

Children as Instruments of Evil in Selected Works by Stephen King

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ABSTRAKT

Cílem této bakalářské práce je dokázat hypotézu, že nevinnost dětských postav ve vybraných dílech Stephen Kinga, *Osvícení*, *Řbitov zvířátek* a „Děti kukuřice“, je ničena v důsledku selhání dospělých a děti se tedy stávají nástroji zla. První kapitola zachycuje vývoj pojetí dítěte v průběhu historie a samotného postavení dítěte v hororové literatuře. Děti jako nástroj zla jsou chápány jako oběti zla nebo jako zlé stvoření sami o sobě. Další části této práce analyzují jednotlivé dětské postavy. První dětskou postavou je Danny z románu *Osvícení*, chlapec obdařen zvláštní psychickou schopností, jehož nevinnost je zničena jeho násilnickým otcem a zlým hotelem. Kdežto dvouletý Gage ze *Řbitova zvířátek* se stane zlým monstrem jako následek chyby nezodpovědného rodiče. A nakonec nevinně zlé děti z povídky „Děti kukuřice“ zabíjejí všechny dospělé nad devatenáct let, protože dospělí jsou považováni za ty, jež selhali.

Klíčová slova: děti jako nástroj zla, zlo, oběti, monstra, nevinné zlo, zlé děti, nevinnost, selhání dospělých, *Osvícení*, *Řbitov zvířátek*, „Děti kukuřice“

ABSTRACT

The aim of this bachelor thesis is to prove the hypothesis that an innocence of the child characters in selected Stephen King's fictions, *The Shining*, *Pet Sematary* and "Children of the Corn", is damaged due to the failure of adults and children thus become instruments of evil. The first chapter portrays the development of a conception of a child during the history and a position of the child itself in a horror literature. Children as instruments of evil are perceived to be either victims of evil or are the evil creatures by themselves. The next parts of this thesis analyze concrete child characters. The first child character from a novel *The Shining* is Danny, a boy endowed with a special psychical ability, whose innocence is corrupted by an abusive father and by an evil hotel. Whereas two-year-old Gage from *Pet Sematary* becomes an evil monster as a result of a mistake of an irresponsible parent. And lastly the evil innocent children from a story "Children of the Corn" kill all adults above nineteen years because adults are considered to be those who failed.

Keywords: children as instruments of evil, evil, victims, monsters, evil innocence, evil children, innocence, failure of adults, *The Shining*, *Pet Sematary*, "Children of the Corn"

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INTRODUCTION

“From all around the children were coming. Some of them were laughing gaily. They held knives, hatches, pipes, rocks, hammers.”¹

Horror writers use their imagination to awake an anxiety, a fear or a sensation in their readership. An American writer Stephen King no doubt manages this task greatly and is rightly considered to be one of the most successful horror writers of the contemporary literary world. He is able to create the evil monsters from the ordinary things, such as the hotels or the cats, as well as he does not hesitate to break a taboo and portray to readers the corruption of the innocent creatures, the children.

Nevertheless during the history the conception of children and their innocence as such has been changing into its modern understanding when a society gives special importance to a child protection. Hand in hand with a development of perception of the child goes

a portrayal of children in the literature. While evil itself is the concept known from Bible, the theme of evil children is a recent phenomenon which started to appear in 1950s and the writers from Ray Bradbury over Ira Levin to Stephen King was influenced by it. The theme of ‘children as instruments of evil’ is a linking element of several Stephen King’s fictions and not only they represent evil children but also they include children as victims of evil. Thus King either puts his child characters into direct contact with evil or damages children’s innocence by making them instruments of evil.

The novel *The Shining* (1977) offers disturbing image of the victimized child Danny who is prone to perceive evil more than other children thanks to his shining ability. The analysis of this novel discusses the child who is jeopardized by an evil environment and by his own parent who tries to kill him. In this novel, evil wants to take advantage of the faults of the adults in order to get Danny. *Pet Sematary* (1983) deals with the irresponsible adult whose consequent attempt to protect his family leads him into making of the mistake when he reanimates his dead son and creates the monster from him. A short story “Children of the Corn” (1977) offers examination of possessed children who kill all the adults because they are understood to be the bearers of sin and to be those who failed to take care of the corn.

This research of King’s works analyzes a problematic and a rather neglected aspect by experts: A depiction of the child in the horror literature. Moreover this thesis argues that

¹ Stephen King, *Stephen King Goes to the Movies* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2009), 565.

the given King's works represent the failure of the adults who by exposing children to evil make of them its instruments. Thus the aim of this thesis is to prove that 'King's children' have to pay a highest price, their innocence, for the faults of the adults.

1 THEORY

“I’m afraid of everything,”² claims Stephen King in a book of Lisa Rogak. There is no surprise that Stephen King is terrified of all things which surround him in his everyday life. Indeed he writes about them and is able to create the monster from the most innocent object.³ When audience asked King what terrifies him the most, he immediately replied that it is “opening the door of [his] children’s bedroom and finding one of them dead.”⁴ In spite of the fact that King is worried about his own offspring, this does not discourage him from putting his child characters into the precarious situations, where they are either being damaged by evil or are endowed with evil by themselves.⁵

King’s source of inspiration for his books *The Shining*, *Pet Sematary* and others, originates in authors such as E. A. Poe and for instance his short story “The Fall of the House of Usher” (1839)⁶, Nathaniel Hawthorne and his perception of evil in his works, for example “Young Goodman Brown” (1835), or Mary Shelley and her *Frankenstein* (1818). While these examples are clearly related with the given King’s works, King also draws the primary inspiration from his own life and experiences and also from his great imagination. His works has thus traditional roots, but they are also influenced by the modern aspects of the society. Due to that King is understood to be the ‘post gothic’ writer, rather than the gothic one.⁷ My selected works by Stephen King bring the problematic aspect into the horror fiction of 20th century, “the presence of the child in horror fiction for adults.”⁸ The portrayal of the child in the contemporary horror fiction has been rather unsearched and neglected aspect. Sabine Büssing claims that the reason, why a motif of the child in the contemporary horror fictions has not been in detail analyzed by experts, lies in the children who as instruments of evil did

² Lisa Rogak, *Haunted Heart: The Life and Times of Stephen King* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2009), 9.

³ See Ibid.

⁴ Tony Magistrale, *Landscape of Fear: Stephen King’s American Gothic* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1988), 73.

⁵ See Ibid.

⁶ See Sabine Büssing, *Aliens in The Home: The Child in Horror Fiction* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1987), 106.

⁷ See Jesse W. Nash, “Postmodern Gothic: Stephen King’s Pet Sematary,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 30 (1997): 151-152, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/195362146/fulltextPDF/3DF3BE410CDA4187PQ/1?accountid=15518>.

⁸ Sara Martín Alegre, “Nightmares of Childhood: The Child and the Monster in Four Novels by Stephen King,” *Atlantis* 23, no. 1 (June 2001): 105, <http://www.atlantisjournal.org/old/Papers/v23%20n1/v23%20n1-7.pdf>.

not occur in the Gothic books. According to her, the genre of horror fiction should be now worthy of scholar criticism.⁹

1.1 Perception of childhood during the history

Today's understanding of the conception of the 'childhood' differs from that one in the history. In the Middle Ages people did not perceive children as innocent creatures and due to that they did not concerned themselves with the possibility of damaging of the child's innocence. Then the society saw children as small replicas of grownups until they were able to take care of themselves.¹⁰ As well the medieval painters, for instance Jean Bourdichon, painted children like the miniature adults. In the book *Centuries of Childhood* (1960), Philippe Ariès claims that the concept of the 'childhood' is a product of the modern society.¹¹ People from 15th to 17th century did not considered children to be important, they felt no emotional feelings to children because they died too often.¹² In the book *Narrative of the Captivity* (1682) by Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, readers may notice that the author calls the dead child as 'it' not 'she'.¹³ Moreover in those times children were not protected from the sexual matters because they were not treated as delicate beings.¹⁴

The end of the seventeenth century went hand in hand with the developing of the education and the concept of a family, as a separate body, was being formed.¹⁵ During this period in England, the family started to accentuate the upbringing of children. Children were taught to the social norms and etiquette, such as proper manners and respecting adults.¹⁶

The Romantic era completely changed the understanding of the childhood. The Romantic child was perceived as "sensual innocence, borne of joy and an intimate connection with nature, pure state of being."¹⁷ In the Enlightenment and the Romantic period the child became distinguished from the adult not only in the matters of his physical appearance but also in emotional level. The concept of John Locke that humans are born

⁹ See Büssing, *Aliens in The Home*, xi-xii.

¹⁰ See Andrew David Scahill, "Malice in Wonderland: The Perverse Pleasure of the Revolting Child" (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2010).

¹¹ See Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (New York: Random House, 1962), 1.

¹² See *Ibid.*, 38-39.

¹³ See Mary Rowlandson, *Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*, Project Gutenberg, November 3, 2009, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/851/851-h/851-h.htm>.

¹⁴ See Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, 100.

¹⁵ See Scahill, "Malice in Wonderland."

¹⁶ See Lu Emily Pearson, *Elizabethans at Home* (Stanford: Stanford University Press: 1957), 140-141.

