

University of Pardubice
Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

Family in *The Shining*

Bachelor Thesis

Podklad pro zadání BAKALÁŘSKÉ práce studenta

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Téma práce: **Rodina v románu Osvícení Stephena Kinga**
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Zásady pro vypracování:

Závěrečná bakalářská práce se bude zabývat tématem rodiny v románu *Osvícení* autora Stephena Kinga (případně bude předmětem porovnání tohoto motivu v dalších Kingových románech, které musí být konzultovány se školitelkou). V teoretické části bude koncept rodiny představen jak obecně (např. nuclear family, extended family), tak také se speciálním zaměřením na USA a dobový kontext 70. let 20. století. Práce také nastíní dysfunkční rodinu a kontext domácího násilí druhé poloviny 20. století v USA. V teoretické části také zazní žánrové zařazení hororu a četnost (případně formy) motivu dysfunkční rodiny v tomto žánru literatury. Jádrem práce bude analýza americké rodiny, především dysfunkční rodiny, ve výše zmíněném románu s důrazem na jednotlivé postavy. Na konec se student pokusí vyvodit obecnější závěry o dysfunkční rodině v *Osvícení* a jaké prvky americké společnosti jsou v něm tudíž žánrem hororu kritizovány. Své závěry bude student opírat o vhodné akademické sekundární zdroje a úryvky z primárního zdroje.

Seznam doporučené literatury:

Coleman, Marilyn. *Family Life in 20th-Century America (Family Life through History)*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007.
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Prohlašuji:

Práci s názvem Family in *The Shining* jsem vypracoval samostatně. Veškeré literární prameny a informace, které jsem v práci využil, jsou uvedeny v seznamu použité literatury.

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Michal Bureš v. r.

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Annotation

The thesis attempts to examine the motifs of family in the novel *The Shining* (1977) by Stephen King. The theoretical part focuses on the categorization of horror novels in terms of literary theory and the occurrence of motifs of dysfunctional families and domestic violence in horror literature universally. Furthermore, it includes a general introduction to the concept of family as well as to its role in 20th-century America with a strong emphasis on the contemporary consensus regarding dysfunctional families and domestic violence. The analytical part then explores such motifs in *The Shining* and interprets the possible criticism of contemporary American society.

Keywords

horror literature, family, domestic violence, Stephen King, *The Shining*

Název

Rodina v románu *Osvícení*

Anotace

Práce se pokouší analyzovat motivy rodiny v románu Stephena Kinga *Osvícení* (1977). Její teoretická část se zaměřuje na kategorizaci hororového románu v rámci literární teorie a na výskyt motivů dysfunkční rodiny a domácího násilí v hororové literatuře obecně. Mimoto tato část zahrnuje obecné uvedení do problematiky konceptu rodiny včetně její role v Americe 20. století se silným důrazem na dobový konsensus týkající se dysfunkční rodiny a domácího násilí. Analytická část poté zkoumá tyto motivy v kontextu románu *Osvícení* a jejich prostřednictvím interpretuje možnou kritiku tehdejší americké společnosti.

Klíčová slova

hororová literatura, rodina, domácí násilí, Stephen King, *Osvícení*

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Introduction

The following bachelor thesis attempts to identify and analyze the motifs of family in the horror novel *The Shining* (1977) written by Stephen King, primarily researching the manifestations of the dysfunctions within the family unit and domestic violence while linking them to the corresponding social context.

The first chapter categorizes horror as a specific genre in the literary corpus. The first part focuses on the rich history of the genre, firstly examining its beginnings in terms of the folk oral tradition and the subsequent transition to written form, secondly exploring the emergence of the Gothic novel, and thirdly mentioning the continuous development of the genre. The second part explains the concomitant complications regarding the academic definition of the genre while offering an alternative approach to its interpretation. The third part delineates several horror subgenres with their general characteristics, concentrating mostly on domestic horror due to its relevance.

The second chapter outlines the concept of a family unit. The first part revolves around its ambiguous definition, introducing several sociological approaches toward it in the process. The second part discusses the family unit in terms of the American culture, firstly defining the traditional American family model, secondly tracing its transformation throughout the entirety of the twentieth century, and thirdly concentrating on its significant changes during the three decades from 1960 to 1990 that are relevant to the thesis. The third part identifies the elements of a dysfunctional family and domestic violence with a special emphasis on the American milieu of the second part of the twentieth century.

The third chapter directly analyzes the motifs of family in *The Shining*. The first part introduces the novel by determining its subgenre and classifying the family unit as one of its main themes. The second part focuses on the character of Jack Torrance, firstly distinguishing the three major incidents that shape his behavior, secondly characterizing the relationship with his father, and thirdly exploring his character development and the overall interpretation of his story. The third part touches upon the character of Wendy Torrance, firstly drafting her relationship with Jack and Danny, secondly tracking the problematic past with her mother, and thirdly discussing her character development and its broader meaning. The fourth part centers around the character of Danny Torrance, firstly figuring out his exceptional psychic abilities, including the mysterious being called Tony, secondly linking them to the character of Dick Hallorann as well as to the supernatural powers residing in the Overlook Hotel, and

thirdly mapping his character development and potential implications of its progression. The fifth part investigates the Torrance family as a whole, elaborating on its transformation, specifying its dysfunctionality, and providing a thorough explanation of its meaning. The sixth part interprets King's social criticism and puts it in the context of cultural changes in America during the second part of the twentieth century.

Generally, the thesis endeavors to approach the subject methodically, initially by presenting the crucial theoretical concepts, subsequently by analyzing the novel in question and its characters, and finally by interpreting King's possible criticism of contemporary American society. The ensuing conclusions, especially the ones related to the theoretical chapters, are then supported by the relevant literature. Unfortunately, the specifics of the topic were not thoroughly researched by many academics as of now, most texts either reflecting upon it in more general terms or concentrating on the film adaptation of *The Shining* (1980) produced by Stanley Kubrick, which the thesis intentionally omits. Correspondingly, some parts of the thesis rely on less academic texts which were, however, directly written or at least validated by professionals in the respective field. The information included in such texts is therefore verified and appropriate for the thesis.

1. Horror as a Genre of Literature

When attempting to explain horror as a type (or genre) of literature, one fact must be highlighted beforehand: it is ancient. Indeed, a considerable number of now common topics, stereotypes, and characters of horror literature have their roots in folk oral tradition that precedes even the first attempts of recording them. As further described by Gina Wisker, people were always mesmerized by mysteries and dark powers beyond their control, the latter of which frequently involved the existence of ghastly beings embodying the very concept of evil that is in some form present in almost every ancient culture. In essence, horror thus always formed an opposition against the stability and security of society.¹ After the emergence of the first written texts which, as Kevin Corstorphine emphasizes, by no means lacked supernatural and horror elements and which were later composed into extensive corpora of folklore, mythology, and religion, the continuation of the genre in written form was secured and flourished in centuries to come.² After all, it is no coincidence that almost every literary period offers a vast number of works that make use of such motifs or that are inspired by myths and religious teachings intertwined with horror fiction.

However, one of the crucial and most productive periods in terms of horror literature, as detailed in Meyer Howard Abrams' *Glossary of Literary Terms*, came in the early nineteenth century in association with Romanticism and the so-called Gothic novel. Authors such as Horace Walpole, Ann Radcliffe, or William Beckford may be considered the pioneers of this unprecedented sensation as their pieces of writing quickly became the classics of the genre. The plot of the Gothic novel is usually centered around secluded, gloomy buildings of medieval architecture that are home to nefarious outcasts who kidnap and torture young women. The presence of supernatural beings and objects then underlines the overall dark atmosphere, even though some of these can be often interpreted rationally. Moreover, such novels also served as sly expressions of social criticism, yet their immense influence on horror literature cannot be neglected.³

Accordingly, as Matt Cardin suggests, the continuous development of horror literature enriched the genre by adding contemporary sources of fear and terror: global wars, massive

¹ Gina Wisker, *Horror Fiction: An Introduction* (New York: Continuum, 2005), 39.

² Kevin Corstorphine, "Introduction," in *The Palgrave Handbook to Horror Literature*, ed. Kevin Costorphine and Laura R. Kremmel (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 8–11.

³ Meyer Howard Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 7th ed. (Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 1999), 110–111.

virus outbreaks, or misuse of science and technology.⁴ Its popularity thus persists to this day, even though the population of the modern era may be less willing to believe the actuality of supernatural phenomena depicted by it.

Nevertheless, despite its rich history, the exact definition of horror, partly due to its extensiveness and blurriness, is not easily compiled. According to Jess Nevins, such a complication is caused primarily by the fact that horror, unlike other genres of literature, has no distinctive features, and thus is not limited in terms of plot, characters, or time and place. Furthermore, it is equally troublesome to establish its common elements as horror can exist in symbiosis with practically any other genre of literature and adapt to their requirements very diligently. Consequently, one of the widely accepted descriptions of the horror genre does not evaluate its content but instead focuses on its effect on the reader, which is rather unique compared to the other genres of literature.⁵

As indicated above, one of the few attributes that horror stories have in common centers around the fact that they are supposed to invoke a plethora of emotions, the most prominent being fear. Many theorists, Cardin being one of them, then beg the question of why someone would subdue themselves to it willingly and even rejoice in it. One of the most plausible explanations states that excitement and enjoyment arise for the reason that danger is at bay and the reader is just an uninvolved observer who faces no harm.⁶ In addition, such sensations of intense dread and fright may result in an adrenaline rush that lasts even after the experience is over and that can subsequently induce feelings of relief and joy, which is an apparent reason for why is the horror genre so appealing to readers.

