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# Gothic American Literature Case Study: The Shining

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# GOTHIC AMERICAN LITERATURE

## CASE STUDY: *THE SHINING*

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Mémoire réalisé par Mélia ERDOGAN

Sous la direction de Madame la Maîtresse de Conférences Alette VENTEJOUX



**MÉLIA ERDOGAN**

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**GOTHIC AMERICAN LITERATURE**  
**CASE STUDY: *THE SHINING***

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Mémoire réalisé dans le cadre du cycle master MEEF anglais

Sous la direction de Madame la Maîtresse de Conférences Aliette VENTEJOUX

Membre du jury : Madame la Maîtresse de Conférences Sophie CHAPUIS

Couverture : © John R. Goodwin, New Hampshire magazine

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## ABSTRACT

Gothic literature is an ever-renewing movement that continues to develop and inspire writers over the centuries. However, this literary genre has always been seen as limited. Indeed, the horror genre is considered as an entertainment based on a fictional and supernatural world, with the only purpose of scaring readers.

I will highlight in the thesis the richness of the Gothic genre by starting with its origins and works of many famous authors such as Edgar Allan Poe, Robert Louis Stevenson, Bram Stoker, Oscar Wilde, Horace Walpole, Mary Shelley, Ann Radcliffe and many others. These literary works show the tremendous evolution of the genre until the Gothic revival of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Thus, my work will focus on one major work of horror, *The Shining* by the American writer Stephen King. First, I will prove the complexity of his work through the study of his writing strategies. Then, I will deal with the famous film adaptation of this novel, “The Shining” directed by Stanley Kubrick. The numerous adaptations show the impact of this work on American culture. This comparative study also shows the conflictual relationship between the two due to the failure to meet fidelity standards.

Key words: adaptations, American culture, Gothic literature, Gothic revival, supernatural, Stephen King, Stanley Kubrick, *The Shining*.

# RÉSUMÉ

La littérature gothique est un mouvement qui se renouvelle sans cesse et qui continue à se développer et à inspirer des écrivains au fil des siècles. Cependant, ce genre littéraire a toujours été perçu comme étant limité. En effet, le genre de l'horreur est considéré comme un divertissement basé sur un monde fictif et surnaturel, dans le seul but d'effrayer les lecteurs.

Je mettrai en lumière dans ce travail de recherche la richesse du genre gothique, en commençant par ses origines et les œuvres de nombreux auteurs célèbres tels que Edgar Allan Poe, Robert Louis Stevenson, Bram Stoker, Oscar Wilde, Horace Walpole, Mary Shelley, Ann Radcliffe et bien d'autres. Ces œuvres littéraires montrent l'évolution phénoménale du genre jusqu'au renouveau gothique du 20<sup>ème</sup> siècle.

De ce fait, mon travail se concentrera sur une œuvre majeure de l'horreur, *The Shining* de l'écrivain américain Stephen King. Tout d'abord, je prouverai la complexité de son œuvre à travers l'étude de ses stratégies d'écriture. Puis, je traiterai de la célèbre adaptation cinématographique de ce roman, réalisée par Stanley Kubrick. Ces nombreuses adaptations montrent l'impact de cette œuvre sur la culture américaine. Cette étude comparative montre également la relation conflictuelle entre les deux en raison du non-respect des normes de fidélité.

Mots clés : adaptations, culture américaine, littérature gothique, renouveau gothique, surnaturel, Stephen King, Stanley Kubrick, *The Shining*.

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## INTRODUCTION

“Not since Dickens has a writer had so many readers by the throat... King’s imagination is vast. He knows how to engage the deepest sympathies of his readers... one of the great storytellers of our time”- *The Guardian*.

Stephen Edwin King is a very famous American author, born in Portland Maine, in 1947. He is married to Tabitha King who is also an American writer. From this union they had three children, Naomi, Joseph, and Owen King. He graduated in 1970 at the University of Maine with a Bachelor of Arts in English. In 1971, he taught English at Hampden Academy in Hampden, Maine while writing short stories. *Carrie* was his first published novel in 1974. And that puts him on his way to his present position as the writer of “best sellers”<sup>1</sup> in the world. From his success he earned the surname of the “king of horror”<sup>2</sup>. He also wrote under the pen name Richard Bachman as a way to challenge his successful career. His works are mostly based on supernatural fiction, science fiction, fantasy, or suspense novels. For his successful books and short stories, he has received countless awards, like the World



Image 1: The Kings in 1979. Clockwise from top left: Tabitha, Owen, Stephen, Naomi and Joe. James Leonard.

Fantasy Award, Edgar Grand Master Award and Good Reads Choice Awards. Stephen King has always been interested in horror fiction, he was a reader of horror EC Comics, including “Tales from the Crypt”<sup>3</sup>. According to Jenifer Michelle D’Élia, in the article “Standing Up With The King: A Critical Look At Stephen King’s Epic”, King’s works followed “the footsteps of many canon-worthy greats of American and English literature like Poe, Hawthorne, and Stoker”<sup>4</sup>. He is also inspired by other American writers, such as Richard Matheson, Shirley Jackson, Mary Shelley, Edgar Allan Poe, Bram Stoker, H.P Lovecraft and many others.

In 1977, *The Shining* was his third published novel. The story takes place in Colorado in the 1970s. Richard Nixon was the president of that tumultuous period in America. Indeed,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/jan/31/stephenking.fiction>

<sup>2</sup> K.S.C. “Why Stephen King’s novels still resonate”, *The Economist*, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> GAINES, William. FELDSTEIN, Al. *Tales from the Crypt*, New-York, EC Comics, 1950-1955.

<sup>4</sup> D'ELIA, Jenifer Michelle. *Standing up with the King: A Critical Look at Stephen King’s Epic*, 2007.

there was a perpetual fight for equal rights for women, native Americans, and African American people. Moreover, there was an emergence of many different movements such as the antiwar movement against the Vietnam War (1955-1975). In the political sphere, the Watergate Scandal in 1972 caused quite a stir and resulted in Nixon's resignation. Concerning the Vietnam War, Stephen King wrote a collection of two novellas and three short stories, entitled *Hearts in Atlantis*, in 1999. Each story is deeply rooted and haunted by this period. It shows his political consciousness and influence in his life and fiction. Stephen King wrote after World War II, and at that time the American lifestyle changed. Contemporary literature displays the change with the emergence of the horror genre. Indeed, the Gothic influence was revived in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by science-fiction and fantasy authors, like Stephen King.

In *The Shining*, the story takes place in Colorado. Usually, his stories or short stories are set in the state of Maine and in a fictional town named "Derry". The first appearance of the town was in the short story "The Bird and the Album", and, in the novels *It* and *11/22/63*. In this horror novel, the main characters are a family: Jack Torrance, his wife Wendy, and their five-year-old son Danny. Jack accepts a job during winter as a caretaker in an isolated and haunted place, the Overlook Hotel. They all move in and experience supernatural activities. Danny is gifted by the "shining", so he can read minds, and experience premonitions and visions. Jack is a writer and teacher. He is struggling with alcoholism and anger issues.

This work belongs to the horror genre, but it is not only a frightening story. King's work can also be interpreted as an autobiography, in which the author reveals his weaknesses and heals his wounds. It is a fictional story but with realistic features since he gets his inspiration from his own life and struggles. Indeed, for the setting of his story, he was inspired by the Stanley Hotel in Estes Park, Colorado. In September 1974, King and his family were the only guests staying in the hotel because it was a day before it closed for the winter season. Moreover, the main themes are the author's most personal fears, which are the dangers of alcoholism and the fear of losing control and his family. In the early stages of his career, King struggled with alcoholism, and *The Shining* voices his concern about this addiction. Other major interesting themes are exploited in this novel, such as capitalism, violence, or even racial relations. These themes are part of American history but not only, they are universal. Many famous authors are inspired by them, such as Tony Morrison in her novel *The Bluest Eye* (1970), which deals with a black girl obsessed by white standards. More than a gothic novel, *The Shining* can be

interpreted as “a form of catharsis”<sup>5</sup>, because writing this novel helped him confront his inner struggles, so that he could heal them.

Stephen King changes the way people perceive the horror genre, he writes from his personal experiences, which makes his works more realistic. Indeed, his stories are not only based on castles and ghosts, they are more complex. But even though he is one of the top selling authors in America, he has been criticized by many literary critics. Indeed, there is a distinction between literary work and popular fiction. Some literary critics consider popular fiction as best sellers, which are only based on entertainment, contrary to literary work. According to Gary Hoppenstand and Ray, B Browne in *The Gothic World of Stephen King: Landscapes of Nightmares* (1987):

A number of critics have closely examined his fiction and not liked what they've seen. Some attack his ideas, claiming that the content of his horror fiction is trite and unoriginal: '*Salem's Lot* (1975) is a vampire story and vampire stories have been done to death; *The Shining* (1977) is a mere haunted house tale; or *The Stand* (1978) is simply another end-of-the-world fantasy, and who needs one of those? Other critics attack his style, claiming that he has none<sup>6</sup>.

