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A Literary Investigation of Horror Genre

Through Stephen King's *IT*

Dissertation submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of *Master* in Literature and Civilization.

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this submission is my work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution.

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Dedication

I dedicate this humble work to my beloved parents, especially to my mother who has been the source of my inspiration and strength, who continually provided her moral, emotional and financial support.

I also dedicate my dissertation to my brother Omar, who guided and inspired me to be strong and to believe in myself despite all the obstacles in life.

I finally dedicate my work to my sisters, brothers, and relatives for their eternal love and support.

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Abstract

The present research work aims to provide an in-depth look at the genre of horror and to shed light on Stephen King's influence in this field. It also endeavors to examine the conceptions that horror is more than just unrealistic child's play, that horror is part of the human mind as it uses our deepest and hidden fears, memories and desires to hunt us and thus shape our selves. It also tends to analyze the concept of coming of age represented in Stephen King's novel entitled *It*. Henceforth, the current study relies on literary criticism, mainly psychoanalysis approach to analyze the concepts of fear and growing up found in King's novel. Through the process of this research a conclusion is reached, horror is developed over the years and it has flourished due to the new conceptions and elements introduced by Stephen King to the genre. Besides in his novel *IT*, King highlights asserts that the concepts of fear and coming of age are connected and they affect each other greatly for only by facing childhood fears instead of repressing them, one can fully mature and become a healthy adult of a certain society.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Ever since it first appeared in the 19th century, horror fiction has been dismissed as immature or unsophisticated, vulgar and pornographic, a genre that is directed only to adolescents and adult males (Magistrale, 1988). Scholars did not give much importance to horror like other literary genres such as the genre of Crime and Psychological, as horror fiction deals with monsters and does not fit in the real world. Over the years, however, horror fiction has flourished as a major source of mass aesthetic stimulation. Critics have shown convincingly that the horror genre although designed to elicit fear and gore in the audiences, both emotionally and physically, is well suited to deal with universal issues. Horror stories encourage readers to work through their own conceptions of morality, helping them to consider the implications of choosing good over evil. For example, people react to allegations of the immorality in horror by demonstrating that the experience of watching horror films is fundamentally about challenging one's humane attitudes. Similarly, asserting that horror can warn and enlighten one's view of the world by reminding him of his inner moral frailty and by asking him to take the moral reality of evil seriously. Hence, horror fiction has established a distinguishable place not only in English literature but also in film industries, theatres, music, art and televisions. Michael Jackson's 'Thriller' cassette has set sales records in every possible category. The *Phantom of the Opera* has already seen success in London. Horror paintings proved to be as a surprising success. Horror paintings of Matt Cail and Eric Swartz which are in high demand send shivers in our hearts. Popular movies *The Omen*, and *The Exorcist* achieved box office success at theaters and set a chain of production of horror movies. Television has also launched several of horror or horror-related series such as *Fredy's Nightmares*. This American Television serial became popular in the world. New versions of horror classics like Edward Gorey's variations on Dracula have been performed in drama theatres. The horror genre's popularity has not remained limited to the masses alone but has also reached the academics. Gina Wisker, Dani Cavallaro, and Noel Carroll's latest philosophical and theoretical works have made this genre worthy by explaining the philosophy of horror.

One author of this genre is Stephen King. He reigns as the contemporary master of horror, having written over fifty novels and several short stories and screenplays. His works have been adapted into films, audio books, was even performed on Broadway. King dabbled in many different genres in the span of his career, ranging from traditional Gothic horror tales, families, and domestic violence to science fiction, fantasy, mystery and crime. One of the most defining features throughout his work, however, has been his focus on

children and coming-of-age stories. The majority of King's "most memorable and important characters, and the ones to whom we, as readers, grow increasingly attached" are children (Magistrale, 1988). King's successful career and prodigious performance testify of the popularity and influence of the genre. King himself believes in the power of the horror tale. King believes that the reason behind the horror fiction high demand is not because people enjoy the gore and death, but rather because it encourages learning how to appreciate to every little joy in their life (King, 1981).

In the twilight of what has been mentioned above, the horror story thus causes us to consider the existence of evil within and around us, which in effect allows us to solidify our concept of morality and acknowledge the implications of our choices.

The purpose of this research work is to provide an in depth look at the genre of horror fiction while shedding light on the following objectives: Firstly, to explore the origins of the genre as well as to get an in-depth look into Stephen King's universe and his influence in popularizing the genre. Secondly, to explore the effects of childhood fears on the development of the child's character, i.e., to probe the structure of the human mind that help shape one's identity. Thirdly, to strive to analyze using everything mentioned above to probe paradoxical relationship between the horror genre and the human mind concerning the concept of maturing. The focal point of this research is to investigate the genre of horror through Stephen King's *IT*.

The present research questions are posed to start investigating this research:

1. What is the notion of horror genre? How does Stephen King employ horror in his works?
2. How does fear influence one's coming of age?
3. How does Stephen King employ the themes of fear and coming of age in his novel *IT*?

The following hypotheses are suggested for the above research questions:

1. Horror is a literary genre that aims to evoke exactly what its name indicates, horrify the audience. Moreover, Stephen King employs the horror genre not only to frighten, but also as a mean to address certain issues faced by people and encouraging them to overcome them.

2. When people are afraid, they tend to try anything to ease the fear which sometimes leads them to suppress those fears and thereby they cannot grow up well as part of them and build their character is missing.
3. Fear and coming of age are the main themes in his novel and he used fear as a mean to develop his protagonists' characters starting from their childhood until their adulthood.

The present research work relies on literary criticism, mainly, psychoanalysis approach to analyze data, and it is divided into three main chapters; the first chapter is divided into two sections. The first section deals with a study about horror as a genre; it examines and identifies the prevailing characteristics and typological variations of the genre. As for the second part of the chapter, it seeks to provide a sneak peek into the universe of the author Stephen King.

The second chapter discusses the concepts of “fear” and “repression” and their relation to the theme of “coming of age”. The chapter aims to provide a general overview of the Freudian psychology, and how psychoanalysis perceives horror. This chapter presents as well a brief description of fear, coming of age and repression which are central factors of this discussion.

The final chapter provides an examination of the themes fear, repression, and the coming of age which are presented in the novel *IT* written by Stephen King. King renders us with an insight into the realm of fear, or horror, and helps us understand our own fears. It also highlights the importance of nurturing one's inner child, because children perceive the world in a different, simpler and maybe an even better way. It aims to examine that only by facing one's fear and conquering them, the individual can find his own self and fully mature.

Chapter One

1.1. Introduction:

Many people define horror by its subjects. We all think of creatures like Frankenstein's monster, Dracula, and the wolfman as a monster in the horror genre. Each of these creatures has a history and has developed over the years. However, horror covers more than just monsters, gore and violence. It is "both an everyday occurrence (...) and a way of dramatizing our hidden fears and desires through fantasy that takes the everyday a few steps further" (Wisker, 2005, p. 1). Thus, this chapter presents a comprehensive account on the genre of horror and its various typological. It provides a definition of the genre and the different types that have emerged over the years, it also focuses on distinguishing horror, terror and gothic by giving a summary about each. Later the discussion explores the universe created by Stephen King in his writing which influenced the horror industry. Henceforth, the aim of the chapter is to provide the reader with further explanations on the genre and King's role in literature.

1.2. The Horror Genre:

Many believe that the genre of horror was invented by Horace Walpole, who's *Castle of Otranto* (1765) have founded the horror story as a legitimate literary form, and that in her popular novel *Frankenstein* (1818), Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley introduced pseudoscience to the genre, about creating a monster which ultimately destroys its creator. However many authors and critics failed to create a strict definition that would be able to completely distinguish and separate horror from the similar and close genres. Literary historian Cuddon (1977) describes the horror story as: "A fictional narrative (usually in prose) of variable length which shocks or even frightens the reader, and/or induces a feeling of repulsion and loathing" (p. 339). Horror can be defined as an emotion blending with disgust. It is something that makes one unmoved. Horror is a strongly aversive emotion that denies all strategy, all option. It is a peculiar blend of fear and disgust, an affront and a threat which people may share, though among survivors and viewers it may remain private, becoming something that cannot be communicated. These two definitions of horror strongly point out that horror is an emotion loaded with fear and disgust. In short, horror can be described as a disliked emotion that makes one very scared, frozen and becomes static like a statue.

Carroll (1990) clarifies the essence and concept of horror in relation to literature by highlighting the difference between the natural 'horror' and the 'art-horror'. Natural horror

deals with the events occurring in the world for example, deeds of Nazi's. According to Carroll (1990) 'Art-horror' is: "Horror as it serves to name a cross-art, cross media genre whose existence is already recognized in ordinary language" (p. 12). Carroll further points out: "Art-horror is an emotion; furthermore it is 'an occurring emotional state'" (p. 14).

'Horror' is often described as tricky as it falls in a class of seemingly descriptive psychological terms which are sometimes used by authors to invoke the emotion they intend to represent. It is connected to the human psyche and correlates it with a stimulus or a trigger. A trigger is an event that causes something to happen and it requires a process.

