeal at the Overlook Hotel.

Wendy is portrayed as a caring homemaker who sticks to her husband despite his flaws, because she mainly wants to protect her family, especially Danny. At first, their marriage seems healthy, and "[d]uring the days, Wendy would stay home and housewife, feeding Danny his bottles in the sunwashed kitchen of the four-room second-story apartment, playing her records on the battered portable stereo she had had since high school" (King 59). But as Jack's drinking problem started causing trouble, Wendy began to consider divorce. She struggled to acknowledge the stark reality that her marriage was a one-sided failure. She waited silently, hoping for a miracle that would make Jack realize the damage being done not just to himself but also to her. However, there was no change in his behavior (57).

Renzetti and Curran have explained this by saying that despite the severity and frequency of abuse, many women remain in these relationships. They may blame themselves for the violence, attempt to change their behavior or circumstances, and hope their partners will change. However, the abuse is often unpredictable, triggered by minor incidents, leading to lowered self-esteem and feelings of helplessness. Intimidation and the fear of violence keep many women trapped in abusive relationships (165). After Jack achieves sobriety, Wendy opts to remain in the marriage, yet their relationship remains strained due to her lingering lack of trust in him. Consequently, Wendy postpones initiating the divorce talk, despite having contemplated it extensively beforehand. She reflects on this decision, acknowledging that she had been pondering divorce for six months prior to Danny's broken arm, and admits that even Danny's welfare may not have been the sole reason for her hesitation (King 57).

One of the significant reasons Wendy Torrance hesitates to ask Jack for a divorce is tied to her limited options for independence and support. She could not consider returning to her mother as a viable option due to their tense relationship. Wendy is certain that her mother

would take her in, but given her history of emotional abuse, she fears she could not endure her mother's constant critical scrutiny of her every action and the accusatory finger pointing towards her for her parents' divorce: "Although it's not your fault, it's all your own fault. You were never ready. You showed your true colors when you came between your father and me" (King 58). Therefore, when Jack loses his job and they move to the hotel, she does not oppose it, instead, Wendy hopes things would get better for their marriage. Even when Danny asks her if she wants to go and live in that hotel for the winter, she actually hesitates and asks herself "which of five thousand answers should she give to that one?" But at last, "[s]he said: If it's what your father wants, it's what I want" (20).

2.2. The Impact of Family Dysfunction on Childhood Trauma

Based on what was mentioned before, it becomes clear that the present dysfunction experienced by Jack and Wendy Torrance in *The Shining* superficially suggests that they are responsible for the troubled environment in which their family finds itself. However, a deeper examination reveals that their own past traumas, heavily influenced by their respective upbringings, are significant contributors to their current struggles. Jack's volatile temper and struggles with alcoholism can be traced back to the abuse he suffered at the hands of his father, a pattern that Jack inadvertently begins to mirror in his interactions with his own son, Danny. Similarly, Wendy's passive demeanor and her inability to confront Jack's deteriorating mental state stem from her own experiences of being dominated and dismissed by her mother. These parental influences have left both characters ill-equipped to handle their internal struggles, thus perpetuating a cycle of dysfunction that envelops their family.

In this regard, Stoop and Masteller argue that adults from dysfunctional families, who have faced various emotional, psychological, and relational issues, acknowledge the significant impact their family history has on their current identity. Although other factors

may also play a role, recognizing and dealing with these family dynamics is essential for their healing. Therefore, understanding these influences allows them to overcome their past and lead more fulfilling lives (30). However, the Torrance family's inability to address their past traumas and dysfunctional behaviors results in tragic outcomes, underscoring the deep effects of unresolved childhood experiences on adult relationships.

2.2.1. Jack Torrance's Character Development

Jack Torrance was the youngest child of Mark Anthony Torrance and an unnamed mother, and a brother of Brett, Mike and Becky. Although Jack's father was an alcoholic and mentally and physically abusive towards every member of his family throughout Jack's childhood, Jack seemed to have developed a love for the earlier years of their relationship. He perceived his father's returns home as a way to disrupt the silence, and sought to connect with him despite the abusive behavior. King describes this bond of Jack with his father as "the unfurling of some flower of beautiful potential, which, when wholly opened, turned out to be blighted inside" (King 243). This shows that at first, Jack admired his father despite his alcoholism and the violence towards his children: "He could remember himself at seven, spanked by a neighbor lady for playing with matches. He had gone out and hurled a rock at a passing car. His father had seen that, and he had descended on little Jacky, roaring. He had reddened Jack's behind … and then blacked his eye" (118).

The seeds of Jack's affection for his father soured at the tender age of nine, when his father's use of his cane landed Jack's mother in hospital. Mark's treatment of his wife resulted in her suffering of a concussion and being hospitalized, which marked the end of Jack's fondness for his father (King 246).Thus, the event that uncovered the blighted inside of the flower of their relationship was the brutal beating of Jack's mother. Jack vividly recalls the event, remembering every detail from the words exchanged between his parents to the

family's dinner that evening. The constant sound of his father's cane hitting his mother imprinted itself on Jack's memory, much like random chisel marks on stone (246). The violence perpetrated by Jack's father inflicted a deep trauma on his young mind, embedding itself in his subconscious and emerging to haunt him in his later years.

Jack's siblings harbored a strong dislike towards their father due to his abusive behavior, and similarly, they held resentment towards their mother for her unwavering commitment to Catholicism, which influenced her decision to remain with him (King 244). Jack, on the other hand, grew to resent his mother primarily for her submissive and feeble demeanor. This disdain evolved into a profound misogyny as Jack matures; he despises women who display signs of weakness, while also resenting his wife whenever she asserts herself. Growing up, Jack would take this domestic abuse out on his classmates and animals. Jack got good grades in school, but often underwent punishment for lashing out and fighting other kids:

> And when his father had gone into the house, muttering, to see what was on television, Jack had come upon a stray dog and had kicked it into the gutter. There had been two dozen fights in grammar school, even more of them in high school, warranting two suspensions and uncounted detentions in spite of his good grades. (King 118)

As he developed a penchant for alcohol, his taste grew into full alcoholism in his college days. However, the pivotal moment that catalyzes Jack's decision to quit drinking was when he inadvertently harmed his son Danny during one of his binges. This marked a departure from his father's behavior, as Jack deeply regrets any instance of harm towards his son and displays a modicum of self-awareness regarding his own issues. Despite the injury, Jack and Danny maintain a strong relationship reminiscent of the one Jack had idealized with

his father in his childhood. Jack's troubles escalate further when the malevolent spirits of the Overlook Hotel exploit his weaknesses—alcoholism, traumatic past, and fears of mirroring his father's abusive behavior—to drive him to madness. The spirits possess him into attempting to murder his family with a roque mallet, becoming a mirror image of his father (King 302).

2.2.2. The Abusive Father

The narrative depicts Jack as initially an abusive father, and only subsequently it is revealed that he himself has been a victim of his own father's abuse. The details of Jack's troubled upbringing begin to emerge in Chapter Fourteen where Jack recalls instances of his childhood abuse. Within the novel, Jack's father is described once as a "miserable, bullying drunk" but he is often called "the irrational white ghost-god" (King 243, 247), a term that highlights his daunting and dominant influence in Jack's life. The violence inflicted by Jack's father deeply traumatized his nine-year-old psyche, leaving lasting scars that stay with him and continue to haunt him. The distinct sound of the cane hitting flesh, referred to as the "whump," is especially imprinted in Jack's memory (246). This haunting sound is akin to the "snap of the breaking bone;" the sound of his son Danny's arm breaking, an incident that similarly torments Jack (22).