¹⁷ Scahill, "Malice in Wonderland."

with a mind as a 'tabula rasa' also indicates that children became considered to be innocent.¹⁸ Besides the painters also the writers included children into their works. Children appeared in poems of romantic writers, such as William Wordsworth, who started to think of humans in the different way. They viewed humans as the creatures not only with the mind but also with the feelings.¹⁹

Since nineteenth century, more and more emphasis was put on a purity of children and also their role in the literature became prominent. Authors such as Charles Dickens, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mark Twain, Robert Louis Stephenson or Rudyard Kipling understood the child as the being with a soul.²⁰

Children are perceived as the pure creatures according to the Romantic point of view. King uses the child characters for their physical size and vulnerability and his portrayal of the child then adheres to the Romantic conception. However he creates adults who are not able "to recapture the natural piety of the child."²¹ As it is seen in my selected works by Stephen King, all the kids, Danny, Eileen, Gage and as well the children of the corn are vulnerable because their pure soul is prone to perceive evil. For instance Danny and the hotel, which wants to kill him, or Eileen, who is influenced by consequences made by evil and her parents and as well as the children of the corn who are possessed by evil God. These children are put in the situations where they are exposed to evil. Then evil wants to take advantage of the mistakes of the adults in order to get the children's innocence.

1.2 The Child as an instrument of evil

Besides my selected Stephen King's works *The Shining*, *Pet Sematary* and "Children of the Corn", there are also other King's books dealing with the child or adolescent characters, such as *It* (1986), *Firestarter* (1980) or *Carrie* (1974). In the Stephen King's fiction, children occupy different positions in a sense of being the instrument of evil. In some books they are portrayed as the little zombie creatures, in others as the victims of an evil entity or the victims of the adults and in some even as the innocent creatures possessed by evil itself.

¹⁸ See Matthew Daniel Eddy, "The Alphabets of Nature: Children, Books and Natural History, 1750-1800," *Nuncius* 25 (2010): 1-22, https://www.academia.edu/1112085/_The_Alphabets_of_Nature_Children_Books_and_Natural_History_1750-1800_Nuncius_25_2010_1-22.

¹⁹ See Büssing, xiii.

²⁰ See Ibid.

²¹ Magistrale, *Landscape of Fear*, 78.

The following typological specification of the children characters influenced by evil is taken from Sabine Büssing and her book *Aliens in The Home: The Child in Horror Fiction* (1987).

1.2.1 The Victim

Victimized children are usually solitary figures in the horror literature. However to be the solid child, it does not have to mean that she/he has no contact with her/his family members. Children are normally surrounded by the father and the mother or another adults but those people, despite the physical nearness, are not able to ward off evil and protect their offspring.²²

As for Danny Torrance from *The Shining*, he is perceived to be the victim child. Danny is both the victim of his parents whose behavior on him is transmitted from his grandparents and the victim of the environment, namely the evil hotel. Moreover he is endowed with a psychical ability, 'shining power', which controls him and makes him also its victim.²³

When considering *Pet Sematary*, Eileen Creed is viewed to be the victim of evil, too. She loses her little brother due to the evil power of the Micmac burial ground and then she is exposed to evil by herself, when evil tries to connect with her throughout the evil visions.

1.2.2 The 'Evil innocent'

Already in the Gothic literature the main theme appearing has been the human soul's struggle between good and evil. While this problem has been limited only to adults, nowadays horror literature includes also child protagonists who are possessed by evil. As Andrew David Scahill stated, Büssing believes that such child is "[the] perfectly amiable and tender creature which is driven to do things by that forces beyond its control."²⁴ Neither these children are fully conscious of what bad things they do, nor they have usually any inner moral struggle.²⁵

The children from the short story "Children of the Corn" are understood to be the evil innocence characters. Even though they are the murderers possessed by evil, Stephen King kept their appearance and features of behavior which are typical for innocent children. In addition to that, in this story, the reader will find two children who experience mind

²² See Büssing, *Aliens in The Home*, 5.

²³ See *Ibid.*, 106.

²⁴ Scahill, "Malice in Wonderland."

²⁵ See Büssing, *Aliens in The Home*, 101.

struggle over evil and good, nevertheless these are exceptions who are either punished or suppressed by evil.

1.2.3 The Monster

In the horror fiction, the term ‘monster’ is often associated with the creatures such as: vampires, demons, werewolves or zombies. When it comes to the theme of children as the instruments of evil, the child monsters started to appear in the horror literature of twentieth century, as the miniature equivalents of their adult predecessors.²⁶

In *Pet Sematary*, there is depicted one of the smallest zombies of the fictional world.²⁷ Two year old Gage is reanimated by his father and because of that he becomes the evil monster who is going to kill a family friend and his own mother. Nevertheless while the zombie is understood by popular belief as the reanimated being with a desire to eat human brains, Büssing inclines to the modern perception of the zombie as “a person or reanimated corpse [...] that feeds on human flesh.”²⁸

1.3 Evil children in literature

The boom of evil children in literature began around 1950s. As for the American and British authors, they started to be obsessed with the evil child characters in their works. For instance Ray Bradbury, as one of the first writers, came up with this subgenre in his short story “The Small Assassin” (1946) and later in his another story “The Veldt” (1950). This trend also continued in other works from the 1950s, such as Richard Matheson’s story “Born of Man and Woman” (1950), Jerome Bixby’s “It’s a good life” (1953), William Golding’s novel *Lord of the Flies* (1954), John Wyndham’s *The Midwith Cuckoos* (1957) or William March’s *The Bad Seed* (1954).²⁹

In 1960s there was still a tendency to portray evil children in the literary works and the writers followed this trend in a different way. They depicted children who became or were made evil rather than children who were born like that. The authors then continued in writing about evil children in their works, exempli gratia Shirley Jackson and her novel *We Have Always Live in the Castle* (1962), Flannery O’Connor and “The Lame Shall Enter

²⁶ See Büssing, *Aliens in The Home*, 110.

²⁷ See *Ibid.*, 117.

²⁸ Oxford University Press, “Zombie,” accessed April 28, 2016, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/zombie>.

²⁹ See Karen J. Renner, “Evil Children in Film and Literature: Notes Toward a Genealogy,” *Lit: Literature Interpretation Theory* 22, no. 2 (2011): 80-81, doi: 10.1080/10436928.2011.572330.

First” (1965) and Joyce Carol Oates with her *Expensive People* (1968). Then Ira Levin came up with one of the most famous horror novel *Rosemary’s Baby* (1967) and as one of the last authors of this period he concluded this decade.³⁰

The following writers from 1970s and early 1980s, impressed by a success of *Rosemary’s Baby*, started to publish more and more texts about evil children. The biggest expansion was with those children who were either a demonic or psychological deviant’s type. One of the most significant works was the novel *The Exorcist* (1971) by William Peter Blatty. Other famous novels were for instance Thomas Tryon’s *The Other* (1971), Dean Koontz’s *Demon Child* (1971) and *Demon Seed* (1973), then Anne Rice succeeded with her series of books *Vampire Chronicles* (1976-2014), where she included her well-known novel *Interview with the Vampire* (1976). In this era also Stephen King enthralled the readership by his books containing evil children. To recapitulate them, they are those already demonstrated works like *Carrie*, “Children of the Corn”, *Pet Sematary* or *Firestarter*.³¹

When it comes to the period of 1990s, the authors went on in a creating scary kids. To mention authors such as Toni Morrison and her novel *Beloved* (1987) or Doris Lessing with *The Fifth Child* (1988).³² Regarding nowadays works, Karen J. Renner holds the view that “the evil child is almost a trite plot device.”³³

1.3.1 The concept of a ‘child’

In the given examples, the concept of the ‘child’ is understood to be rather general than the concrete one. The government or cultural ‘laws’, which differs the child from the adult, vary from a country to country and from one culture to another one. However these ‘laws’ suggest that the boundary should be marked by age. Karen J. Renner defines the child as anyone who has not reach the boundary of eighteen years.³⁴ Nevertheless due to the story “Children of the Corn”, in this thesis I will be working with the child as someone who is under the age of nineteen.

³⁰ See Renner. “Evil Children in Film and Literature”, 81.

³¹ See Ibid., 82-83.

³² See Ibid., 83.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ See Ibid., 83-84.

1.3.2 The concept of 'evil'

Evil has enormous number of forms and is possible to apply it in many ways. Generally evil is understood to be the opposite of good. According to the Oxford dictionary the concept of 'evil' means "profound immorality and wickedness, especially when regarded as supernatural force."³⁵

When considering the concept of evil from the point of view of the 'evil child', it is not easy to depict what makes these children evil. Every discussed child is mean in a different way. Some is possessed by a demon, some is a murderer, a zombie or a vampire. Evil children are thus the results of evil which affected them from the outer environment or is innate in them.³⁶

King understands evil as something 'inner'. "Evil is inside us. The older I get, the less I think there's some sort of outside devilish influence; it comes from people. [...]"³⁷ Nevertheless King both chooses to portray evil as some outer power which influences his literary characters and as well evil as the characters' inner or inherited nature. Inner evil comes out of Jack Torrance from the novel *The Shining*, who is controlled by the memories and by an inherited temper of his abusive father. And furthermore this inner evil is strengthened by external evil of the hotel. In the following analysis, evil will be mostly external and will have various forms generated by the specific place or entity, namely the hotel, the Indian burial ground and an embodiment of evil in the form of God.

³⁵ Oxford University Press, "Evil," accessed April 1, 2016, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/evil>.

³⁶ See Renner, "Evil Children in Film and Literature," 83-85.

³⁷ Ella Alexander, "Stephen King: 'Evil is Innate'," Independent, October 29, 2014, accessed April 2, 2016, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/stephen-king-god-is-a-source-of-strength-yet-organised-religion-is-a-dangerous-tool-9826478.html>.