Horror has an incomprehensible nature. It tends to lead to an uncontrollable situation and a lack of information. It is linked with the marvelous and the occult. In short, horror can be described as a disgusting and everlasting emotion that arouses out of uncanny objects, creates uncontrollable circumstances, and drives into abnormal state and places restrictions on reason and rationality. These eerie artifacts that are suppressed in the consciousness are reflected in horror fiction. Gina Wisker (2005) believes that horror is in everyday reality, but it is also a genre, a creation and a depiction of what is terrifying and disgusting, what people fear and secretly desire (p. 5).

1.2.1. The Formulas of Horror Novels:

The horror tale typically describes the utter annihilation of the supernatural creature. One might argue that horror is the most perplexing type of entertainment; however, considering its popularity and the pleasure of the audiences, we can easily say that people enjoy being frightened. Cawelti (1977) argues that the level of emotion in a horror tale is so high that it might force the readers out of themselves as an escape. One may experience an utter self-forgetting in the intense presence of an external illusion, such as when encountering a monster with blood dripping fangs. These exhilarating emotions are the product of what Cawelti called in his 1969 article "convention" and "invention".

Conventions are elements that are common to readers and are used to preserve the story's consistency. They include plots, stereotypical characters, and language structures that already exist and embraced by society and its culture. (Cawelti, 1969) In a sense, conventions are the comfort zone for readers. Contrarily, inventions are the new concepts developed by the author to provide new approaches or definitions that have not been understood yet by employing new types of characters, themes, or linguistic techniques

(Cawelti, 1969). The combination of conventions and inventions of what is familiar and what is unfamiliar in the horror tale is what makes its story intense and terrifying.

However, the intensity of emotions is not what makes a horror story. The writer needs to add a sense of terror into his writing, because there is something cozy or typical about horror and terror offers a completely different level of fear. If the monster is unfamiliar, it may alter a huge misunderstanding between fantasy and reality, and the readers might get convinced that the monster is real. Horror, however, naturalizes terror by embodying it into categories. When an unusual thing is encountered and seen, it begins to lose its terror. The authors must therefore strive to recreate the sense of horror in their works; by updating the character of the monster, and producing new gruesome manners, etc. (Cawelti, 1977)

Wood (1979) suggested an interesting theory concerning the basic formula of horror. He concluded that the formula of horror is a familiarity that is violated by the Monster (Wood, 1979). This premise sets out three variables which are familiarity, the monster, and most importantly, the relation between the two.

Firstly, familiarity in the horror story is described as the fundamental static elements that appear to be repetitive in the story. Normality is usually used to help and defend the storyline (Wood, 1979). It is also a method used to differentiate what is normal and what is not. This can be very effective because when the monster or any strange incident occurs, readers can be horrified due to the transition. Things that depict normality include the family, the social institutions, such as police and church ...etc. Secondly, the monster, it is usually defined as an entity that humans regard to be something abnormal, a dysfunction in the natural order (Carroll, 1990). The monster could also be described as creatures denied by science (Carroll, 1990). Monsters in horror fiction are generally viewed as impure and vulgar. They can be made out of dead bodies, creeping out of oozing places, and are related with filth, disease etc., that's is why the characters, alongside with the readers, view them with a mix of terror and disgust (Carroll, 1990). Lastly, the relation between what is normal and familiar and what is not is the main focus of a horror story. It shows how the normality characteristics of the story combine with the unfamiliar features and how they influence each other. This formation takes the form of a long discovery process.

1.2.2. Horror and Monsters:

Horror stories appear to be structured around monsters, and most monsters represent ancestral threats. By monsters, we mean deadly, evil, more or less inhumane. Pennywise the dancing clown in Stephen King's *IT* is evil, cruel, and inhumane in its ability to defy the laws of physics. Horror monsters have qualities that allow them to manipulate the system of human fear. People have evolved to be especially attentive to certain kinds of threats, including the threats posed by predators and aggressive characters. Many horror monsters are misrepresentations of ancestral predators that have preyed on humans for millions of years (Clasen, 2010). To demands attention, horror monsters do not need to be believable, but they need to exploit into developed attention biases.

Unnatural monsters achieve particular salience and enjoy superior mnemonic durability because they are disregarded innate intuitions. An angry ghost is unforgettable and eye-catching than an angry person. Humans have built a cognitive system that automatically and non-reflectively categorizes objects in the world and assigns them some domain-specific assumptions. When something appears to be breaching those domains; like a floating rock, a talking tree ...etc, we pay special attention. Unnatural, the category of violating horror monsters takes advantage of this human aspect. They merge traits of distinct anthologies, or infringements of standards. Other traits, usually traits that encourage predation, may be intensified to make the monsters more fearful, that is, to make the emerging fear system more powerful.

The evil of most horror monsters can also be explained in evolutionary terms. Insofar as horror monsters are ascribed intelligible intentions, they appear to be antisocial ones (Clasen, 2014). Some horror creatures, such as most zombies, seem to be driven purely by predatory hunger and can hardly be described as evil, whereas others—the truly evil ones—are guided by a sadistic urge to inflict hurt in others. For instance, Count Dracula is evil because he is simply unconcerned about the pain he inflicts on his victims in his greedy pursuit for power (Clasen, 2012a). He devotes himself to the dehumanization and humiliation of others. Antisocialism tends to be viewed as evil because humans evolved to suppress behaviors that threaten sociality. This pattern has grown in response to the challenge of maintaining cooperative, unified communities. Stories play a crucial role in transmitting and improving pro-social values (Gottschall, 2012). Most literature including horror literature prefers pro-sociality over antisocialism, which is especially apparent in agonistic structure, i.e, the distribution of characters along a line varying from negative

(antagonists) to positive (protagonists). Antagonists tend to be portrayed as greedy, antisocial, power-hungry individuals, while protagonists tend to be depicted as pro-social, supportive, selfless individuals (Carroll, 1990). Jonathan Harker's effort to save his fiancée and the world from the evil of Dracula in Bram Stoker's 1897 novel is selfless and good. Jack Torrance's greediness and violent pursuit of power and status in Stephen King's *The Shining* (1977) is bad (Clasen, 2017). It is also considered as an atypical yet illustrative case. One of the most popular literary monsters of all time is Frankenstein's monster from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1831). The famously ambivalent monster is motivated not by a selfish gain or a sadistic enjoyment, but by a pro-social urge to enter into cooperative alliances and to form procreative bonds (Shelley, 1994, p. 165). His monstrosity lies not in his intentions, but in his appearance (Shelley, 1994, p. 94). This unusual and dissonant mix of exterior and interior qualities creates an aesthetically complex and intriguing monster, one that highlights the value of motivation to the concept of monstrosity.

The nature of horror monsters can then be clarified by the emergence of cognitive patterns. They are usually dangerous, antisocial creatures that intensify our fear and condemnation, and they appear to be exaggerated or counterintuitive variants on ancestral threats to attack our attention more effectively and evoke strong emotional responses. This is a central argument in evolutionary horror study; a perspective that could not have been accomplished without understanding the human evolutionary history and the ancient selection forces that shaped the human mind.

1.2.3. The Evolution of Horror Genre:

The origins of the genre of horror literature can be traced back to the development of the gothic literary tradition of the 18th century. While some of its features have been found in myths and legends, the 18th century was truly a major source for the creation of the horror novel in its finest form. Terror continued to gain more presence in the works of writers and became a common element in storytelling.

Most horror scholars such as Gina Wisker, Noel Carroll ... claim that Horace Walpole's novel "*Castle of Otranto*" which was published in 1765 was the first true Gothic, or horror novel. Gothic fiction is characterized by the use of great structures like architecture, humans, animal ... etc. Environments with a dark atmosphere and big castles were the first setting for authors such as Charles Brockden, Brown Ann Radcliffe or Matthew Lewis, whose works reflected a move from gothic to horror fiction. Violence and brutality so

blatantly portrayed in contemporary horror fiction were seen only by a few drops of blood on the floor or a piece of fabric ripped on the bush's thorns.

In 1800, Johann Ludwig Tieck's *Wake Not the Dead* was the first famous English vampire story to be translated from German. In June of 1816, when a group of friends, including Lord Byron, Percy Shelley, Mary Shelley and Dr. John Polidori gathered for a summer vacation at a villa by Lake Geneva, the genre of horror fiction was truly revolutionized. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* was published Two years later and it not only proved to establish the sub-genre of science fiction, but also inspired the stereotypical depiction of the monster in both fiction and art.

Following the successful release of *Frankenstein*, Dr. Polidori, another member of the Lake Geneva squad, published *The Vampire* in 1819. This novel was considered to be the first vampire tale in the English language. Soon after, the literary world was filled with new types of characters including psychos, masochist, vampires, werewolves and other monsters roaming in dark woods, abandoned castles or haunted houses. In 1833, Edgar Allan Poe developed a new approach to horror. He explored the psychological basis of horror, and he worked in his short stories with horror as a cohesive atmosphere focused on clues, observations, and subjective mood. He is regarded as the founding father of the modern detective novel, and remains one of the most influential writers.