Jack is deeply frightened when he accidentally breaks his son's arm, a moment marked by "[j]ust enough of a sound to slit through the red fog like an arrow—but instead of letting in sunlight, that sound let in the dark clouds of shame and remorse, the terror, the agonizing convulsion of the spirit" (King 22). Freud suggests that our minds continually reorganize memories in light of new experiences, and past traumas may resurface and cause distress when reactivated by similar current events (Kurtz 25, 26). For Jack, encountering situations reminiscent of his father's behavior could revive memories and emotions linked to his

childhood trauma, resulting in nightmares and anxiety. This is exemplified in another instance where Danny locks himself in the bathroom and refuses to respond, and which is evident in the subsequent passage:

> Jack knocked harder. “Stop fooling, doc. Bedtime’s bedtime. Spanking if you don’t open up.”
>
> He’s losing his temper, she thought, and was more afraid. He had not touched Danny in anger since that evening two years ago, but at this moment he sounded angry enough to do it … “Danny, if you make me break this lock I can guarantee you you’ll spend the night sleeping on your belly,” Jack warned.
>
> Jack shook him again, and Danny’s eyes suddenly cleared. His toothbrush fell out of his hand and onto the tiled floor with a small click.
>
> “What?” he asked, looking around. He saw his father kneeling before him, Wendy standing by the wall. “What?” Danny asked again, with rising alarm. “W-w-wuh-what’s wr-r-r—”
>
> “Don’t stutter!” Jack suddenly screamed into his face. Danny cried out in shock, his body going tense, trying to draw away from his father, and then he collapsed into tears. Stricken, Jack pulled him close. “Oh, honey, I’m sorry. I’m sorry, doc. Please. Don’t cry. I’m sorry. Everything’s okay”. (King 137)

Jack's loss of temper and subsequent aggressive behavior towards Danny could be seen as a reactivation of his own past traumatic experiences, involving similar aggressive behaviors witnessed or endured in his own childhood. This parallels Freud's concept of the “return of the repressed,” where repressed memories and emotions do not vanish but can resurface in altered or symbolic forms under certain circumstances. When Jack finds himself yelling at Danny not to stutter and subsequently sees his son's frightened reaction, he is

momentarily shocked by his actions. This moment of realization leads to immediate regret and an apologetic response. Jack's horrified reaction upon recognizing his own aggressive behavior illustrates Miller's point that an adult may be horrified to catch themselves angrily screaming at their child, reminiscent of their own despised experiences with their father. This unconscious replication of childhood experiences suggests that even unremembered aspects of one's past can still influence their behavior, manifesting unconsciously in their actions (19).

2.2.3. Flashbacks and Intrusive Memories

In light of the above analysis, the debilitating trauma evoked by family dysfunction becomes evident in King's novel. Trauma is defined by Cathy Caruth as "the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomena" (*Unclaimed Experience* 91). Jack Torrance's troubled past, which is marked by the abusive and alcoholic behavior of his father, lays the foundation for his psychological struggles. In the novel, Jack experienced repeated traumatic flashbacks. Through these flashbacks, King provides glimpses into Jack's traumatic upbringing, revealing the profound impact of paternal abuse on his psyche. These flashbacks depict Jack's feelings of fear, resentment, and powerlessness, as he grapples with the traumatic memories of his father's violent outbursts. Caruth also notes that flashbacks emerge involuntarily, without any conscious effort by the person to recall or reflect on the traumatic incident, suggesting that the trauma is never fully processed by the mind. Thus, when a flashback occurs, it is not just a memory resurfacing, but also a manifestation of the trauma's failure to integrate into the individual's consciousness, resulting in overwhelming and uncontrollable experiences (*Trauma: Explorations in Memory* 152, 153).

Jack’s flashbacks start while rummaging through papers in the hotel's basement, as he is reminded of a traumatic experience where he was beaten. As he drifts into sleep, he is plunged into a vivid and intricate nightmare. This profound trauma triggers other unsettling memories that become entangled with it. At first, he sees an image from his childhood: Jack's face seemed to mirror back at him, altered slightly, characterized by the wide eyes and innocent smile of a boy sitting in the hallway with his toy trucks, waiting for his father, who would amuse him with a game involving the elevator (King 248). However, this nostalgic recollection is marred by the haunting memory of the salty and woody aroma of taverns exhaled, and a young Jacky “tumbling down, old clocksprings pouring from his ears as his father bursts into laughter” (248). This memory triggers another trauma, that of Danny’s broken arm, as Jack’s youthful appearance transforms into Danny’s, eerily resembling his own (248). Both recollections are accompanied by a “the misty smell of beer rising … a dreadful batter all in ferment, rising on the wings of yeast, the breath of taverns,” highlighting the striking similarities between Jack and his alcoholic father. The sequence of memories concludes abruptly with a “snap of bone … his own voice, mewling drunkenly, Danny, you okay, doc?” (248). The cascade of recollections culminates with Danny's face morphing into Jack’s mother’s dazed face, emerging from under the table, bruised and bleeding (248), completing the cycle of disturbing visions.

Jack’s nightmare intensifies when he hears his father’s voice coming from the hotel's radio, compelling him towards violence: “—kill him. You have to kill him, Jacky, and her, too. Because a real artist must suffer. Because each man kills the thing he loves. Because they will always conspire against you, trying to hold you back and drag you down” (King 249). The voice is “coming dead at him out of the radio,” symbolizing the Overlook's manipulation of Jack's innermost fears (249). Battling these resurfacing memories, Jack tries frantically to deny them: “'No!' he screamed.' You’re dead, you're in your grave, you’re not in me at all!”

Even though he had tried to erase all remnants of his father from his mind, it was unbearable for his father's influence to resurface, penetrating the hotel situated far from the New England town where his father had lived and died (249). Disoriented by the nightmare, Jack sleepwalks from the basement to the office where the radio is located. Troubled by his hallucinations, Jack finds it difficult to separate what is real from what is not and begins to wonder if he really had harmed Danny as Wendy suspected and tried to choke his own son as instructed by his father (255).

The memories resurfacing in Jack's subconscious are not just remembered; they manifest throughout the hotel, haunting him. Jack grapples with recollections of his abusive, alcoholic father and his own past acts of drunken aggression towards his son. The violent traumas from his past that still affect Jack in the present persist into the future, perpetuating the cycle of temporal disturbance that defines his haunting.

2.2.4. Defense Mechanisms

Jack Torrance, as a troubled character in *The Shining*, resorts to displacement and rationalization to deflect from the painful past of an abusive father that persistently resurfaces before him. Jack channels his emotions toward external targets, particularly his wife and son, while simultaneously attempting to rationalize his actions as necessary.

2.2.4.1. Displacement

Displacement is one of the defense mechanisms that Jack’s psyche uses in responding to problems that arise. Jack’s relationship with his abusive father as a child accumulates through the events in the hotel and persists to significantly affect his adult life. Consequently, he uses his wife and son as an outlet for his rage and bad emotions, repeating some of his father's abusive behaviors. His abuse manifests both emotionally and physically, exacerbated by his struggles with alcoholism, his personal demons, and the malevolent influences of the

Overlook Hotel. First, Jack's emotional abuse towards Wendy often manifests as loud and aggressive shouting:

> "Don't tell me what to do."
>
> "Jack... please, we shouldn't... it..." She couldn't find the words.
>
> "Don't tell me what to do," he repeated sullenly, and then went into the bedroom. She was left alone in the rocking chair with Danny, who was sleeping again. Five minutes later Jack's snores came floating out to the living room. That had been the first night she had slept on the couch. (King 57)

As the influence of the Overlook Hotel grows stronger, Jack's behavior becomes increasingly erratic and dangerous, leading to more explicit threats of violence, such as: "I'm going to bash your brains in" and "Have to be punished," he was grunting. "Chastised. Chastised …harshly" (King 408). Afterwards, the threats escalated into tangible violent actions as demonstrated in the following scene:

> "Jack, I want to help."
>
> "Oh yeah. You and Danny only want to help." The grip on her ankle was crushing now. Still holding on to her, Jack was getting shakily to his knees. "You wanted to help us all right out of here. But now… I … gotcha!"
>
> "Jack, you're hurting my ankle—"
>
> "I'll hurt more than your ankle..." (King 407)

Additionally, Jack's pursuit of his family with a roque mallet, intending on killing them, directly reflects the behavior of his father, who frequently wielded a cane to beat his wife and children.