I chose the American author Stephen King at the core of my dissertation because he is one of my favourite writers. I have read his famous books and I like the Gothic Horror fiction genre. I want to demonstrate in this study that his works are worth taking into consideration. He has to become a must-read author to work on in literature from Secondary School to University. The Gothic genre has always existed, but it is not the most studied genre, even though it reserves vast and rich resources to exploit in class. Within this framework, I will bring a stylistic approach to the subject. I will prove that *The Shining* is not only a horror work, but a complex literary work. One of the purposes of this study is to examine the Gothic features present in this work. Through his writing style people face their fears, especially those from childhood. So that people do not only read King's works for entertainment but to experience and face their inner fears, traumas, and struggles. King's novels have a major impact on American horror, but also on American culture. His novels are well spread all around the world and have been translated into about fifty languages and adapted into movies or other types of adaptations. As Marie J. MacNee wrote in her book *Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror Writers*, “works by King have

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Shining-novel-by-King>

<sup>6</sup> HOPPENSTAND, Gary. BROWNE, Ray. B. *The Gothic World of Stephen King: Landscapes of Nightmares*, Bowling Green, Bowling Green: State University Popular Press, 1987. p.2.

been adapted for film, television, and drama, recorded on video and audio, and spun off into calendars and gimmicks”<sup>7</sup>, which emphasizes his worldwide impact. The definition of Gothic literature is limited to a dark aspect. The literary historian J. A. Cuddon suggests that it is “a piece of fiction in prose of variable length...which shocks, or even frightens the reader, or perhaps induces a feeling of repulsion or loathing”<sup>8</sup>.

Within the case study of *The Shining* by Stephen King, we may wonder how, through the vast aspect of the horror genre, the complexity of a fantastic and fictional work is revealed. And how does the novel have a major impact on American culture? First, to answer these questions, I shall focus on the notion of Gothic literature, then, I shall discuss the novel *The Shining*, to eventually conclude on Stephen King’s impacts on American culture.

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<sup>7</sup> MACNEE, J. M. *Science fiction, fantasy, and horror writer*, New York, NY: U.X.L, 1994. pp. 221-226.

<sup>8</sup> CUDDON, J. A. *The Penguin Book of Horror Stories*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985. p.11.

# I. Gothic literature

## 1.1. Its origins

The word “Gothic” has a variety of meanings due to its complex history. Indeed, the complexity of the term leads to contradictions. According to Nick Groom, in his book *The Gothic: A Short Introduction*:

[The] story begins with the barbarians—a vast and varied group of many peoples [...] Barbarous’ meant foreign—that is, non-Hellenic—and so came to mean outlandish, rude, or brutal. The Romans extended this meaning to all peoples who were neither Latin nor Greek, before encompassing all those outside the Roman Empire<sup>9</sup>.

Originally, the etymology of the word “Gothic” goes back to the late 300s and 400s A.D when ancient Germanic tribes fought against the Roman Empire. At that time, Rome was a powerful empire which had control over Europe. They were known under the name of the “Goths”. For example, the two major tribes were the Visigoths and Ostrogoths. Because of the actions and traditions of these tribes, they were considered as “barbarians”, so that the term was negative. In fact, they were involved in ransacking and “their religious practices and rituals, such as the ways in which they buried their dead, went against Roman and Christian traditions”<sup>10</sup>.

From the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the term “Gothic” was applied to a new form of art in Europe: Gothic architecture. Especially Gothic cathedrals and churches which are characterized by their innovative way to create light from the stained glasses and the height. Moreover, Gothic architecture includes rib vaults, spires, flying buttresses, pointed arches and gargoyles. The early gothic style first appeared in France, for example the Laon Cathedral (1160), the Basilica Saint-Denis (1144), the Senlis (1160) cathedral, or the most famous Notre Dame de Paris (1160). Critics used to qualify this style of architecture “Gothic” as a negative connotation from the meaning word “barbaric”. The gargoyle is one of the most symbolic features of this artistic period. Indeed, they are waterspouts designed as horrible creatures perching along the roofs. They can be interpreted in both negative and positive ways. They can be considered as a protection, or a symbol of the souls condemned for their sins and turned to stone. Furthermore, in the Middle Ages people had an absolute faith in Christianity but also in

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<sup>9</sup> GROOM, Nick. *The Gothic: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. p.32.

<sup>10</sup> <https://words.usask.ca/helus/2020/03/23/the-changing-meanings-of-gothic/>

the devil and other supernatural manifestations. This awareness of the horrific appeared, according to Howard Philips Lovecraft, in his book *Épouvante et Surnaturel en Littérature*, during the “recurrent plague epidemics”. Thus, “this tragic state of mind is notably manifested by the grotesque sculpted figures of the Gothic Cathedrals of this time, the demonic gargoyles of Notre-Dame de Paris”<sup>11</sup>. It is only in the mid-18th century that the term “Gothic” took on a positive connotation as a style of architecture, contrary to the concept of barbarism.

The age of the Enlightenment was an important period that dominated Europe in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was an intellectual and philosophical movement also named the “age of reason”. Indeed, the Enlightenment’s main ideas are characterized by a focus on human values and optimism to improve human lives. Rationality and reason are the keys to knowledge, freedom, and happiness. At that time in the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Romanticism emerged as a reaction to this strict rationalism of the Enlightenment. On the contrary, the Romantics focused on nature, individualism, and the sublime. Gothic literature appeared as a subgenre of Romanticism, though it mainly focused on negative features of humanity. Gothic writers emphasized feelings and emotions, whereas the Enlightenment movement intended to blind those feelings. To Maggie Kilgour, Professor of English and author of *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*,

the emergence of the gothic in the eighteenth century has also been read as a sign of the resurrection of the need for the sacred and transcendent in a modern enlightened secular world which denies the existence of supernatural forces, or as the rebellion of the imagination against the tyranny of reason<sup>12</sup>.

Concerning the political sphere, these literary genres had been influenced by the American (1765-84) and the French Revolutions (1789-99). These major events resulted in the rising of the middle class asking for liberty and more autonomy. Gothicism has been considered as an involved literary movement in these revolutions by questioning the oppressive laws and morality of that turbulent historical period. Critics argued this statement such as Maggie Kilgour in *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* in which she suggests that “the gothic is part of the reaction against the political, social, scientific, industrial and epistemological revolutions of the

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<sup>11</sup> LOVECRAFT, Howard Phillips. *Épouvante et surnaturel en littérature*, translated by Bernard Da Costa, Paris, Pierre-Guillaume de Roux, 2014. p.38 [translation my own].

« Épidémies récurrentes de peste » ; « cet état d’esprit tragique se manifeste notamment par les grotesques figures sculptées des cathédrales gothiques de ce temps, les démoniaques gargouilles de Notre-Dame de Paris ».

<sup>12</sup> KILGOUR, Maggie. *The Rise of The Gothic Novel*, London and New-York, Routledge, 1995. p.3.

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which enabled the rise of the middle class”<sup>13</sup>. In fact, Gothic fiction is more than a literary genre, it freed people’s speech.

“The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown”<sup>14</sup>. Fear has always been a source of inspiration for many artists. And in early times, fear was in the religious sphere, such as the fear of going to hell. The fear of the unknown has always existed and can be found in ballads, legends, poesy, or oral tales. Despite the early existence of the Gothic genre, it took a long time before it was recognized as a genre.

As most critics would argue, Gothic literature started with Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* in 1764. In the second edition Walpole added the subtitle “A Gothic Story”. Horace Walpole was an English writer, art historian and known as the founder of English Gothic fiction. He revived the Gothic style by building the Strawberry Hill House in Twickenham, south-west London. It was inspired by a nightmare in that place. The novel is set in a haunted castle and combines ancient medieval romances and supernatural elements in a rather realistic fiction of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. According to Maurice Lévy, in “‘Gothic’, and Critical Idiom”, “‘Gothic’ has, to me, that special eighteenth-century flavour, which attaches itself to ruined castles and abbeys”<sup>15</sup>. *The Castle of Otranto* is a perfect example of what Robert Hume called “Gothic trappings, include haunted castles, supernatural occurrences (sometimes with natural explanations), secret panels and stairways, time-yellowed manuscripts, and poorly lighted midnight scenes”<sup>16</sup>. Indeed, the extract below from *The Castle of Otranto* highlights these statements:



Image 2: Portrait of Horace Walpole by John Giles Eccardt, 1754.