The 19th century horror fiction publications included works by Abraham 'Bram' Stoker and Henry James. Stoker's novel *Dracula or The Un-Dead* remains as one of the most terrifying and highly known vampire stories of all time. This novel was a great source of inspiration for many other vampire tales and films adaptations made in the 20th century. Henry James's *The Turning of the Screw* novella was named the most preferred ghost stories even for the non-fans, and eventually established a new theme which is "the evil child tale."

Lovecraft was the first to use the term "cosmic horror" for this type of literature, and he applied it in most of his works. Lovecraft inspired many other authors like Ray Bradbury, Robert Bloch, and Stephen King.

The biggest development of this genre happened in the 1960s. Horror becomes independent from specialized magazines and started to be published in a book form. This also shifts the structure from a short story to a novel. Many of the works are considered to

be the best of what has been written in this genre so far. In 1974, Stephen King became one of the best writers of modern horror fiction. With the release of his novel *Carries* in 1974, King established himself as a brilliantly crafted and diligent author. Other novels included *Salem's Lot* (1975), *It* (1986), *The Stand* (1978), and *The Shining* (1977). King's short stories and novellas have great popularity too. His writing is characterized by having a keen eye for details and characters.

The year 1976 marked the return of the vampire novel *Interview with the Vampire* by Anne Rice. Rice followed this novel with several sequels, including *The Vampire Lestat* (1985), *The Queen of the Damned* (1988) and *The Tale of the Body 7W* (1992). Movies like *Halloween*, *Friday the 13th* and *Alien*, and many other films, overdone the late 70's with over high profile cartoon-like horror, consequently, it damages the considerable reputation of authors such as King and Rice. Yet by 1981, Thomas Harris' *Red Dragon* introduced one of the most prominent villains in modern horror fiction: Dr. Hannibal Lector. This remarkable work has effectively restored popular appreciation for the genre of horror fiction.

In recent years, the archetypes of vampires, werewolves, and zombies have dominated the horror genre. The 1990s represented a period of change and self-awareness for the genre. Although horror has come a long way from its Gothic origins, the genre will undoubtedly continue to flourish and evolve.

1.2.4. The Subgenres of Horror Genre:

There are many subgenres of the genre of horror which are:

1.2.4.1. Dark Fantasy:

It is hard to determine a clear description as this subgenre is always developing. Both Grant and Wagner have been credited for establishing this term, although both of them have identified a different kind of fiction. Grant defined dark fantasy as a type of horror story in which humans are threatened by something beyond their comprehension, whereas Wagner (1970) used this term to classify his fiction about Kane. Since then, dark fantasy has not only been applied to swords and witchcraft and high fantasy fictions that feature anti-heroic or morally ambiguous protagonists, but also writers, reviewers, and publishers have adopted dark fantasy as an alternative to horror and used it to characterize numerous other works that feature supernatural elements. This subgenre is mostly represented by

Stephen King's *The Dark Tower* series, Raymond Feist's *Faerie Tale* and Clive Barker's *Weaveworld*.

1.2.4.2. Gothic Fiction:

Gothic is usually viewed as the subgenre of horror. It is a literary genre or a form that includes fiction, suspense, death and occasionally romance. It originated back to the 1764 novel "*Castle of Otranto*" by the English author Horace Walpole. Walpole used this term in a sense of brutal or from the medieval era, his tale of affection, tragedy and mythical creatures laid the foundation a fictional genre that has been investigated by writers such as the Bronte sisters, Edgar Allan Poe, and many others. This subgenre is mostly written in a literary format. Some of these tales involve an evil from the past, as haunted mansions, closed and spooky locations like temples, crypts, ruins, and prisons are the most popular places of stories portraying the cruelty of a time when characters often pay for the past, which adversely affects the present and plays a vital role in the whole mystery and its resolution.

1.2.4.3. Psychological Horror:

This subgenre deals with the human psyche as it is based on the main protagonist's fear, on his feelings of remorse, on his faith and dysfunctional emotional state of mind. The role of the monster in it portrays a mentally unstable individual (or even a group), who at first glance may seem normal and his illness will become evident as the plot progresses. An individual's emotional or mental disorder often comes from childhood either by having a mental illness or by being abused as an infant, or by very unstable parents raising them. The person grows oblivious of his illness and considers his actions natural, while feeling that the whole world is against him, so he defends himself in every way possible. It is mostly a kind of realistic horror; the story mainly does not include any supernatural events or explanations. Nevertheless, since the reader's consciousness begins to reveal the views of the insane, psychological horror can also deal with a vague reality and thus evoke the erroneous appearance of supernatural horror. A recent example is Joe Hill's novel *Heart Shaped Box*.

1.2.4.4. Supernatural Horror:

The most common and perhaps the most widespread subgenre of horror is the supernatural horror. Here, the rules of the normal do not apply, allowing authors the freedom to construct their own reality. The stories of the supernatural concentrate on different forms of creatures from beyond such as demons, goblins, vampires, ghosts ...etc persistently destroying the lives of suffering humanity. Often the setting of such stories is a secluded village, churches, haunted houses, where the protagonist becomes stranded. There are several examples, the 1954 novel *I Am Legend* by Richard Matheson, and *Dracula* by Bram Stoker as well as the novels by Anne Rice which are filled with powerful arcane beings.

1.2.4.5. Extreme Horror:

An extreme horror also known as the visceral or the splatter-punk is the most disturbing and disconcerting of all the subgenre of horror. The essence of this subgenre is the naturalistic description of disgust. The vivid brutality and blood gore are heaped on, often from the start to the end evoking in the audience a subconscious sense of the horror of violent death. Splatter-punk is a term coined in imitation of cyber-punk, and preferred by some younger authors. Clive Barker's work is a typical example of this sub-genre. His series of books, entitled Blood Books, includes a short story in which he does not prevail to his characters with compassion and lets them die without mercy and any euphemism. The opposite of extreme horror is subtle horror, which only offers a light atmosphere of discomfort / fear.

1.2.4.6. Science Fiction Horror:

While several scholars of science fiction literature have argued that horror and sci-fi are two completely independent and incompatible genres. Noël Carroll does disagree with them. After all, some literatures or films use not only the traditional horror elements, but also the elements of science fiction that are intended to induce fear in the audiences. A horror movie can take place in space or a distant and renovated future full of space ships and other developed technologies, like robots or androids. Many common monsters involve various radioactive mutants or other technical (UN) success probably the best example is the 1986 fly, directed by David Cronenberg, and are not far from the insane creatures created by scientists. We may also meet extraterrestrial beings in sci-fi horror movies and their invasion of Earth like *The Web of Dreams* by Stephen King.

1.2.4.7. Cosmic Horror:

This subgenre is often characterized by the works of Howard Phillips Lovecraft, a writer known for his short stories such as *Horror in Dunwich* and *Calling Cthulhu*. His tales are based on the idea of a species from outer space that inhabited the earth before the humankind. The classics and newer works of cosmic horror have a distinct style; with florid prose and intense negativity and its blend with science fiction portraying emotions of when one learns about something he should not know about. Besides Lovecraft works, we can also include the works of Peter F. Hamilton, Clive Barker or *The King in Yellow* by Robert W. Chambers.

1.2.5. Gothic vs. Horror vs. Terror:

People also question whether the gothic differs from horror as both are united by some thematic and stylistic conventions, and both aim to terrorize the readers by evoking an emotional reaction from them. Clive Bloom notes that the answer to this question is simple but complex at the same time, as horror and gothic are often overlapping concepts (Bloom, 2000). Scholars claim that horror is a subgenre of the gothic, but gothic whether literature, art or film originates from romanticism and is mostly about the atmosphere. There are various main characteristics of gothic works (isolated settings, unreliable narratives ... etc) but all of these are quite atmospheric. A lot of gothic works are about creating a sense of insecurity, fear, and anticipation in the readers. In the meantime, horror is the emotional response that occurs when encounters something scary. The presence of the supernatural, a monster in particular, is a classic feature of horror. The monster functions as the repressed representation of desires within a given society. They portray the return of the repressed, which address modern problems; that gothic has always been anxieties' indicator that haunts a given society at a particular moment in history (Bruhm, 1998). King (1981) describes these anxieties as "phobic pressure points" that horror is aiming to push. These pressure points naturally shift over time: from captivity narratives such as *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* by Mary Rowlandson as one of the earliest examples, to the zombies of 21st century. The horror genre also appears to take the conservative side as King explains in *Danse Macabre* that horror refers to the radical Republican in a three piece suit that lies within all of us (King, 1981).

Besides, it is important to remember that there is a distinction between terror and horror. Accordant to Stephen King, terror is the unwelcome intuition that comes to mind when knocking on the door starts and the embodiment of horror is that state of fear that underlies

terror, an emotion that is somewhat less than good, since it is not entirely of out the mind. In other words, the object of terror is certain, whereas the source of horror remains unknown. Terror provides relief, while horror produces a state of mystery and disorder, and there is no recovery from it. The origins of horror are still in the dreams, and the source of terror is actuality. Horror is linked to psychology and terror is connected with meaning. In his book, Dani Cavallaro references Devendra P. Varma as a symbol to vary between terror and horror: the contraction between Terror and Horror is the contrast between horrible discomfort apprehension and nauseating awareness, between the smelling the scent of death and stumbling against a dead body (Cavallaro, 2002).