> The mallet came down again with whistling, deadly velocity and buried itself in her soft stomach. She screamed, suddenly submerged in an ocean of pain. Dimly she saw

> the mallet rebound. It came to her with sudden numbing reality that he meant to beat her to death with the mallet he held in his hands. (King 439)

In this scene, Jack's violent act of striking with a mallet reflects Freud's concept of "repetition compulsion", which suggests that individuals often unconsciously repeat behaviors, emotions, or thoughts from their past, especially those linked to trauma. Jack wielding the mallet mirrors the abusive behavior of his father, who used a cane to render his wife a dead body.

Another form of Jack's displacement is revealed through his relationship with alcohol. When faced with success or failure, Jack turns to alcohol to either celebrate or console himself, as mentioned in the text. This use of alcohol serves as a displacement activity where the real emotional issues are masked by the temporary escape that drinking provides. By consuming alcohol, Jack displaces the need to confront his deeper emotional and psychological issues (King 117, 118).

In her paper, Linda J. Holland-Toll describes the environment in the hotel as reflecting America's dual obsessions with alcohol and violence. This setting influences Jack, who slips into an alcoholic mindset even in the absence of actual alcohol. The text underscores the complex relationship American society has with alcohol. Despite recognizing its negative consequences, society often celebrates and glamorizes alcohol consumption (139). She further discusses how alcohol is seen as a measure of manhood. Many men perceive the ability to consume alcohol as a mark of masculinity, and conversely, an inability to handle alcohol might be seen as a weakness or a diminishment of one's manliness. This societal expectation puts pressure on individuals to consume alcohol to affirm their gender identity (139, 140). Jack battles alcoholism and the scars of childhood abuse. For him, alcohol is both a means to celebrate successes and to drown his sorrows. When he tries to give up drinking due to his increasing instability and aggression, he ends up, perhaps unconsciously, wrecking not just his

own life but also his family's. In a way, he transforms into a version of his father; a violent, abusive alcoholic (140).

2.2.4.2. Rationalization

Rationalization is another device of defense mechanism used by Jack, wherein he attempts to justify or explain his actions in a presumed logical manner, believing that he should not be blamed for such a behavior.

> He hadn't felt mean. He had always regarded himself as Jack Torrance, a really nice guy who was just going to have to learn how to cope with his temper someday before it got him in trouble. The same way he was going to have to learn how to cope with his drinking. But he had been an emotional alcoholic just as surely as he had been a physical one—the two of them were no doubt tied together somewhere deep inside him, where you'd just as soon not look. But it didn't much matter to him if the root causes were interrelated or separate, sociological or psychological or physiological. He had had to deal with the results: the spankings, the beatings from his old man, the suspensions, with trying to explain the school clothes torn in playground brawls, and later the hangovers, the slowly dissolving glue of his marriage, the single bicycle wheel with its bent spokes pointing into the sky, Danny's broken arm. And George Hatfield, of course. (King 118)

Jack sees himself as a really nice person, even though there is evidence showing otherwise. This self-image is important to him because it helps him ignore the bad things he does. He knows he needs to work on controlling his temper and drinking, but he is putting it off. He is not treating it like something urgent that needs fixing right away. By doing this, he

is avoiding facing up to how serious his problems are and the damage they are causing. In another passage, Jack Torrance rationalizes his growing aggression and strict control over his family by attributing it to their supposed disobedience and misinterpretation of his role and intentions:

> He did see. He had been too easy with them. Husbands and fathers did have certain responsibilities. Father Knows Best. They did not understand. That in itself was no crime, but they were willfully not understanding. He was not ordinarily a harsh man. But he did believe in punishment. And if his son and his wife had willfully set themselves against his wishes, against the things he knew were best for them, then didn't he have a certain duty—? (King 387)

Adhering to the traditional paternal belief that "Father Knows Best," Jack considers himself the definitive authority on what is beneficial for his family. He views any resistance as a direct challenge to his authority. Jack believes that his prior tolerance has contributed to these conflicts and misunderstandings, so he thinks it is justified to adopt a more punitive approach. His conviction that punishment is necessary for defiance influences his behavior, enabling him to view himself not as harsh, but as a responsible father and husband enforcing needed discipline.

On top of that, Jack's increasingly hostile behavior towards his family is justified in his mind by their perceived lack of trust and betrayal. He believes that his family, especially his wife, should trust his judgment and authority unconditionally, viewing himself in a traditional patriarchal role where the father's decision is final:

> What it really came down to, he supposed, was their lack of trust in him. Their failure to believe that he knew what was best for them and how to get it. His wife had tried to usurp him, first by fair (sort of) means, then by foul. When her little hints and whining objections had been overturned by his own well-reasoned arguments, she had turned

> his boy against him, tried to kill him with a bottle, and then had locked him, of all places... (King 419)

Jack interprets his wife's actions as attempts to undermine his authority. Instead of seeing these actions as protective measures for herself and their son, Jack views them as personal attacks and a malicious challenge to his role as head of the family. This rationalization feeds into his growing hostility and detachment from reality.

Furthermore, in reflecting on his father's behavior and alcoholism, Jack concludes that the blame lies entirely with his mother, whom he scornfully labels as a “milksop sponge” and “mentally and spiritually dead” (King 419). This perspective allows Jack to absolve his father, and in a way, himself, of any responsibility for their actions, instead placing all fault on the female spouse. Jack's negative view of his mother mirrors his current resentful feelings towards his wife, Wendy, whom he perceives as having made him a prisoner: “All you ever think about is ways to drag me down. You’re just like my mother” (407). This shift of blame shows how Jack tends to make his own issues seem acceptable by unfairly criticizing the women in his life.

Eventually, Jack rationalizes his abusive behavior and his father's who “had tried to bring the four children up to know right from wrong, to understand discipline, and above all, to respect their father,” (King 419) as an attempt to instill proper values. He plans to harshly chastise his family, believing this will correct their paths. Jack hopes that his son Danny will grow up to appreciate and implement these lessons more effectively than he did, perpetuating a cycle of abuse under the guise of necessary and constructive discipline.

2.3. Wendy’s Emotional Turmoil

Wendy grows up in a household with an unnamed father and mother, along with a younger sister named Aileen, who tragically died at the age of six. A significant aspect of

Wendy's family dysfunction is the emotional abuse inflicted by her mother, which left deep emotional scars that influenced her perception and behavior. Furthermore, Wendy's interactions with her husband Jack and her son Danny indicate that she carries emotional trauma from her past. She is always haunted by the shadow of her mother and often appears anxious and overly concerned about her family's safety, possibly stemming from the insecurity and feelings of inadequacy brought on by her mother's mistreatment. Stephen King subtly introduces Wendy's instances of traumatic experience, providing context for her responses to the horrors that she encounters at the Overlook Hotel (King 57, 58).

Unlike Jack's father who was physically abusive, Wendy's mother is actually emotionally abusive. Emotional abuse, as Beverly puts it, is an abuse that is non-physical, and can take various forms such as verbal assaults, constant criticism, intimidation, and manipulation. This abuse erodes the victim's self-confidence, self-worth, and self-trust (8). Wendy's mother fits perfectly into these criteria as she is portrayed as verbally abusive, constantly criticizing Wendy and undermining her self-confidence. Wendy's upbringing under her mother's emotional abuse has significant impact on her as a wife and a mother.

We first learn about Wendy's mother through Wendy's memories of her initial meeting with Jack. This encounter occurred during Wendy's college years; just three months after her mother had harshly thrown her out, telling her never to come back and suggesting that she should seek refuge with her father since she is the one to be blamed for their divorce (King 52). For Wendy, Jack represents her escape from her mother's oppressive control. He helped her break away from her mother, telling her: "She wants to keep beating you ... The more times you phone her, the more times you crawl back begging forgiveness, the more she can beat you with your father. It's good for her, Wendy, because she can go on making believe it was your fault. But it's not good for you" (king 53). One would also find out that her mother did not attend her wedding and only her father was there. Yet, Wendy accepts this

reality, believing that she could handle it as long as she had Jack by her side (53). However, the birth of her son Danny sparks a tentative reconciliation with her mother, which is "always tense and never happy" (54). Additionally, what triggers Wendy's emotional suffering is her dreams and flashbacks which "[are] always of her mother's face and of her own wedding" (57). This suggests that Wendy's trauma is deeply rooted in her relationship with her mother who has been absent in the most supposed happiest moment of her life.