The lower part of the castle was hollowed into several intricate cloisters; and it was not easy for one under so much anxiety to find the door that opened into the cavern. An awful silence reigned throughout those subterraneous regions, except now and then some blasts of wind that shook the doors she had passed, and which, grating on the rusty hinges, were re-echoed through that long labyrinth of darkness. Every murmur struck her with new terror; yet more she dreaded to hear the wrathful voice of Manfred urging his domestics to pursue her<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* pp.10-11.

<sup>14</sup> LOVECRAFT, Howard Phillips. *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, Dover Publications: Inc, New-York, 1973.

<sup>15</sup> LLOYD SMITH, Allan. SAGE, Victor. *Gothick Origins and Innovations*, Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1994. p.2.

<sup>16</sup> HUME, Robert. *Gothic versus Romantic: A Revaluation of the Gothic Novel*: PMLA 84, 1969. p.282.

<sup>17</sup> WALPOLE, Horace. *The Castle of Otranto*, Cassel and Company: Limited London, Paris, New York & Melbourne, 1901. p.14.



This extract illustrates the writing strategies used by Horace Walpole to produce an effect of terror on his readers. As one can perceive, the castle is described as a narrow and dark setting. Moreover, the notion of a “long labyrinth of darkness” emphasizes the fear and causes another difficulty for the character in moving forward. The use of sounds is very important in this passage. First, the “awful silence” can be interpreted as a sound to increase anguish. And after the silence, the sounds of the wind and the “murmur” creates a supernatural atmosphere.

Throughout the centuries the Gothic style has been influenced and developed by various movements of history and arts. These different influences shaped its meaning, therefore its richness in literature.

## 1.2. Variations of Gothic styles

Since the eighteenth century, Gothic writings have undergone significant transformations. Their development over the centuries revealed its ambiguity and complexity. Thus, “for about 250 years this lowly, hybrid, barely controlled, vaguely embarrassing literature has not just survived but insisted on coming back repeatedly”<sup>18</sup>. The transformation of this literary genre occurred in three waves. The eighteenth century marked the beginning of the first wave. Indeed, after the success of *The Castle of Otranto*, Gothic fiction gained in popularity and many other famous gothic writers made their appearance. For instance, Ann Radcliffe, who is considered as a pioneer of Gothic Fiction during the Romantic Age. Her best-known works are *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1796). Her writing is famous for its well detailed supernatural setting and for the introduction of the archetypal Gothic villain. Matthew Lewis was inspired by her works and published *The Monk* in 1796. This novel is the perfect illustration of the main themes used in Gothic literature at that time. It deals with the distrust in Catholicism, black magic and Satanism.

The first part of the nineteenth century witnessed the apparition of Mary Shelley’s masterpiece *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus* (1818). Some critics like Brian Aldiss considered *Frankenstein* as the first science-fiction novel. Contrary to other Gothic writers, she marked a shift in Gothic fiction. Indeed, the supernatural events do not happen because of magic

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<sup>18</sup> LUCKHURST, Roger. *Late Victorian Gothic Tales*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009. p.9.

but through science. Moreover, she changed the typical Gothic villain into a supernatural creature. Shelley's work was followed by a famous Irish novel, *Melmoth the Wanderer* by Charles Maturin (1820). It is believed that this novel was the last traditional Gothic genre, which ended the first wave.

During the nineteenth century Gothicism was characterized by a decline of the dominance of the genre. Despite this slow decline, the talented Edgar Allan Poe created his own modern reinterpretation of the genre by writing "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839). His stories explore gothic themes such as the aristocratic decay, death, horror, fear, and many others. That is why he is considered today as the father of American Gothic literature. The end of the nineteenth century, during the late period of the Victorian era, gave birth to other masterpieces, which were known as criticism against Victorian society. The most interesting point in that period was the introduction of a new setting, a more urban and modern one. In fact, as Maria Beville suggests "the urban landscape replaced the forest, supernatural and abject forces became internalised and the distinction between reality and fiction began to dissolve"<sup>19</sup>. This urban gothic era was illustrated by Robert Louis Stevenson in the *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde (1890) and the famous Gothic villain, *Dracula* by Bram Stoker (1897). They all followed the modern influence, but the stories are still often set in fictional lands or countries that the readers had never visited, such as Transylvania, Romania in *Dracula*. Moreover, in the haunted portrait of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* "the reflection of degeneration can be found on historical, social and most significantly, personal levels. Firstly, the decline of the British Empire and urban crises caused by industrialisation can be seen as manifested in the urban Gothic landscape, which is demarcated by darkness, fog and disintegration"<sup>20</sup>. The extracts below from *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, illustrate this statement:

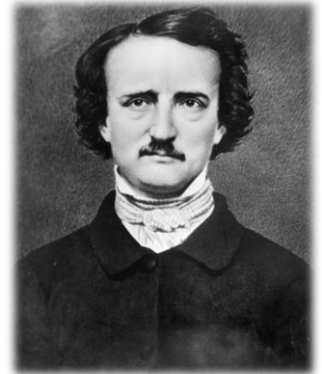


Image 3: Portrait of Edgar Allan Poe. U.S. Signal Corps National Archives, Washington, D.C.

I don't know what I expected, but I went out and wandered eastward, soon losing my way in a labyrinth of grimy streets and black, grassless squares<sup>21</sup>.

He remembered wandering through dimly-lit streets, past gaunt black-shadowed archways and evil-looking houses. Women with hoarse voices and harsh laughter had called after him. Drunkards had reeled by cursing, and

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<sup>19</sup> BEVILLLE, Maria. *Gothic-postmodernism: Voicing the Terrors of Postmodernity*, Rodopi: Amsterdam, New-York, 2009. p.62.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* p.64.

<sup>21</sup> WILDE, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Penguin Books, London, 2000. pp.48-49.

chattering to themselves like monstrous apes. He had seen grotesque children huddled upon doorsteps, and heard shrieks and oaths from gloomy courts<sup>22</sup>.

The verb “wander” is repeated several times and associated with the idea of being lost. This can be interpreted as a metaphor of Dorian acting like a ghost lost in these dark streets. Moreover, the people are considered insane and immoral suggesting by the use of “apes” or “grotesque”, which can be seen as a criticism of Victorian society.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, critics made a distinction between “Male Gothic” and “Female Gothic”. In *Literary Women* (1976), the American literary scholar Ellen Moers coined the term “Female Gothic” to describe female’s writing during that period. Gothic novels were used many times as a revolutionary tool. Indeed, it has also been reassessed as a feminist movement to tackle issues of women experience in society. To Maggie Kilgour, women are “confined to the private domestic sphere, women thus are ironically allowed both too much and too little freedom. Repressed through domestic imprisonment, denied the true limits and inward authority of reason, they are encouraged to indulge their feelings and sensibility”<sup>23</sup>. The result of such stereotypical vision can be noticed in the differences between the male and female protagonists in Gothic novels. Thus, male protagonists are mostly depicted as being beastly and/or tormented. Usually in Gothic fiction the characters are facing their own demons, so they represent the worst version of humanity. For example, in *Frankenstein*, the creature by Shelley well illustrates this vision. On the contrary, the female protagonists are often perceived as victims who are screaming, crying, fainting and in need to be rescued, such as Mathilda in *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole. Gothic writers also depict women as supernatural beings, maternal figures, or as sexually attractive objects devoted to men. For instance, to the professor of English Literature Fred Botting, “the female vampires in *Dracula* display the effects of desire and horror attendant on the dangerous doubleness of sexuality”<sup>24</sup>.

Women writers played a central role in the “Female Gothic” movement. The finest illustration of the Female Gothic literature is based on a balance between the explanation of supernatural features and the position of women. Indeed, Ann Radcliffe in her novels introduced this feminist literary consciousness by mixing both the Gothic genre and romance.



Image 4: Portrait of Ann Radcliffe.  
Courtesy of the Women’s Museum of California.

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* p.86.

<sup>23</sup> KILGOUR, Maggie. *The Rise of The Gothic Novel*, London and New-York: Routledge, 1995. p.78.

<sup>24</sup> BOTTING, Fred. *Gothic*, Routledge: London and New York, 1996. pp.94-95.

She was the one to introduce compelling female characters who are alone and threatened. They have to use their intelligence to overcome male villains. For instance, in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), the female characters are persecuted or killed by their husbands, like Emily St Aubert's aunts. Ann Radcliffe's innovative mode is to explain the supernatural events, and this was criticised by other writers such as H.P Lovecraft. Indeed, he considered that this is "a provoking custom of destroying her own phantoms at the last through labored mechanical explanations"<sup>25</sup>.