1.3. Stephen King: King of Horror:

Stephen King is an author who undeniably belongs to the pantheon of several of the best authors of the horror fiction genre. Critics like Anthony Magistrale, also acknowledge that that King is the only descendent of a line of great authors such as Howard Phillips Lovecraft and Edgar Allan Poe (Magistrale, 1992). King creates in his works a magnificent parallel universe, starting with what King calls in his book *Danse Macabre* the inside evil, as well as employing Poe's most famous narratives using outside or cyclopean evil (King, 1981) represented in the horrific tales of Cthulhu Mythos by H.P. Lovecraft and many other stories. In King's case, though, it is much easier to term it a multi-verse, since it appears to bend and twist truth beyond understanding by using the real world only as a reference point from which a vast number of dimensions exist side by side. These dimensions are profoundly entangled in King's literary universe, and the veil between them is often strong, often weak and sometimes it does not exist. King's creative skills arise from his ability to see beyond what people see as real, true, and existent. He blends two of the most common, terrifying, yet very real and strong themes introduced to literature with his own creative versions, Poe and Lovecraft, thereby, redefining the genre of horror fiction.

Stephen Edwin King was born in Portland, Maine, on September 21, 1947. He studied at the University of Maine and later worked as an English teacher. His novel *Carrie* (1974) and its film adaptation were the first of many *The Dark Tower* novels that helped him to overcome poverty and allowed him to devote himself completely to what he loves the most is writing. The publication of *Carrie* was followed by an endless stream of other popular novels such as *The Shining* (1977), *The Stand* (1978), *Duma Key* (2008), *It* (1986), series (1982-2004), *Bag of Bones* (1998), *On Writing (A Memoir of the Craft)* (2000),

Dreamcatcher (2001), and many more. His most popular collections of short stories include *Night Shift* (1978), *Skeleton Crew* (1985), *Nightmares & Dreamscapes* (1993) and *Everything's Eventual* (2002). In 2003, it was proved once and for all that Stephen King is an author of great importance and significance in the literary tradition since he was awarded The National Ten Book Foundation Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters, one of the most esteemed literary awards in the US. He received this award that has put him up there, among other significant contemporary writers such as Phillip Roth, Don DeLillo, Ray Bradbury, Eudora Welty, and Norman Mailer.

1.3.1. Stephen King's Universe

One of the main aspects of King's writing is his emphasis on making the characters realistic and relatable. The fear in his stories does not come from monsters, but instead the affection that the reader develops for the characters in the stories, as they are forced to confront their own fears and weaknesses against terrible odds. This helps to attract the readers into King's stories, as they are interested in the characters and their survival and safety. Critics say that his fiction involves an everlasting struggle between good and evil, between chaos and order within the infinite realms of alternate worlds. Another main factor is his balance between fear and realism. Fear is not always triggered by the sheer existence of the unreal and the supernatural, but also acts as a reflection on the people and community in which they live (Magistrale, 2010).

As noted above, King places great importance on readers who sympathize with the characters in his fiction, as this is the portal through which he can evoke fear in them. To achieve this, King tends to portray his characters as three-dimensional, who are broken human beings, often bearing painful past and suppressed memories. To put the reader in his world, King fills the reader with cultural references and brand names, to make the reader feel at home in his world. To resolve the challenges that his characters undergo, King depends on the power of imagination, where many of his characters conquer their difficulties through their imagination. Hence, the audience's imagination works in harmony with the author's imagination, and it is this reader-writer relationship that can be identified as a foundation of King's mass appeal.

Moreover, Maine is not only the inspiration of many locations in his works, but also King's speech in his stories. Many of his works take place in a small town in America, and its struggle with darkness which is usually hidden underneath. In many of his novels,

Children are the only ones able to overcoming the horror, in which he stresses the importance of imagination and its connection with children.

King appears to concentrate heavily on the story in his works. King writes clean prose with the attempt to move the story further. He employs flashbacks to add depth to his characters, which can be seen in *It*, *Carrie* and *The Shining*. King's works include several common themes, such as the unity of the ordinary people who set their differences aside for the greater good, which is why he does not identify his works as either horror or supernatural but rather as insightful, intricate parts of the human experience that often lead us to reflect on our childhoods, not always with affectionate nostalgia. He invites his readers to get in touch with their memories and remember what being a child and innocent really means. Believing that most adults have lost touch with their imaginations and their sense of the supernatural, King inspires his readers to extend their conceptions of memory and experience.

1.3.2. Stephen King's Horror:

In *Danse Macabre*, King shared his thoughts about what constitutes horror. In the book, King introduced three kinds of horror: the terror, the horror and the gross out. Like Radcliffe, who did not treat horror and terror as equivalents, King tends to build up of the terror above all (King, 1981).

King's category of **terror** is probably the most disturbing form of horror, because you don't see it, but you can feel it instead. In *Danse Macabre*, King provides an example of terror, as the unpleasant sensation that someone is behind you, but when you turn around, nobody is there. Whereas horror and gross out can be perceived, terror is in many aspects one's own illusion, and thus is more effective in terrifying than anything visible. King describes terror as a moment of suspense before the monster is introduced, anticipation and one's imagination are at work in such situation. King believes that terror is the most challenging out of the three, but also the one that he pays the highest regards to:

"I recognize terror as the finest emotion and so I will try to terrorize the reader. But if I find that I cannot terrify, I will try to horrify, and if I find that I cannot horrify, I'll go for the gross out, I'm not proud." (King, 1981, p. 23)

Horror can be defined as the abnormal, which by its very own nature horrifies the audiences. King's representation of horror can be described as the normal turned abnormal

which is why it can have a disturbing impact on his audiences. Horror can be seen as a vivid representation of the unimaginable, and as such the unwillingness to grasp it will lead to fear it. Horror often triggers physical reactions by presenting something absurd (King, 1981)

At last, the **Gross out** which is quite self-explanatory; King provided an example of a mutilated body, or yellowish splatters on one's arm. Although it can be found in any literary work, gross out horror has its own sub-genre in the film industry that is called the splatter films, often known as "torture porn". King ranks the gross out at the bottom of the ladder and regards it to be the last option. However, King acknowledges that gross out horror is an art that is easy to accomplish in the world of film, because of the visual nature of the medium (King, 1981). King claims that artistry can be found in the gross out by presenting childish acts of chaos, implying what he called 'YUCH factor'. As such, there is a naive, immature response from the audience to the imaginary.

1.3.3. Children in Horror:

In the mid twentieth century, readers witnessed the emergence of the use of children in horror fiction. Although not really a child, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) is considered one of the earliest novels of the parent-child contradiction in horror fiction. Frankenstein's monster who is a creature that was created by patching different parts from rotten bodies is one of the first childlike characters in literary horror. The creature begins at first with a blank mind, just like a new born baby. The theme of the creator and the creation found in the novel could serve as symbolism to the parents who have failed their own child. In both cases, the archetype adults make an unreasonable decision and they face the consequences. William Merch's novel *The Bad Seed* (1954) is an excellent example of how parental failure results in creating monsters. The story features a murderous 8 years old girl, Rhoda Penmark, whose foster parents discovered that her biological mother was an infamous serial killer. The creation therefore is the result of the failed parent, as the infant represents the failure of those who were responsible for them.

In King's stories however, rather than being merely the product of the adults, children have the power to react to evil, rather than simply surrender to it. They are granted greater agency, as King provides them with a powerful moral code and the ability to handle what the adult can't. Children defeating evil which adults cannot do is a recurring theme in many of King's works. King himself claims that the reason kids are best prepared to defeat

the evil forces is because of the power of their imagination, and their spiritual strength and resolution. Despite assisting his child characters with incredible abilities, for instance, Charlene McGee from *The Firestarter* and Danny Torrance from *The Shining*, still it is their powerful sense of mortality and urge to do the right thing that makes them able to overcome the evil they encounter (Davis, 2012). The strong mortality found in King's child characters may be viewed as possessing the Apollonian qualities such as motive, solidarity and restraint. In comparison, in his works, the adults tend to possess more of the qualities of Dionysian, such as illogic and the lack of discipline. Davis suggests that in addition to having a stronger sense of morals, children are better at embracing what is ambiguous and unreasonable, while adults are constrained by their belief in logic and reason (Davis, 2012).

However, King's emphasis on strengthening child's characters through their capacity to fight evil has been somehow special to him just how other storytellers have taken a different approach. For instance, by the late 1960s and early 1970s, the child became a horrific theme in horror as both Levin's *Rosemary's Baby* (1967) and William Peter Blatty's *The Exorcist* (1971) portrayed children possessed by evil. However, by the early 1980s the child symbolism as evil started to shift, as writers and filmmakers started to investigate the oddness of children without turning to evil possession. This can be seen in movies like *Poltergeist* (1982), *The Changeling* (1980), and King's own movie adaptation of *The Shining* (1980).