2 THE SHINING

The Shining, Stephen King's one of the bestsellers was published in 1977.³⁸ Jack Torrance is hired as an out-of-season caretaker of *The Overlook*, the renowned hotel which is the whole winter cut off from civilization by severe blizzards. As a recovering alcoholic, a writer and a former teacher, he and his family check in this hotel as the only guests. Together with his wife Wendy and his son Danny they are supposed to find out that the hotel is dominated by the evil force. Wendy Torrance takes this moving as the last opportunity in order to save her marriage and family life. She became a stressed out, hysterical, and frightened woman due to Jack's alcoholism and the influence of her own mother. Their five-year-old son, Daniel Anthony 'Danny' Torrance is not an ordinary boy. Danny is endowed with a special skill thanks to which he is able to read other people's mind, to see visions of the future or to perceive evil power. He is a 'shiner'.

This family moved in the hotel the day when season was over. Danny met there with an *Overlook's* Afro-American chef Dick Hallorann, who was 'shiner' as well. As Hallorann was leaving he warned Danny about a dangerousness of this place and he said to call him telepathically, if something vicious happens. Until the snow cut them off, the days had gone well. Thereafter weird matters started to occur. Jack found scrapbook where the violent history of the hotel was portrayed and this happening became the fatal moment for Jack's gradual insanity. The hotel wanted to get him on its side and more than that also Jack wished to be part of it and live forever. This evil place was doing what it wanted, the ghosts of the hotel revived, the ballroom was full of guests, in a Colorado bar a bartender was preparing the martini drinks for Jack even though all alcohol from the hotel was taken away, and also when everybody was asleep, the elevator started to going up and down with the ghost guests who were invited to the fancy-dress ball and so forth.

"This inhuman place makes human monsters."³⁹ The hotel forced to Jack to kill his family, thus he started his mission with roque mallet in his hand. Nobody could call them a help but Danny. Hallorann came to aid to Danny and Wendy and all three escaped right in the moment when the hotel with Jack and all its evil force exploded.

³⁸ See Tony Magistrale, *Stephen King: America's Storyteller* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010), 91.

³⁹ Stephen King, *The Shining* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2011), 156.

2.1 Failure of the parenthood

Stephen King intentionally exploits his children's characters in order to criticize American lifestyle. Sara Martín Alegre's work claims that King's picturing of the relationship between parents and children in his novels is a portrayal of the failure of the American family. Moreover in this view Alegre believes that Stephen King indirectly sends a moral message, "be good to your children,"⁴⁰ to his readers.⁴¹ In *The Shining* the fault of the adult is constituted by Jack, his father, his mother, Wendy, her mother and as well partially by a chef, Hallorann. In *The Shining* all histories mingle with one another. Danny becomes the instrument of the familial and the hotel ghosts, who shape his personality and leave their mark on him.⁴²

Danny should blame on his grandfather for his horrific experiences. Jack's failure as the father has its roots in his own childhood. As in the introduction of *The Shining* King says "he decided to admit Jack's love of his father in spite of his father's brutal nature."⁴³ According to King, who did not simply show the cruelty of Jack's father, this changes understanding of the novel. Until Jack was seven years old he had love his father despite the fact that his father used to beat him. Jack would play with his trucks in the hall waiting for his father. Always when Jack's father came back from the work, he would lift little Jack up, both of them crying 'Elevator!'. Jack's love to his father went hand in hand with fear from him, the fear from his 'good right hand'.⁴⁴ Jack's tough childhood is projected through his whole life, his father's words and nature were gradually stealing into Jack's mind until he changed into him. His father showed to Jack a bad role model, not only by his lousy upbringing but also by his alcoholism. Jack became the alcoholic and a rapist, who beat his student up. Nevertheless the fatal moment, which strongly influenced Jack, was the day when his father beat Jack's mother by the cane in front of his eyes. He kept repeating "come on and take your medicine"⁴⁵ when he was beating her. This sentence interlaces the whole story as suggestion of forthcoming happenings. Danny was hearing this sentence in his head but did not know what it meant until the very end, when Jack went after him with his murderous weapon. For Jack this sentence is part of his own subconscious, forcing him to do the same thing as his dead father used to do. One day Jack's dad came into Jack's dream

⁴⁰ Alegre, "Nightmares of Childhood," 105.

⁴¹ See Ibid.

⁴² See Magistrale, *Stephen King: America's Storyteller*, 120.

⁴³ King, *The Shining*, xi-xii.

⁴⁴ See Ibid., 245-246.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 142.

to remind him of his harsh childhood, to show him that he had behaved 'rightly' because they had deserved it and finally to make him to punish his family. After Jack had escaped from the pantry he began to follow his father's advice.

As well as Jack's mother gave to Jack a specific pattern to his future. She let Jack's father to beat her and her children and by that she jeopardized them. Jack's siblings "hated that their mother, a nondescript woman who rarely spoke above a mutter, only suffered [their father] because of her Catholic upbringing said that she must."⁴⁶ After Wendy had locked Jack in the pantry in order not to hurt her or Danny, "[Jack] started to sympathize with his father. Jack realizes now what exactly had driven his daddy to drink in the first place. Hadn't it been the woman he was married to?"⁴⁷ Now Jack started to think that it was right what his mother did, that she actually raised the children to respect their father. And in a view of Jack, Wendy did not raise his son to respect him and that is another reason why both of them have to be punished.

Wendy did not leave Jack despite his alcoholism and violent nature and due to that she exposed Danny to evil. As Kate Sullivan stated, "Wendy chooses her erotic attraction to and support of Jack over Danny's safety."⁴⁸ Wendy has always loved Jack, just after the incident when Jack had broken Danny's arm she felt a hate for him. At that time she was decided she divorce him, not because of Danny, but because the situation was bad. Jack was a drunk and a rough and she just waited when he will lose his job. Nevertheless she could not fully accept that her marriage would be over, she waited for some miracle. Moreover she was afraid that her son would blame her for the divorce. Thus she constantly believed that Jack could change and will realize his problem. He really stopped drinking at that time. Not for Wendy but due to the car accident that Wendy had no idea about. So next she agreed to move in the *Overlook* Hotel just because she hoped for a new start for her family.

"[...] But in sleep she did believe them, and in sleep, with her husband's seed still drying on her tights, she felt that the three of them had been permanently welded together – that if their three/oneness was to be destroyed, it would not be destroyed by any of them but from outside. Most of what she believed centered around her love for Jack. She had never stopped loving him, except maybe for the dark period immediately following Danny's accident."⁴⁹

Wendy's relationship with her own mother influenced Wendy's willingness to stay with Jack. When she wanted to leave Jack, she had no place to go. She knew her mother

⁴⁶ King, *The Shining*, 245.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 421.

⁴⁸ Kate Sullivan, "Stephen King's Bookish Boys: (Re)imagining the Masculine," *Masculinities* 14 (1999-2000), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.ark5583.0014.002>.

⁴⁹ King, *The Shining*, 59.

would take her back, but she would just reproached to Wendy that she was incapable to keep her marriage and to raise Danny. Wendy alienated from her mother as the result that her mother had kicked her out of the house, just because she was convinced that Wendy had caused breakup of her marriage. Thanks to support from Jack, Wendy was able to separate from her mother. When Danny was born, she sometimes visited her mother, however she kept showing her how bad mother Wendy is.

2.1.1 Pseudo-parental relationship

Dick Hallorann's special connection with Danny might be understood as the pseudo-parental relationship. Hallorann shares the shining ability with Danny, which makes their relationship special. Hallorann failed at his role, although he corrected his mistake. When Torrance family arrived to the hotel, Hallorann immediately recognized that Danny is the shiner. He knew what is going on in *The Overlook*, that this malevolent hotel is able to hurt or kill Danny. Hallorann warned Danny and persuaded him and himself, too, that the evil things in that place are only like the pictures in the children's book. Nevertheless the failure of Hallorann lies in his insufficient attempt to get Danny out of the hotel while it was time. Hallorann just tried if the boy would go with him to Florida, but it was just the vain attempt. "Sure you don't want to go to Florida, doc?"⁵⁰ Nevertheless once Danny called Hallorann for the help, he did not hesitate and sprung to Danny's aid. Hallorann took his own life for Danny when he was driving in the middle of the raging blizzard. And as well Hallorann did not give up when the ghosts of the hotel tried to telepathically scare him not to go to save Danny.⁵¹ And even one more time Hallorann resisted. At the end, when the hotel was burning and Danny and Wendy were running away only in a nightwear, Hallorann decided to take some horse blankets from the equipment shed. Suddenly there stored roque mallets started to lure Hallorann to take them and kill Danny and Wendy, but he resisted the temptation.⁵² Even though these last events indicates that Hallorann corrected his mistake, he could not save already damaged innocence of Danny.

2.1.2 Like father like son

Jack's harsh childhood reflects in his own parenting. In the view of Alegre, Jack is "[unable] to cope with the effects of the abuse inflicted by his father."⁵³ His rough nature and

⁵⁰ King, *The Shining*, 81.

⁵¹ See *Ibid.*, 433.

⁵² See *Ibid.*, 489.

⁵³ Alegre, "Nightmares of Childhood," 108.

alcoholism made him to be aggressive and even though he did not want to hurt Danny, he did so. Jack broke the arm of his three-year-old son because of a spilled beer all over his paper. That was the first time when Jack ‘lost his temper’ and realized that he has to stop drinking for his son. However a breaking Danny’s arm was not the last incident. Jack smacked Danny’s face because of the fact that Danny supposedly lied about the hedge shaped like animals which had seemed to be alive. Jack slapped him to persuade himself that it was not true even though he had seen the animals as well. Nevertheless the hotel started to lure Jack to harm his son even more – to kill him.