Even though it would be nearly impossible to list all the diverse themes and characters appearing in horror literature, some tend to repeat rather frequently. Therefore, several subgenres and established forms can be identified within the large corpus of the genre. When attempting to name just a few that Rabeea Saleem views as greatly prominent, the most apparent distinction revolves around paranormal horror and non-supernatural horror. The defining feature of paranormal horror is the presence of unearthly beings (ghosts, demons, undead) whose existence is devoid of logic and reason. Non-supernatural horror, on the other

⁴ Matt Cardin, "Horror through History," in *Horror Literature through History: An Encyclopedia of the Stories that Speak to Our Deepest Fears*, ed. Matt Cardin (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2017), 36.

⁵ Jess Nevins, *Horror Fiction in the 20th Century: Exploring Literature's Most Chilling Genre* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2020), xiv–xv.

⁶ Matt Cardin, "Introduction: Spookhouses, Catharsis, and Dark Consolations," in *Horror Literature through History: An Encyclopedia of the Stories that Speak to Our Deepest Fears*, ed. Matt Cardin (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2017), xxxi–xxxii.

hand, utilizes sources of fright and angst from casual, day-to-day situations that virtually anybody could experience. Another significant subgenre, which was already mentioned and defined, is the Gothic novel. On top of what was already stated, due to its common setting and romantic undertone, the Gothic novel is often said to represent Mankind's fear of nature as well as its desire to dominate it at the same time. Body horror then explores the idea of disabled, disfigured, or mutated human bodies as a way to invoke fear and disgust. Subsequently, the so-called Splatterpunk is characterized by the depiction of intense gore and graphic violence.⁷

The subgenre that, for the purposes of the thesis, needs to be covered in depth, even though it might seem marginal, is sometimes dubbed domestic horror. As the name rightly suggests, it does not necessarily relate to any extraterrestrial phenomena nor does it feature deranged murderers and psychopaths thrilled by violence and gore. Much like non-supernatural horror, domestic horror instead deals with dreads and perils of real-life hardships which makes it even more sinister and, in turn, rather attractive for readers. Essentially, as cleverly put by writer Nathan Ballingrud, it can be described as “the horror that comes from within the family.”⁸ According to literary critic Emily Martin, domestic horror comes as deeply rooted in fears and insecurities regarding one's home and people who dwell inside as it constantly challenges preconceived notions about the stability and safety of the family unit. Eventually, the reader can reach a point in which they themselves begin to realize that such misgivings are grounded in reality for it is not sporadic to doubt the intentions of people closest to them and beg the question of if what they view as a safe haven truly is safe and if their loved ones are what they seem to be. Although there is an enormous number of people whose family situation is far from perfect, the family unit is still perceived as synonymous with security and steadiness in a world full of uncertainties. Domestic horror deconstructs such questionable images and points out that danger lurks everywhere and that no place is completely secure. For these reasons, it is considered by some to be one of the most chilling and horrific subgenres of horror literature in general.⁹ Subsequently, it should come as no surprise that the domestic horror subgenre commonly contains traces of other disruptive

⁷ Rabeea Saleem, “Your Guide to the Horror Sub-genres,” Book Riot, April 27, 2020, <https://bookriot.com/horror-subgenres/>

⁸ Nathan Ballingrud, “The H Word: Domestic Horror,” Nightmare, May, 2013, <https://www.nightmare-magazine.com/nonfiction/the-h-word-domestic-horror/>

⁹ Emily Martin, “Your Guide to the Domestic Horror Sub-genre,” Book Riot, July 22, 2022, <https://bookriot.com/domestic-horror-guide/>

phenomena within the family, domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse, or sexual assaults being just some of them.

2. Concept of Family in the Context of American culture

The subject of a family unit fundamentally concerns nearly every member of modern-day society, its significance being dependent on culture, historical development, and individual perception. Contrary to the apparent commonness of the concept, however, describing family and its properties in general terms is no simple goal. According to David M Newman and Elizabeth Grauerholz, one's personal image regarding the meaning and function of the family unit is heavily influenced by their immediate nuclear family, which is a term referring to the imminent core of the family (i.e. the couple with or without children, alternatively a single parent with their children), by the extended family members, who include other relatives (e.g. the grandparents), and finally by the mass media, especially television. Due to such a vast arsenal of empirical knowledge as well as acquired information inherent to almost every individual, it is no coincidence that the word "family," particularly in terms of American society, earned rather strong connotations and is therefore used not only for an objective description but also for conveying intense emotions regarding person's sense of connection to others.¹⁰ Thus, any potentially universal definition of the concept would most likely lack some of these components.

Nevertheless, despite the seeming impossibility and perhaps undesirability of a versatile definition, Newman and Grauerholz argue, the official authorities are often bound to at least attempt to compile one in order to, for instance, delineate the legal implications of the family unit. Eventually, such definitions tend to be rather limited in the face of scientific research.¹¹ Instead, Teresa Ciabattari, whose thoughts regarding the subject are based on the influential postulation formulated by sociologists Ernest W. Burgess and Harvey J. Locke, distinguishes between four distinctive approaches to defining the family unit, all being widely used in modern sociology and beyond. The first approach, sometimes dubbed structural, views the family unit in formal terms and concentrates on the legal bonds within it. The second approach focuses on the members of the family unit as on the cohabitants of a single household. The third approach perceives the members of the family unit in terms of their respective social roles, which, in turn, further regulate their behavior within the family. The fourth and final approach then recognizes families as a symbolic structure whose meaning is consolidated through collective activities that catalyze the mutual emotional attachment,

¹⁰ David M. Newman, Elizabeth Grauerholz, *Sociology of Families*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press, 2002), 2–7.

¹¹ Newman et al., *Sociology*, 7.

therefore emphasizing the importance of reciprocal interactions.¹² As visible, each of these approaches is centered around diverse aspects of the family unit, which is why their applicability depends solely on the objectives and circumstances of the researchers involved.

As far as the American culture is concerned, the ideal of proper family life used to be rather clearly defined and its validity was recognized by the majority of the American population. Such an image of a typical American family, as described by Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, entailed a married couple with their children sharing a single household. The father posed as the privileged head of the family as well as its breadwinner whereas the mother served as his supporter, supervising the children's upbringing and tending to the family home. Marriage was viewed as a permanent commitment and sexual intercourse before the wedding was generally denounced, partially due to the prevailing Christian mentality. Parents were allowed to take care of the children as they considered appropriate and fitting, external intervention hence being uncommon. Finally, any family that would not comply with one or more of these unspoken norms was ostracized and publicly labeled as problematic.¹³

However, the twentieth century, predominantly the second part, saw a sudden shift of interest away from the typical American family model. Marilyn Coleman, Lawrence H. Ganong, and Kelly Warzinik note that the reality of American families changed rather dramatically. Indeed, the established gender roles were challenged as the number of working mothers rapidly increased and although men remained the family breadwinners in most cases, women frequently financially participated in the functioning of the family. Furthermore, there was considerable growth in the number of households cohabitated by single persons, unmarried couples, and couples of the same sex, less children were producing income for themselves and their families, therefore more children attended schools, and divorce replaced death as the primary reason for the end of most marriages. Generally speaking, the concept of the family became, in essence, more fluid and vibrant. Nevertheless, even though the factuality of such changes in American society is evident, their meaning and implications are rather unclear. No definite consensus among the sociologists exists since the attitudes toward

¹² Teresa Ciabattari, *Sociology of Families: Change, Continuity, and Diversity* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2022), 38–46.

¹³ Steven Mintz, Susan Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life* (New York: Free Press, 1989), xiii.

the shift are diverse, some perceiving it as the decline of the traditional American family and others highlighting its vividness and positive features overall.¹⁴

Additionally, the three decades of the twentieth century from 1960 to 1990 with the respective changes in family life need to be covered separately and in detail for the purposes of the thesis and the general context. As stressed by Mintz and Kellogg, the most significant transformations in the period included the decrease in the average number of children per family from 3.8 during the post-war baby boom period to less than 2 after 1980, the doubling of the aforementioned divorce rates during the period from 1966 to 1989, which relates to the increased number of single-parent households and cohabitating unmarried couples, and the immense release in terms of sexual restraints, as only 1 out of 5 women in 1989 postponed the sexual intercourse after the wedding. Moreover, nearly 60 percent of married women at the end of the 1980s were employed and worked outside their homes which led to an even greater shift away from the traditional conception of gender roles. In conclusion, the three decades in question most sensibly witnessed the redefinition of the concept of the family unit even to the extent that almost any group of people cohabitating in one household can be considered family.¹⁵ Naturally, such a process of gradual reshaping continues to this day, with the family structures becoming more and more distinct from their traditional forms.

Notwithstanding the general liberalization in terms of family life, there still exist certain traces of disruptive phenomena within it that are widely criticized and that can render particular families dysfunctional. According to journalist Nadra Nittle whose postulations were examined and confirmed by psychiatrist Daniel B. Block, dysfunctional families can be mostly identified by the lack of emotional, possibly even material, parental support that is frequently connected to even more serious problems such as neglect, addiction, or child abuse. Typically, such major defects are latently ignored by the parents and children may be disciplined for bringing them up or even sharing them with the outside world, which often results in escapism and overall denial of reality around them. Furthermore, longer exposure to such subversive elements can lead to a plethora of psychological disorders treatable mostly by psychotherapy as well as to a continuation of the dysfunctional family cycle after the creation of one's own family.¹⁶

¹⁴ Marilyn Coleman, Lawrence H. Ganong, Kelly Warzinik, *Family Life in 20th-Century America (Family Life through History)* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007), viii–ix.