1.4. Conclusion:

To conclude, horror fiction is a complex literary genre which was characterized by the presence of the monster and feelings of fear, disgust and astonishment that it evoked in the audience. Thus, this chapter has first addressed the concept of horror as a literary genre; it provided a brief overview of the evolution of the genre and its various types. At the same it highlighted the differences between horror and other similar genres. Next, the chapter presented an in-depth look into the universe created by Stephen King in his works by examining some of the themes and styles he used which contributed in flourishing the American fiction.

Chapter Two

2.1. Introduction:

The evolution of horror fiction over the years has led in the emergence of new themes that portrayed the realistic issues that people face in real world. One of these themes is the “Coming of Age”. Authors of horror such as Stephen King frequently link this theme with fear since both are connected, as the comprehension of fear affects how the characters cope with it, and ultimately, the way they mature in the process, and the affect of it on their conception of fear. Thus, this chapter aims to explore the concepts of fear, repression, and coming of age. Firstly, the chapter provides a comprehensive account on Freud’s psychoanalysis theory and its three major systems, and later it focuses to probe and discuss the concepts of fear, repression and coming of age which are the central focus in this part of the chapter.

2.2. Freudian Psychology:

In order to understand the Freudian psychology, it is best to have pre-knowledge about the Freud psychoanalysis theory and its three major systems (the Id, the Ego, and the Superego) and how these systems together form the human psyche.

2.2.1. The Psychoanalysis Theory:

Psychoanalytic theory was founded by Sigmund Freud at the end of the nineteenth century from 1885 till 1939, and later developed by many psychoanalysts over the world. It is focused primarily on understanding the internal mechanisms within the individual mind, seeking to solve the psychological problems of human beings; it also contributes to perceiving the artistic fields from a psychological viewpoint. In other words, the psychoanalytic theory is a technique to cure humans of their inner psychological issues, aimed at helping them overcome their problems in every aspect of life, hence, this approach enables people to discover their unconscious desires, including their hidden inclinations to be knowledgeable of their own weaknesses and restore their self-confidence.

In his book "*The Origin and Development of Psychoanalysis*," Freud (1910) states that memories aren’t entirely lost but are pushed into the unconscious. Hence, he developed a new approach to allow the patients to freely discuss their experiences and memories without being embarrassed or forced into a hypothesis in which he called it "Psychoanalysis".

The Freudian psychoanalysis was developed in his clinical practice by observing and analyzing the patients. There were, however, many practitioners such as Anton Mesmer (1734-1815), Jean Charcot (1825-1893) and Joseph Breuer (1842- 1925) who influenced Freud's theories. Moreover, Freud's psychoanalysis approach and its three main systems (the *id*, the *ego*, and the *superego*), and how these systems together form the human psyche.

The **id**'s function is to satisfy the basic needs of life like hunger and sexual need. The id is not bound by the rule of rationality. It is motivated only to satisfy the instinctual desires. If these needs are not fulfilled, one will feel some stress and anger. This stress will result in the id doing into a phase that Freud calls as "the primary process". The primary process generates the memory image of the object required to reduce the tension. On the other hand, the "secondary process" phase is required as the primary process does not effectively reduce the tension alone. This secondary process is part of the ego (Hall, 1954).

Without any interaction with the outside world, the id could behave impulsively that would lead to an increase of tension by calling for retribution from the external world. To avoid this, the rules of society must be taken into account. This act of interaction between the individual and the world is called the **ego**. Unlike the id that is directed by the rules of pleasure, the ego is governed by the principle of reality which is what Freud called "the secondary process" since it is established after and overlays the primary phase of the id. The secondary process is what is usually referred to as problem-solving or reasoning (Hall, 1954).

The **superego** is an extreme version of the ego that was developed in Freud's theory on narcissism during the First World War. It gives the feeling of another part of the mind besides the id and ego. In comparison to the id where individuals live only for themselves, the superego requires them to live as a part of the society, to respond and be responsible toward others (Thuschwell, 2000). It usually composed of conscience and the ideal self systems. The conscious punish the ego by inducing feelings of remorse because the ideal self is an abstract idea of who you are, how you should connect with other people and how to be a member of a certain society. Hence, the id, the ego and the superego function together to establish behavior. The id makes demands, the ego provides a sense of reality and the superego provides moral principles to the action taken (Guerin, 2005).

2.2.2. Psychoanalysis and Literature:

Psychoanalysis and literature had a peculiar relationship and have become intertwined. As literature falls within the substance of psychoanalysis, the psychic also falls within the realm of literature and its reasoning. So the contradiction that existed between the two branches means that each of them seek to explore the hidden self, that literature demonstrates the hidden self and the psychic is the method to investigate it.

According to Freud (1920) several psychoanalytic theories influence the psychic of the author and his book: the unconscious, the psychic philosophy, the perception of dreams, and the relationship between Neurosis and imagination. He believed that authors, playwrights, and poets would use their imagination as a kind of therapy; to convey neurotic tension via creative work that offers as insight into reality and psychoanalyzing a literary work helps us to comprehend the unconscious of the author. Hence, the Freudian principles can be used in any literary work to evaluate the characters and their actions with regards to the narration structure and to provide us with a theory of psychological literary criticism. Therefore, there is a shared interest between the field of psychoanalysis and literature.

Coleman (1976) concluded that literature could not offer any theoretical or realistic framework for the treatment and interpretation of the causes of abnormal behavior. It is a privilege of psychology to offer various kinds of such behavior to a great deal of understanding that may be about the complexities of personality, mental disorder or the inner experiences of those who have such disorders (p. 8).

The history of literature introduced the idea of supremacy of the human faculty of imagination by great romantic poets such as Coleridge, William Wordsworth and Percy Bysshe Shelley, this is an idea of reminiscence of the theories of psychoanalysis which also include the renaissance man Sir Phillip Sidney's beliefs on the moral impacts of poetry.

2.3. The Concept of Fear

Lovecraft (1973) wrote that "the oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown" (p. 21). The main focus of a person's fear must be because of something that is perceived as dangerous or threatening. If one does not consider anything dangerous, one will not be afraid of it (Carroll, 1990). As mentioned earlier, monsters elicit feelings of both fear and repulsion, and when the characters see the monster as a harmful and disgusting creature, the audiences inevitably

experience a horrible reaction, a mixture of the negative emotions. This describes the main distinction between horror fiction and the regular monster fiction, i.e. fiction with a monster character; the monsters in horror fiction invoke horror, people are horrified by their presence, whereas monsters in monster fiction, like Chewbacca from *Star Wars*, are not viewed as terrifying (Carroll, 1990). However, fear can often serve as a positive emotion, for example, in the situations where the benefits are much greater than the risks (Bantinaki, 2012)

There are several factors that affect one's understanding of fear both genetically and environmentally. After people are born, the influence of their family starts to increase gradually, and then, as they grow up, the impact of a larger social sphere also increases. In the article "Fears of Adolescence", the authors points out that it is the relationship between inherited traits and the environment that influences our understanding and experience of fear, as well as the responses individuals have to fear, and, most importantly, why certain origins of fear are embraced, while others are suppressed in an individual mind (Michalčáková et al. n.d) Thus, Despite being an emotionally disturbing condition, fear serves as a survival mechanism, designed to protect organisms from danger.

2.4. Defense Mechanism: Repression

The term 'repression' appears first of all in Breuer and Freud's preliminary discourse. It is a mechanism in which the undesirable ideas, memories and emotions create a conflict between the concept of pleasure and reality principle and are forced into the unconscious. It was considered as a type of a defense mechanism that keeps unconscious matters out of consciousness. For instance, repression is capable of making someone unable to see something that is clearly there, or distorting any details related to the threatening object from passing through the sense organs. This process is done in order to prevent the ego from apprehending the threatening object that will arouse anxiety. Repression often includes memories that linked are to traumatic experiences. Usually, the traumatic experiences are harmless to themselves, but a person may run the risk of recalling those experiences. As a consequence, an entire complex of memories can collapse under the influence of repression. In every case, whether it is a feeling, a memory, or an idea that is suppressed, the intention is to get rid of any objective, neurotic, or moralistic anxiety by denying or falsifying the presence of an external or internal danger to the protection of the ego (Hall, 1954, p. 86).

In a letter to Ferenczi dated on December 6, 1910, Freud (1896) stated that the theory of repression involves three stages: fixation, repression and the return of the repressed. The first stage is described as primary repression (fixation) which results in the formation of nucleus of conscious ideas. Secondary stage called repression proper aims either at the mental versions of the primary repressed source or at those sharing associative connection with it. The final stage called the return of repressed which is the breakdown of repression and the resulting neurosis.

Repression has different characteristics as Freud described. It is an active mechanism that gives the impression of being embodied an immense amount of energy. It is the unconscious mechanism in which the patient is not aware of it. In addition, the process continues; the memories that are rendered unconscious remain unconscious. Finally, repression is a purposive process; it gives the impression of being guided to an end.