She influenced many writers, even feminists such as Mary Wollstonecraft, and other major literary works like *Wuthering Heights* (1847) by Emily Brontë. Her novel is filled with Gothic themes. It can be noticeable that the Radcliffean Gothic genre influenced Brontë's female characters. Indeed, Isabella and Cathy Linton can be considered as gothic heroines in their sufferings of being persecuted women. Romanticism is also part of Brontë's writings, including the explanation of supernatural presence and the position of female protagonists in conflict with the male domination in society.

Since the eighteenth century, Gothic fiction has been influenced by many writers, who mixed and divided it into many different variations. However, it can explain the complexity and richness of this literary genre. The rise of the Gothic novel highlights the powers of horror.

### 1.3. The powers of horror

It beseeches, worries, and fascinates desire, which, nevertheless, does not let itself be seduced. Apprehensive, desire turns aside; sickened, it rejects. A certainty protects it from the shameful - a certainty of which it is proud holds on to it. But simultaneously, just the same, that impetus, that spasm, that leap is drawn toward an elsewhere as tempting as it is condemned. Unflaggingly, like an inescapable boomerang, a vortex of summons and repulsion places the one haunted by it literally beside himself <sup>26</sup>.

Julia Kristeva is a Bulgarian French philosopher, novelist, and literary critic. She has taught at Columbia University in New-York and now in France at University Paris Cité. One of her

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<sup>25</sup> LOVECRAFT, Howard Phillips. *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, Dover Publications, Inc, New-York, 1973. p.23.

<sup>26</sup> KRISTEVA, Julia. *Powers of Horror, an Essay on Abjection*, translated by Leon S. Roudiez, Columbia University Press: New-York, 1982. p.1.

famous works is her book *Powers of Horror, an Essay on Abjection*, written in 1980. It deals with an “approaching abjection” as a philosophical attempt to explain the fear and the horror emotion. The feeling of abjection can be divided into two phases: fascination and repulsion. Repulsion can be seen as a violent rejection due to a threat and then a need for protection. This threat can come from “an exorbitant outside or inside”<sup>27</sup>. Facing this feeling of repulsion, ethics and morals make people not confront this object of desire. So why do we watch or read things which are not pleasant?

According to Julia Kristeva, this feeling of abjection can be compared as a morbid curiosity and the excitement of transgression. Like an irrational will to look at what you should not: “an elsewhere as tempting as it is condemned”<sup>28</sup>. The author uses the example of a corpse as the ultimate symbol of abjection. Indeed, to her, “The corpse, seen without God and outside of science, is the utmost of abjection. It is death infecting life”<sup>29</sup>. It means that morally no one can consider a corpse as a beautiful thing, it is not an acceptable idea. The viewer of an object is balanced between attraction and repulsion, such as in literature.

While Gothic fiction began in England, American Gothic literature started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Edgar Allan Poe is considered as one of the major influencers of this genre. Other writers get their inspiration from Poe, but they are more focusing on the American South history than supernatural events. Thus, William Faulkner (1897-1962) gave birth to a new type of Gothic writing, which deals with the American south. In the 1920s Faulkner’s Southern Gothic works were usually set in Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia, Louisiana and in southern towns or plantations. The plots of Southern Gothic novels are usually disturbing and include supernatural elements. This genre was inspired by early Gothic fiction. The characters are the victim of the story, indeed, they are rather complex, and their morality is often questioned. They also have difficulty finding a place in society. By using dark humour, Edgar Allan Poe’s stories exposed the characters’ complexity in society.

The Southern Gothic genre reached its popularity in the 1940s to the 1960s. The main characteristic of the genre is the setting which is different and related to the dark history of America: slavery, racism and violence. The main goal of these Southern writers is to expose social issues and explore the question of morality through their characters. The presence of supernatural elements is not only there to create a dark atmosphere of terror, but they are also a way to highlight the dark past of America.

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<sup>27</sup> KRISTEVA, Julia, *op. cit.* p.1.

<sup>28</sup> KRISTEVA, Julia, *op. cit.* p.1.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* p.4.

Another additional or subgenre aspect of the Southern Gothic can be linked with the notion of Abjection introduced in the *Powers of Horror, an Essay on Abjection* by Julia Kristeva. It is the Grotesque, also called the Southern Grotesque genre. Especially abjection in the repulsive and frightening-grotesque genre. The grotesque is defined by the degradation or distortion of normality which induces a paradoxical feeling of attraction and repulsion, as described by the philosopher Kristeva. One of the main characteristics of the genre is the physical and mental deformities of the protagonists which create fear and aims to shock the readers. Famous Southern Grotesque writers are Truman Capote, Carson McCullers, Erskine Caldwell, William Faulkner, Flannery O'Connor and many others. Southern Grotesque can be interpreted as another way to criticize society through disturbing features. According to *A Theory of the Grotesque in the Southern Fiction*, Alan Spiegel considered that "the grotesque represents the physical and mental distortions shaped by the new pressures of industrialism and the modern city".<sup>30</sup> What is more than interesting in his theory is that he makes a distinction between "Northern" and "Southern" novelists. To him, "the Northern novelist often chooses to disclose the narrative through the point of view of the one normal character in an abnormal world, the Southern novelist will characteristically tell his story from the point of view of the one abnormal character in a normal world"<sup>31</sup>. This distinction is a crucial one and the short stories by Flannery O'Connor can be relevant illustrations of the Grotesque Southern writing style. For example, the opening pages of her short story "A Stroke of Good Fortune", written in 1971, stages a woman named Ruby Hill. She is pregnant and she does not accept it. Flannery O'Connor wrote during a rather conservative period in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. And she used her main character to denounce the struggles of a modern woman in a patriarchal society. The focus is on Ruby's physical deformities due her pregnancy. Ruby is disgusted by her own body and these deformities reveal her inner struggles as well:

The sight of a radically deformed person calls forth a peculiar kind of fear; it is not a rational fear inspired by the presence of a real danger, but something more profound and more primitive than the fear of the wild beasts or strangers. It is the same fear that we experience in a nightmare upon imagining that we are being pursued by a bogey or demon<sup>32</sup>.

In his works, *The Ludicrous Demon: Aspects of the Grotesque in German Post-Romantic Prose*, Lee Byron Jennings suggests that the physical deformities used in the Grotesque genre aimed to frighten the readers, but not only. Indeed, the Grotesque can also be a form a dark humour

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<sup>30</sup> SPIEGEL, Alan. *A Theory of the Grotesque in Southern Fiction*, Georgia Review, 1972. pp.426-437.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* pp.426-437.

<sup>32</sup> JENNINGS, Lee Byron. *The Ludicrous Demon: Aspects of the Grotesque in German Post-Romantic Prose*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1963. p.11.

and creates a “feeling of amusement”<sup>33</sup>. For instance, the story by Carson McCullers “The Ballad of the Sad Café”, depicts a dwarf:

He was scarcely more than four feet tall and wore rugged, roasty coat that reached only to his knees. His crooked little legs seemed too thin to carry the weight of his great warped chest and the hump that sat on his shoulders. He had a very large head, with deep-set blue eyes and a sharp little mouth<sup>34</sup>.

He is described in a rather grotesque appearance which can provoke amusement to the readers. It proves, once again, all the variations of the Gothic genre.

The variety within Gothic fiction reveals that it is a literature of transformations. Yet at the end of the nineteenth century a new Gothic style emerged, the modern Gothic. The plot focuses on the urban present and reflects contemporary concerns. The 20<sup>th</sup> century was marked by many traumas such as the two World Wars. These wars, economic and political depressions, epidemics, marked a shift as well in the tone of all genres of arts, including literature. Post-war Gothic increased in popularity. Even though the traditional Gothic fiction still has an influence, the current writers developed stories which are connected to modern life. Moreover, the modern Gothic Romances were mostly written by female authors. Authors such as Mary Stewart, Phyllis A. Whitney, Victoria Holt and many others embodied the image of young women running away from a dark and terrible castle. For instance, Daphne Du Maurier’s *Rebecca*, written in 1938, is considered as the best illustration of this genre. It depicts an unnamed woman who marries a wealthy widower before discovering that he and his house are haunted by his ex-wife. This novel has been successfully adapted by Alfred Hitchcock in 1940, and he won two awards.

The terror aspect of the Gothic genre has developed and changed significantly through the centuries. But the form of this style of writing remains the same: horror and mystery. And this is the basis of the novel *The Shining*, written by Stephen King in 1977. This novel is considered as a Gothic revival of the early Gothic genre. Indeed, King revives many Gothic features from the pioneer of Gothic fiction, Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto*, but he also incorporated modern elements: instead of a castle, the scene takes place in a haunted hotel for instance. The characters are perceived as Gothic heroes, especially Jack Torrance who is the perfect example of a typical Gothic villain.