¹⁵ Mintz et al., *Domestic*, 203–205.

¹⁶ Nadra Nittle, "What Is a Dysfunctional Family?" Verywell Mind, August 9, 2021, <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-a-dysfunctional-family-5194681>

Moreover, one of the common but also extremely serious concomitant factors of the dysfunctional family is the presence of domestic violence. As Margi Laird McCue claims, arguably the most coherent definition of the term was formulated by the Oregon Domestic Violence Council which recognized domestic violence as a coercive behavioral pattern utilized by one person in order to control their intimate partner, rendering them inferior. The destructive behavior involves physical, sexual, emotional, and economic abuse and its ultimate objective is to enforce submission and obedience using various intimidation strategies as a catalyst. In addition, McCue continues, the forms of abuse are not necessarily intertwined and can occur independently, with emotional abuse being present rather frequently, often increasing in severity or transforming into a more dire type of abuse over time. As for the perpetrators of domestic violence, no definite pattern can be determined since they are associated with various backgrounds, social classes, and levels of education, perhaps the only reliable statistics thus indicating that 85 percent of them are men. Likewise, the motivations for such behavioral patterns differ substantially but the standard cause seems to be a desire for control and power in an intimate relationship which is often manifested by extreme jealousy and possessiveness.¹⁷

Expectedly, the manifestations of dysfunctions and domestic violence within the family unit in the American milieu are not abysmally different from those already mentioned above. However, as described by Coleman, Ganong, and Warzinik, the deliberate effort to raise public awareness about the existence of such issues in American society accelerated only in the 1960s. Until then, merely short-lived outbursts of sudden interest in family abuse emerged and quickly diminished. Nevertheless, the second part of the twentieth century also saw a rapid increase in terms of the reported cases of child and spouse abuse which only indicates the immense attention the American population began to pay to these problems, finally realizing their destructive nature. Accordingly, during the last decades of the twentieth century, the concern regarding the dysfunctions within the family unit, including a plethora of social movements, grew rather exponentially and the victims of the abuse were no longer disregarded.¹⁸

¹⁷ Margi Laird McCue, *Domestic Violence: A Reference Handbook*, 2nd ed. (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 2–12.

¹⁸ Coleman et al., *Family*, 241–243.

3. Family in *The Shining*

Despite the fact that domestic horror as a subgenre of horror literature might not seem to be a subject of concern for many authors and literary theorists alike, whenever mentioned with a list of novels enclosed as examples, it is highly probable that *The Shining* would be among them. Emily Martin, who dedicated one of her concise articles to the subgenre at hand, states that “*The Shining* is an excellent example of a haunted house story that sheds light on the horrors happening within a family unit.”¹⁹ Notwithstanding the brief summary of the plot, Martin’s claim brings out an interesting detail that needs to be touched upon. As declared in chapter one, domestic horror strives to awaken dread rooted in insecurities regarding one’s own family unit which denotes an apparent affinity to the non-supernatural horror. However, Stephen King’s sophisticated approach vis-à-vis *The Shining* utilizes the factuality and credibility of non-supernatural horror and combines it with elements of paranormal horror in order to intensify the effect it has on the reader. Occasionally, as demonstrated further, these two seemingly ambivalent subgenres coexist together to the extent that it is nearly impossible to distinguish between supernatural and natural phenomena. Unfortunately, such a storytelling technique, although elaborate, might pose an obstacle to the analysis of the affairs in the plot that are characterized by this subgenre ambiguity. Thus, the subsequent analysis focuses primarily on the non-supernatural events but also attempts to provide a possible interpretation of prominent paranormal or ambiguous phenomena in the context of its main topic.

Nevertheless, the family unit as a disintegrated safe space continues to be the defining feature of domestic horror as well as one of the main themes of *The Shining*. In order to correctly analyze and evaluate the Torrance family as a whole and draw general conclusions regarding King’s criticism of certain social phenomena, it is vital to research individual members of the nuclear family unit by outlining not only their characteristics, motivations, and behavior, but also links to the extended family members who, although not directly appearing in the novel, are mentioned several times. On the whole, the core of the Torrance family consists of Jack Torrance, who acts as its patriarch, his wife Wendy, and their five-year-old son Danny. The extended part of the family in question then includes both pairs of the married couple’s parents.

As anticipated, Jack Torrance is the head of the Torrance family as well as its breadwinner. He is portrayed to appear as a highly educated man, having been employed as a

¹⁹ Martin, “Your Guide.”

teacher and coach of the debate team at the Stovington Preparatory Academy while fulfilling his ambitions as a freelance writer. Moreover, at the beginning of the novel, Jack is hired as the winter caretaker of the Overlook Hotel on the recommendation of the current owner and his acquaintance Albert Shockley, believing the manual work and isolation would relieve Jack's psyche and allow him to finish the play he has been writing. Generally speaking, Jack can be perceived in many respects as an upstanding citizen, caring husband, and loving father, but he also harbors a significantly darker side which the novel revolves around. Indeed, Jack's undeniable qualities are rather overshadowed by his impulsive anger outbursts and overall aggression catalyzed and intensified through repressed alcoholism. In order to fully comprehend the complexity of Jack's character, it is hence paramount to mention and analyze some of the situations described in the novel which reveal his more sinister self. Fundamentally, three crucial events that take place before the arrival of the family to the Overlook Hotel need to be elaborated on as they can hardly be interpreted in the context of paranormal phenomena, therefore displaying Jack's behavior unaltered by external forces beyond his control and at the same time depicting the canny development of his character.

Proceeding chronologically, the first and arguably most eloquent incident of the three occurred approximately two years before the events of the novel. Jack, gently drunk, had to leave his study in order to answer a phone call and Danny, who was playing there at that moment, seized his father's absence and slightly damaged the interior of the room while pouring beer over the script of the play Jack has been strenuously writing. However, it must be emphasized that Danny's intent was far from malevolent as at the time of the incident, he was only three years old, his carefree behavior, therefore, being completely natural. After Jack returned and observed the desolation Danny caused, he flew into a rage and, intending to punish his son for the mischief, grabbed his arm so violently that he broke it. Jack's sudden realization that his reckless action crossed the line and the arrival of Wendy, who immediately took Danny into her arms and dialed the hospital, fortunately, defused the situation, yet the deed was already done, so to speak. The general nature of the incident, simple and linear as it may seem, is a perfect demonstration of the disruptive behavioral patterns that accompany Jack throughout the novel and ultimately lead to his downfall. However, even though the situation as a whole could be classified as an episode of child abuse, there are certain factors at play that might potentially mitigate its severity. Firstly, judging by Jack's sincere remorse over his reaction as well as by the painful memories of the incident that haunt him even after two years, it is clear that he understands its gravity and repents. Secondly, the plot reveals that

such an incident, of course prior to the arrival of the Torrance family to the Overlook Hotel, happened only once, dismissing any assumptions of the abuse being periodical. Finally, Jack's behavior signals an inadequate response to the situation but not a willful intention to injure Danny as Jack is not initially described as a violent person. On the other hand, reminiscing about the event also awakens Jack's darker side as it

[brings] the shame and revulsion back, the sense of having no worth at all, and that feeling always made him want to have a drink, and the wanting of a drink brought still blacker despair – would he ever have an hour, not a week or even a day, mind you, but just one waking hour when the craving for a drink wouldn't surprise him like this?²⁰

Visibly, even though Jack was able to overcome his alcohol addiction and remained sober for fourteen months as of the beginning of the novel, his alcohol cravings did not yet abandon him and regretful memories only increased their intensity.

The topic of alcoholism also ties to the second defining event that should be discussed. When Jack worked as a teacher at the Stovington Preparatory Academy, he made acquaintance with the aforementioned Albert Shockley who, aside from owning the Overlook Hotel, held a chair in the Academy's Board of Directors, thus rather frequently appearing on school banquets where he and Jack bonded over their mutual fondness of alcohol. Their fast friendship accelerated Jack's alcoholism as well as deteriorated his marriage since the two of them would spend whole nights outside their homes, drinking. Nevertheless, during one of such escapades, they had a car accident that involved Albert running over a bicycle. Strangely, after a closer inspection of the place and its surroundings, they found no traces of the cyclist's body. Still, the intense shock and fear of the possible consequences forced both Jack and Albert to initiate their individual alcohol abstinence periods. The incident itself thus illustrates the primary reason why Jack stopped drinking alcohol, but it also indicates that the decision was not entirely willful and thought through. Instead, the car accident was a strong impulse that demonstrated the destructive power of his addiction and revealed what it would lead to in the near future. Moreover, Jack simultaneously recognized that this very moment might be the last chance to save his marriage as the intention to get divorced was already on Wendy's mind. It is equally important to note, however, that even after the child abuse episode, Jack was not able to reject alcohol completely, even though the incident terrorized his mind ever since. Such an observation signifies that the unexpected trauma Jack experienced was, in fact, so intense that he began reevaluating his past decisions, realizing his life might be on the verge of collapse. In addition, Jack's inner monologue describing the

²⁰ Stephen King, *The Shining* (New York: Anchor Books, 2008), 25.

event in question includes one more important mention. Often, when returning home to Wendy and Danny after a night of drinking with Albert, finding them asleep on a couch,

[h]e would look at them and the self-loathing would back up his throat in a bitter wave, even stronger than the taste of beer and cigarettes and martinis – martians, as Al called them. Those were the times that his mind would turn thoughtfully and sanely to the gun or the rope or the razor blade.²¹

Indeed, several passages including the one cited suggest that at a certain point, Jack even considered committing suicide. King does not explicitly list all the possible reasons, yet a few of them can be identified through subtle hints and implications. Admittedly, the main and most apparent one would be the general unhappiness and unrecognition of Jack. Even though he makes a living as a teacher, he seems to be just one of many, whereas his writing career stagnates as he struggles to finish the play – his magnum opus. On top of that, Jack's family life, partially due to his own alcohol addiction and violent tendencies, also worsens and, as manifested, he feels that there is a real possibility of divorce. Evidently, alcoholism, therefore, appears as Jack's way of escapism from the pressing reality that does not satisfy him.