2.5. The Coming of Age:

Coming of age is one of the themes that emerged in adolescents' literature. Terminologically, the term coming of age is often used to represent to fully reach legal adult status (Millard, 2007, p.11). Millard (2007) further notes that coming of age usually occurs between twelve and nineteen years old. In this case, teenagers strive to reach full legal adult status in different cultures, in particular with respect to cultural norms such as driving license, sexual consent, alcohol, and marriage. In other words, teenagers strive to prove that they are mature enough to be adults with greater rights and responsibilities.

The transition from one phase to another of involves developments, namely biological, psychological and social growth (Karunan, 2006, p.5). Karunan (2006) further points out that these changes occur concurrently at different rates for each teenager within each gender, frequently influenced by social and environmental factors. In the journey to the maturation, adolescents or young adults develop faster (Bucher & Hinton, 2010, p.2). The physical or biological transformation of young adults can easily be seen by their rapid growth and transition. Bucher and Hinton also note that adolescents also go through changes in their way of thinking called cognitive development in which teenagers undergo a higher-level thought process. In this process, the moral and ethical conduct of teenagers inevitably improves with the encouragement of parents, teachers or any other mature figure. Moreover, teenagers also experience social development. Socially, are acquainted with friends and peers (Manning & Bucher, 2009, cited in Bucher & Hinton, 2010, pp.2-3).

In other words, teenagers increase social connections and also strengthen their friendship with the mates.

The aim of the coming of age novel is normally to raise a topic with which all youngsters must engage in on their path towards to adulthood (Fox, 2010, p.33). Moreover, within the coming of age issue, teenagers are important due to how they are at the core of social change, while at the same time they are the products of the adult social culture which shapes their transformation (Millard, 2007, p.8). Therefore, the narratives in contemporary coming of age novels travel forward in time to the point of maturity from which it can discuss the unspoken root that started it. It can be noted that the narratives shifting in the coming of age novel aims to explore why and how the adolescents experience and face the process of coming of age to reach the point of maturity.

2.6. Conclusion:

Psychologists claim that an individual's adult life is affected by the way he perceives his childhood problems such as fears. They suggest that facing fears and overcoming them leads to a healthy mature life. However, some people repress the memories of fear as a defense mechanism in order to keep their sanity. By doing so, they can't mature successfully and they become trapped in their own fears instead. To sum up, in this chapter few points were addressed starting first by presenting a brief explanation concerning Freud's psychology and his theory on the human psyche. Next, the concepts of fear, repression, and coming of age were discussed briefly highlighting their connection to each other as well as their influence on the human mind.

Chapter Three

3.1. Introduction:

Stephen King's contribution to popularizing the horror genre cannot be denied. His novels helped set the transition from the fiction of gore and disgust with no moral story to narratives that are naturalistic with issues that haunted American and still does such as bullying, domestic abuse, race and religious discrimination ... etc. This last chapter deals with the analyses of the work of Stephen King's *It*, which tells the story of the seven main characters known as The Losers' Club and their struggle to eliminate the evil haunting them. The analysis examines how the characters perceive their fears and their monster, and how they overcome their flaws to fully grow up as a healthy adult.

3.2. Synopsis:

The main events of the story take place in 1958 in Derry, Maine. The seven main characters Bill Denbrough, Richie Tozier, Stan Uris, Ben Hanscom, Eddie Kaspbrak, Beverly Marsh and Mike Hanlon, are all children from eleven to twelve years old who are dealing with few personal dramas in their lives, in addition to being terrorized by a squad of older boys from school led by Henry Bowers, a victim of domestic abuse himself. Therefore, the children form the Losers' Club as a mean to psychologically protect themselves from their predators. Alongside, their family and school issues, the children soon realize that their greatest problem is yet to be confronted, as a sequence of horrible events that happened in the summer of 1958 introduced the children to their worst nightmares. Later, the losers learn that the town they live in is haunted by a mysterious creature since ancient times, and it tends to perform its brutal crimes in a cycle every 27 years. Throughout that summer, the Losers are tormented by an unutterable evil with the ability to change its disguise to fit each child's deepest fear. The complexity of the nature of the monster is what grants it with the name of It. Throughout the novel, It has manifested itself as the children's deepest nightmares, such as mummies, werewolves, lepers, among others. However, the creature mostly likes to introduce itself in the disguise of a clown named Pennywise the Dancing Clown to approach its victims mainly the children by luring them to the sewer and drain system of Derry where It lives. United by their friendship, the losers bravely agree to enter the town's sewer system and put an end to It. After a crucial battle with It, they doubt that they had defeated the monster for good. Therefore, when they exit the sewers, they make an oath that if the creature would ever come back, then they must come back too and finish what they had started. In 1985, the Losers goes back to Derry when a series of murderers resembling the ones that happened

27 years ago. The children have grown up to be successful adults but they barely remember their infancy, except for Mike, the only member of the club who still lives in the small town. He calls his friends asking for their presence to face Pennywise for the last time and to keep the promise they made many years ago. The Losers' Club returns to defeat the evil entity once and for all, except for Stan Uris who kills himself when he hears that It is back. King (1997) describes the Losers as a special group of friends as they do not only relate to each other fear from *It*, but also their personal dramas, worries, problems, their dreams and accomplishments. They build an extraordinary relationship of friendship, trust and affection. They are different from one another but they complete each other, and this strong sense of unity gives them the necessary strength to overcome their fears and thus defeat It.

3.3. The Monster:

One of Stephen King's most prominent monsters is without doubt the monster from the novel *It*. The monster itself is an alien who haunts the town Derry in Maine. The monster is dubbed It, given that it is a shape-shifter which changes its forms to adapt to children's individual fears and imagination. According to Magistrale (1988), the evil monster tends to manifest itself into various monstrous forms that are peculiar to its victims.

The most common shape that It presents itself with is Pennywise the Dancing Clown. It appeared in that form to George Denbrough: "The face of the clown in the storm drain was white, there were funny tufts of red hair on either side of his bald head, and there was a big clown-smile painted over his mouth" (King, 1986, p. 13). To George's brother Bill, It appeared as George's ghost, and It appeared to Mike Hanlon as a flesh eating bird just like the movie monster, Rodan. Besides, It appeared as a mummy to Ben, Eddie saw a leper, Richie a werewolf, Stan two drowned boys, and Beverly saw blood in her drain. It also changes to get the kids' trust It, allowing the monster to catch them. For instance, Pennywise changes the color of his eyes to attract George: "How, George wondered, could I have thought his eyes were yellow? They were a bright, dancing blue, the color of his mom's eyes, and Bill's" (King, 1986, p.14). The monster itself clarifies its reasons for preying on children of varying age as children's fears can easily be interpreted in a physical form.

Nevertheless, when the Losers returned to Derry as adults, they saw It in a different form than the one they saw when they were young. Eddie saw It as a hobo that looked like his high school bully Belch Huggins, Ben as Dracula, Richie as a Paul Bunyan's statue,

and Beverly as the witch from Hansel and Gretel. When they find It in its lair, both in 1958 and 1985, It came out as a huge pregnant female spider. In fact, even doesn't succeed in describing the true nature of It because neither as children nor as adults could they comprehend Its true shape "...not a Spider either, not really, but this shape isn't one It picked out of our minds; it's just the closest our minds can come to (the deadlights) whatever It really is" (King, p. 1064).

The origin of the monster is really fascinating. It has been in Derry for quite a time, and citizens of Derry have become familiar to the existence of a hideous evil in their town, although they are unable to see the monster for themselves. Whenever there is an act of violence in the town, It seems to appear there, such as John Markson killing his entire family the murder of a crew of lumberjacks, the big fire at Black Spot, the ambush of the Bradley Gang, and the explosion at the Ironworks. The amusing fact about the relation between Derry and It is that the people there no longer notice It. It could be defined as a state of collective silence or an act of collective ignorance. The people have become so used to its crimes that they are unable to recognize when It starts tormenting children in the town. And any murder committed by Pennywise is a representation of the town's ignorance towards its infants (Magistrale, 1988). The town itself becomes the source of evil, and the Losers Club know that the town is corrupted, hence allowing It to linger and murder without anyone noticing. Another potential theory for this collective ignorance may be that the entire town is simply under the monster's control, and that makes it difficult for the authorities, like the police, to recognize It as the killer. Any time It came to light, the authorities would find someone who may have committed at least one murder at that time. The suspect would be arrested this and convicted with all the crimes that have happened, without knowing, or even caring, that the suspect could be innocent. For instance, although Eddie Corcoran was killed by It, his stepfather was arrested for the murder. Don Hagarty said that when he looked into the clown's eyes, he knew that the clown was Derry (King, p. 36) Mike assumes that there is something, some creature feeds on Derry (King, p.148), and Beverly feels that her violent husband is nothing next to the evil awaits her in Derry (King p. 397).