Despite the brutal incidents, Danny has always loved his father. It was that special father-son relationship which Wendy could not fully understand. “Jack and his pride!”⁵⁴ She used to say to express she was jealous that Danny loves his father more than her. For instance when Wendy wanted to fix Danny’s glider, he refused, he wanted to his daddy to do it. Jack used to read to Danny, he used to teach him how to read and Danny liked to do it with his daddy. After that incident with the lady from the room 217 Danny refused maternal embrace and run to Jack. Then Jack also made him to drink some homemade medicine to recover. Wendy knew he would not have drunk it for her. In the scene of the last moment with his father, when Jack is going to kill him, Danny says to the evil monster with a mask of his father:

“‘You’re not my daddy,’ Danny told it again. ‘And if there’s a little bit of my daddy left inside you, he knows they lie her. Everything is a lie and cheat. [...] ‘You’re not my daddy, you’re the hotel. And when you get what you want, you won’t give my daddy anything because you’re selfish. And my Daddy knows that. You had to make him to drink the Bad Staff. That’s the only way you could get him, you lying false face.’ [...] ‘Go on hit me. But you’ll never get what you want from me.’”⁵⁵

Danny suppressed evil in his father by forgiving him his sins and by transferring them onto the hotel. For the last time Jack changed to the loving father again and let Danny escape. “[...] suddenly his daddy *was* there, looking at him in mortal agony. [...] ‘Doc,’ Jack Torrance said. ‘Run away. Quick. And remember how much I love you.’”⁵⁶ Even after all evil what happened to Danny, he missed his father. After some time in Florida, when Danny was still the child, he remembered his father:

“When [Hallorann] looked back at Danny, he saw that his eyes had filled with tears. Putting an arm around him, [Hallorann] said, ‘What’s this?’ ‘Nothing,’ Danny whispered. ‘You’re missin your dad, aren’t you?’ Danny nodded. ‘You always know.’ One of the tears spilled from the corner of his right eye and trickled slowly down his cheek.”⁵⁷

⁵⁴ King, *The Shining*, 12.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 475.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 495.

Similarities among Jack, his father and Danny are obvious. Jack found a wasp nest when he was repairing the roof of the hotel. He decided to give this 'trophy' to Danny just as his father had given the wasp nest to him when he was little. Jack killed all the wasps by special preparation and Danny was allowed to take this nest to his bedroom. Nevertheless the very next night wasps came to life and stung Danny. Jack thought the preparation failed, nonetheless the fact was that the hotel reanimated the wasps. Mark Torrance gave the nest to Jack and Jack gave another nest to Danny, too. The wasp nest might be analyzed as a symbol of their mutual relationship and as a connection link among them. Moreover it can represent their genes which pass on. And even though Jack wanted to suppress and 'kill' the aggressive temper in himself, it recovered and started to sting. The same as evil is able to reanimate the wasps, it can stimulate the aggressive genes in Jack in order to awake the monster in him.

Like father like son. The link between the names of Jack and Danny may be another symbol of their likeness. Real name of Jack is John Daniel Edward Torrance whose middle name transferred to his son Daniel Anthony Torrance. These names can signify that Danny is resembling to his father. There were moments when even Wendy was noticing that. Danny was sitting on the curb, not playing with the trucks though, but waiting for his Daddy just like Jack used to do. As well as in gestures Danny was like his father. "[Danny] shrugged and Wendy saw Danny's paternity in the gestures; Jack could hardly have done it better himself."⁵⁸ Or in another situation: "[Wendy] looked at him pleadingly and thought how strange it was; she had never seen him when he looked so much like Jack."⁵⁹

As is evident Jack's abusive behavior did not give a good example to Danny either. Through this model of failed fatherhood King intends to send a moral message to American Family⁶⁰, namely that the poor childhood creates a base for a bad parenthood or adulthood and causes repetition of the same faults. As Martin Chilton stated, King claims: "The shining boy never really left my mind and I thought I let him to be an alcoholic and see if he could do a better job than his dad."⁶¹ King's sequel of *The Shining - Doctor Sleep* (2013) was published 36 years later and portrays the grown up man, Danny. He became a person with

⁵⁸ King, *The Shining*, 97.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 413.

⁶⁰ See Alegre, "Nightmares of Childhood," 108.

⁶¹ Martin Chilton, "Stephen King: The Shining Boy Never Left My Mind," *Telegraph.Co.Uk*, November 13, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1456125227?accountid=15518>.

the features of his dead father. He is the alcoholic with explosive nature and still has his shining ability.⁶²

2.1.3 A Milestone between child and adult

Daniel Anthony 'Danny' Torrance had an imaginary friend, Tony. King's intention probably was to use Danny's middle name for his friend in order to show connection between Danny and Tony, and moreover to stress the relation with his grandfather whose middle name is as well Anthony. At the beginning of this novel, the reader does not know who Tony actually is. However initially he seems to be the bad and mean character. Tony used to appear in Danny's mind when he fainted or fell asleep. In 'dreams' similar to epileptic fits, Tony would tempt Danny to go to the scary places, to an old basement, showing him where the lost things are hidden and importantly he was showing him the evil happenings of the future. Tony was displaying him what will happen in the hotel but Danny had not understood it yet. He was revealing to Danny the fragments and the images of the forthcoming events, the snow, the person in the tub, the blood, the roar, the bloody mallet in daddy's car, the sounds of the mallet, some voice saying: "come on and take your medicine"⁶³, and REDRUM written on the mirror. Danny was scared and begged Tony to leave him alone. However in the end of the book reader is familiarized with a real identity of Tony. He is actually Danny himself but the ten-year-old boy, the milestone between five-year-old Danny and adult Danny. Danny's innocence was being damaged by Tony and his portraying of the evil visions of the future. Danny has gradually started to understand what all the evil images in his mind means. Finally Danny deciphered what the REDRUM means: "[...] in the medicine mirror, the word REDRUM flashing off and on. [...] And then, eyes widening in horror, he saw the word REDRUM reflecting dimly from the glass dome, now reflected twice. And he saw that it spelled MURDER."⁶⁴ Unfortunately he had to fight with a problem which he could not solve at his age. He was not able to stop evil of the hotel without the help.

2.1.4 Destroying innocence of the children

The hotel remembers the murder of the innocent ones. Delbert Grady was the former caretaker of The *Overlook*. As well as Jack, he moved in with his family, wife and two little

⁶² See Sam Leith, "The New Review: Books: Danny, Champion of the Underworld: The Little Boy with Psychic Powers is Grown Up in a Powerful Sequel to the Shining, Writes Sam Leith: Doctor Sleep Stephen King Hodder & Stoughton Pounds 19.99, pp485." *The Observer*, September 29, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1437494159?accountid=15518>.

⁶³ King, *The Shining*, 142.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 337.

daughters. They were eight and six years old. Not only Jack but also Grady was the same type of person, the alcoholic. The hotel destroyed his humanity like the Jack ones. When the hotel welcomed spring season, the people found the four bodies. Grady shoot his wife, he murdered his little girls with the ax and finally the hotel allowed him to kill himself and to become a part of the hotel's spooks. The monstrosity of the hotel made him to kill his innocent children, he failed totally as the parent. Then Grady became the one through whom the hotel spoke with Jack, manipulated with him, forced him to kill his wife and Danny. And finally he was the one who opened the pantry where Jack was locked by Wendy.⁶⁵

Jack is the killer motivated not only by his father Mark but also by evil of the hotel. King decided to justify Jack's fault by transforming it to the hotel which possess him. The main failure of Jack was that he let himself to be controlled by the hotel which intensified his brutal nature. "The hotel persuaded him that only killing his family will liberate him."⁶⁶ Jack was selfish and did not want to give up of this occupation. He has already failed when he was fired from the university, he did not want to repeat it. He was proud of the possibility to belong somewhere, he wanted to become a part of *The Overlook* – "manager/caretaker."⁶⁷ After he had found the scrapbook, he was convinced that he as the writer has to write the book about the history of the hotel. These were the dreams which he did not want to give in. The *Overlook* Hotel persuaded him that his family wants to take it from him, so he destroyed a two-way radio and intentionally did not fix a snowmobile, the only thing which could get Danny and Wendy out of that snowbound building.

Not only that Jack failed because of the abusing of his son but he was also ruining Danny's child innocence by exposing him to evil. Due to the innocence and the shining talent Danny is prone to experience the evil force more than any other child. The hotel wanted to reach him through his father. With the help of Jack, the hotel desired to get Danny's ability to reveal itself in the even greater power. And Wendy's words confirm this theory: "[...] I worry. Because he's little and he seems very fragile and because ... because something in this hotel seems to want him. And it will go through us to get him if it has to. That's why we must get him out, Jack."⁶⁸

Danny was not the ordinary child. He was born with a placenta over his face and Wendy though that it was a sign that he will be an extraordinary boy. Thanks to his shining

⁶⁵ See King, *The Shining*, 423-424.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 481.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 287.

skills, at his five years, he was more grown up than his peers, however he had still features of the innocence. The signs of the purity consist in his behavior. Like the normal child he likes watching the cartoons, such as *Sesame Street*, he enjoys doing the puzzles, playing with the toys and also he often sucks his thumb. But his purity was getting slowly tarnished. Since he was born he was hearing the thoughts of his parents which afflicted him and was damaging his innocence. His mother used to think to the divorce. Danny knew that parents of his friend Scotty divorced and now he sees his father only on weekends. At least at that time “the greatest terror of Danny’s life was DIVORCE.”⁶⁹ And his father used to play with the word ‘suicide’ in his mind. Danny did not find out what it meant, but he understood that it was the bad thing.