The third and final affair that needs to be touched upon revolves around Jack's former student at the Stovington Preparatory Academy named George Hatfield. George is portrayed as a good-looking athlete who has great aspirations not only in soccer and baseball but also in terms of a corporate career since his father is a successful lawyer with a vast number of influential connections and wants George to follow in his footsteps. Hence, George joined the school debate team Jack was coaching in order to gain precious experience but the discussions revealed that when arguing, he stutters. As expected, he was removed from the team soon after and sought revenge by slashing the tires on Jack's car. Coincidentally, Jack caught George *in flagrante delicto* and proceeded to attack him, which resulted in the subsequent dismissal of the former. Of course, the incident once again proves that Jack is incapable of controlling his aggression, and, occurring during the alcohol abstinence period, it also verifies the claim that alcohol does not induce his outbursts of anger but only catalyzes them. However, arguably the most significant part of the affair is what precedes it. After the session that exposed his stutter concluded, George approached Jack and accused him of setting the timer ahead. A heated argument followed shortly after during which Jack denied George's claims and, unable to contain his temper, even mocked his stutter. When George gave up and left the room, Jack's emotions were a mixture of satisfaction and shame.

²¹ King, *Shining*, 55.

Still in the grip of his temper and his shame at mocking George's stutter, his first thought had been a sick sort of exultation: For the first time in his life George Hatfield had wanted something he could not have. For the first time there was something wrong that all of Daddy's money could not fix. ... Then the exultation was simply buried in shame, and he felt the way he had after he had broken Danny's arm.²²

The conversation and its aftermath demonstrate rather diligently that Jack's actions follow the pattern of a thoughtless rage immediately replaced by shame and regrets. More importantly, however, Jack's perceptible emphasis on the fact that George, who was supported by his father and appeared very capable in his own right, finally met his match, suggests a feeling of envy based on the boy's youth, appearance, and work prospects Jack visibly experienced. This assumption is consolidated by Jack's attempt to convince himself that there is nothing he could be jealous about, denoting denial as a defense mechanism. Furthermore, his inner monologue includes several hints and even an indirect admission that he indeed set the timer ahead during the discussion, supposedly to aid George because it was clear that the stutter cannot disappear by itself. Presumably, such a claim is a mere excuse meant to relieve Jack's burden of guilt and shame.

Even though the events analyzed do not occur in the novel's timeline, King goes to great lengths to capture them in detail through Jack's distorted memories. The same can be said about Jack's relationship with his late father Mark Anthony Torrance whose persona should be carefully examined in order to fully grasp the nature of Jack's behavior. Until growing older, Jack adored his father uncritically, even despite his painfully familiar violent tendencies and affinity to alcohol. On the other hand, the remaining members of the nuclear family, particularly Jack's two brothers and sister, despised him, departing home as soon as a suitable opportunity arose. The apparent reason for their hatred was the spouse abuse Mark Torrance committed on their mother who silently suffered through it, never fighting back. When Jack was thirteen years old, his father suddenly died of a stroke, leaving him insurance money and a vision of a dysfunctional family model that he would later adopt and impose on Wendy and Danny. Indeed, Jack's uncontrollable aggression and alcoholism were at least partially stirred by his oppressive father. After all, during his childhood, Jack most likely viewed such a type of disintegrated family dynamic as ordinary, and even after coming of age and realizing its destructive nature, glimpses of it might have pervaded through. Additionally, potential genetic dispositions are another valid explanation. However, as vigilantly noted by Mathias Clasen, the description of Jack's relationship with his father which, in fact, occurs

²² King, *Shining*, 163.

two times throughout the novel, serves one more purpose: it deliberately illustrates the development of Jack's character. The first depiction of the scene in which Mark Torrance severely injures his wife in front of the whole family is very clear and graphic, signaling Jack's persistent childhood trauma as he dreams about the incident in great detail. The second is brought up only as Jack descends deeper into insanity and seems rather vague, stressing his new-found certainty that the actions of his father were, in the end, justified and that he should deploy similar methods when dealing with Wendy and Danny, while explicitly stating that "now, twenty years later, he could finally appreciate Daddy's wisdom."²³ The passage indicates that Jack's possession by the Hotel intensifies, rendering him more evil than good and finishing his transformation into Mark Torrance.²⁴ Moreover, the bond between Jack and Mark is to some extent reminiscent of that between Danny and Jack since the former also idolizes his father, ignoring all the evident errors and missteps, loving him unconditionally. Unfortunately, Jack's premature death at the end of the novel makes it impossible to estimate how would their mutual relationship evolve and if Danny would grow to despise Jack later in life.

Simultaneously, Jack can be characterized by a lack of respect for several external authorities in the course of the novel. The first and most apparent of such figures appears to be Stuart Ullman who makes a living as a manager of the Overlook Hotel. Ullman is portrayed as very capable and resourceful, yet Jack views him as exceedingly arrogant and unpleasant. Such an attitude toward his persona can be associated with the fact that Ullman is the one who interviewed Jack, openly voicing his strong disagreement connected to the latter's employment, stating that he acquired the job only due to Albert Shockley's intervention. Subsequently, when traveling with Wendy and Danny to Sidewinder in order to buy supplies and Christmas presents, Jack decides to call Ullman, telling him that he found compromising information about the Hotel's dark and violent past and mockingly announcing that he would publish them, ruining the Overlook's reputation. Jack's decision to call Ullman seems rather abrupt and reckless, but his consequent inner monologue diligently illustrates the possible reasons.

Once, during the drinking phase, Wendy had accused him of desiring his own destruction but not possessing the necessary moral fiber to support a full-blown deathwish. So he manufactured ways in which other people could do it, lopping a piece

²³ King, *Shining*, 563.

²⁴ Mathias Clasen, "Hauntings of Human Nature: An Evolutionary Critique of King's *The Shining*," *Style* 51, no. 1 (2017): 83.

at a time off himself and their family. Could it be true? Was he afraid somewhere inside that the Overlook might be just what he needed to finish his play and generally collect tip his shit and get it together? Was he blowing the whistle on himself? Please God no, don't let it be that way. Please.²⁵

Indeed, Jack is not only vengeful and unwilling to conform but he also manifests self-destructive behavior. As emphasized in the excerpt and stated previously, he contemplated committing suicide several times but never managed to make himself do it. The possible and arguably most probable explanation could, of course, be a fear of death that is inherent to almost every individual. However, instead of directly ending his life, Jack chooses to, perhaps even subconsciously, destroy himself, piece by piece, taking other people in his proximity, especially Wendy and Danny, as unsuspecting hostages.

Consequently, the three major incidents which constantly haunt Jack and control his actions depict him as a deeply troubled individual who, nevertheless, understands the seriousness of the situation and regrets his demeanor deeply. As the analysis revealed so far, the sudden outbursts of anger, fondness for alcohol, feelings of failure and inferiority, and finally the improper paternal model are at fault, yet these aspects of Jack's personality directly clash with his softer side characterized by marital and parental love and care. Jack's multi-layeredness and absence of black-and-white rationale make him a credible and potentially redeemable figure at first, yet after the arrival of the Torrance family to the Overlook Hotel, the psychological development of his character gathers momentum. Initially, the seclusion truly affected Jack's mind positively, his family life dramatically improving, and the creative block that made the writing of the play nearly impossible slowly vanishing. However, following the blizzard that cut the Hotel off from the outside world, Jack, as well as the rest of the Torrance family, started experiencing rationally inexplicable phenomena which the former dismissed as mere hallucinations. Gradually, the influence of the Overlook increased and the evil entity, whose exact nature will be further explored and interpreted, possessed Jack, forcing him to attack Wendy and Danny, almost murdering them. Thus, it can be deduced that the Hotel affects Jack much more than all the other characters. Elizabeth Jean Hornbeck explains that Jack's childhood trauma caused by the abusive father is what renders him so susceptible to possession by the Hotel since the supernatural powers that control the building prey upon emotionally scarred individuals.²⁶ Such an assumption appears to be mostly valid because it seems that Jack's tormented psyche truly succumbs to the Hotel's power more

²⁵ King, *Shining*, 269.

²⁶ Elizabeth Jean Hornbeck, "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?: Domestic Violence in *The Shining*," *Feminist Studies* 42, no. 3 (2016): 693.

willingly. Even so, what in the end directly persuaded Jack to assault Wendy and Danny was the dialogue with the spirit of the Overlook's former winter caretaker Delbert Grady who, under the influence of the Hotel, murdered his whole family and committed suicide shortly after. The pinnacle of the conversation comes when Grady says: "And the manager puts no strings on his largess," Grady went on. "Not at all. Look at me, a tenth-grade dropout. Think how much further you yourself could go in the Overlook's organizational structure. Perhaps... in time... to the very top."²⁷ This proposition ultimately convinced Jack and triggered a chain of events that resulted in his death and the destruction of the Overlook. However, the fact that his interest piques the mention regarding a position of trust demonstrates that Jack indeed has unfulfilled ambitions and is even prepared to commit gruesome acts on his family to gain power and success. After all, the Hotel, in this regard resembling an archetype of the devil, seems to promise its denizens exactly what they desire most in order to make them do its bidding. Essentially, Jack prioritizes his personal goals over Wendy and Danny.