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* p.11.

<sup>34</sup> McCULLERS, Carson. *The Ballad of the Sad Café and Other Stories*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1951. p.4.

## II. Stephen King's *The Shining*

### 2.1. Gothic heroes

One of the main characteristics in Gothic literature is the presence of a Gothic villain. Usually, most of them are men and represent previous archetypes already exploited by early Gothic writers. For example, in *The Caste of Otranto*, the evil father Manfred is the Gothic villain. It could also be a dangerous lover like Heathcliff from the novel *Wuthering Height*. In the opening pages of the novel *The Shining*, the life of Jack Torrance is introduced. For many reasons Jack Torrance can be considered as a Gothic villain. Indeed, the story opens with Jack applying for a new job as a caretaker at the Overlook Hotel. This job is an opportunity to change his life after having been fired from his job as a teacher. And also, a way to change his abusive behavior towards his family.



Image 5: The Stanley Hotel in Estes Park, Colorado by Carol M. Highsmith, 2015.

Moreover, as a writer, the hotel is the perfect place to finish his play. From the beginning of the first chapter, during the interview, Jack adopts an ambivalent behavior: instead of showing motivation for the job, he is defensive and proud. As readers, from the first line, we are directly in the inner thoughts of a rather aggressive character. During the job interview, Jack with “a big wide PR smile”<sup>35</sup> keeps repeating in his mind that Ullman is an “*officious little prick*” (p.1, italics in the original text). This notion of “PR smile” is repeated in the chapter and reflects Jack’s mood. It can be interpreted as a criticism of a fake and hypocritical smile used by people in society.

But as Heidi Strengell suggests, “pride equals sin in Gothic world and inevitably leads to disaster. Like a true Gothic character, Jack full of hubris, directs himself towards his own doom”<sup>36</sup>. During the interview Ullman reveals a tragic event that occurred with the last family who had stayed in the Overlook. The last caretaker, Delbert Grady, “murdered the little girls with a hatchet, his wife with a shotgun, and himself the same way”. To him, the tragedy

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<sup>35</sup> KING, Stephen. *The Shining*, London: Hodder, and Stoughton, 2007. p.1. “References to this novel and this edition will be given between brackets from now on”.

<sup>36</sup> STRENGELL, Heidi. “The Ghost: The Gothic Melodrama in Stephen King’s Fiction”, University of Lapland, *European Journal of American Culture*, 2005. p.232.



happened because of “the feeling of claustrophobia” which can “result in hallucinations and violence-murder”<sup>37</sup>. This tragic event foreshadows the future danger at the Overlook, and it can be seen as a curse. It is in that perspective that Jack Torrance can be compared with Hamlet in Shakespeare’s play. No matter what decision he is going to undertake, his cursed fate will always limit his actions. Throughout the novel, Jack is trying to overcome his demons including his temper, struggles with alcoholism and memories of his abusive father. This pursuit of a new life leads to his self-destruction and as a reader he “both engages our sympathies and terrifies us in his gradual descent into madness”<sup>38</sup>. Jack Torrance represents the male tyrant of the family as the feared husband and father. But throughout the novel his main difficulties are to preserve that identity and patriarchal power. Usually, the villain is always in quest for more power, so he can sacrifice anything, even his family, just to satisfy his selfish needs.

His family is suffering from his behavior, like his wife Wendy Torrance. At first, Wendy embodies perfectly the modernized Gothic heroine archetype. King represents her as a lovely and devoted wife and mother “with childish qualities and with love as well as obedience for the male figure”<sup>39</sup>. As a Gothic heroine, she is an attractive and faithful woman “who has been raised in the shadow of a voracious mother” (p.16). But her marriage with Jack has no future. She thinks of divorcing him, but she is too afraid of his reaction. Despite the arm-breaking accident and the multiple times Jack loses his temper, we encounter her crying over her fate, unable to make a decision and protect Danny. At some point she decides to leave Jack, but she ultimately changes her mind when he improves his behavior. At the cost of her and Danny’s well-being, she stays in her abusive marriage and accepts without any considerations everything that Jack wants. Indeed, Wendy follows him at the Overlook Hotel saying to her son that “if that’s what your father wants, it’s what I want”. Her weak personality can be explained by her childhood, as she is “haunted by the faces of her own mother and father”. She is also haunted by “the feelings of guilt over their marriage” (p.55). At the same time, she is grateful to Jack who married her and made her realise that she has to get away from her abusive mother. This feeling of guilt controls her life choices and almost cost her son’s life. She hesitates to follow Jack as it makes her anxious and cry over the “terror of the future” (p.16). It is as if she is also foreshadowing the danger in the Overlook Hotel.

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<sup>37</sup> STRENGELL, *op.cit.* p.9.

<sup>38</sup> BAILEY, Dale. *American Nightmares: The Haunted House Formula in American Popular Fiction*, Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1999. p.92.

<sup>39</sup> STRENGELL, Heidi. “The Ghost: The Gothic Melodrama in Stephen King’s Fiction”, *University of Lapland, European Journal of American Culture*, 2005. p.233.

In Gothic novels, the supernatural elements are in the centre of the genre, and through Danny Torrance, Stephen King displays them. Indeed, Danny is a five-year old boy gifted with the ability to shine, “sometimes thinking very hard made something happen to him. It made things-real things-go away, and then he saw things that weren’t there” (p.30). His ability to read minds and see the future has its importance throughout the whole novel. Stephen King uses Danny’s gift as a link between the present and the future to hold the reader into suspense. Usually, Danny Torrance appears as an observer in the storytelling. His shine makes Danny quite precocious for his age. This is notably caused by the connection he has with adults’ thoughts: “he understood a great many things about his parents” (p.28). Most of the time the shine makes him sad and afraid, as it makes him aware of the troubles encountered by his parents. He does not understand everything but when he does, he cannot do anything, for example about the “Bad Thing” his dad did or even about the “feelings of guilt and anger” of his mother. But the worst thing which can happen to his family is “DIVORCE, a word that always appeared in his mind in red letters” (p.29). Danny’s shine disturbs his childhood and makes him as anxious as his mother. The shine, through visions, is also some help to prevent the future dangers coming. His visions are perceived through Tony, his “invisible playmate” (p.31), who prevents him not to go to the Overlook by repeating the word “REDRUM” (p.35), which is a clue in the storytelling about the future terrible events. Indeed, in the Overlook Hotel, Danny has to face his shine even more, since the hotel wants his power for itself. Furthermore, his shine can be a way to communicate with other people who do have the same gift. Indeed, Danny did not know what his gift was until he met Dick Hallorann. Dick is a former cook at the Overlook Hotel, he also possessed the gift that he called “shining” (p.87) and this revelation helps Danny to no longer feel lonely or ashamed of his gift but instead to use it wisely. He also warned Danny about the danger of this hotel towards those with the shining. Dick Hallorann represents the complicity of a friend, or a father that Danny never had before. Moreover, he is the one who rescues Danny and Wendy at the end of the story.

The complexity of these characters is also revealed within the notion of double identity. From the beginning of the novel, the readers are aware of the duality of Jack’s behavior in a retrospective way. Jack is both good and evil, and during the novel, he tries to fight his demons. Moreover, the notion of “Doppelgänger” is first mentioned by Wendy, when she eventually realises that there are no differences between her husband sober or drunk, “[i]t was almost as though the Jack she had lived with for six years had never come back last night—as if he had been replaced by some unearthly doppelgänger that she would never know or be quite sure of” (p.56). Even his five-year-old Danny is aware of Jack’s double personalities: “Now,

somewhere, it was coming for him. It was hiding behind Daddy's face, it was imitating Daddy's voice, it was wearing Daddy's clothes. But it was not his daddy. *It was not his daddy*" (p.466, italics in the original text). And it is this mix of devoted husband, father and alcoholic mad person that makes Jack one of the most terrifying characters ever imagined. This concept of duality is also present in Wendy's character, as she is going to change throughout the novel. Thus, through her motherhood and need to protect her lovely son, she is going to evolve as a real mature and independent woman:

She looked older, and some of the laughter had gone out of her face. Now, as she sat reading her book, Hallorann saw a grave sort of beauty there that had been missing on the day he had first met her, some nine months ago. Then she had still been mostly girl. Now she was a woman, a human being who had been dragged around to the dark side of the moon and had come back able to put the pieces back together (p.493).

And Danny is also experiencing this dichotomous personality through Tony:

And now Tony stood directly in front of him, and looking at Tony was like looking into a magic mirror and seeing himself in ten years, the eyes widely spaced and very dark, the chin firm, the mouth handsomely molded. The hair was light blond like his mother's, and yet the stamp on his features was that of his father, as if Tony—as if the Daniel Anthony Torrance that would someday be—was a halfling caught between father and son, a ghost of both, a fusion (p.466).