Wendy's trauma can further be viewed through Caruth's explanation of Adult Catastrophic Psychic Trauma, where she argues that adult trauma is not about the intensity of the event itself, but rather the recognition of an unavoidable danger. This realization can shift a person's emotional state from anxiety to a feeling of surrender, leading them to freeze or become unable to act. When someone faces this kind of unavoidable danger, they might experience a "catatonoid reaction," where they feel paralyzed and might follow commands automatically without resistance (*Trauma: Explorations in Memory* 80). In the novel, Wendy Torrance's passive demeanor can be interpreted akin to a catatonic response when faced with the imminent danger posed by her husband's behavior. She remains paralyzed and hesitant about broaching the subject of divorce with him, even though she becomes convinced that the divorce is necessary. The signs are painfully clear; her husband's alcoholism and worsening temper are becoming unmanageable, evidenced by his declining handwriting. Whether intentional or not, he has harmed Danny, indicating a troubling path towards potential job loss and further turmoil (King 58). Therefore, instead of coming forward with the solution, Wendy continues to show obedience and acceptance to Jack's decisions. She remains unable neither to take firm steps to protect herself and her son Danny nor better communicate her thoughts because "[t]he subject [i]s taboo between them" (59).

At a pivotal moment, just as Wendy gathers the courage to confront Jack regarding what she believes is best for herself and Danny, she is surprised by her husband's request to

postpone their talk for a week (King 59). Though having little faith in her husband's promises, Jack assures her that he is not promising anything and insists that they would talk in a week if she still wants to and what followed is that Wendy "turn[s] back to the dishes without saying anything more…"(59). Wendy's silence suggests that she accepts Jack's demand and holds on to the possibility of discussing it in the future; however, her husband makes no concrete commitments, and no further discussions was made showing Wendy's surrender to the idea.

After escaping from her mother, Wendy could not truly feel secure. Her body is free, but her mind and emotions remain under her mother's lingering influence. Now a mother herself, Wendy constantly fears failing in her role. She often sees echoes of her mother in her own words and actions, constantly feeling like her (King 56, 58). One example of this would be her continuous skepticism and blaming of Jack, so that in a moment Wendy realizes it were the way her mother would have thought, and that is a really horrible thing. Besides, Wendy believes that if things were to repeat themselves, she would act and think in the same manner, because "[s]he carrie[s] part of her mother with her always, for good or bad" (268).

Eventually, her relationship with her husband begins to resemble the one she had with her mother. Just when Wendy thought she found solace in her relationship with Jack, cracks begin to appear in their marriage, exacerbated by Jack's descent into madness. In her marriage, she struggled with feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt. In her book, *The Emotionally Abused Women*, Beverly contends that many emotionally abused women often find themselves in abusive relationships due to a psychological pattern called repetition compulsion, where they try to recreate past abusive experiences in an attempt to change the outcome (78). Originating by Freud, the concept of "repetition compulsion" involves reliving repressed material as contemporary experiences rather than memories of the past. This tendency is often observed in individuals with challenging childhoods, as they find themselves trapped in cycles of unhealthy relationships (Levy 45). Various theories, including

those by Horowitz, Janet, and Russell, attempt to explain repetition compulsion, attributing it to the desire to understand, heal, or cope with early traumas like fear of abandonment (46).

Whatever the reason that made Wendy end up with Jack as a partner, her decision to stay with Jack despite his abusive behavior, along with staying with him at the Overlook Hotel despite clear signs of danger categorized her as the Codependent type; one of the types of the abused women that Beverly outlines in her book. Growing in dysfunctional family backgrounds can foster codependency as individuals demonstrate low self-esteem, seeking validation through helping others and assuming a rescuer role. Codependents face challenges in expressing their own needs, as they seek external validation and fear abandonment. They find it tough to articulate emotions like anger and pain, resulting in repression while prioritizing others' needs (Beverly 39). These could be seen in Wendy's initial passive role, which reflects an unconscious desire to confront and alter the outcome of her past abusive relationships, particularly with her mother.

2.3.1. The Abusive Mother

Wendy's mother abuse starts when she kicks Wendy out of the house while Wendy is in college because she thinks Wendy is responsible for her divorce (King 52). In another instance, Wendy's mother insults her daughter by calling her a "home-wrecker," (59) further demonstrating how she uses her emotional abuse to blame Wendy for dissolving her marriage. However, the divorce, which Wendy's father initiates, is later appears to be Wendy's mother's fault as her husband left her because she "hounded" him too much (268). Thus, the reason for their divorce is the wife overstepping the boundaries of her role by giving orders to the patriarch instead of being submissive to him (McKauffley 2).

Wendy's mother exemplifies one of the categories of abusive parents outlined by Beverly in her book, which is "The Hypercritical Parent". This type of parent excessively

fixates on their child's faults and shortcomings, maintaining a critical eye and expecting mistakes at every turn. These parents criticize various aspects of their child's life, including appearance, behavior, academics, and social interactions, leading the child to feel inadequate and never good enough. (Beverly 82). In the narrative, Wendy's mother excessively focuses on Wendy's faults and shortcomings, maintaining a critical eye and expecting mistakes at every turn. She constantly points out what Wendy does wrong or leaves undone, particularly within her interactions with her husband and son. This is illustrated through one particular scene which shows the damaging effects of hypercritical parenting:

> When she took Danny to the house, she went without Jack. And she didn't tell Jack that her mother always remade Danny's diapers, frowned over his formula, could always spot the accusatory first signs of a rash on the baby's bottom or privates. Her mother never said anything overtly, but the message came through anyway: the price she had begun to pay (and maybe always would) for the reconciliation was the feeling that she was an inadequate mother. It was her mother's way of keeping the thumbscrews handy. (King 54)

Wendy's mother consistently critiques Wendy's abilities as a mother without directly stating it. By remaking Danny's diapers, frowning over his formula, and keenly noticing any signs of discomfort or rash, Wendy's mother implicitly communicates disapproval of Wendy's caregiving skills. This behavior creates a pervasive sense of inadequacy within Wendy, as she absorbs her mother's implicit criticism.

Wendy's mother's lingering influence is also apparent during a particular night when Jack arrives home drunk, clumsily ascending the stairs and waking Danny, ultimately leading to causing damage to the boy as it is described in the following scene:

> He had tried to soothe the baby and dropped him on the floor. Wendy had rushed out, thinking of what her mother would think if she saw the bruise

> before she thought of anything else—God help her, God help them both—and then picked Danny up, sat in the rocking chair with him, soothed him. She had been thinking of her mother for most of the five hours Jack had been gone, her mother's prophecy that Jack would never come to anything. (King 56)

Wendy's first concern is not for the baby's well-being but rather the anticipated criticism from her mother, indicating a profound fear of falling short as a mother. Moreover, her mother's prediction regarding Jack's lack of success might have deepened Wendy's sense of inadequacy, further intensifying her insecurities and trauma.

2.3.2. Wendy's Oedipal Crisis: The Mother as a Rival

In *The Shining*, Wendy Torrance's early childhood remains largely unexplored, leaving room for speculation about her past experiences through a Freudian lens, particularly focusing on the Oedipal phase and its potential effects on her adult life. The Oedipal phase, occurring in the early years of childhood, is a crucial period in psychosexual development, marked by unconscious desires for the parent of the opposite sex and rivalry with the parent of the same sex (Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* 107). In Wendy's case, her close relationship with her father suggests potential conflicts with her mother, possibly stemming from unconscious desires for her father and feelings of rivalry with her mother.