The monster appears in a cycle every twenty seven years. According to Carroll (1990), this is evident to the various sequential onsets of the monster as it returns in a specific period (p. 100). Normally the cycle starts with violent incidents, such as the fire, or the children's murders of during Easter egg, resulting in a domino effect of unexplained brutal

crimes. When the murders stop, It hibernates for a period of time. It feeds on, violence and human pain, and when It is satisfied, It goes back into its slumber. The Losers thought that It feeds on children, on their meat and blood and thus it obtains its power. However, twenty-seven years later Mike acknowledges that It's power did not come from food, instead it was faith and children were easy targets because of their faith and vulnerable imagination. (King, 1986, p. 908) Despite the Losers battle with the monster, It still came back almost thirty years later, as they were unable to fully eliminate it, rather they only ended its terrors and massacres.

Interestingly, the monster usually tends to be as a quirky figure, a clown. However, the clown figure is also transformed into a variety of hideous shapes. King was able to turn the clown into a loathsome character by altering his appearance: making it more terrifying by adding sharp teeth, very dramatic makeup and a creepy smile, as well as making it the children's murderer. Although not all the murders are mentioned in the novel, the ones that are described are complexly detailed as they include body disfigurement. This graphically magnifies the brutality of the murder above the death itself, making the murderer even more terrifying.

In addition, the entity, alongside its many disguises, elicits feelings of fear and nausea. This can be demonstrated with the concept of art-horror, discussed by Noël Carroll in his article "The Nature of Horror". He states that the term can be used to describe the feeling we get when we see, in books or movies, a monster which is both frightening and impure. We feel terrified when we think how much threat the monster poses, and we feel disgusted if we take into consideration its impurity. Art-horror combines these two descriptions and makes us feel simultaneously mortified and irritated (Carroll, 1990, p. 55). In an encounter with this kind of a monster, we will not only retaliate out of fear, but we would also retaliate because to the repulsion of revulsion and disgust, since we view the monster as impure, or filthy. In that sense, King's fearsome, abhorrent, evil monster becomes a cruel juxtaposition to the delightful innocence and purity of the children.

3.4. Fear:

The novel has many examples of the different things that people fear. The triggers of the children's fears vary, but for the Losers Club, the root of their fears is It or even the town of Derry itself. Even as adults, they are all terrified of this mysterious creature. While none of them can remember the reason for their fear of going back when Mike asks for

them to, they know for sure that something dangerous awaits them in Derry. When they left the town in 1958 after confronting the monster, thinking that they have killed it, they forgot everything that happened in the sewers under Derry. This includes the suppression of negative emotions; a common and natural psychological mechanism that people use to cope with trauma. An alternative explanation of this phenomenon may indicate a more malicious power at work: the monster could, in reality, have manipulated their memories and feelings, inflicting them with collective amnesia. Once they returned, their repressed memories begin to resurface: as they reunite, they start to recall fragments of events through conversation.

Even though she does not recall much, Beverly is different from the rest of her friends. Her childhood greatly influenced her adulthood, since she had married Tom Rogan, who is just like her abusive father. The others have forgotten everything to create a healthy adult life. However, Beverly is more like Mike than any other member of the group who stayed back in Derry when everyone else left. He monitored It and gathered information about the brutal events in Derry throughout history, and tried to understand how It acts. Unlike the rest, Mike does not have a prosperous life and career, however, he sacrificed himself for them as he knew that It will be coming back and that someone has to bring them back when that happens. On the other hand, Beverly leads an exciting and luxuriant life on the surface, but in fact, she has also obviously sacrificed herself and suffers daily from It, in the form of her tyrant husband Tom. She is trapped in her own childhood, and even the smallest mistake she makes would awaken Tom's wrath and he would punish her just like her father did when she was young.

Odd as it might seem, It also has fears. After the Losers attacked it in the house on Neibolt Street, It started to get a little bit afraid, because they actually managed to wound It, which was impossible until then. However, Its greatest fear is the from the Other, since its equally equivalent, a sort of a rival, who would help the children in their fight against It, and could even give them the key to defeating it. It fears that It is not the only phantom in Derry: "Hate was new. Hurt was new. Being crossed in Its purpose was new. But the most terrible new thing was this fear. Not fear of the children that had passed, but the fear of not being alone" (King, p.1024). The Other force could be the Turtle, which in the past, has comforted the children and guided them to find the necessary information for their quest to defeat It. For instance, the Losers believed that they had suddenly found a book which describes the ritual of Chüd, but in fact, the Turtle had guided them towards that book, as if

they were fated to find it. It is struck by anxiety after the Losers Club reassembled, knowing how strong and determined they've become and they are here for It. Just like how fear had strengthened the Losers, it has also weakened the monster, making it less of a threat.

3.5. Facing Fear:

Psychologists often say that facing fears is the best way to conquer them. But for the Losers, confronting their fears as children only aided them to weaken their enemy not entirely defeat it. When each one of them met It separately, they were too afraid to even think about confronting It. Even so, when this group of outcasts faced It together, their unity and strength became apparent. Together and by their own special ways, the children were capable of overcoming the unbearable fear of confronting the monster, signifying that in times of need or anxiety, good friends will help us overcome our worst fears.

However, the Losers have a weak link just like any group of friends. In the novel, Stanley Uris is the weak link in the Club and just like all of them, He has seen the monster at least once. However, when they decided to share their stories and look for comfort and understanding from the others, he declined. It was as if he was scared that if he telling his story, would make it real all over again, and he just wanted to forget that he ever come across the monster. At first, he was so terrified about the idea of facing It, but he later changed his mind and he joined the rest, however, the amount of horror and gore he experienced traumatized him for the rest of his life. When they exited the sewers back in 1958, it was Stan's idea to cut their palms and make an oath that they would come back if It ever returned. Yet, during the ritual, Stan chose to cut his wrists instead of his palms (King, p. 140). Sadly, Stan commits suicide by cutting off his wrists when Mike called him in 1985, leaving the word "IT" written in his own blood on the wall. He was not able to face his fears, which in the end led to his suicide, and thus he was the only member who didn't make it back to Derry. This indicates Stan just like the other characters, was so traumatized by what happened that he buried the fear and memories of it. Once the memory of the terror recurred, despite not recalling any precise details of the previous experiences with the monster, he committed suicide instead of encountering it again.

Besides, the Bowers Gang (The Losers' bullies) did not confront their fears either, and they pretended to be brave or even behave as grown up, but in fact, they were children who were really afraid of the demon haunting Derry. Just the leader, Henry Bowers, has

managed to keep his fears in check and not to show that he is terrified, which is why he was used by It as a weapon against the Losers. Henry was simply an instrument of evil; he was used to inciting fear into the Losers Club, as they were all tormented by him and were mortified of him, even as grownup, knowing that he was mentally unstable. At some point, even Henry's friends, Victor and Belch, were terrified of him, having known how aggressive and irrational he is, and that if they don't make him stop him, he can actually take somebody's life. When he assaulted Ben, even though they knew he would try to murder him, they were too mortified to intervene to stop Henry:

He saw that both Belch and Victor had stopped laughing. They looked nervous ... almost scared ... All of a sudden they don't know what he's going to do, or how far he might go. However bad you thought things were, that's how bad they really are ... maybe even a little worse. You got to think. If you never did before or never do again, you better think now. Because his eyes say they're right to look nervous. His eyes say he's crazy as a bedbug (King, p. 199).

After torturing and harassing almost everyone in the Losers Club, Henry killed his father because the voice in his head, which we later find out that it was Its voice, ordered him to do so and gave him the switchblade knife with which he committed the crime. Even Belch and Victor began to fear that Henry had gone crazy, realizing that he had become more and more sadistic and cruel. When they faced It in the sewers under town back in 1958, It took the form of Frankenstein's monster, and decapitated Victor, and disfigured Belch later in 1985. Henry managed to flee, however the shock upon seeing his friends being killed made him go crazy. He was accused of the murder of his father alongside the murders of several children. It also used Henry as a handy weapon against the Losers in 1985 as well. Henry was sent to scare them, hoping that Henry's attempts to kill them would drive them away from Derry, so that It could continue with the hideous murder cycles. Children may sometimes be the victims of the evil force or the adults, and they are often just pure creatures corrupted by evil. Surprisingly, Eddie kills Henry as self-defense during a fight, and it became clear to them that It had been behind Henry's cruel behaviors.

In 1893, in his work *Studies on Hysteria*, Freud described the repressed as a foreign body. The Hysterical symptoms mimic some of the original trauma as a reaction to an accident, and the recollection of the trauma serves as a foreign body which, even after its entry, may continue to be treated as an entity that is still in process. In other words, the original trauma remains alien in both the body and the mind, and continues to be active in both, until it is brought to light during therapy. The foreign disturbs the body, but continues to be unrecognizable by the subconscious, thus it keeps the trauma alive within us. Stan's

trauma kept troubling him, because he neither talked about his anxieties nor did he seek psychological help.

3.6. Repression and Coming of Age:

Author Kenneth Millard defined the coming-of-age novel as a story in which the protagonist transitions from a naive child to a mature adult, discovering his true self and his meaning in society, working through the difficulties of adulthood (Millard, 2007).