Tony is not only an invisible friend, but also Danny as an adult in ten years. This can explain the influence of Anthony or Tony as he is always trying to help him. But Tony does affect the behavior of Danny's parents towards him as they protected him more than he needed.

The complexity of the characters relies on the psychological aspect, whether it is a question of the rise or the downfall of the main characters. The supernatural features are central to the plot, but is it the setting or the characters that bring horror to the novel?

## 2.2. Gothic Features

*The Shining* by Stephen King is part of the modern Gothic genre, but not only. King also developed in his novel the same gothic features which had already been exploited in the traditional Gothic by the pioneer Horace Walpole. According to Heidi Strengell, a parallel can be drawn between these two writers, indeed they both "believe in the power of terror to awaken

and sustain interest” and they both “exploit the supernatural in order to amuse”<sup>40</sup>. In King’s novel *The Shining*, the Overlook Hotel plays an important role in the plot, just as the castle in *Otranto*:

However, more important than the physical presence of the Gothic castle becomes the atmosphere of oppression and the powerlessness of the characters, manipulated by forces they cannot comprehend. Both King and Walpole use the forces of nature to emphasize the possibility that evil forces shape man’s fate.<sup>41</sup>

Indeed, the Overlook Hotel is representative of the supernatural feature used by King, but it is also a way to exploit his characters’ weaknesses and psyche. The hotel is haunted, and its several rooms, doors and passages can be the representation of the secrets and history of the protagonists’ minds. As the Torrance family arrives in the hotel, it comes back to life, interested in Danny’s shining power. To capture Danny, the hotel uses the weakest member of the family which ironically appears to be the father, Jack Torrance. The hotel exploits Jack’s flaws and weaknesses against him, so that he slowly isolates himself and starts losing his mind. Tony had tried to prevent Danny against the malicious hotel by repeating “*this inhuman place makes human monsters*” in vain (pp.156-157, italics in the original text). The hotel manifests itself gradually, first by apparitions of ghostly figures, then outside of the hotel with the wasp nest, the topiary and finally with the masked parties. The collection of the hedge animals plays a major role in the plot. Dick Hallorann was the first to mention the hedge animals as he tried to warn Danny to stay away from them: “So if you should see something, in a hallway or a room or outside by those hedges... just look the other way and when you look back, it’ll be gone” (p.95). Jack encountered them as he was in the playground. At first, “he realized something had changed while he had his hand over his eyes. The dog had moved closer”, as if it was a hallucination but then he starts to be mad and scared of them, “(no no NO NO I WILL NOT BELIEVE THIS NOT AT ALL!)” (pp.228-229). Jack seems to be trapped between reality or fiction as he pretends “he had imagined the whole thing. He had had a bad scare but it was over now” (p.230). During the whole novel, Jack is more and more influenced by the hotel and becomes crazy, out of control. But he is always denying his madness and he pretends, “he hadn’t. That was all. It was a hallucination, no different from what had happened yesterday outside that room on the second floor or the goddam hedge menagerie” (p.305). The topiary can be interpreted as the symbol of the psychological and physical changes that Jack undergoes throughout the novel. At the end of the novel, he becomes part of the Overlook Hotel as he

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<sup>40</sup> STRENGELL, Heidi, *op.cit.* pp.224-225.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* p.225.

turns into a monster: “He was up on his hands and knees now, his hair hanging in his eyes, like some heavy animal. A large dog ... or a lion” (p.416). Through the setting of the haunted Overlook Hotel, the supernatural is omnipresent in the novel but fear arises more because of the actions of the characters than because of the setting. Indeed, Jack, the main character, embodies evil, and he is the one to be scared of.

The whole novel is rooted into a prophecy and that can explain current situations with former past events. In *The Shining*, Stephen King is always shaping the past with the present. It is as if the past was haunting the present. In this modern Gothic novel, the prophecy appeared to be in the scrapbook which contains the whole history of the hotel. Jack discovered it in the basement: “a thick scrapbook with white leather covers, its pages bound with two hanks of gold string that had been tied along the binding in gaudy bows” (p.169). The way the book is described suggests mystery and Jack is directly attracted by it. He immediately perceives it as an opportunity to write a book “about the Overlook Hotel” (p.198), instead of suspecting what the devious hotel expected from him. For the hotel the scrapbook is a direct connection with Jack and an easy way to get into his mind. As he keeps reading the scrapbook, he is more and more absorbed and involved in the Overlook Hotel history. Indeed, “he promised himself he would take care of the place, very good care. It seemed that before today he had never really understood the breadth of his responsibility to the Overlook. It was almost like having a responsibility to history” (p.175). As he felt responsible for the place, he wanted to participate in its history and perpetuate it. And this sudden admiration for the history of the Overlook led to a form of addiction. The same addiction that Jack has with alcoholism. Thus, he is constantly hiding and isolating himself from his family while he is reading the scrapbook. His behavior changed progressively and displayed all the signs of alcoholism as he “wiped his lips with his hand and wished he had a drink. This would go better with a drink” (p.174) as the writer Tony Magistrale highlights the fact that Jack

unconsciously associates getting caught reading the scrapbook with his alcoholism is an important nexus to keep in mind, for both acts are done in secret, both produce high level of excitement and guilt in Jack, both chronicle habits of violent and destructive behavior, and both deliberately exclude Wendy<sup>42</sup>.

The scrapbook reveals the secrets of the other owners and caretakers and since the past is shaping the present, Jack is willing to sacrifice everything for the hotel as the others had done before. More than that, the entire novel is based on the balance between the past, the present

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<sup>42</sup> MAGISTRALE, Tony. *Stephen King: America's Storyteller*, Praeger ABC-CLIO, LLC: Santa Barbara, California, 2010. p.113.

and the future. The past tragic events are repeating themselves in the present or will be repeated in the future. For instance, in the beginning of the novel, the readers are aware of Jack's abusive childhood, which arouses pity and may explain his abusive behavior in his marriage and with his son. This circular way of life creates anguish towards both the readers and the characters. The scrapbook delivered a repeating history, the hotel has already killed people and will never stop until someone destroys it. That is the only way to stop this tragic prophecy and ironically Jack himself will do it.

The Gothic features used by the storyteller Stephen King can also be depicted through his writing style strategies. In a Gothic novel, the setting is at the core of the plot, and as it has been mentioned before the Overlook Hotel is a haunted place which can be associated with the castle of early Gothic novels. But before this notion of a haunted hotel, the setting described by the main characters as they arrived in the hotel is interesting. Indeed, there is a mixed feeling between fear, worry and happiness and the same distinction concerning the landscape. Indeed, chapter eight, "A view of the Overlook", starts with "Mommy was worried" and right after she was "laughing" (p.65). As far as the landscapes are concerned "they were beautiful mountains but they were hard" (p.66). And the more they are approaching the Overlook Hotel the sicker they were, indeed, Wendy "was unable to breathe at all; the view had knocked the wind from her", and she felt "nausea and eventual vomiting". His son Danny felt the same way, "his eyes had the blank look of someone on the verge of fainting" (pp.67-68). And ironically, only Jack is fine during the travel. Danny observed each sign written in capital letters, such as "FALLING ROCK ZONE" or even "ENTERING SIDEWINDER PASS" (pp.65-66), which suggests that during winter they will be completely stuck and isolated. Once they arrive at the Overlook Hotel the snow will ultimately trap them:

The Overlook faced it as it had for nearly three-quarters of a century, its darkened windows now bearded with snow, indifferent to the fact that it was now cut off from the world. Or possibly it was pleased with the prospect. Inside its shell the three of them went about their early evening routine, like microbes trapped in the intestine of a monster (p.232).

The setting chosen by King is significant, it is part of the main Gothic elements which arouses fear and anguish to both the readers and the characters. The Overlook Hotel is vast with many doors and passages, it also means that it is a place where it is easy to get lost or to find yourself alone, and helpless.