Throughout the narrative, Wendy's memories reflect a strong bond with her father, indicating a significant relationship during her formative years. The daughter-father relationship is evidenced by Wendy's words of how she has been her father's girl from the first (King 61). This sentiment is more echoed in her reminiscences, like the memory of a Sunday when he took her to the park, and she fell from the second tier of the jungle gym, scraping both knees (268). Another poignant moment arises when she encounters Halloran's Roebuckers, triggering memories of her father's own humorous reference to them and his

playful gestures at the dinner table whenever her mother was preoccupied in the kitchen or on the phone (79). Conversely, there is a notable absence of mention regarding her relationship with her mother during this critical phase of development. This absence, along with Wendy's emotional symptoms in adulthood, suggests the possibility of emotional abuse or neglect from her mother. The need for validation and security, which is seen in Wendy's relationships and role as a mother to Danny, could be interpreted as compensatory mechanisms for the emotional void left by her early experiences. Moreover, Wendy's experiences of emotional abuse during adulthood could be traced back to similar patterns established during her childhood. According to Caruth's theory of trauma, trauma is not necessarily confined to singular, dramatic events but can also stem from ongoing, tough experiences (Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* 185). This implies that Wendy's childhood may have been marked by the same persistent emotional abuse and criticism that she faces in her adult life.

By delving into Wendy's past through a Freudian and trauma-focused analysis, we can speculate on the underlying causes of her emotional struggles and symptoms in *The Shining*. While the specifics of her childhood remain ambiguous, her adult behavior and experiences provide clues to the traumatic events that may have shaped her psyche.

2.3.3. Defense Mechanisms

In *The Shining*, Wendy Torrance employs both 'denial' and 'sublimation' to manage the trauma of growing up with a neglectful and emotionally distant mother. While she denies the extent of her mother's neglect, she also channels her distress into caring for and protecting her son in the face of danger.

2.3.3.1. Denial

Wendy's history of abuse at the hands of her mother likely instilled in her a coping mechanism of denial, which allows her to avoid confronting painful or threatening realities, shielding herself from emotional distress. At first, Wendy appears oblivious to the severity of her strained relationship with her mother, even following their reconciliation, which leaves her with a sense of inadequacy in her maternal role (King 54). This would last until Danny hits her with the following truth:

> "I know how you feel about her," Danny said, and sighed.
>
> "How do I feel?"
>
> "Bad," Danny said, and then rhyming, singsong, frightening her:
>
> "Bad. Sad. Mad. It's like she wasn't your mommy at all. Like she wanted to eat you."
>
> He looked at her, frightened. "And I don't like it there. She's always thinking about how she would be better for me than you. And how she could get me away from you. Mommy, I don't want to go there. I'd rather be at the Overlook than there."
>
> Wendy was shaken. Was it that bad between her and her mother? (King 221)

Through Danny's unsettling description of Wendy's mother as someone who "wanted to eat" her and who constantly belittles her parenting abilities, Wendy seems shocked and shaken by his words. This reaction suggests that she is in denial about the severity of her mother's behavior.

2.3.3.2. Sublimation

In *The Shining*, Wendy's protective instincts towards her son, Danny, can be seen as a form of sublimation; a psychological defense mechanism where unacceptable impulses are redirected into socially acceptable actions. Wendy's fear and distrust of Jack's increasingly

erratic behavior lead her to fiercely protect Danny from harm, even as she grapples with her own fears and doubts about their situation. This protection can manifest in various forms throughout the novel, such as physically intervening to prevent Jack from harming Danny.

Wendy's determination of protecting her son includes moments like when "she [i]s considering the possibility of using a butcher knife on her husband if he trie[s] to interfere with her and her son" (King 257). Amidst the chasing of Jack for her and Danny to kill them, he ends up grabbing her throat with one hand, making it hard for her to breathe. Panicking, Wendy tries to pull his hands away, forgetting she is holding a knife. But his hands are too strong for her to break free (408). Suddenly, one of Jack's hands releases her throat as he forcefully pushes Danny away with a snarl. The boy stumbles back against the empty shelves and fell to the floor, dazed. Meanwhile, Danny cries weakly which triggers the mother's body to act and finally one of her hands slipped from Jack's grip and grasped a nearby bottle. With her last ounce of strength, she aims the bottle at Jack's head, praying for a direct hit. When it struck him, the glass shattered violently inside the straw, making a heavy, impactful sound against his skull. Jack staggers back, his eyes rolling up, and the pressure on Wendy's throat is finally released (409).

By focusing on Danny's safety, Wendy showcases her maternal love and demonstrates resilience in coping with the challenges she faces. In this respect, Miller contends that a mother often feels like the center of attention because her child's eyes are constantly on her, suggesting that her repressed and unmet emotional needs from her own mother may resurface when she becomes a mother herself (11). This indicates that unresolved past issues can impact present maternal behavior and emotional dynamics. Consequently, Wendy could not shake off the fear that one day her child might feel like a stranger to her, and she to him, though hopefully not as distant as she feels from her own mother. And so she prays, "Please don't let it be that way, God. Let him grow up and still love his mother" (King134).

Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter delves into the reoccurrence of dysfunctional family patterns and their enduring impact on children. Accordingly, the novel portrays Jack and Wendy Torrance grappling with both physical and emotional challenges stemming from their troubled familial past, as they confront the aftermath of their traumatic upbringing. While tested differently, both characters employ various defense mechanisms such as repression, displacement, rationalization, denial, and sublimation to navigate their difficulties.

Chapter Three: The Impact of Family Dysfunction on Women's Agency

Introduction

The following chapter offers a psychoanalytic feminist examination of Wendy Torrance, a key female character in Stephen King's *The Shining*. Through the lens of Object Relations in Feminist Theory and its core ideas, the analysis delves into Wendy's evolution from a passive to an active agent. Particularly, it explores how this transformation can be understood in light of her relationships with her mother and her son, Danny. The chapter will extend its analysis by incorporating a stylistic examination of Wendy's character through the Transitivity model, focusing on the three main processes highlighted by M. A. K. Halliday.

3.1. Examination of Wendy's Character Development

In *The Shining*, Stephen King presents a modern version of a Gothic heroine in Wendy Torrance. She is a loving mother and devoted wife who grew up under her domineering mother. Despite having multiple reasons to leave her husband, like when he broke their son's arm and his frequent furiousness, she still follows him to the Overlook Hotel (Strangell 98). Wendy, like other Gothic heroines, has a weakness for her husband's wishes, as seen when she tells her son, "If that's what your father wants, it's what I want." She stays in their troubled marriage out of a sense of duty and guilt over her parents' divorce. Jack supported her during her difficult relationship with her mother, making her feel obligated to stand by him in his time of need. Even though she plans to leave after a violent outburst, she reconsiders when Jack shows a sudden improvement, almost costing her son's life. Wendy is aware of Jack's flaws but chooses to ignore his erratic behavior, inability to write, and suspicions of drinking again, making her partly responsible for her own misfortune (99).