However, Clasen, who views Jack's character as a symbol of perpetual evolutionary conflict between a self-centered pursuit of one's own agenda and a desire for emotional bonds with others, argues that his selfish motives become apparent much earlier in the plot when being sent by Wendy to check on the condition of the snowmobile in order to estimate whether they would be able to safely depart. Through the inner monologue, King indicates that Jack is evaluating his options, realizing that after leaving, he would not be capable of finding a lucrative job, instead living in poverty and angst. Eventually, this image is what forces him to take out magneto from the engine compartment and throw it away which makes the Torrance family trapped inside the Hotel. As a result, the reader ceases to sympathize with Jack, instead identifying with Wendy and Danny's desperate situation.²⁸ Of course, such an act of egocentrism implies that Jack indeed values himself more than his family. On the other hand, the ending of the novel slightly redeems his character while simultaneously delivering one of the crucial messages of the whole plot. When the possessed Jack attempted to murder Danny, the latter showed no signs of fright because he has come to a realization that the Hotel wields power only if its victim manifests negative emotions. Accordingly, after Danny overcame his fear,

[t]he face in front of him changed. It was hard to say how; there was no melting or merging of the features. The body trembled slightly, and then the bloody hands opened like broken claws. The mallet fell from them and thumped to the rug. That was all. But

²⁷ King, *Shining*, 520.

²⁸ Clasen, "Hauntings," 78-79.

suddenly his daddy was there, looking at him in mortal agony, and a sorrow so great that Danny's heart flamed within his chest. The mouth drew down in a quivering bow.²⁹

Fundamentally, a more simplified interpretation of the scene was already formulated. Danny was able to break the Overlook's hold only after finding courage. However, the implications for Jack's character are rather substantial. His ability to momentarily break through the possession to save his son might be a subtle hint that his parental side eventually emerged victorious and that he chose Danny not only over his ambitions but over life itself since the entity immediately punished him for trespassing, directing the roque mallet he was holding toward him. The clear differentiation of the original Jack from his possessed counterpart achieved by, for instance, referring to the possessed Jack using the pronoun "it" rather than "he" also suggests that he was, in fact, the prey rather than the hunter the whole time. Generally speaking, Jack Torrance is a tragic hero whose selfish motivations and inner demons precede his ultimate downfall. Through his character, however, King deliberately conveys that, even in the face of a life-threatening crisis, the family bonds remain strong and survive.

Jack's wife and Danny's mother – Wendy Torrance – is depicted as a good-looking, affectionate, and kindly housewife who supports her husband even despite his frequent aggression and alcoholism. In contrast to Jack, Wendy's motives are mostly connected to her family as she struggles to preserve it while striving to do what seems to be best for their son. Therefore, when contemplating the ideal approach to characterizing her personality, a detailed analysis of her relationship with Jack and Danny should take precedence. Furthermore, Wendy's attitude toward her mother should be slightly touched upon because it plays a pivotal role in several of the decisions she makes.

Initially, Jack and Wendy's romantic relationship appeared healthy and fulfilled. They met when studying at college, moved in together, and, after a brief period of separation, even married. After Danny was born, Wendy would take care of him during the day while working as a home-based typist during the night. Then, Jack's drinking habits worsened and the incident involving Danny's broken arm occurred, which forced her to start considering divorce. However, when the decision was made, Jack suddenly stopped drinking alcohol altogether, so she postponed the verdict, gradually abandoning the idea completely. Still, it is important to note that Jack and Wendy's marriage was already deeply flawed as she did not trust him, often smelling his breath for traces of liquor and suspecting him of harming Danny.

²⁹ King, *Shining*, 632.

After Jack's dismissal from the Stovington Preparatory Academy and moving to Boulder, Colorado, Wendy was unhappy and, similarly to Jack, wished for a fresh start inside the walls of the Overlook Hotel. In fact, Jack and Wendy's marriage seemed to improve for a short period of time after their arrival at the Hotel since they spent a lot of time together, being able to renew and maintain the intimacy between them. Nevertheless, as the Hotel began strengthening its hold on Jack, their marriage deteriorated once again. In the end, the possessed Jack assaulted Wendy, nearly killing her, which was their last encounter before his death. Surprisingly, however, even after Jack succumbed to the influence of the Overlook, Wendy felt an obligation to assist him, telling herself: "And your husband, whatever has happened to him and no matter how dangerous he may be... maybe he's part of your responsibility, too."³⁰ Apparently, Wendy's moral imperative did not allow her to forsake Jack, feeling a sense of liability toward him. This observation denotes that some of her notable qualities may include the want to help others and clearly defined morals.

Still, Wendy's consistent unwillingness to initiate divorce, even in the face of Jack's aggression and alcoholism, may seem peculiar. As noted by Hornbeck, such attitudes sometimes invoke the persistent cultural myth that the victims of domestic violence frequently stay with their partners, enduring the abuse due to low self-esteem or inability to defend themselves. These assumptions proved to be false as only a negligible number of abused women remain in the relationship, mostly for financial reasons or out of fear that the abusive partner would harm them if they attempted to leave.³¹ Wendy's situation is rather specific since she recognizes Jack's ambivalent behavioral patterns and, more importantly, realizes the negative effects his departure could have on Danny which seem to be the primary reason why she keeps postponing the final decision. Thus, it would be a mistake to presume that she allows Jack to abuse her and Danny, living in denial and ignoring the gravity of the situation. Furthermore, Wendy reconsiders her judgment regarding the divorce only after Jack alters his behavior, stops drinking altogether, and seemingly gets his aggression under control. Certainly, after being trapped in the Overlook Hotel, she regrets giving her husband a second chance, yet such a turn of events could not have been anticipated. In addition, Wendy is capable of standing up to Jack several times which completely negates any potential images of weakness and powerlessness.

³⁰ King, *Shining*, 542.

³¹ Hornbeck, "Who's Afraid," 697-698.

Moreover, Wendy displayed considerable bravery when fighting the possessed Jack in order to protect Danny, recognizing there was nothing prohibiting the former from harming their son, except for her. In general, Wendy's relationship with Danny remains rather consistent throughout the novel as not much happened between the two that would have the potential of altering it significantly. It can be only assumed that after surviving the horrors orchestrated by the Overlook Hotel, their mutual bond became even stronger. However, even though Wendy had practically no imminent reason to, at one point in the story, she "suddenly realized she was feeling jealous of the closeness between her husband and her son, and felt ashamed."³² Such feelings of jealousy and shame are hinted at several times and seem to be mainly caused by Wendy's problematic past regarding her own mother who will be further elaborated on. As previously mentioned, Jack and Danny share a close bond that is not severely disrupted even after the events at the Hotel. On the other hand, it would be unwise to presume that Danny prefers his father over Wendy because it is not sporadic for a young boy to unconditionally love and idolize his father.

Similarly to Jack, Wendy shows signs of recurring childhood trauma, although in her case, the manifestations are more subtle, affecting mostly her innermost feelings. The possible explanation could be tied to the fact that unlike Jack, whose father abused him and the other family members physically, Wendy was a victim of emotional abuse inflicted by her mother. The apparent cause of the maltreatment was the divorce of her parents when Wendy was younger, which she was frequently blamed for. After Danny was born, Wendy reluctantly reconciled with her mother, even though she still made her feel inferior and incompetent whenever visiting, striving to prove that she is a better mother than her daughter ever will be. In other words, "the price she had begun to pay (and maybe always would) for the reconciliation was the feeling that she was an inadequate mother."³³ It can be thus estimated that Wendy's mother was fairly unhappy with the reality of her life, trying to find comfort in passing the blame on her daughter. Accordingly, Wendy lived in constant fear of becoming like her, realizing that a faint reflection of her mother truly is a part of her personality and would influence her behavior. Furthermore, the dysfunctional relationship with her mother is what makes Wendy prone to jealousy regarding Jack and Danny's dynamics, demonstrating the aforementioned feeling of inadequacy induced by her.

³² King, *Shining*, 128.

³³ King, *Shining*, 67.

Although not likely apparent at the first sight, Wendy's character development is arguably the most significant of all the figures appearing in the novel, perhaps excluding Jack, who, as analyzed, was nevertheless under the influence of external powers beyond his control. Stephen Snyder notes that from a typical American housewife who tends to the family home and is frequently overshadowed by her husband, Wendy evolves into an independent heroine capable of facing the impending doom in the form of the possessed Jack and prevailing, symbolically thus being able to decide her own fate instead of following her husband's example.³⁴ While Snyder predominantly focuses on the characterization of Wendy from the film adaptation who is in many respect different when compared to her original counterpart, he does raise an excellent point. Indeed, Wendy's advancement process initially puts her into the position of an archetypal housewife who overcomes a vast number of trials and tribulations, concluding her story with the transformation into a single mother who has to take care of Danny all by herself. As delineated in chapter two, the progression of her story closely mimics the social changes in twentieth-century America and the redefinition of the original gender roles. Correspondingly, Wendy's character might reflect and represent this transition from the old family model to the new one.