Danny Torrance is the victim child, the instrument of evil, through whom evil reveals itself. The dangerous moment for Danny was supposed to be his entering to the room 217. Dick Hallorann warned him not to go there, but Danny’s curiosity was stronger. Similar situation appeared in the children’s fairy tale, which always scared Danny, “Bluebeard” (1697). It is the story of an aristocrat who had several wives. Nevertheless every wife mysteriously disappeared. Then he got married again. After wedding he had to leave the chateau and gave to his new wife keys to every room in the chateau and she was allowed to go to every room except one. Immediately she desired to see what is hidden in the forbidden room. The room was filled with the dead bodies of Bluebeard’s ex-wives. Bluebeard always punished his wives for their curiosity.⁷⁰ Danny stole the universal key of the room 217 and entered there. In the bathroom, there was the body of the dead woman. “The woman in the tub had been dead for a long time. [...] She was bloated and purple, her gas-filled belly rising out of the cold, ice-rimmed water like some fleshy island. Her breast lolled. Her pubic hair floated.”⁷¹ Eyes of the child saw something that had to grab a piece of his innocence away. Not only that Danny saw a moldy corpse, but also he saw the naked adult woman. The reason why Danny’s innocence is damaged lies in the American society who understands a nudity as the taboo.⁷² To be specific the nudity is state when a human genital, pubic hair or female breast are being shown.⁷³ The taboo is even strengthen when the naked person is seen by a

⁶⁹ King, *The Shining*, 29. Block capitals in the original text.

⁷⁰ See Charles Perrault, *Pohádky Charlese Perraulta* (Praha: Aventinum, 1995).

⁷¹ King, *The Shining*, 239.

⁷² See Anita L. Allen, *Unpopular Privacy: What Must We Hide?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 72.

⁷³ See *Ibid.*, 223.

stranger with an opposite sex.⁷⁴ Generally the taboo is notably strong when the child is exposed to the nudity, or especially female nudity, as is pointed out in this case. The nudity and the sexual content as such are considered as the forbidden and inappropriate things in front of the eyes of the children. This view is rooted in an American conservatism and its strictness about sexuality.⁷⁵ In addition to that the dead naked woman started to choke Danny. After his parents found him, he had bruises onto his neck and was about to collapse. Wendy was convinced that Jack must have done it.

Danny was exposed to the other experiences with a sexual undertone. As well as according to the Romantic concept of the children's innocence these sexual expressions damage innocence of children. While the ghost guests were enjoying the masquerade ball, the man disguised as a dog chased Danny:

“‘Let me by,’ Danny said. ‘I’m going to eat you, little boy,’ the dogman answered, and suddenly a fusillade of barks came from his grinning mouth. [...] ‘Let me by.’ ‘Not by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin,’ the dog man replied. His small red eyes were fixed attentively on Danny’s face. He continued to grin. ‘I’m going to eat you up, little boy. And I think I’ll start with your plump little cock.’”⁷⁶

Then Danny also had to hear another vulgar expression, “[I have] even the *pecker* [...],”⁷⁷ and that right from his father.

Danny’s another cognition, which tarnished his innocence, was the murder in the Presidential Suite, the room where all important guests used to stay. There Danny saw the blood and the pieces of human brain on the wall even though the previous wallpapers had been removed. At the times when hotel had been owned by a Mafia, these criminals used to square accounts with inconvenient persons there.

Next hotel’s evil thing was hedge shaped like animals. The cute rabbit, the dog and the lions could change into the killing animals. Children generally like animals. King’s image of this evil animals, which was supposed to be lovely, damages Danny’s trust and child incorruptness, because this hedge shaped like animals could move and when Danny was playing at the playground these animals tried to kill him.

Danny, at his five years, had to face the evil by himself. Despite meeting with the evil things Danny did not want open his heart to his parents at first. He feared that men in

⁷⁴ See Allen, *Unpopular Privacy*, 72.

⁷⁵ See Sarah-Jane Stratford, “Conservative Americans are more terrified of sex than violence,” *The Guardian*, November 4, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/nov/04/blue-is-the-warmest-colour-shocking>.

⁷⁶ King, *The Shining*, 368-369.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 474.

white coats would take him from his mommy and daddy, if he told them what he had seen. Danny thought that his father would phone somewhere and say: “[...] My son here can’t stop crying. Please send the MEN IN WHITE COATS to take him to the SANNY-TARIUM. That’s right he’s LOST HIS MARBLES. Thank you.”⁷⁸ Later when Danny told to his parents about the lady from the room 217, Jack denied it, although he saw her, too, also by that Danny lost the trust in his parents. And again Danny’s willingness to trust to parents was broken when Jack slapped him for the fact that he supposedly lied about the hedge animals.

Due to the fact that Danny had experience evil by himself, he lost a big part of his innocence and became more grownup. At the beginning Danny was the innocent child with the thumb in his mouth, who was just hearing and seeing the fragments of the evil things in his mind. Later on he started to understand what Tony is showing to him, what murder means, whose voice is saying “come and take your medicine”⁷⁹, it was his daddy. And eventually he had to grow up and deal with the evil by himself. He saw the dead bodies of two men in front of the Presidential Suite, who started to get up. “!!FALSE FACES!! NOT REAL!!”⁸⁰ Danny tried to scream and they were gone. The decayed woman tempted Danny to her room. “‘False face!! be [sic] hissed. ‘Not real!’ [...] she faded and was gone.”⁸¹ And lastly Danny, as it has been already mentioned, had to deal with his father who was going to kill him. These examples demonstrated the fact that Danny had to face evil of the hotel and by that he was losing his innocence and had to emotionally grow up.

Danny grew up from the innocent child to the ‘big boy’. At the very end of the novel under the pressure of these events, Danny has changed, his innocence was destroyed. Mature Danny urged Wendy and Hallorann that they need to leave the hotel immediately, because it was going to explode. Danny still managed to take care about his mother. He brought “Wendy’s boots and coat and gloves and also his own coat and gloves.”⁸² Danny behaved wisely as they were escaping from the explosion. “He was trying to support his mother, help her over to the snowmobile.”⁸³ After that he also reminded to Hallorann that there was a gas can in the snow, which they need for a drive.

⁷⁸ King, *The Shining*, 215.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 142.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 467.

⁸¹ Ibid., 468.

⁸² Ibid., 480.

⁸³ Ibid., 484.

Nevertheless Danny could never forget what bad things had happened to him. In spite of the fact that Alegre's view is that in the future Danny can cope almost unscathed with the number of evil he experienced, "something and ordinary child might not accomplish, if Danny ever does,"⁸⁴ his childhood was too devastating and left a mark on him.

"[Danny] leaned his head against Halloran's shoulder and wept, the tears now flooding down his face. [...] When he had quieted a little, Halloran said: 'You gonna get over this. You don't think you are there right now, but you will. You got the shi—' 'I wished I didn't!' Danny choked, his voice still thick with tears. 'I wish I didn't have it!' 'But you do,' Hallorann said quietly. 'For better or worse. You didn't get no say, little boy. But the worst is over. [...]'."⁸⁵

Father's guilt, who let himself to be controlled by evil, is clear. However Danny blamed himself for what happened. The hotel wanted to kill Danny for his shining to gain a bigger power and thus Danny was anxious and thought it was all his fault.⁸⁶ King's children's characters are often placed in the adult world and are attached to some important adult character and in spite of the fact that children are not responsible for the adult faults, they have to face their consequences.⁸⁷

To conclude the analysis of *The Shining*, the main failure is represented by Jack, whose alcoholism and brutal nature inherited from his father Mark was intensified by the evil hotel which took advantage of Jack's weakness and changed him into the monster able of killing of his own son. As well due to the failure of Wendy, who was not able to give up of her marriage with Jack, Danny's innocence kept being tarnished by evil of the hotel and by the abusive father. And lastly Hallorann constitutes the only adult who corrected his mistake of not taking Danny away while it was time to do it. Despite the Hallorann's rectification, that he did not hesitate to go to save Danny and did not let himself to be dominated by the hotel, which telepathically tried to persuade him not to go to the hotel and later to kill Danny, Danny's damaged innocence could not be saved.

⁸⁴ Alegre, "Nightmares of Childhood," 109.

⁸⁵ King, *The Shining*, 496.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 495.

⁸⁷ See Magistrale, *Landscape of Fear*, 73-78.

3 PET SEMATARY

Pet Sematary, as King claims in an interview for *Entertainment Tonight*, is probably one of the scariest books of his production. In this work King breaks the big taboo, the death of the child, who revives and comes back as the instrument of evil.⁸⁸

Dr. Louis Creed, his wife Rachel and their two children, a five-year-old daughter Eileen, a year old son Gage and Eileen's beloved pet, a cat named Winston Churchill, moved into the small town Ludlow, Maine. Creed family believed that they can settle in this placid place and live happy life away from the big city Chicago. However nothing is how it looks.

Right in the beginning they met their new neighbor Jud Crandall, an eighty-three-year old man, who soon became the family friend. Jud took them to this special place in Ludlow. In the forest above Creed's house, there was situated an old graveyard, where the generations of children had been burying their dead pets. Children called this place 'Pet Sematary'. Everything seemed fine, until Victor Pascow, a student injured in a car accident, died in Louis's arms. This happening was a foreshadowing of the next events in this novel.

A tomcat Church was hit by a truck in a highway near the family house. In order not to upset Louis's daughter Eileen, Jud decided to show to Louis the Micmac burial ground, the magic and powerful place located deeper in the woods, where he could bury their dead cat. Surprisingly for Louis, the cat came back home, alive, but slightly besotted and aggressive. Then Jud and Louis have not known yet, they awaked the evil power of this burial place.