Even though she played a part in the hotel's troubles at first, she eventually fights not just for her own survival but for her son's too, and she comes out victorious. As the Delbert Grady ghost points out to Jack after a particularly humiliating defeat at Wendy's hands: "She appears to be ... somewhat stronger than we had imagined. Somewhat more resourceful. She certainly seems to have gotten the better of you'" (King 422). She starts out as someone easily deceived and in need of rescue, yet it is her role as a mother that gives her the strength to overcome the challenges in her path to survival. "She had never been tried in fire. Now the trial was upon her, not fire but ice, and she would not be allowed to sleep through this. Her son was waiting for her upstairs" (404). Therefore, with no one else to rely on except the one trying to harm her and her son, "Wendy actively rejects the hotel's domination" while Jack becomes more obsessed with it (Magistrale 96). Once everything is over and Wendy and Danny are safe, King gives a final picture of her as follows:

> She looked older, and some of the laughter had gone out of her face. Now, as she sat reading her book, Halloran saw a grave sort of beauty there that had been missing on the day he had first met her, some nine months ago. Then she had still been mostly a girl. Now she was a woman, a human who had been dragged around to the dark side of the moon and had come back able to put the pieces back together. (King 491)

3.1.1. Unresolved Mother-Daughter Relationship

Nancy Chodorow emphasizes the significance of early maternal relationships in shaping one's sense of self and agency. She argued that the infant's emotional disposition, including feelings of self-love or self-hate, originates from its earliest relationship with the mother. This relationship forms the foundation upon which the infant constructs its sense of identity and its perception of the world (Chodorow, *The reproduction of Mothering* 78). Wendy's distant relationship with her mother likely influenced her understanding of herself as

a woman and as a mother. The lack of a close and nurturing relationship with her mother, a one that is fraught with tension or neglect had left Wendy to struggle with feelings of insecurity and low self-esteem, and thus impacting her agency. According to Chodorow, when a woman becomes a mother, the most important aspect of her relationship with her daughter is recognizing that they are alike. This means her daughter might also become a mother one day. This special connection is felt by the daughter and incorporated into her psyche, or ego. This happens mostly at an unconscious level. As a consequence of this special relationship, daughters are subtly shaped in ways that lead to what we often think of as feminine attributes: a sense of self-inrelation, feeling connected to others, being able to empathize, and being embedded in or dependent on relationships (*The Reproduction of Mothering* 167). Because Wendy's relationship with her mother was not strong, and likely characterized by emotional neglect, she could not develop those attributes that she was not fully prepared for motherhood and always felt like "an inadequate mother" (King 54).

Women sometimes seek to complete a relational triangle or recreate a mother-child unity through their relationship with children. This reflects a mother's conflicted and powerful need for her own mother. Additionally, women may turn to children to fulfill emotional and even erotic desires that are unmet by men or other women, expecting from infants what only another adult should provide (212). This is evident in Wendy's constant efforts to care for and be emotionally present for her son, Danny. This behavior may reflect an unconscious desire to reconnect with her own mother, that is likely why there was a forced reconciliation between the two as soon as Danny was born (King 54). However, even after the reconciliation, their relationship remained strained and tense as Wendy's mother disapproved of her marriage to Jack and continued to criticize her role as a mother

.

3.1.2. Mother-Child Mutual Recognition

Jessica Benjamin's theory of 'intersubjectivity' adds another layer to the analysis by emphasizing the importance of mutual recognition and reciprocity in relationships. Rather than solely examining fulfilled or suppressed desires to understand how the sense of self is formed or disturbed, attention is given to how others' validation or rejection can influence a child's sense of agency and self-esteem (19). As a result of not receiving sufficient validation and attention from her mother during her childhood, Wendy grows up to develop a weak character and dependency in her interactions with her husband. Their relationship appears to lack mutual recognition, with Jack becoming increasingly overbearing and abusive. This leads Wendy to have concerns about the potential danger that Jack poses to her and her son, Danny. A glimpse of her internal thought process, which highlights her deep maternal instinct and the protective measures she is considering appears in the follwing passage:

> There was really only one question, and it was asked in a mental voice of utter coldness and pragmatism, the voice of her maternity, a cold and passionless voice once it was directed away from the closed circle of mother and child and out toward Jack. It was a voice that spoke of self-preservation only after son-preservation and its question was:
>
> (Exactly how dangerous is he?). (King 255, 256)

As the narrative progresses, Wendy's relationship with Danny becomes central to her growth and empowerment. In *The Bonds of Love*, Benjamin's concept of mutual recognition highlights the need for both mother and child to acknowledge each other's individuality and validate their experiences. Traditionally, the mother is viewed primarily as the child's supporter and caregiver, not as an individual with her own goals. Societal norms and parenting literature reinforce this view, making mothers feel confined to this role (24). A mother struggling with her sense of self, fear, or suppressed desires cannot fully engage with

her child's development or empathize with their experiences. The child's need for recognition can only be met by a mother who has her own independent identity. Self psychology errs in viewing maternal recognition as mere mirroring; instead, the mother should be an independent individual who provides a unique and distinct response, which becomes increasingly significant as the child grows into their own identity. Nevertheless, recognition must be mutual, allowing both selves to assert themselves. It is crucial for the child to recognize the mother as an independent person, making mutual recognition as important a developmental goal as separation (24).

At the start of the story, Wendy seems uncertain about her abilities as a mother and is always desiring a deeper bond with her son, Danny, whom she sees as more attached to his father. As a result, Wendy feels envious of their close relationship and ashamed of her jealousy (King 104). Despite her efforts to show her maternal love, it often goes unrecognized as Danny consistently prefers his father. For example, he refuses to let her fix his broken toy, deciding to wait for his dad to come back and fix it instead (22). Additionally, Danny rejects her offer to stay and read him a story, asking his father to stay with him instead (144). In another instance, his drinking the cup of milk from Jack's hands makes her feel that he would not have done so for her (273).

Conversely, Danny, with his special abilities, seeks recognition from his mother. Despite her concerns about his well-being, she neither sees him for who he truly is nor acknowledges his unique situation with his superpower. Danny Torrance, as a five-year-old boy, has the ability to “shine”, which enables him to read minds, see the future and communicate telepathically with those who shine as well. Nevertheless, while Danny struggles to fully comprehend his visions, he keenly feels the ominous nature behind them. From the start, he is hesitant about moving to the hotel yet chooses not to voice his concerns to his parents, not wanting to disrupt their happiness. Danny can be seen more as an observer

rather than participant of the story. Furthermore, he cannot even discuss Tony, his invisible friend, with his parents, knowing they would not believe him. Whenever Tony appears, Danny loses consciousness, and upon waking, he notices the strange looks from his parents and senses their fear and concern, which confirms their disbelief. It is only when Wendy starts showing interest in his abilities that Danny begins to feel somewhat better, as illustrated in the following passage:

> "I'm not making this up, Mommy. Honest to God."
>
> "I know that," she said, and smiled. "Did Tony tell you?"
>
> "No," he said. "I just know. That doctor didn't believe in Tony, did he?"
>
> "Never mind that doctor," she said. "I believe in Tony. I don't know what he is or who he is, if he's a part of you that's special or if he comes from … somewhere outside, but I do believe in him, Danny. And if you …he … think we should go, we will. The two of us will go and be together with Daddy again in the spring." (King 225,226)

As Wendy grows more attuned to Danny's psychic abilities and the perils they encounter at the Overlook Hotel, she starts to see him not merely as her son but as an individual with unique insights and strengths. Hence, Wendy's affirmation to her child enabled him to perceive her as a distinct individual with her own struggles and pain:

> "I know how you feel about her," Danny said, and sighed.
>
> "How do I feel?"
>
> "Bad," Danny said, and then rhyming, singsong, frightening her:
>
> "Bad. Sad. Mad. It's like she wasn't your mommy at all. Like she wanted to eat you."
>
> He looked at her, frightened. (King 226)

This mutual recognition as Wendy starts to sense her child's attention, and reciprocally Danny also recognizes his mother's love and protection fosters Wendy's determination to protect him and prompts her to comfort him and instill hope within his restless soul:

> "…We'll leave here. And do you know what we'll do next spring? The three of us?"
>
> Danny shook his head against her breasts. He didn't know. It seemed there could never be spring again.
>
> "We'll go fishing. We'll rent a boat and go fishing, just like we did last year on Chatterton Lake. You and me and your daddy. And maybe you'll catch a bass for our supper. And maybe we won't catch anything, but we're sure to have a good time."
>
> "I love you, Mommy," he said, and hugged her.
>
> "Oh, Danny, I love you, too." (King 417)

Therefore, their mother-child mutual recognition serves as a source of empowerment for Wendy, giving her the strength to confront the horrors of the hotel and protect her son. In the climactic showdown with Jack, Wendy's agency and strength are evident as she fights to save Danny and herself from his violent rampage. This transformation from a somewhat passive figure to a determined and resourceful protector can be understood as a result of the mutual recognition and validation within her relationship with Danny.