### 2.3. Gothic suspense

The writing style and techniques used by Stephen King to build suspense take part of the success of the bestselling novel *The Shining*. Suspense according to Alfred Hitchcock, is “the most powerful means of holding onto the viewer’s attention”<sup>43</sup>. First, the book is divided into five different parts, as most of the Shakespearian five acts’ play. Suspense evolves and intensifies gradually until the end of the story. Concerning the type of narration, the narrator is heterodiegetic, undetermined and outside the action. But the story is perceived through a third-person internal focalizer. The story events are seen through different eyes and thus different viewpoints in every chapter. The most interesting thing is that the reader has total access to each characters’ mind. According to Sharon A. Russel, “King moves immediately into minds of the characters and lets us read their thoughts”<sup>44</sup>. Indeed, King gives access to the characters’ inner thoughts to the reader by using italics. For example, in the opening pages of chapter one, “Jack Torrance thought: *Officious little prick*” (p.3, italics in the original text). As I read the novel, I have noticed the important use of repetition, it can be seen as a nexus with the notion of a circling way of life balanced between the past and present events. But it can also be a way of drawing suspense and fear in the plot. Usually, a repetition emphasizes an idea and arouses emotions. In this Gothic story, the main emotions or themes are those of horror, fear, violence and addiction. For instance, Jack Torrance is an alcoholic, and he is always making the same gesture which is to “wip[e]d his mouth”:

“Nothing,” Jack muttered. He took his handkerchief from his back pocket and wiped his mouth with it. Wendy had a moment of that sickening time-is-running-backward feeling again. It was a gesture she remembered well from his drinking days (p.138).

Then, this gesture would occur as a repeated motif throughout all the novel and would symbolize Jack’s addiction with alcohol. The repetition can be observed through the variety of focalizations in the Gothic novel, *The Shining*. When an event is repeated from the viewpoint of different characters it creates suspense. As regards the general structure of the novel, different suspense motifs are developed. The events of each chapter are interspersed and anachronic because of the many ellipses and analepses in the novel. According to Maria Anastasova, the main repeated motifs are “room 217, the motif of the hedge animals and the motif of Hallorann’s

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<sup>43</sup> TRUFFAUT, François. *Hitchcock*. New York: Touchstone, 1983. p.72.

<sup>44</sup> RUSSEL, Sharon A. *Stephen King: A Critical Companion*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996. p.47.

journey”<sup>45</sup>. These events are the perfect illustration of the evolution of suspense in the novel. In fact, room 217 is haunted by a dead woman who committed suicide in a bathtub. This story is first mentioned by Watson in chapter 3, then in chapter 12 by Dick Hallorann when he warns Danny not to go there, which arouses “a morbid kind of curiosity” in chapter 19 called “outside 217” (p.185). This warning generates suspense bound to the readers, as they are wondering if Danny will enter and be hurt by this deadly woman? And then in chapter 25 “Inside 217”, he finally enters the haunted room, and this answers the previous question. Danny was so terrified by this horrible event that Jack checked the room in chapter 30, “217 Revisited”, and he could feel a presence but did not admit it, just as his first experience with the hedge animals. In fact, the hedge animals attack the male protagonists successively in different chapters (23, 34 and 51). Danny uses his shining power to call Dick Halloran and ask him to save their lives. The travel from Florida to Colorado is difficult and long which creates tension and suspense in his future arrival at the hotel. Is he going to arrive in time to save the whole family? The suspense is terrible as it lasts five chapters. There is a distinction between tension and relief during the whole journey, which maintains hope and suspense towards the reader. I have noticed that despite the fragmental narration used by King with analepses or pauses to postpone the action, it creates an intense and uninterrupted suspense and horror throughout the entire novel. There are other events which bring suspense and horror, but this time, they are more related to the notion of the supernatural. These supernatural events maintain horror and fear. For instance, in chapter 16, Danny is bitten by wasps which were supposed to have been killed by Jack previously:

And suddenly he found that he didn't like the Overlook so well anymore, as if it wasn't wasps that had stung his son, wasps that had miraculously lived through the bug bomb assault, but the hotel itself (p.149).

These inexplicable and strange events arouse fear and curiosity which maintain suspense and terror. All these events are linked by a common underlining thread which is the shining. As the title of the novel suggests, *The Shining* holds the reader into suspense. As I have mentioned before, the shining power was first introduced by Danny and then Dick Hallorann named it. Danny is afraid by his ability to shine because he does not understand the meaning of his visions:

And suddenly Danny had one of those flashes of understanding that frightened him most of all; it was like a sudden glimpse of some incomprehensible

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<sup>45</sup> ANASTOVA, Maria, “Patters of Creating Suspense in Stephen King’s *The Shining*”, South-West University Neofit Rilski, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria, 2016. p.50.



machine that might be safe or might be deadly dangerous. He was too young to know which. He was too young to understand (p.91).

He knows how the people around him feel, so he is aware that his parents are worried about him, about his invisible playmate Tony. What is interesting is that Tony tries to warn Danny about the events to come, by doing so, he makes links between the present and the future. And early in the novel, in chapter four entitled "Chadowland", Tony reveals for the first time the main danger in capital letters the word "REDRUM" (p.35) on a mirror. Furthermore, King usually used capital letters in the novel to emphasize the terrifying aspect of a word. These capitalizing words effect revealed the undeniable influence of Gothic writers, such as Edgar Allan Poe and Shirley Jackson. But it is also a way to mark or hold the attention of the reader and to maintain the gothic suspense. Danny does not understand the meaning of the word "REDRUM", like the readers. But there are some clues in the lexical field of blood on pages 35 and 36. Indeed, the colour "red" and the word "blood" (pp.35-36) are repeated and foreshadowed the meaning of this word. The word "REDRUM" is indeed repeated many times in the novel, around forty times, until the revelation of its meaning in chapter 37 "The Ballroom":

Suddenly a huge clock in a glass bowl materialized in front of it. There were no hands or numbers on the clockface, only a date written in red: DECEMBER 2. And then, eyes widening in horror, he saw the word REDRUM reflecting dimly from the glass dome, now reflected twice. And he saw that it spelled MURDER (p.337).

This revelation occurs just before the fifth part of the novel entitled "Matters of life and death", which arouses even more morbid curiosity and suspense on the readers. The shining as a gift is quite paradoxical, because in a way it is a supernatural power which is scary, but it is also a way to know the future. Beyond its terrifying and supernatural aspect, this gift is known and understood by everyone. Indeed, readers can identify themselves through it since it can be considered as a synonym of intuition. This notion of intuition brings human beings back to their primitive instinct, at a time when they were only guided by their senses. Wendy embodies this intuition as a mother through many premonitions: "I think all mothers shine" (p.95). And she also experienced it without even knowing she was right:

Yet, sitting stiffly beside Danny, the idea that it was indeed voices became more and more convincing. Jack and someone else, discussing his escape from the pantry. Discussing the murder of his wife and son. It would be nothing new inside these walls, murder had been done here before (p.436).

Moreover, it is also what makes Wendy so endearing, her protective maternal side.

The importance of sounds in *The Shining* entirely participate in the creation of an effect of terror. These literary features are used by the writer Stephen King throughout the entire novel as a matter of suspense. For instance, the sound of the wind is widely described in Gothic novels to frighten both the characters and the readers. Stephen King uses wind as a personification related to the feeling of sorrow: “The wind sighed through the trees [...]. It was a faint and sorrowful sound” or “only the wind spoke back” (pp.60-61). Wind can be considered as an instrument of horror: “Outside a sudden gust of wind slammed against the equipment shed, making it rock and creak” (p.303). Outside of the Overlook Hotel, the hedge animals coming into life are represented by numerous sounds, for instance in chapter 57 “Exit”, Dick Hallorann faced again these nightmarish animals:

In his head, Hallorann heard it whine fearfully, and mixed with that sound was the fearful, confused yowling of the big cats [...] Even from here he could hear the sounds of the close-set twigs and branches which made up its body cracking and crunching like breaking bones (p.484).

The motif of a “booming sound” is mentioned in four chapters (4, 32, 37 and 55) and it foreshadows the destruction of the hotel, as well as the “steady ticking” sound of the clock “like a bomb” (p.440). Inside of the Overlook Hotel, many louder sounds are depicted: “the sound of the hotel, the old monster, creaking steadily and ever more closely around them” (p.359). Moreover, the sound of the elevator creates anguish as well:

The humming sound again. Loud and steady, varying the slightest bit. Followed by a clank as the humming ceased. A rattling bang. A thump. Then the humming resumed.  
It was the elevator” (p.326).

In this quotation the use of plosives consonants creates an interesting alliteration which echoes to the hotel sounds. The same effect is also produced with objects of violence, such as the mallet: “flat, whacking sound of the mallet against flesh had been replaced with a hollow booming sound, echoing and reverberating” (p.300). Similarly, silence is omnipresent and also part of the soundscape of the novel. You may be used to a sound but rarely to silence, especially in a place where you do not feel at ease. And in *The Shining*, Dick Hallorann, Danny and Wendy do not feel comfortable in the Overlook Hotel. They are scared of the slightest sound they hear but what scares them even more is silence, indeed, “Somehow the silence was worse, more ominous than the screams and the blows against the strong pantry door” (p.419). Paradoxically, silence in a haunted hotel does not seem natural, as if “the hotel’s silence seemed to mock” (p.462).