Danny Torrance, affectionately called Doc by his parents, is a five-year-old son of Jack and Wendy, which makes him the youngest member of the Torrance family. Danny is presented as bright, curious, and intuitive, mirroring several of his parents' undisputed qualities. Despite his low age, he also appears to be rather mature, comprehending affairs children are usually not exposed to. More importantly, however, Danny possesses a set of unique psychic abilities, loosely associated with his mysterious companion Tony as well as with the character of Dick Hallorann, that should be reflected upon in detail. Moreover, his story and broader character development are intertwined with the powers residing in the Overlook Hotel, their exact nature and motivations thus also being subjected to the consequent analysis.

Essentially, Danny is introduced as a standard five-year-old boy, but it quickly becomes apparent that his extraordinary skills render him tremendously idiosyncratic. He seems to be capable of inducing a trance-like state which allows him to find missing objects, observe persons in distant places, see other people's thoughts, and even predict the future, although the prophecies proved only partially accurate. During these extracorporeal journeys similar to astral projection, Danny is accompanied and even guided by Tony, an enigmatic

³⁴ Stephen Snyder, "Family Life and Leisure Culture in *The Shining*," *Film Criticism* 7, no. 1 (Fall 1982): 11.

figure whom Jack and Wendy consider his imaginary friend but who nevertheless frequently surfaces in the visions, attempting to warn and protect Danny from the incoming dangers. When the family arrived at the Overlook Hotel, Danny's second sight gradually subsided, most likely due to the hostile aura of the place. However, near the end of the novel, he experiences another vision in which Tony appears, telling him: "Danny... you're in a place deep down in your own mind. The place where I am. I'm a part of you, Danny."³⁵ The identification of Tony with Danny can be understood quite literally, which is further supported by the fact that immediately afterward, Danny, for the very first time, beheld his invisible companion who looked exactly like his more mature version. Thus, Tony may be viewed as Danny's older, experienced self that lived within him the whole time, manifesting itself only sporadically and guiding him through difficult situations. This claim is even more valid when taking into consideration that Danny's full name is Daniel Anthony Torrance, Tony, therefore, being his second name as well as his second self. As far as Danny's special talents are concerned, the novel itself offers several explanations regarding their exact nature. Dick Hallorann who works as a cook at the Overlook Hotel and who forms a rather close bond with Danny calls his skills "the shining" and proclaims that he himself possesses similar abilities, only of significantly lesser intensity, declaring he never met a person displaying such a formidable arsenal of supernatural capabilities as Danny. Subsequently, Hallorann also suggests that in the religious context, such skills are dubbed visions. On the other hand, Dr. Bill Edmonds, who is tasked with examining Danny, approaches the subject scientifically, utilizing his knowledge of medicine and psychology, and interprets it as precognition. The three seemingly contradictory definitions, separately representing the concepts of science, religion, and magic, appear to be intertwined in this case, thus merging psychology and spirituality into one set of correlative powers.

Additionally, the aforementioned Dick Hallorann, although not directly related to the Torrance family, should be discussed in detail since he adds another dimension to the story and is closely connected to Danny. Hallorann is portrayed as an elderly man of African American descent. When the two first meet, he takes Danny aside and warns him about the strange occurrences in the Hotel, claiming that all of them appear to be mere illusions that, although frightening, cannot affect the reality around them, which renders them completely harmless. This comment later proves to be false as every member of the Torrance family and even Hallorann are subsequently directly assaulted by the supernatural forces residing in the

³⁵ King, *Shining*, 628.

Hotel. Furthermore, Hallorann assures Danny that if the situation at the Overlook worsens during the winter isolation, the latter can use his second sight and call him, promising he would arrive as soon as possible. As the events escalate, Danny desperately strives to reach him and ask for support which Hallorann ultimately delivers, departing Florida immediately after sensing Danny's pleas and heading to the Hotel, overcoming a vast number of trials and tribulations along the way. Eventually, Hallorann is able to save Wendy and Danny by getting them out of the Hotel before the boiler explodes. Moreover, the final chapter depicts Wendy and Danny staying by the lake, near the restaurant where Hallorann works, which implies that the three of them established a good rapport, growing very close to each other. This proclamation is further validated by the fact that Hallorann comforts Danny when he mourns the loss of Jack, saying:

“There's some things no six-year-old boy in the world should have to be told, but the way things should be and the way things are hardly ever get together. The world's a hard place, Danny. It don't care. It don't hate you and me, but it don't love us, either. Terrible things happen in the world, and they're things no one can explain. Good people die in bad, painful ways and leave the folks that love them all alone. Sometimes it seems like it's only the bad people who stay healthy and prosper. The world don't love you, but your momma does and so do I.”³⁶

The conversation between the two further suggests that Hallorann is not only Danny's guide and potential friend, but also acts as a father figure, representing the manner in which a proper father should treat his son, providing valuable advice, supporting, and consoling him. Hence, Hallorann can be perceived as a savior-like figure and one of few characters who do not appear morally gray. His positive morality is further highlighted by the fact that he himself nearly perishes when attempting to rescue a family he theoretically does not even know well enough to feel obliged to. Generally speaking, Hallorann's character simultaneously promotes the question of race that is otherwise mostly not present in the novel. When getting closer to the Hotel in the attempt to save the Torrance family, Hallorann receives a cryptic message via his own second sight that tells him to return from whence he came, calling him a “dirty nigger”³⁷ in the process. Such an echo of the Hotel would not seem strange but the emphasis put on the word “nigger” as well as on the racial difference between Hallorann and the Torrances appears multiple times throughout the whole novel. Apparently, its primary purpose is to make the reader notice the mutual understanding and closeness of individuals whose origins differ but who were bound together by surviving exceedingly difficult

³⁶ King, *Shining*, 658.

³⁷ King, *Shining*,

situations. Moreover, the fact that Hallorann is depicted as a messiah and a person of unflinching determination and strong will subsequently connotes the expression of disapproval in terms of racial discrimination and intolerance. More significantly, however, King uses Hallorann's character to challenge the typical image of the family unit by stressing that families are not merely people related by blood or legal bonds, but people who love, support, and take care of each other as can be observed by the end of the novel.

Incidentally, as demonstrated several times, the Overlook Hotel itself shows signs of a desire for control over Danny and his abilities which implies that they likely pose a threat to it. In order to better grasp its potential motivations, it is vital to discuss the exact nature of the powers responsible for the hauntings at the Hotel. A few possible interpretations were previously outlined. The Overlook can be comprehended as an embodiment of evil, as a devil-like entity whose sole purpose is to lure unsuspecting people in, offer them what they desire most, and slowly turn them into monsters in a human form capable of harming and even killing their loved ones. Alternatively, a more simplified version of the interpretation may assume that the building is possessed by a demon, evil spirit, or another type of hostile being whose motives remain unknown. Another possible explanation might entail that the Hotel, due to the shady dealings that took place there and a vast number of various people who sought accommodation in its quarters, accumulated an enormous amount of negative energy and echoes of the past events that now affect most of the individuals staying there, especially the ones with the traumatized mind. Moreover, writer Nasrullah Mambrol, who further expands this hypothesis, suggests that "King brilliantly expands the haunted-house archetype into a symbol of the accumulated sin of all fathers."³⁸ Such a formulation, if taken literally, would narrow the aforementioned hypothesis, claiming that the negative aura resonating through the Hotel, in fact, symbolizes the primordial sin related to fatherhood, only intensifying through the absorption of the life force originating from the individuals inhabiting the place, especially figures like Jack or Grady whom themselves are considered improper fathers. Whatever the particular character of the evil forces may be, their hunger for Danny and his abilities seems to hint at their ultimate goal to use his talents and thus expand their influence, simultaneously realizing that Danny is the only one who senses the impending danger and could thus convince the family to leave. Accordingly, the Hotel utilizes Jack's unfulfilled ambitions and childhood trauma in order to divert the possibility of their imminent

³⁸ Nasrullah Mambrol, "Analysis of Stephen King's Novels," *Literariness*, December 11, 2018, <https://literariness.org/2018/12/31/analysis-of-stephen-kings-novels/>

departure. These machinations could insinuate that the Hotel indeed is dominated by an inherently evil being that is not so abstract, which would shed more light on Jack's possession as well. However, King deliberately shrouds the nature of the hauntings in mystery, which arguably makes it even more horrifying.

Throughout the novel, Danny's character undergoes rather significant changes that conclusively determine the ultimate fate of his family. From a young boy who is terrified by the psychic abilities he does not understand, Danny evolves into a semi-independent person who learns how to control and even use them to his advantage. More importantly, when being hunted by Jack and invoking Tony, the latter tells him: "You will remember what your father forgot,"³⁹ referring to the boiler in the basement of the Hotel that needs to be regularly cooled down, otherwise it might overheat and explode, which is precisely what happens immediately afterward, giving Danny, Wendy, and Hallorann enough time to escape and sealing Jack's fate. In this scenario, Danny remembers a crucial detail that his father and even the powerful entity possessing his body failed to realize, highlighting his smartness and vigilance as superior to adults. Moreover, Danny is frequently portrayed as innocent and naïve, being unable to comprehend the meaning behind some of his parents' thoughts and actions. The idea of innocence is thereby contrasted with the horrors he witnesses and the enormous responsibility he has by the end of the novel. Consequently, the overall story, especially its final chapters, can be perceived as a rite of passage for Danny. After experiencing a plethora of traumatizing scenes, he faces disillusionment and becomes more mature, his inner journey toward adulthood thus accelerating. Of course, it would be a mistake to presume that Danny's story centers around his transformation from a boy to a man, as in the final chapter of the story which takes place several months after the events at the Overlook Hotel, he is only six years old. Rather, it could be viewed as a transition from a phase of innocence and carefreeness to a phase of experience and greater responsibility.