3.2. Women's Agency: Transitivity Analysis of Wendy Torrance

In this section, the focus shall be on the transformation of Wendy Torrance, the female protagonist, from a passive figure to an active agent, examining the transitivity choices throughout the novel, as Sara Mills said: "The extent to which a character is the passive 'victim' of circumstance, or is actively in control of the environment, making decisions and taking action, is one of the concerns of feminist stylistics" (112). Transitivity analysis involves the identification and interpretation of processes, participants, and circumstances. Therefore, among the different strategies of selecting passages for stylistics analysis, the one used in this research is a random selection of clauses from different passages from chapters (2, 6, 8, 16, 27, 36, 46, 48, 50, 52) based on their importance. The excerpts are chosen from

the parts where Wendy, as the main character interacts with two major characters: her husband Jack, and her son, Danny.

Ryder argues that the choice of processes and participants in a situation reveals power dynamics and responsibilities among them. Participants' power varies depending on the nature of the process in which they are involved. He categorizes participants into different levels of power: those existing in existential processes and those identified in relational processes are considered the least powerful or active. Participants in mental, behavioral, and verbal processes, such as sensers, behavers, and sayers, are more active but still lack direct influence over others or external factors. Thus, in the realm of transitivity, material processes are considered the most event-like (42). Within material processes, there exists a variety that assigns different levels of power to participants. Ryder posits that when participants act as the medium, they are active but lack significant power since their actions do not directly impact others. In processes involving two participants, if there is a goal involved, the power of the agent is greater when the goal undergoes a change of state rather than just a change of location (43). In the novel, there are numerous instances where Wendy performs actions but does not directly affect others. Therefore, Wendy's actions will be analyzed using three processes: material, mental, and verbal, dismissing the other ones like: relational, behavioral, and existential.

3.2.1. Wendy's Suppressed and Expressed Agency

In *The Shining*, Wendy Torrance's agency is first suppressed by Jack's control and the hotel's supernatural forces, shown through her passive role and limited dialogue. As the plot advances, her agency is expressed by focusing more on her active thinking process, her actions, and her communication, highlighting her growing strength and her transformation from a passive figure to an active protector and survivor.

3.2.1.1. Material Process

Table 1

Examples of Wendy Torrance's Material Processes

Chapter	**Material Process**			
Two	**Actor**	**Process**	**Goal**	**Circumstance**
	She	looked out		the window
	She	leaned over		
	She	hesitated		Again
	She	stopped		
	She	went		Back
	She	went		upstairs
Six	She	went		without Jack
	She	had waited		
	She	hurt		all the time
	She	had lain		awake
Eight	She	was sitting		in the right-hand bucket
	She	darted		toward him
	She	knelt		beside him
Sixteen	She	got up		
	She	crashed		into the towel
	She	knocked		lightly
	She	plugged in	the night light	
	She	turned off	the lamp	
	She	took	a coloring book	
Twenty-seven	She	clutched	Danny	in her arms
	She	now discovered	Something	even worse
	She	had made	one bad decision	
	She	opened	it	
Thirty-six	She	had already caught	the car's bottom edge	
	[she]	pulled	herself	up enough

	She	threw	something	
	She	tossed	it	out
Forty-six	Wendy	Took	the towel-wrapped knife	from under her pillow
	She	Put	the gate	up
	She	got	a can of tomato soup	
	She	opened	the can	
	She	took	a step	backward
	She	picked up	his legs	
	[she]	began to drag	him	along the floor
	Wendy	pushed	the pantry door	
	She	picked up	Jack's feet	again
Fifty	She	picked	it	up
	Wendy	crossed	the room	
	She	pulled	the door	open
	She	reached	the corner	of the main
	She	counted	the strokes	corridor
	She	jerked	her head	away
	Wendy	forced	herself	to her feet
Fifty-Two	Wendy	risked	another glance	over her shoulder
	She	reached	the top	
	[she]	threw	a glance	behind her
	She	threw	herself	forward
	She	caught	the edge	of the dresser
	She	got	the key	into the lock
	Wendy	ran	the bolt	
	[she]	twisted	the spring lock	
	Wendy	slipped	one of the razor blades	out
	She	pushed	the door	open

Wendy Torrance is present in multiple chapters in the novel. She is first introduced in chapter two through a series of actions (she looked out, she leaned over, she hesitated, she stopped, she went). As noticed in Table 1, intransitive verbs and temporal and spatial circumstances are frequently used in chapters Two, Six, and Eight. Most of Wendy's activities and movement take place indoors and do not suggest agency or assertiveness. However, as the narrative progresses, Wendy begins to take a more active role, as seen in chapter sixteen with actions such as (she plugged in, she turned off, she took), often involving inanimate objects as goals like (the night light, the lamp, a coloring book). According to Mills, characters who exert more control over their environment are depicted with a higher proportion of material-action-intention processes (112). Therefore, as the story develops, Wendy Torrance increasingly engages in material processes, affecting both inanimate objects and animate figures like Danny and Jack, thus appearing more agentive.

3.2.1.2. Mental Process

Table 2

Examples of Wendy Torrance's Mental Processes

Chapter	**Mental Process**			
Two	**Senser**	**Process**	**Phenomenon**	**Circumstance**
	She	was feeling	low	
	She	feared		sometimes
Six	She	felt	no real urge	
	She	dreaded	the day	
	She	loved	her son	
	She	heard	so much	
Eight	She	Saw	a waterfall	spilling over

	She She	could see saw	the highway clinging pines	 grimly
Sixteen	Wendy She She She She	could heard liked heard wondered knew	the typewriter it Danny's hearty smack it	 less and less vaguely
Twenty-seven	She She She She She She	still felt was dreaming saw thought refused was considering	 his true face it the possibility	 was perfectly possible
Thirty-Six	She She	Saw realized	the engine	housing on top of the car
Forty-Six	Wendy She She She She She She	thought had heard had seen didn't like remembered saw could hear	 the end of her marriage that thought the knife her son Danny	 a loud banging noise many times in the pocket clamber up on the bar crying

	She	felt	better	
Fifty	She She She She She she	felt sensed heard saw thought had never heard	watched movement the mallet the knife such an awful sound	above her
Fifty-Two	She She	wanted to shriek rejected	 it	

Wendy Torrance's role as a senser is depicted through numerous mental processes, as illustrated in Table 2. These processes encompass the thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and inner experiences of Wendy's character. Initially, Wendy's mental activities are predominantly characterized by perceptive and emotive verbs such as (she was feeling, she feared, she saw, she dreaded, she saw, she heard, she loved, she liked) which reflect her emotions and anxieties. Later, these processes shift to cognitive and desiderative verbs like (she wondered, she knew, she realized, she thought, she wanted, she rejected) indicating her contemplation of her situation and her efforts to withstand psychological pressures. Furthermore, specific phenomena in Wendy's mental clauses in the later chapters, such as (seeing "her son," hearing "Danny," sensing "movement," seeing "the knife," and hearing "the mallet") offer insight into the triggers of her actions.

3.2.1.3. Verbal Process

Table 3

Examples of Wendy Torrance's Verbal Processes

Chapter	**Verbal Process**			
Two	**Sayer**	**Process**	**Receiver**	**Verbiage**
	She	said	[Danny]	"If it's what your father wants, it's what I want."
	She	said	[Danny]	"Stay out of the road, doc,"
Six	She	told	herself	she would have made the decision long ago if it hadn't been for Danny.
	She	told	herself	The divorce was necessary.
	She	said	[Jack]	"Jack," … "you shouldn't. You can't even tie your shoes, let alone drive."
	She	said	[Jack]	"Congratulations,"… "Maybe you gave him a concussion."
Eight	She	said	[Jack]	"You know," …"I don't think we've seen five cars since we came through Sidewinder. And one of them was the

				hotel limousine."
	She	asked	[Jack]	"You're sure the larder is fully stocked?"
Sixteen	Wendy	said quietly	[Danny]	"Not so close, doc," … "You'll hurt your eyes. It's—"
	She	said	[Jack]	"All right, honey,"… "But it's not a big thing. Really it's not."
	She	screamed		"Danny!"
	She	said	[Jack]	"Jack, you're scaring him!"
	She	asked gently	[Danny]	"Why did you lock the door, Danny?"
	Wendy	said, alarmed	[Danny]	"Shh," … "It's all right if you don't remember, hon. Sure it is."
	She	said	[Jack]	"If the doctor says there's something wrong, I'll look for a job in Sidewinder,"

				… "If I can't get one in Sidewinder, Danny and I will go to Boulder. I can't go to my mother, Jack. Not on those terms. Don't ask me. I … I just can't."
Twenty-Seven	She Wendy She	shrieked hissed called nervously	 [Jack] 	"Danny!" "Don't you touch him!" … "Don't you touch him! I'll kill you if you lay your hands on him again!" "Jack?"
Thirty-Six	Wendy She She She	Demanded said whispered cried	[Jack] [Danny] [Jack] [Jack]	"What do you mean, just?" … "It's the middle of the night. Who's running it?" "come on," "Jack,"... "What is it? What's wrong with it?" "I keep hearing voices in my head!"