One of the most distinguishing aspects of the novel *IT* is its focus on the transition from childhood to adulthood, as it follows the lives of two groups of children who are haunted by It, the Losers Club and the Bowers Gang. The author describes their way of thinking, the way they talk about the world around them, their plans for the future, the way how they see their families and fellow citizens. Setting the novel in two separate periods draws attention to the element of psychoanalytic repression that can occur during the transition from childhood to adulthood.

As the novel starts, the Losers find themselves in the state of innocence. The children's version of the story is set in 1958, an era that is referred to as the "Golden Age of Innocence." It was considered to be the perfect period to be an infant; back then, candy was sold for only cents at the general store, movie tickets could only cost you a dollar or two, and you could ride the bike anywhere you liked. It was an era of safety, predictability, and fun. But aside from this, the late 1950s and early 1960s were a time of great social outbreak; parents getting a divorce, children were being left alone more often, and the emerging of the working single mothers. This can be seen in King's representations of the types of jobs held by the adults in Derry—Ben's mother, for instance, "worked forty a week in the spool-and-bale room at Starks Mills in Newport, and after work days when the dust and lint had been particularly bad, she sometimes coughed so long and hard that Ben would become frightened" (King, p. 176). The working parents and caretakers of the 1960s pushed kids into earlier adulthood than usual, destroying the protective barrier that once shielded children from exposure and awareness of the adult world.

This inability to make a proper transition from childhood to adulthood is the core basis of the novel's main argument in many ways. The Losers find themselves struggling to adapt to adult life. On the surface, they seem to do pretty good; Bill is a famous novelist, Richie is a D.J. in Los Angeles, Ben is a world renowned architect, Stan is a prosperous tax accountant, Eddie runs a limousine company for celebrities in New York, and Beverly

owns a fashion company. Yet their achievements lie in the hardships they have experienced from childhood and adult life.

As infants, each member was exposed to various social or physical traits as mentioned earlier. Beverly's is her complicated relationship with her father. As noted above, her encounters with It reflect this fear because It disguised itself with whatever its victims fear the most, Its choice to appear as blood reflects Beverly's fear of incoming womanhood and blooming sexuality, which in turn reflects her fear of attracting her father's unwanted sexual attention. Like Beverly, the other kids also suffer from different traits. While these traits put the children at odds with their fellow peers and even the adults in their lives, they are ultimately able to use them to their advantage. As Magistrale (1988) stated, "Against these oppressive legions, King's children are often endowed with uncommon powers and traits, and these special attributes, combined with a native shrewdness and acute perceptivity, help distinguish them from the adult world while aiding in their survival" (p. 59) In other words, the characteristics that hold the children down and make them feel outcast are what allow them to fight back against It.

When the Losers returned to Derry as adults in 1985, they had no recollection of their experience as children. It is only by facing It again that they are forced to relive their childhood experiences and recall what helped them to overcome It in the first place. The children in *It* have repressed the traits which defined them as children as a way of coping with their experiences with It, and by extension, their first steps into the unknown and terrifying world of adulthood. These traits return to haunt them later as adults, having become alien after such a long process of repression.

The author gives us a glimpse into Losers Club's adult thinking, that is, when all of them recall their childhood, and the fear they had felt back then. This memory causes them to wake up their inner child, which becomes a major weapon in their battle against It:

The energy you drew on so extravagantly when you were a kid, the energy you thought would never exhaust itself – that slipped away somewhere between eighteen and twenty-four ... It was no big deal; it didn't go all at once, with a bang. And maybe, Richie thought, that's the scary part. How you don't stop being a kid all at once, with a big explosive bang ... The kid in you just leaked out, like the air out of a tire. And one day you looked in the mirror and there was a grownup looking back at you (King, p. 743).

To destroy the monster they must to be both infants and adults. In particular, their mature age allows them to truly understand the power It possess, to see Its real nature. And at the

same time, they have to remember and confront their childhood memories and their fear from It, they have to return to know how much impact It has had on their lives ever since 1958. For instance, none of them has children, which may be another case of potential abuse and long-term damage caused by It, with the intention to keep the inner child of each character forever lost. Luckily, the manipulation fails.

Given the fact that all of them had to both grow up yet remain children at the same time, it is possible to say that the Losers are simply trapped between the two phases and this may be the key to defeat the monster. Children are more likely the ones who believe and fear supernatural events and monsters. As mentioned earlier, children faithful, and It feeds on their faith, however, when children mature, they stop believing in such things and therefore they do not pose any threat to It. Mike indicates that this may be the way It defends itself, by the fact that, when children grow up, they become incapable of faith (King, p. 908). He is also concerned that It knows they are no longer kids and that It knows they cannot beat It (King, p. 908).

The Losers Club is concerned that they will not be able to defeat the monster because they do not know how they managed to wound it back in 1958, and they are no children anymore. However, what they do not realize yet is that It is scared of them, knowing that they are not as vulnerable as It thought they were (King, p. 1034). The strength that It feels when they reunite may be related to a certain incident that occurred after their fight in 1958, that event being all of them having to engage in a sexual act with Beverly. The Losers get lost in the sewers back in 1958 while trying to leave Its lair and they started arguing, Beverly realized that this was happening because they are no longer connected; their unity was weakening. She proposed a very mature thing to do: that they all have to engage in a sexual act with her, claiming that the sexual act is an incredibly intimate act that connects people forever. She thought that sexual intercourse would strengthen their connection, which would aid them to escape the sewers alive. Subsequently, they were united once again by the sexual act. However, this incident may be viewed as a bit of an intrusion into the world of adults. This act represents their entry into the world of adults; it represents a kind of initiation. This scene shows that they are indeed mature, and that maturity is an essential element in justifying their fear of It, which in the end leads them to overcome It as adults.

Be that as it may, Mike knows that to defeat It, they have to learn how to be children again, and It believes that they will not be able to do that, hoping that their lack of innocence and integrity as adults will allow It to destroy them. Once more, they must believe to recover those two crucial qualities; they must have both faith and fear so that they will be able to see and face It again for the last time. The monster needs them to go back to Derry and to become infants again, as that will certainly make them terrified of It again, which the monster believes will cripple the characters (King, p. 908).

The theme of growing up is very complicated and there is no definite answer as to what motivated the Losers Club to defeat It. Their adults' rationality made them understand the It and how to destroy it. While at the same time, their childlike features within them helped them to confront and defeat It for good. The secret to their success was being trapped between both the world of children and the world of adults.

3.7. Conclusion:

To sum up, this chapter focused on analyzing the novel *IT* from a psychoanalytic perspective. This chapter has first focused on the issue of repression as a defense mechanism to protect one's self from the painful memories. Moreover, it has also addressed the concepts of fear and coming of age and it presented the idea that only by understanding fears and facing them, one can truly forget and forgo as grownup. Finally, this chapter explains how *IT* indicates the impact of childhood on the adulthood. For the Losers' Club, the fears and traumas from their childhood influenced their lives as adults, even if they couldn't remember anything.

4. General Conclusion:

This dissertation leads to the conclusion that although horror fiction is somewhat frightening and disturbing, it is a mean to address the social issues and encourage people to come forward and overcome their greatest disturbances.

Moreover, the first chapter defined the genre of horror as an extension of the gothic that has transitioned from being associated with supernatural, doom, decay, old buildings, churches, curses... etc to be more realistic by illustrating that the real monsters are the human beings: destructive, unloving parents, school bullies, uncaring teachers, indifferent neighbors, corrupt politicians or amoral scientists. This chapter also highlighted the influence of Stephen King on the genre as he presents in his works a dark view of society, full of mean, hypocritical and weak adult figures. He uses typical characters but addresses universal issues, and he creates simple, normal heroes which indicate that everyone can make a difference.

The second chapter dealt with the Freudian psychology. At first this chapter provided a brief explanation on Freud's psychoanalysis theory that indicates that the mind is governed by three main systems; the id, the ego, and the superego in which they work together in harmony to create stability and normality and a slight error could create a dysfunction to the harmony. This chapter also addressed the concepts of fear, repression, and coming of age and come to the conclusion that these three concepts have a deep connection to each other and that fear and repression of fears affect greatly the phase of coming of age.

The last chapter is an analytic chapter in which the themes "fear" and "coming of age" were targeted in Stephen King's *IT*. The novel tackles a lot of social issues faced by the seven main characters such as racism, bullying, domestic violence, sexual abuse ... etc that are manifested as a mysterious monster. This chapter also focuses on the transition to adulthood that every child has to undergo, and it explains that in order for the characters to mature and be a healthy member of a certain society, they need to perceive their fears and overcome their flaws.

Stephen King's *It* emphasis that the essence of personal development depends on the individual's capacity to deal with his problems, desires, and traumas so that he will not be trapped in them later, and King's use of children in the novel is because the children

represent something pure and innocent, and they are confronted with the monster, which is evil and impure.

Future researches will be rich and diverse, what can be dealt with in future research can be for example the analysis of some significant topics including the use of children in the novel or the children innocence.

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