After some time another accident happened, the truck killed their already two-year-old son Gage. Everybody was devastated by Gage's death, but Louis could keep thinking only about one thing. After the funeral he sent his wife and daughter with her parents to Chicago in order to realize his plan. He dug his son from the grave and buried him again in the Micmac burial place. The very next morning little Gage came back from the death as the killing monster. He managed to murder Jud and his mother Rachel, who came back from Chicago due to bad premonition. When Louis found out what happened, he killed his evil son and set the house on fire. Nevertheless he had not learnt from his mistake, one more time he went to the Indian burial ground, he took the corpse of his wife and buried it. "He played solitaire that night until long after midnight. [...] A cold hand fell on Louis's shoulder. Rachel's voice was grating, full of dirt. '*Darling,*' it said."⁸⁹

⁸⁸ See "1989 Entertainment Tonight review of Stephen King's *Pet Sematary*." YouTube video, 2:37, posted by "RetroAirings," January 12, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lxspr2Jhc-E>.

⁸⁹ Stephen King, *Pet Sematary* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2011), 465.

3.1 Premonition of horror

A hitting by a car became a link appearing throughout this story. Not only Jud Crandall warned the family about the dangerousness of the road near their house but he also suggested the scenario of forthcoming happenings. On the first working day in the university hospital, Louis Creed had to face the death. The student Victor Pascow was hit by the car and died in Louis's surgery. Louis was with him right at the moment when Pascow's soul was leaving his body. That was the reason why Pascow stuck to Creed's family.

The supernatural power wants to break the Creed family, it plays with them in order to get children. "[...] it is not ultimately the family itself that attracts evil. More often than not, it is the child [...], who attract evil because they are in rebellion against adult world."⁹⁰ Pascow's death is either a warning of the future events or a temptation of evil itself. As Pascow was dying, he whispered to Louis: "'In the Pet Sematary.' [...] 'It is not real Sematary...'"⁹¹ Louis did not believe what he had heard. Later that night Louis had a real dream. Pascow made him to go to the Pet Sematary and showed him the downfall and advised him not to go behind it. As well as he said to Louis directly what was going to happen: "'Your destruction and the destruction of all you love is very near, Doctor.'"⁹² In a view of Jesse W. Nash, Pascow allures Louis by showing him the hint, the possibility. Moreover he says that King intentionally pays attention to Pascow's appearance of a ghost. He has dried blood on his face. This can be interpreted as that he looks like an Indian with a red face paint. This correspond with Nash's statement that Louis is tempted by Indian burial ground itself.⁹³ In addition to that, an intertextual reference of the forest as the puritans' symbol of evil and the place of not God's chosen Indians is visible in Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story "Young Goodman Brown".

Louis takes the premonitions rationally, however this not paying attention to the supernatural forces makes Louis irresponsible. As well as Louis is not rational about the protecting his own children. Not only he willingly buy the house near the road frequented by the cars, he neither protected the premises of the house by a fence after the car accident with the cat had happened. Louis will not learn from his mistakes, but King as well as the supernatural force would not let him.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Nash, "Postmodern Gothic," 155.

⁹¹ King, *Pet Sematary*, 72-73.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 88.

⁹³ See Nash, "Postmodern Gothic," 157.

⁹⁴ See *Ibid.*, 156.

3.2 Death is to be kept from the children

After the Creed family had arrived to Ludlow, Jud showed them the graveyard of the dead pets. Local children have taken care about it and have buried their dogs, cats or even hamsters there. That was the first time when Louis's and Rachel's five-year-old daughter, Eileen, came across with the concept of death, it was the first cemetery she had ever seen. Her mother was not happy about it. According to her, Eileen was too young to understand the concept of death. For Rachel it was morbid that children maintain the graves. Moreover she thought, it was mistake to take their little daughter there. Nevertheless mother's scrupulosity did not save her daughter from the facing of death and evil.

Rachel's anxiety about the graveyards and the dead people has its roots in her own childhood. When she was eight years old, her ten-year-old sister, Zelda, had been taken ill with spinal meningitis. The disease made the mean monster from her. Rachel often had nightmares about her sister. "[...] Louis, I was eight ... bad dreams every night ... I had started to think she hated me because *my* back was right, because *I* didn't have the constant pain, because *I* could walk, because *I* was going to live ... I started to imagine she wanted to kill me."⁹⁵ Then her irresponsible parents left her with her sick sister alone and went to some visit. Zelda had choked with her own tongue and died. Rachel thought it was her blame, however it was fault of her parents that Rachel had to face such an experience. However Rachel was glad that her sister died. Due to that, even at adult age, Rachel was convinced, her sister was going to kill her somehow. After Gage's funeral, Rachel had the nightmares again. "The last few nights, since Gage died, when I go to sleep, Zelda's there. She says that she's coming for me, and this time she'll get me. That both she and Gage will get me. For letting them die."⁹⁶ Zelda serves a symbol of ancient ghosts who, just as she, are waiting for a revenge.⁹⁷

Eileen must be kept from death in order to protect her child innocence. After visiting the Pet Sematary, Louis's daughter was so upset with possible death of her beloved pet, so when the truck killed Church, Jud meant to help Louis with their loss. He knew the Indian burial ground from his own experience, when he had buried his dog there. He brought Louis there and laid to rest the cat Church. Nonetheless it did not rest in peace, it came back as the

⁹⁵ King, *Pet Sematary*, 227.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 336.

⁹⁷ See James Smythe, "Rereading Stephen King: Week 16 – Pet Sematary," review of *Pet Sematary*, by Stephen King, *The Guardian*, February 21, 2013. <http://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2013/feb/21/rereading-stephen-king-pet-sematary>.

zombie. Eileen saw the difference, but she did not understand that. Church smelled as a bad meat, and it changed into hellcat, it started to kill rats and crows, not because it was hungry but because it enjoyed it. What was meant to be a protection was actually changed into evil. Then Louis and Jud had not known yet that they had irritated the power of this ancient burial ground.

3.3 Death is physiologically impossible

A rational doctor let himself to be dominated by evil. Louis as the doctor was a witness to many deaths. He understood passing as a part of the life and as the natural thing. It is a last stop on the line of the life and there is no way to come back. *“The dead do not return; it is physiologically impossible.”*⁹⁸ When undead Church returned home, Louis could not believe his eyes. He thought the cat must have been only paralyzed, not killed. Later on when Jud explained him everything, Louis gradually started to believe it. The reader must have suspect that something terrible is going to come about when Louis asked: *“Has anyone ever buried a person up there?”*⁹⁹ Meaning the burial ground is capable of bringing the dead back to the life. The burial ground is like a drug, it has such a strength that Louis could not stop to think about it. He could not resist the possibility he could return his beloved ones to the life. Here evil might be understood as human’s desire to command the nature. Louis was playing God, *“Lazarus, come forth’... because if He hadn’t called for Lazarus by name, everyone in that graveyard would have risen,”*¹⁰⁰ and he was drunk with such a power. However sometimes it is better to give up something no matter how much pain it causes. *“Sometimes death is better.”*¹⁰¹ King shows us what happens when evil finds the human’s weak spot and makes him to desire something so much regardless of consequences.¹⁰²

3.4 Consequences

The Micmac burial place wanted more, to get the innocent one. It caused the death of Gage, the place had power. The truck driver, who killed Gage, claimed: *“he just felt like putting the pedal to the metal.”*¹⁰³ Gage thought it was just a game when he was running away from

⁹⁸ King, *Pet Sematary*, 84. Italics in the original text.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 183.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 421.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 180.

¹⁰² See Smythe, “Rereading Stephen King.”

¹⁰³ King, *Pet Sematary*, 329.

his parents. Nevertheless the truck killed him at his two years. Then Jud realized what he caused:

“I wasn’t exaggerating when I said I might have killed your boy, Louis, or had a hand in it. It’s an evil, curdled place, and I had no business taking you up there to bury that cat. I know that now. It has a power you’ll beware of if you know what’s good for your family and what’s good for you. I wasn’t strong enough to fight it. It has a power...It’s been full of power before, and I’m scared it’s coming around to full again. I’m scared it used me to get at you through your son.”¹⁰⁴

Jud knew that the returning the human among the living could not end well. Jud with the help of the real story tried to persuade Louis not think about reburying Gage. He came to tell Louis about Timmy Baterman and his dad.¹⁰⁵

Timmy was the son of some local man. When young Timmy died in a war, the old Baterman was not able to cope with death of his seventeen-year-old son. So as soon as the corpse of Timmy had arrived, his father buried him in the Indian burial ground. When Timmy came back as the zombie, he was evil and he was saying only the disgusting things about people. And it was not Timmy, it was ‘it’. The old Baterman eventually killed his son and set their house on a fire.

“It was only the bad *it* wanted to talk about, though. It was only the bad *it* wanted us to remember, because *it* was bad ... and because *it* knew we meant danger for it. [...] The thing we saw that night, lookin’ up into that red sun ... that was a monster. Maybe it was a zombie, or a *dybbuk*, or a demon. Maybe there’s no name for such a thing as that, but the Micmacs would have known what it was, name or no.’ ‘What?’ Louis said numbly. ‘Something that had been touched by the Wendigo,’ Jud said evenly.”¹⁰⁶

In Ludlow’s forest, beside ancient evil controlling the Micmac burial ground, there was another evil creature. Local forest was also inhabited by Wendigo. According to a legend, Wendigo or Wendigo is believed to be the cannibalistic monster, the evil descendant of the Native American tribes and to be once the human being. The human became the monster due to a starvation and a severe winter which made him to eat the other people.¹⁰⁷ Wendigo and the Micmac burial ground are thus related to the Indians. Nevertheless both of them are considered to be evil with the power to create from the human the evil monsters.