				… “What is it? What’s wrong?”
	She	screamed	at him [Jack]	“Does that look like a short circuit to you, Jack?”
Forty-Six				
	she	said, crying	[Jack]	“Stop it,” … “You don’t know what you’re saying.”
	she	said	[Danny]	“Me too,” …“And honey, that’s why you’ve got to help me put your daddy somewhere.”
	She	screamed	[Danny]	“The door, Danny!”... “Shut the door!”

It is evident from Table 3 that the most frequent verbal process used by Wendy is the process “said”, through which she is engaging in small talks with her son, Danny. Later, the verb “told” is also used to show her talking to herself, expressing thoughts she cannot share with her husband, such as the one of divorce. Gradually, Wendy begins to “ask” and “say” things to Jack, like advising him not to drive drunk or accusing him for giving their son a concussion, yet there is no room for explanations, arguments, or protests. It is only when Jack starts to appear more dangerous that Wendy's verbal processes shift to more aggressive ones, such as “shrieking,” “hissing,” “screaming” and “crying” followed by verbiage that contain

threatening and imperative statements directed at Jack like “Don’t ask me,” “Don’t you touch him!” and “Stop it” showing her will to stand against his volatile behaviors.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter delves into the evolution of Wendy Torrance into a heroine and explores the underlying reasons for her shift from passivity to agency. Additionally, applying a framework of Object Relations Feminism Theory highlights the significance of Wendy's maternal role in fostering her resilience in the face of adversity. Furthermore, employing a Transitivity analysis proves beneficial in deepening our understanding of the complexity of Wendy's character and her narrative significance. Through recognizing Wendy’s roles as an ‘actor,’ ‘senser,’ and a ‘sayer,’ this multifaceted approach has enhanced our comprehension of Wendy as a nuanced female protagonist, adeptly navigating the psychological and interpersonal hurdles presented within the novel.

General Conclusion

In the light of the detailed analysis in the previous chapters, this dissertation attempted to study the way the phenomenon of family dysfunction, its manifestation in the physical abuse that impacts Jack Torrance in the novel, and how it results in enduring childhood traumas that persist into his adulthood. Similarly, through the analysis of the case of emotional neglect and abuse with reference to Wendy Torrance, this phenomenon is proven to lead women into building a sense of agency through their natural ability of mothering. This research is structured following the Psychoanalytic and Psychoanalytic Feminist approaches, which incorporate trauma theory and object relations feminism theory, respectively. While the former highlights the occurrence of flashbacks and intrusive memories, the Oedipus complex, and the use of defense mechanisms, the latter centers on the significance of mothering and the early recognition between mother and child.

The first chapter includes the theoretical concepts used to conduct the study, starting with an introduction to the Gothic genre, its elements and evolution, and ultimately its interrelation with the psychoanalytic approach. The first approach employed Sigmund Freud's trauma theory to explain how individuals experience overwhelming events that disrupt their sense of self, often leading to the compulsion to repeat traumatic memories. This is further supported by Cathy Caruth's perspective, emphasizing how direct exposure to shocking events can result in delayed responses, manifesting later as flashbacks, nightmares, and repetitive experiences. Additionally, Alice Miller's insights highlight the long-lasting impact of parental mistreatment during childhood on individuals' emotional and relational patterns in adulthood. Thus, the concept of defense mechanisms and their role to shield oneself from internal distress are also emphasized.

The second approach incorporates feminist notions within psychoanalysis. The first notion is object relations, in which Nancy Chodorow and Jessica Benjamin develop theories on the role of mothering in both fulfilling and constraining children, especially girls. The second notion concerns the female Oedipus complex, in which Chodorow argues that girls maintain a strong attachment to their mothers due to shared similarities, unlike boys who separate to establish their identity. Benjamin expands on this, suggesting that the female Oedipus complex involves not only sexual desires and rivalry but also a struggle for recognition and identity within parent-child relationship. Another approach included is the stylistic analysis which is utilized to demonstrate the concept of agency linguistically. This latter provides a way to explore language and enhances one's ability to analyze literary texts. This approach further uses M. A. K. Halliday's transitivity model which analyzes clauses by identifying processes, participants, and circumstances, represented by verbs, nouns, and adverbial clauses, and wherein processes are classified into six categories: material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioural and existential.

The second chapter delves into the portrayal of family dysfunction in *The Shining*, showcasing its profound effects on the characters' psychological well-being and exacerbation of their traumas. Jack Torrance grapples with the enduring scars of his father's abuse, experiencing flashbacks and recurring nightmares that force him to relive past traumatic events. Meanwhile, Wendy Torrance's experience of emotional abuse from her mother is explored, shedding light on her internal turmoil and hesitant personality, hinting at a potential history of childhood neglect and abuse. The examination of the Oedipus complex suggests that Wendy's close bond with her father may have sparked conflicts with her mother, rooted in unconscious desires and feelings of rivalry. Both characters employ defense mechanisms to cope with their traumas, illustrating the profound impact of a dysfunctional family environment on their lives.

The third chapter explores Wendy Torrance's journey of overcoming her lack of bond with her own mother, which initially affects her confidence in her maternal role. Through persistent efforts to deepen her relationship with her son, Danny, and gain his recognition, Wendy eventually asserts her agency and strength. Despite initially appearing weak and dependent in her interactions with her husband, Jack, Wendy successfully forms a relational triangle and reestablishes a strong mother-child bond with Danny. Moreover, Wendy's active role has been further demonstrated through a stylistic analysis using the transitivity model. By examining examples of Wendy's material, mental, and verbal processes, it was revealed that she was initially passive, as shown by the use of intransitive verbs, mental processes focused on perception rather than cognition, and a lack of assertive language. However, as the story progresses, Wendy assumes a more active role, evidenced by the increased use of transitive verbs and the inclusion of participants like her husband and son as the affected goals of many of her actions. Wendy also begins to exhibit psychological processes of action and adopts a more assertive approach in her interactions with her husband, Jack.

This analysis has significant implications for our understanding of *The Shining* and the psychological horror genre as a whole. Firstly, it reveals a more complex and nuanced understanding of Jack and Wendy Torrance's motivations and behaviours, which are grounded in their past experiences. Secondly, it highlights the importance of addressing childhood trauma and providing appropriate psychological support for those who have experienced it. Jack and Wendy's experiences underscore the potential long-term impact of childhood trauma on psychological development and the necessity for proper interventions and support. Finally, the analysis offers a new perspective on Wendy Torrance as an active character in the narrative, linking her experience of being raised by an emotionally distant mother to her own role as a mother, both theoretically and stylistically.

While this research provides valuable insights into the complex psychological factors influencing the behavior of the two central characters, Jack and Wendy Torrance, it is not without its limitations. To expand on this modest study, future research could utilize a reader-response theoretical framework, incorporating qualitative components such as interviews or surveys. This approach would help explore how different audiences interact with and interpret King's characters, offering further insights into their significance within the novel and their impact on readers. Additionally, this research raises significant questions for future exploration, such as the application of feminist theory to critique traditional gender roles and enhance literature with deeper insights into the dynamics of family relationships in the novel.

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