Fundamentally, the Torrance family, at least at the beginning of the novel, more or less represents the traditional American family model and its concomitant features. The couple is married and cohabitates in a single household. Jack is the patriarch as well as the breadwinner of the family, working and generating profit, whereas Wendy is a typical housewife, tending to the family home and supervising the upbringing of Danny. Nevertheless, several signs regarding the transformation of family life can be spotted even initially, for example, Wendy working for as a typist for an unspecified period of time in

³⁹ King, *Shining*, 620.

order to earn extra money. However, the end of the novel completely disrupts the Torrance family structure through Jack's death, thus rendering Wendy a widow and a single mother, having to manage to raise Danny alone, at least for a certain period of time. When asked by Hallorann when she will start working again, she replies:

“Right after Labor Day. When Danny and I leave here, we'll be going right on to Maryland to look for a place. It was really the Chamber of Commerce brochure that convinced me, you know. It looks like a nice town to raise a kid in. And I'd like to be working again before we dig too deeply into the insurance money Jack left. There's still over forty thousand dollars. Enough to send Danny to college with enough left over to get him a start, if it's invested right.”⁴⁰

The passage not only somewhat outlines the future of the family, but also indicates their new mode of life independent of any patriarchal authority. Wendy is free to pursue her own goals and even though both she and Danny are still shaken by Jack's passing, the insurance money is capable of securing Danny a higher education, which could denote Jack's indirect but ongoing participation in the well-being of his loved ones. Generally speaking, the Torrance family mirrors some of the social changes occurring throughout the twentieth century in America, the old-fashioned family model diminishing, providing free space for new forms of the family unit, in this case for a single mother with her child. Accordingly, the novel depicts, both literally and figuratively, the transformation of the traditional American family image and its inherent connotations.

As examined, the Torrance family appears to be dysfunctional by definition, but the overall reality of the situation is much more complicated and tricky to capture. The relationship between Jack and Wendy rises and falls multiple times throughout the course of the novel and, as implied through inner monologues and reminiscence, the past events were not much different, featuring periods of love, care, and mutual understanding gradually replaced by periods of hatred, indifference, and angst. Several times, even the possibility of a divorce surfaced, particularly due to Jack's alcoholism and the aforementioned child abuse episode. Immediately after the latter, Jack

was standing there and his eyes met the eyes of his wife and he saw that Wendy hated him. It did not occur to him what the hate might mean in practical terms; it was only later that he realized she might have left him that night, gone to a motel, gotten a divorce lawyer in the morning; or called the police. He saw only that his wife hated him and he felt staggered by it, all alone. He felt awful.⁴¹

⁴⁰ King, *Shining*, 655.

⁴¹ King, *Shining*, 24.

As the excerpt as well as the analysis of his character suggest, Jack is not a typical abusive parent as the only known incident involving child abuse before the arrival at the Overlook Hotel happened several years before the beginning of the novel and haunted him ever since. Generally speaking, King does an excellent work stressing that real bonds between people cannot be viewed as black or white. Jack has many flaws and does a considerable number of mistakes, some of which are rather reprehensible, but that is exactly what makes him so credible and realistic as a character. Furthermore, even though the spouse and child abuse undoubtedly are the main themes of the novel, it appears exceedingly difficult to determine whether Jack committed any of it willingly or even consciously, excluding, of course, the incident regarding Danny's broken arm whose exact nature was already thoroughly researched. Notwithstanding the uncertainty regarding the violence, however, the label of a dysfunctional family when discussing the Torrances is unquestionably well-deserved and appropriate, Jack being the primary reason for it as well as the disruptive element of the family unit.

Even though there can be a plethora of possible interpretations connected to the Torrance family and its deeper meaning, one, in particular, deserves to be examined closely. Interestingly, Snyder, in relation to Wendy, mentions that she "provides an emotional counterweight to her son's visionary talents and her husband's self-absorbed intellectuality."⁴² His brilliant deduction puts the Torrance family into an entirely new perspective, each of its members symbolizing different mode of thinking, alternatively even distinct ideologies. Jack represents not merely intellectualism, but direct rationalism and materialism, often acting as the voice of reason, almost blindly believing in scientific data rather than acknowledging the possible existence of paranormal phenomena. Wendy, as implied, serves as the base for emotions, innermost feelings, and moral imperatives, her actions being frequently grounded in empathy and a personal sense of justice. Finally, Danny impersonates the power of imagination as well as the world of the unseen, potentially spirituality and the occult. In a broader view, the hypothesis can be even more universally expanded by linking it to an old-fashioned triangular model of science, religion, and magic, yet such a scheme poses several complications, particularly in associating Wendy with religion, which does not necessarily center around emotional invocations and, more significantly, involves transcendent phenomena appertaining to Danny's domain of thought. Similarly, the system of intellectualism, emotionalism, and spiritualism includes several flaws as well, arguably the

⁴² Snyder, "Family," 11.

most apparent being Jack's anger outbursts that function within the realm of emotions. However, the overall hypothesis seems to be mostly accurate nonetheless, as each of the individual characters is defined precisely by the *modi vivendi* described. Consequently, Jack's death at the end of the novel can be interpreted as the death of reason repressing emotions and imagination, its disappearance, at last, enabling them to thrive and grow.

In more general terms, *The Shining*, as well as its individual characters, capture the ever-changing spirit of the age. Michael J. Blouin suggests that even in spite of King's own proclamation that his novels are strictly anti-political, their plots often reflect the actual political climate, primarily including viewpoints on foreign wars, the welfare state, and the inclination toward theocracy.⁴³ Although his statement is, without a doubt, grounded in reality and applicable to a considerable number of King's novels *The Shining*, in particular, delineates the social environment of contemporary America rather than the political situation, even though the two domains are naturally interconnected. More specifically, the novel focuses on the new-found attention paid to the dysfunctions within the family unit. As indicated in chapter two and further explained by Hornbeck in connection to the origins of the novel, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, public awareness regarding child and spouse abuse increased tremendously. Several movements and organizations, for example the National Organization for Women, worked hard to achieve the establishment of child abuse reporting laws, shelters for maltreated women, and overall recognition by mass media and the legal system regarding the seriousness of such disruptive phenomena. Expectedly, the popular culture reflected the social environment of the time, implementing the motifs of dysfunctions within the family and domestic violence into its corpus, which involves not merely books, but also movies and other forms of visual art. *The Shining*, both the original novel and its subsequent film adaptation, thus followed this example, endeavoring to depict the problematic relationships within the family unit and their immediate effects on the children.⁴⁴ Apparently, King deliberately puts emphasis on the aspects of the dysfunctional family, going great lengths just to describe Jack's child abuse episode, alcoholism, and overall lack of control over anger. Similarly, he refers to the problematic parental relationships of both Jack and Wendy, highlighting the evident childhood trauma. Thus, it can be assumed that King not only criticizes such phenomena but also wants the reader to comprehend their immense gravity, which is mostly achieved through Jack's character and his tragic death. Nevertheless,

⁴³ Michael J. Blouin, *Stephen King and American Politics* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2021), 1–2.

⁴⁴ Hornbeck, "Who's Afraid," 701–704.

the novel simultaneously dismantles the black-and-white of the world, demonstrating that even perpetrators of domestic violence do not have to be inherently evil.

Incidentally, the socially critical subtext in terms of horror literature can be traced back to the tradition of Gothic fiction. According to Hornbeck, *The Shining* exploits more key features of the genre, the secluded building haunted by dark powers, isolation of the individual characters, paranormal phenomena, and Danny's extraordinary spiritual abilities being only some of them. Moreover, the merging of psychologically abnormal and supernatural aspects and alternatively even scenes depicting child and women abuse are equally typical for Gothic fiction. However, most of the original Gothic sources of fear and terror may seem slightly overshadowed by the exceptionally realistic descriptions of domestic violence, especially near the end of the novel, after Jack gets possessed by the Hotel's specter.⁴⁵ In essence, the categorization of certain motifs as originating from the Gothic genre is certainly valid and immensely useful. It further illustrates the brilliance of King's writing which utilizes seemingly unrelated motifs and sources of fright from older traditions and links them to contemporary scares, some of them alluding to the social context.

⁴⁵ Hornbeck, "Who's Afraid," 692–696.

Conclusion

The Shining can be viewed as a common example of a novel corresponding to the conventions of the domestic horror subgenre, with the family unit, as well as its dysfunctions, being one of its main themes. The novel introduces a comprehensive image of the Torrance family by not merely depicting its inherent features but especially by focusing on the feelings and motivations of its individual members through the frequent use of inner monologues and reminiscence.

Jack Torrance is a tragic character as well as the major disruptive element within the family unit. His defining attributes are uncontrollable aggression, affinity to alcohol, dysfunctional bond with his physically abusive father, self-destructive tendencies, and especially the intrapersonal conflict between pursuing his selfish ambitions and tending to his family that can be broadly interpreted as the omnipresent ambivalence of one's self-absorbed motivations contrasted with the intense need to socialize and maintain relationships with other people. On the other hand, the moments before his inevitable death partially redeem him as he prioritizes his son, breaking the fetters of possession and attempting to save him. The general message of the character thus emphasizes the immense strength of the family unit and the inability of external forces to destroy it. Furthermore, it demonstrates the apparent limits of a black-and-white vision of the world, highlighting Jack's more positive side.

Wendy Torrance is initially depicted as a more or less typical housewife, striving to preserve the family even in spite of her husband's reprehensible actions. Her most recognizable weakness seems to be the proneness of negative emotions, especially inadequacy and jealousy, ingrained by her emotionally abusive mother. However, throughout the novel, Wendy evolves into an independent heroine who is capable of deciding her own fate and protecting her son. Moreover, the transformation from a housewife to a single mother reflects the redefinition of gender roles and the overall social changes in twentieth-century America.