Nevertheless Louis did not care for the warning of Jud. Gage returned as the revenge from beyond the grave, from the hell. He became the murderous zombie who eats human flesh. Gage took a scalpel from father’s medical bag and went to kill Jud. Jud had to

¹⁰⁴ King, *Pet Sematary*, 307.

¹⁰⁵ See *Ibid.*, 290.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 306.

¹⁰⁷ See Robert A. Brightman, “The Windigo in the Material World,” *Ethnohistory* 35, no. 4 (Autumn 1988): 339, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/482140>.

pay for his fault as the first one. Gage was evil and mean: “‘Hello, Jud,’ Gage piped in a babyish but perfectly understandable voice. ‘I’ve come to send your rotten, stinking old soul straight to hell.’”¹⁰⁸ The vicious cat, Church, helped Gage to accomplish his aim. Birds of a feather flock together. Then Rachel arrived and went directly to Jud’s house. She was looking for Jud and when she opened the door of the room:

“Zelda stood there. [...] Zelda was wearing the suit they had buried Gage in. [...] It was Zelda screaming, ‘I finally came back for you, Rachel, I’m going to twist your back like mine and you’ll never get out of bed again.’ [...] Church was perched on one of her shoulders and Zelda’s face swam and changed, and Rachel saw with spiraling, sickening horror that it really wasn’t Zelda at all. [...] It was Gage. His face was not black but dirty, smeared with blood.”¹⁰⁹

Gage run to her mother. “‘I brought you something, Mommy,’ he screamed.”¹¹⁰ And not only that Gage killed her mother, he tried to eat her.

With great power comes great responsibility. Louis crossed the line when he reanimated Gage. This fault brought consequences and Louis must be held responsible for his actions and must remedy what he caused. Despite the fact Gage was Louis’s son, he did not felt any moral issue when he was going to kill him. Louis as the doctor evaluated the alternatives whether his son could come back as the normal or retarded child and if he would come back as “a thing of evil”¹¹¹, Louis did not hesitate to kill him, he would kill him as he was a rat.¹¹² When Louis saw what Gage had done, he had to get busy. As he planned his son had to die, now by his hands. Then Louis set the house on fire to cover his tracks. However Louis was not able to deal with the consequences of his faults and did not accept them as they were.

3.5 Loving care for a family

Louis had not learn from his mistakes. One more time he tried to beat the border between life and death. The love for his wife was stronger than his rational thinking. And again probably in order to protect her daughter and to correct all his mistakes, he buried his wife in the Micmac burial place. However King intentionally did not solve the ending of his work

¹⁰⁸ King, *Pet Sematary*, 431.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 439.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 348.

¹¹² See *Ibid.*, 348.

and kept the horror flowing.¹¹³ It depends on the reader's imagination what could happen next with the Creed family when Rachel came back from beyond the grave.

Due to the fact that Louis was not able to admit his mistakes, he still tried to correct them. Nevertheless this is a vicious circle, where he still continues to fail and remedy. "*Your son is dead but your daughter is not. What are you doing for her?*"¹¹⁴ Louis is the loving father, who does his mistakes for his family. For instance as it is already mentioned Louis's protection of his daughter in order to keep the death from her. Nevertheless another effort to protect his children is visible in the paradox situation when Louis was carrying the corpse of his dead son through the forest in order to reanimate him. When Louis was on his way to the Micmac burial ground, he met Wendigo. "He clutched Gage closer to him, hugging him, as if to protect him."¹¹⁵ Louis's constant effort to protect his children is thus visible, however he protected his son in order to damage his innocence by making a monster from him.

3.6 People being dominated by evil

Evil from burial place did not allow anybody to avert its plan. It somehow tempted Louis to exhume his son and to bury him in the Micmac burial ground. And when Louis persuaded his wife to go to Chicago with her daughter and her parents, suddenly, as if by magic, some seats in the airplane were free. Louis had then a real chance to reanimate Gage. Also when Louis was stealing into to the graveyard, he was lucky that nobody saw him. By that time Jud had already known what Louis was after. He was waiting for Louis until he will come back, unfortunately something mighty tried to sleep him: "*It's puttin' me to sleep [...] it wants me out of the play.*"¹¹⁶ And one more time the burial ground caused something. It induced a breaking of Rachel's car and by that it complicated to Rachel to arrive in time and to prevent Louis from reanimating their son, and actually it made her to arrive on time in order to be killed by Gage.

And again like with Danny in *The Shining*, Eileen's (the five-year-old daughter of Louis and Rachel), innocence is damaged by the portraying of the evil visions. Meanwhile in Chicago, Eileen had nightmares. Victor Pascow, who she had never heard of before, was showing her what was probably going to happen to her father, brother Gage and beloved pet Church. She saw undead Gage, dead Daddy, and Church. Nevertheless due to the Eileen's

¹¹³ See Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, "Books of the Times," *The New York Times*, October 21, 1983, <http://www.nytimes.com/1983/10/21/books/books-of-the-times-243538.html>.

¹¹⁴ King, *Pet Sematary*, 316.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 411.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 401.

nightmares, Rachel was persuaded that something was wrong. So after they had arrived into Chicago, Rachel decided she has to come back to Ludlow. Pascow might have only warned Eileen, on the other hand he could deliberately cause the death of Rachel.

Pascow's ghost might represent the revenge from the hell of Rachel's dead sister, Zelda. Both Pascow and Zelda did the same sound, "Gaaaaaa—,"¹¹⁷ when they were dying and King's emphasis on this same sound might be read as his intention to show the possible connection between Pascow and Zelda.

To summarize the novel *Pet Sematary*, the main failure lies in Louis's continuous effort to protect his family. In the beginning Louis and the family friend Jud reanimated Eileen's beloved pet in order to protect her innocence. However this first mistake cause death of another Louis's child, two-year-old Gage. Louis was not able to cope with the fact that his son is dead and moreover that he failed to protect him. When he tried to remedy his mistake he failed again. Louis's well-meant intention to protect family from the pain over the loss of little Gage changed into evil plan, when Louis, controlled by evil, created from the innocent child the monster who killed Louis's wife and the family friend. And one more time Louis wanted to correct what he caused when he revived his dead wife. Nevertheless his initial aim to protect his daughter did not change the reality that the innocence of his children was damaged for his own failure.

¹¹⁷ King, *Pet Sematary*, 72.

4 CHILDREN OF THE CORN

The theme of 'evil innocent' is presented in Stephen King's short story *Children of the Corn*. The setting of this story is rural Nebraska, where a couple Vicky and Burt drive across with the plan to spend some time in California and to save their marriage. In the surrounding of this area there was nothing than the fields of corn. The weird things started to happen when the car of this couple was the only one on the road towards the town Gatlin "NICEST LITTLE TOWN IN NEBRASKA – OR ANYWHERE ELSE! DROP IN ANYTIME!"¹¹⁸

Suddenly something jumped under their car. It was the thirteen-year-old boy, someone cut his throat and thrown him out of the corn. In order to find some police station, Vicky and Burt gave the corpse into the trunk of the car and drove to the nearest town. By the time Burt turn on the radio and some station, which was really close, was broadcasting propaganda about some religion. "ONLY BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB WE ARE SAVED!"¹¹⁹ Moreover in a dead boy's suitcase Vicky found a crucifix with Jesus and four letters, I N R I, which all had been made of a corn husk and a corncob.

Everything started to be even weirder when they arrived to Gatlin, where as if nobody lived and the time stopped in the 1964. Burt went to look to the local church, while Vicky was waiting in the car. In the church he found out that townspeople are dominated by the pagan and evil religion which is worshiping corn God, "He Who Walks Behind the Rows."¹²⁰ The local children had killed their parents and everybody who was above the age of nineteen in order to save the harvest.

When Burt came out of the church, from all around the children were coming with the murderous weapons in their hands and they went to kill Vicky and him. Children managed to murder Vicky, but Burt ran away and hide in the corn. Nevertheless neither he could not escape the death. The corn God, as the embodiment of evil, eventually crucified him.

4.1 Sinful adults

In this story the failure of the adulthood is represented by sinful parents and adults, who have to be killed. Adults are understood as weeds in moribund corn. Here Stephen King uses a symbolism, when the sins are likened to the weeds and children's innocence to a heathy crop.

¹¹⁸ King, *Stephen King Goes to the Movies*, 570.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 547.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 575.

And in order to save the harvest and to ingratiate with He Who Walks Behind the Rows, children have to weed out everyone above nineteen years. As Magistrale says, only by human sacrifices the crop is purified:¹²¹

“There were no minges or mosquitoes in here, no black-flies or chiggers [...]. In the last of the daylight [Burt] swept his eyes closely over the row of corn to his left. And saw that every leaf and stalk was perfect, which was just not possible. No yellow blight. No tattered leaves, no caterpillar eggs, no burrows, no— His eyes widened. *My God, there aren't any weeds!*”¹²²

The sins of grown-ups are also likened to the original sin of Adam and Eve. Children of the corn started to worship only the Old Testament. Thus children had to kill their parents and also every pregnant women. They had to start up their own ‘mankind’, who is not affected by original sin. About 1964 some seventeen years old girl had a baby, they call her Eve, and by that children established new order — the order of corn God.¹²³

4.2 Stephen King's paradoxes

Adults failed in the taking care of the crop. There was too much sinning, so children had to take over the responsibility for it and became the followers of the God's order on their own. Therefore they had to stop being children and by that they lost part of their innocence. They became evil innocent creatures dominated by evil, represented by the wicked religion. Children are perceived as the pure creatures according to Romantic point of view.¹²⁴ Stephen King's portrayal of the children of the corn is rather paradox here. Namely because children's behavior is both childish and evil.

Children's innocence is lost by murders. “They got religion and they killed off their parents. All of them. [...] Shot them in their beds, knifed them in their bathtubs, poisoned their suppers, hung them, or disemboweled them.”¹²⁵ However in their own religion, the murder does not mean sin, children only made the sacrifices for their evil God.

Children's purity is lost by sexual experiences. In order to preserve the mankind, children had to multiply among themselves. “Ruth's belly was big with Malachi's child [...]”¹²⁶ Since they had been killed before the adult age, they had been obliged to have sex in the child age. Even though the sex among teenagers from the age of fifteen or sixteen is

¹²¹ See Magistrale, *Landscape of Fear*, 79.

¹²² King, *Stephen King Goes to the Movies*, 573.

¹²³ See *Ibid.*, 565.

¹²⁴ See Scahill, “Malice in Wonderland.”

¹²⁵ King, *Stephen King Goes to the Movies*, 564.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 577.

not considered as the unusual thing, King intentionally did not mention the exact age of Ruth or of some other children of the corn in order to delete the difference between the young and older children. Furthermore this hypothesis is illustrated in the story: “From all around the children were coming. [...] Burt felt a wild urge to scream out [as if he did not see any difference among the children]: *Which of you is Adam and Eve? Who are the mothers? Who are the daughters? Fathers? Sons?*”¹²⁷ And as well evil God commanded the children: “Yet be fruitful and multiply as the corn multiplies, that my favor may be shewn you, and be upon you.”¹²⁸ And last but not least according to Alegre’s opinion, King uses sacrificial children “for commercial ends in entertaining fiction verging on the pornographic.”¹²⁹

On the second thought the children kept some innocent features. Despite the fact that children of the corn are the killers, the reader will notice that they still keep innocent appearance and behavior. “From all around the children were coming. Some of them were laughing gaily. They held knives, hatchets, pipes, rocks, hammers. One girl, maybe eight, with beautiful long blond hair, held a jackhandle.”¹³⁰ Furthermore King gave those children another paradox feature. They were afraid of going to the corn at night. Children are generally afraid of the darkness. So when Burt escaped them to the corn, the children gave up, because it was getting dark. “[Burt] suspected they had done the most kidlike thing, regardless of the consequences for them; they had given up and gone home.”¹³¹ Not only that the children gave up because of the oncoming night, they were also terrified of He Who Walks Behind the Rows. One of the local children, Ruth, pointed out that they (the children) might not be embodiment of evil by themselves, but they are actually its instruments, who must obey in order not be killed as the thirteen year-old-boy in the trunk.

“[Ruth] had conceived a secret hatred for the corn and sometimes dreamed of walking into it with a torch in each hand when dry September came and the stalks were dead and explosively combustible. But she also feared it. Out there, in the night, something walked, and it saw everything ... even the secrets kept in human hearts.”¹³²

Another paradox consists in the situation when God of the corn punishes children for not killing Burt. The children have to pay the price for not killing the guilty one. The children failed to kill Burt despite the fact they had the place for the sacrificing of the sinners provided

¹²⁷ King, *Stephen King Goes to the Movies*, 565.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 576.

¹²⁹ Alegre, “Nightmares of Childhood,” 105.

¹³⁰ King, *Stephen King Goes to the Movies*, 565.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 572.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 577.

by evil God. Evil God then had to kill Burt by himself because “this man has made a blasphemy within [him]”¹³³. Children thus had to be punished for their disobedience and “the Age of Favor”¹³⁴ had to be lowered from nineteen to eighteen years. Even though they were only children, they accepted their failure as if they were grown-ups, and they continued to obey God’s will. Several children had been above the Age of Favor, thus they surrendered to the corn in order to redeem others.¹³⁵

When Vicky and Burt passed a billboard “GATLIN 5 MI. DRIVE CAREFULLY PROTECT OUR CHILDREN,”¹³⁶ King’s warning is rather ironical here and Alegre’s statement “be good to [the] children”¹³⁷ does not work in Gatlin. Just as Louis was able to kill his zombie son without blaming himself, Burt as well did not feel any moral issue when he killed the child. Neither when it looked like he had hit the child by the car, nor when he killed the child by his hands:

When [Burt] looked up, the boy with red hair was almost on top of him. He was grinning, confident. ‘Hey, you bastard,’ Burt said. His voice was creaking, shocked. ‘Remand your soul to God, for you will stand before His throne momentarily,’ the boy with the red hair said, and clawed for Burt eyes. Burt stepped back, pulled the Pency out of his arm, and stuck it into the red-haired boy’s throat.”¹³⁸

Even though the children should be considered, according to the Romantic conception, as the innocent creatures, Burt did not perceive these children as the fully innocent beings and thus he felt no moral problem to kill the boy.

4.3 Failure of Americans

Another story interpretation, which differs from the religious fanaticism, brings Tony Magistrale in his work *Landscape of Fear: Stephen King’s American Gothic* (1988). The connection of Vietnam War and Nebraska’s corn is visible in this story. According to Magistrale, Stephen King’s choice of the time setting in 1964 is not random but it is connected with Vietnam War. Not only that America started to interfere into Vietnam in 1964 but also Stephen King gives special importance to words which suggest this Vietnam War’s interpretation. For instance that Burt was a Vietnam veteran.¹³⁹ King also chooses the name of the president, who supported the commitment of the American forces in Vietnam,

¹³³ King, *Stephen King Goes to the Movies*, 576.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ See Ibid., 576-577.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 548.

¹³⁷ Alegre, “Nightmares of Childhood,” 105.

¹³⁸ King, *Stephen King Goes to the Movies*, 567.

¹³⁹ See Magistrale, *Landscape of Fear*, 79-80.

to suggest that this story has the interpretation of Vietnam War.¹⁴⁰ “Somewhere up ahead there would be a drugstore with a soda fountain, a movie house named the Bijou, a school named after JFK.”¹⁴¹

Burt and Vicky must be killed because they represents post-Vietnam Americans.¹⁴² As King, in the “Children of the Corn”, indicates: “[...] the corn was dying as a result of too much sinning,”¹⁴³ according to Magistrale, this metaphorically shows the ‘sins’ of the adults who were responsible for the war. Here the ‘sins’ mean the destruction of thousands of American and Vietnamese lives and also Vietnamese landscape by chemical poisoning of the soil. In a view of Magistrale those adults were individuals past the age of nineteen, thus it becomes obvious, why the age nineteen is crucial in this story. As Magistrale says, for those sins, there has to be repentance as it is symbolized in “Children of the Corn”.¹⁴⁴

Moreover Magistrale claims that Americans destroyed the last pieces of America’s innocence.¹⁴⁵ In this context I understand innocence of America as those children of the corn who were first innocent however their innocence started to tarnish as a result of murders.

To conclude the examination of this short story, the innocence of the children was being tarnished in particular by the murders and also by the early sexual experiences. The adults had to be killed because they were perceived to be the sinners and their sins would infest the corn. Then the children had to take over the role of the adults and in order to be saved they had to start to satisfy evil God by themselves. This story thus represents the failure of the adults both in literal and metaphorical way.

¹⁴⁰ Magistrale, *Landscape of Fear*, 80.

¹⁴¹ King, *Stephen King Goes to the Movies*, 553.

¹⁴² Magistrale, *Landscape of Fear*, 80.

¹⁴³ King, *Stephen King Goes to the Movies*, 564.

¹⁴⁴ See Magistrale, *Landscape of Fear*, 79-80.

¹⁴⁵ See *Ibid.*

CONCLUSION

This Bachelor's thesis discussed the position of the child in selected Stephen King's horror fiction. Children as instruments of evil are victims, monsters or evil innocent creatures, whose innocence is corrupted due to the failure of the adults. While in the ancient history the concept of the child did not exist, Stephen King understands the child characters as the innocent creatures and thus he inclines to the Romantic perception of the child. Thanks to this fact King does not hesitate to expose children to the situations where they have to either face the evil environment or they became evil monsters by themselves. In both aspects the child innocence is being damaged and much credit belongs to the adults who failed in their roles.

In *The Shining* the failure of the adult was constituted especially by Jack Torrance and his own father Mark. Mark's alcoholism and rough nature is rooted in Jack who continues to repeat the same faults of his father. The evil entity, the *Overlook* Hotel, intensifies Jack's temper and wants him to kill his own son Danny. Jack Torrance lets himself to be dominated by evil hotel and by memories of abusive father. Neither Wendy is able to protect her own son because she is weak and prefers to save her own marriage. Moreover Danny is victim not only of the hotel ghosts and his father but also of his own shining ability, which makes him even more vulnerable. Due to the horrific experiences, being choked by the dead woman or being almost killed by his own father, Danny's innocence is damaged and he has to deal with the consequences by himself, leave the childhood behind and emotionally grow up.

Unsuccessful attempt to protect children was portrayed in the work *Pet Sematary*. Louis Creed and the family friend Jud Crandall cross the border between death and life in order to protect innocence of Louis's daughter. Nevertheless their well-meant intention changes into the evil plan which they are not able to stop. Evil takes advantage of the human's weakness and makes Louis Creed create the monster from his little son Gage and by that Gage loses the innocence. This failure brings consequences which hit as well the innocence of Louis's daughter who has to suffer from the real nightmares and from the loss of her own brother.

The purity of the children in the story "Children of the Corn" is tarnished by killing all adults above nineteen years in order to satisfy evil God. This God took advantage of the failure of the adults in order to dominate the children, who had to take over the role of the adults and stop being children.

Every of these Stephen King's fictions represent the failure of the adults who failed to protect the innocence of the children and thus my initial hypothesis, that 'King's children' have to pay a highest price, their innocence, for the faults of the adults, has been reached.

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