Danny Torrance is portrayed as an extraordinary individual whose unique abilities, which enable him, for example, to see into the future, merge psychologically abnormal and supernatural phenomena. Furthermore, during the visions, Danny is accompanied by an enigmatic figure called Tony who symbolizes his more mature and experienced self. In the course of the novel, Danny forms a rather close bond with Dick Hallorann who can be perceived as a savior and father figure. More importantly, Hallorann, being of African American descent, represents a canny expression of disapproval with racial discrimination

and intolerance. Incidentally, the exact nature of nefarious powers residing in the Overlook Hotel and wishing to utilize Danny's capabilities is deliberately shrouded in mystery as it only adds to the immediate effect on the reader. Danny's overall story can be viewed as a rite of passage involving the transition from innocence and carefreeness to experience and greater responsibility.

Initially, the Torrance family as a whole represents the traditional American family model which is, however, ultimately disrupted by Jack's imminent passing, symbolizing the general transformation of the family in contemporary America. Moreover, its individual members reflect separate domains of thought, particularly intellectualism (Jack), emotionalism (Wendy), and spiritualism (Danny). Jack's death at the end of the novel thus represents the death of reason, providing free space for emotions and imagination to prosper and grow.

Generally speaking, *The Shining* mirrors a considerable number of social phenomena related to the second part of the twentieth century. Stephen King goes to great lengths to outline the immense horrors of domestic violence while highlighting the frequently gray morality of its perpetrators in exceptional detail. In addition, he reuses several key features of Gothic fiction, therefore linking the older literary tendencies with new social and political issues.

Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce identifikuje a analyzuje motivů rodiny s důrazem na jednotlivé postavy a kontext dysfunkční rodiny a domácího násilí v románu *Osvícení* poprvé vydaném v roce 1977, jehož autorem je americký spisovatel Stephen King.

První kapitola se zaměřuje na horor jakožto žánr literatury v obecném smyslu. První část stručně mapuje jeho počátky a důležité momenty v rámci literární historie. Nejprve se zabývá hororovými prvky ústní lidové slovesnosti a jejich postupným přechodem do písemné podoby. Následně se soustředí na znaky gotického románu a jeho signifikanci vzhledem k hororové literatuře obecně. Nakonec ve zkratce zmiňuje kontinuální vývoj hororové literatury a obohacení žánru o nová témata. Druhá část popisuje komplikace spojené s definicí hororu jakožto žánru literatury a předkládá alternativní typy přístupů k němu. Třetí část se pokouší o vymezení základních subžánrů hororové literatury, přičemž klade důraz na tzv. *domestic horror* a jeho charakteristiky kvůli celkové relevanci v rámci práce.

Druhá kapitola vysvětluje koncept rodiny jak obecně, tak i s ohledem na kulturní specifika USA. První část nastiňuje obecný význam rodiny, v jehož kontextu definuje některé základní pojmy a fundamentální sociologické přístupy k tématu. Druhá část konkrétněji vykresluje roli a tradiční podobu rodiny v rámci americké kultury. Nejprve diskutuje o pojetí tradiční americké rodiny a jejich rysech. Následně sleduje postupné proměny americké rodiny v průběhu dvacátého století a jejich sociální kontext. Nakonec se detailněji zaměřuje na změny podoby americké rodiny během tří desetiletí druhé poloviny dvacátého století (od roku 1960 do roku 1990) zásadních pro tuto práci. Třetí část osvětluje problematiku dysfunkční rodiny a domácího násilí, přičemž se koncentruje zejména na americké milieu druhé poloviny dvacátého století.

Třetí kapitola se přímo věnuje analýze motivů rodiny v románu *Osvícení*. První část klasifikuje příslušný román jako typického zástupce subžánru *domestic horror* a určuje rodinu jako jedno z jeho hlavních témat. Druhá část zevrubně charakterizuje postavu Jacka Torrance. Nejprve popisuje a analyzuje tři zásadní incidenty silně ovlivňující jeho chování a jednání. Následně zkoumá Jackův problematický vztah s otcem a jeho implikace. Nakonec komentuje postupný vývoj postavy a její obecnou roli a význam v příběhu. Třetí část se soustředí na postavu Wendy Torrance. Nejprve nastiňuje povahu rodinných vztahů s Jackem a Dannym. Následně rozebírá její dysfunkční vztah s matkou a jeho danosti. Nakonec mapuje vývoj postavy a interpretuje její širší význam. Čtvrtá část se zabývá postavou Dannyho Torrance.

Nejprve diskutuje o povaze jeho nadpřirozených schopností a o identitě postavy Tonyho, jenž Dannyho provází a ochraňuje. Následně propojuje Dannyho výjimečné nadání s postavou Dicka Halloranna a se silami sídlícími v hotelu Overlook, přičemž pátrá po jejich původu. Nakonec shrnuje vývoj postavy a jeho hlubší smysl. Pátá část se zaměřuje na rodinu Torrancových jako celek, přičemž nastiňuje její proměnu, specifikuje její dysfunkčnost a interpretuje její obecný význam. Šestá část se zabývá Kingovou sociální kritikou a dává ji do kontextu s kulturními změnami v rámci USA druhé poloviny dvacátého století.

Rozbor se výrazně soustředí na jednotlivé postavy a jejich vzájemnou dynamiku. Jack Torrance je vykreslen jako tragická postava a v rámci románu je stavěn do role rozkladného prvku celé rodiny. Jeho postava je charakterizována neschopností ovládat hněv, potlačovaným alkoholismem, patologickým vztahem s otcem, sebedestruktivními sklony a především osobním konfliktem mezi vlastními ambicemi a zájmem o rodinu. Konec románu však Jacka částečně vykupuje, neboť se v posledních chvílích před svou smrtí osvobodí z posedlosti entitou sídlící v hotelu a pokusí se zachránit svého syna. Příběh jeho postavy tak hodnověrně vypovídá o síle rodiny, kterou nelze zničit intervencí zvnějšku, a demonstruje limity a nedostatky černobílého pohledu na svět. Wendy Torrance je zprvu popsána jako typická žena v domácnosti, která je, podobně jako Jack, ovlivněna problematickým vztahem s matkou a hluboce zakořeněným traumatem z dětství, jenž v ní vyvolává pocity méněcennosti. V průběhu románu se Wendy nicméně postupně stává nezávislou hrdinkou schopnou postavit se manželovi a ochránit svého syna. Její proměna z ženy v domácnosti ve svobodnou matku zároveň reflektuje sociální změny v USA dvacátého století. Danny Torrance je i přes svůj nízký věk vyobrazěn jako výjimečná osobnost disponující unikátními schopnostmi, které propojují psychologicky abnormální a nadpřirozené jevy. Během podivných vizí, které prožívá ve stavu transu Dannyho doprovází Tony – tajemná bytost, která symbolizuje jeho dospělejší a zkušenější já. V průběhu románu Danny naváže blízký vztah s Dickem Hallorannem, jenž se mu stane otcovským vzorem a jenž jakožto Afroameričan reprezentuje autorův ostrý nesouhlas s rasovou diskriminací. Danny je zároveň úzce propojen s temnými silami obývajícími hotel Overlook, jejichž přesná povaha zůstává neznámá, což jen umocňuje celkový zážitek čtenáře. Dannyho příběh obecně symbolizuje přechodový rituál z fáze nevinnosti a bezstarostnosti do období zkušenosti a zodpovědnosti. Rodina Torrancových zpočátku odpovídá vžitě představě o tradiční americké rodině, nicméně Jackova smrt vede k její transformaci, která zrcadlí proměny rodiny v USA napříč dvacátým stoletím. Její jednotliví členové kromě toho představují odlišné světonázory, tedy intelektualismus (Jack),

emocionalismus (Wendy) a spiritualismus (Danny), přičemž Jackův skon na konci románu lze interpretovat jako smrt rozumu, jež dává prostor pocitům a představivosti. V obecném smyslu román *Osvícení* zachycuje celou řadu osobitých sociálních jevů. King vynakládá značné úsilí, aby detailně a věrně nastínil kontext domácího násilí a podtrhl ambivalentní pohnutky jeho pachatelů. Společně s tím vychází ze starších literárních tradic, zejména z gotické fikce, přičemž její běžné motivy aplikuje na aktuální sociální a politické problémy.

Práce přistupuje k tématu metodicky a logicky jej strukturuje. Nejprve tak předkládá obecnější informace týkající se korespondujících teoretických konceptů, následně analyzuje příslušné literární dílo s důrazem na motivy rodiny a nakonec dává závěry rozboru do souvislosti se sociálně-historickým kontextem a interpretuje autorovu možnou sociální kritiku. Práce v rámci sběru dat kombinuje poznatky z monografií, akademických článků a webových stránek, přičemž analytická kapitola se mimoto opírá také o vlastní dedukci a interpretaci jednotlivých konceptů. Naneštěstí nejsou specifika tématu rodiny v románu akademickou obcí prozkoumána natolik, aby bylo možné se odkazovat pouze na ryze odborné publikace a články, pročež je práce zároveň nucena nakládat s méně akademickými zdroji, které nicméně byly sepsány či validovány odborníky a podrobeny kritické analýze. Kromě toho se práce pokouší vyvarovat propojení knižní předlohy a filmové adaptace *Osvícení*, jejímž režisérem je Stanley Kubrick, poněvadž obě média se od sebe výrazně liší.

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