Stephen King plays with the senses in a similar goal, which is to overwhelm the readers with terror and suspense. The feeling of horror passes by all human sensory information, which are sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. For instance, when Danny explained his meeting with the dead woman to his parents: “She grabbed me ... turned me around ... I could see her eyes ... how her eyes were ... and she started to choke me ... I could smell her ... *I could smell how dead she was ...*” (p.273, italics in the original text). A smell can be a direct sign of a supernatural event, as what happened to Dick Hallorann when he smells the smell of oranges, “he knew it was coming, something was coming at him” (p.344).

The writing style and strategies used by Stephen King to create at the same time complex characters, horror and a suspense more and more gripping throughout the whole novel, make it unique and world famous. This work can be interpreted as an autobiography, which inspired many artists, especially on the cinematographic level.

### III. Stephen King's impacts on American culture

#### 3.1. Autobiographical features

“That truth is monsters are real, and ghosts are real too. They live inside us, and sometimes they win”, *The Shining*, Introduction xiii.

At the center of the novel *The Shining* there is the Torrance family. Stephen King focuses on families in many of his novels and more precisely on dysfunctional families. For example, in *Carrie*, a mother is torturing her own daughter, which suggests that the most terrifying event that could happen to anybody is the destruction of the family unit. To Patrice Allart, “[f]rom the beginning of Stephen King’s career, the main victim of the Monster is the Family. The family is essential in the American society and is even a taboo subject for this society which wants to be ‘politically correct’”<sup>46</sup> (p.279).

Moreover, Stephen King is an American who has been married for nearly forty years and has three children, so his worst nightmare is the destruction of his family. Indeed, [a]ccording to an interview in the *Tampa Tribune* in 1980, he recalled: “I discovered about halfway through that I wasn’t writing about a haunted-house story, that I was writing about a family coming apart. It was like a revelation”<sup>47</sup>. In *The Shining*, Jack suffers from alcoholism and his violent behavior almost cost a divorce. Jack’s father was also an alcoholic and abusive. Wendy has also a difficult relationship with her parents, and especially with her judgmental and jealous mother. The notion of a dysfunctional family is endless in the novel, as if the family tree was poisoned and cursed. The description of these sorrowful families revealed their weaknesses, however they also highlight the strength unity within a family which cannot be completely destroyed. The Overlook Hotel appears to be “exactly what the three of them needed: a season together

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<sup>46</sup> ALLART, Patrice. *Spectres, Monstres & Lovecrafteries, Stephen King son oeuvre et son univers*, Paris : L’œil du Sphinx, 2014 [translation my own].

Dès le début de la carrière de Stephen King, la principale victime du Monstre est la Famille. La famille est essentielle dans la société américaine et est même un sujet tabou pour cette société qui se veut « politiquement correcte ».

<sup>47</sup> SIMPSON, Paul. *A Brief Guide to Stephen King Contemporary master of Suspense and Horror*, Robinson: London, 2014. p.42.

away from the world, a sort of family honeymoon” (p.71). The presence of love is rare throughout the novel, but it is precious:

He squeezed her tightly. “I love you.” She squeezed him back, touched. Those had never been cheap words with John Torrance; she could count the number of times he had said them to her, both before and after marriage, on both her hands (p.129).

Life in the Overlook Hotel was seen as an opportunity for them to get rid of the past trouble. And at the beginning of their stay, it seems to have worked, as Wendy says, “[t]his is the happiest I’ve been since we were married” (p.129). But the truth is behind the thoughts of the characters. Danny and his dad seemed to be very close, and this connection between the two creates jealousy from the mother, as she feels like an “outsider”. She is aware that this is a toxic feeling, as she “suddenly realized she was feeling jealous of the closeness between her husband and her son, and felt ashamed. That was too close to the way her own mother might have felt ... too close for comfort” (p.97). It shows that despite this will of moving forward, the family dysfunctions are still present. The Overlook Hotel is determined to attack the Torrance family unit, and in order to do so, the hotel uses his victim Jack and controls him with his addiction to alcohol and drugs. Alcoholism and drug abuse are dominant themes in the novel. At the beginning, we learn that Jack and his friend Al Shockley were alcoholics. When Jack was drunk, he was violent like his own father. Indeed, “Jack actually reproduces the pattern of violence and alcoholism he was raised in throughout his childhood”<sup>48</sup>. And his drunken rage was used against his own family. Once, he broke the arm of his three-year-old son and this terrible event would haunt him and his family until the end of the novel. Danny has since then been traumatized and refers to his father’s drinking as “The Bad Thing” (p.273), which creates an ambivalent father figure to him. Concerning his wife Wendy, Jack was not physically but mentally violent to her, indeed, the relationship between the two is based on tensions, violence and domination. Jack manifests gradually the symptoms of alcoholism, as he isolates himself to read the scrapbook and “wiped his mouth constantly with his hand as he turned the pages” (p.173). This gesture acts as a repetitive pattern throughout the novel. Even though there is no alcohol in the hotel, Jack shows all the signs of alcoholism. His addiction to medication also fuels his madness:

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<sup>48</sup> FOLIO, Jessica. “Exposing traumas in Stephen King’s *The Shining* and *Doctor Sleep*”, University of Reunion Island, France, December 2015. p.330.

He took one of the Excedrin from the counter, regarded it for a moment, then put it into his mouth and began to chew it, slowly and with relish. The taste flooded back like memory, making his saliva squirt in mingled pleasure and unhappiness. A dry, bitter taste, but a compelling one. He swallowed with a grimace. Chewing aspirin had been a habit with him in his drinking days. (p.195)

The Overlook Hotel possesses Jack when he is drunk, it means that it is alcohol that drives him crazy and makes him lose “his temper” (p.39). Alcohol reveals the abusive nature of Jack, which shows the slight gap between alcohol and abuse. Throughout the novel, Jack’s temper worsens, and he starts to act more violently as he is filled with murdered thoughts: “[h]e was going to kill her, and then he was going to kill Danny. Then maybe the hotel would be satisfied and allow him to kill himself. Just like that other caretaker.” (p.409) As the nightmare of Danny and Wendy started again, Wendy tried to persuade Jack to escape from the hotel and to go to her mothers’: “we must get him out, Jack. I know that! I feel that! *We must get him out!* (p.287, italics in the original text). But it is too late the malicious Overlook Hotel pushes Jack to murder his family, as it did to the Gradys. Jack was so mad and insane that he almost killed his wife Wendy with a roque mallet and as he was about to do the same with his son, until Jack, the beloved father appeared one last time to save Danny’s life:

But suddenly his daddy was there, looking at him in mortal agony, and a sorrow so great that Danny’s heart flamed within his chest. The mouth drew down in a quivering bow.  
“Doc,” Jack Torrance said. “Run away. Quick. And remember how much I love you. (p.475)

Even though Jack was an alcoholic and insane father, he loved his son, and this tragic scene suggests that the bond within a family can never be completely broken.

*The Shining* is more than a Gothic novel, since it does not only relate to supernatural events, but it is also dealing with fears and struggles that anyone can encounter in life. Through the inner thoughts of his characters, Stephen King creates a direct connection with the readers which implies the revelation of their dark side. As if behind each human soul, there was a dark side hidden in the shadows. Stephen King warns against the dangers of getting controlled by those addictions, which can lead to both self-destruction and hurt their loved ones.

And this dark side is especially illustrated in the novel through the addictions of his main character: Jack. The notion of Doppelgänger is widely discussed in the novel, and whether he

meant it or not “Jack is a direct mirror of King”<sup>49</sup>. Indeed, if we make a close-up to Stephen King’s biography, we can notice that there are significant similarities between the two. King has been a teacher and he also aspired to become a famous writer and a loving husband and father. During the 1970s, the American author struggled with alcoholism and drug abuse. Through Jack, King explores his own experiences and traumas as a source of inspiration and central idea of the plot. To write about his problems helps him to confront them, a kind of purgation or purification of his emotions:

I had written *The Shining* without realizing I was writing about myself. I’ve never been the most self-analytical person in the world. People often ask me to parse out meaning from my stories, to relate them back to my life. While I never denied that they... have some relationship to my life, I’m always puzzled to realize years later in some ways I was delineating my own problems, and performing a kind of self-psychoanalysis.<sup>50</sup>

And this suggests that *The Shining* can be considered as a “form of catharsis”<sup>51</sup>. These autobiographical features explain as well why the most prominent sources of fear in the novel are both the fear of losing control and family. Jack Torrance is a symbol or representation of the darkest side of King. He shows the vices and the dangers of alcoholism. Since Jack is the mirror of King, he is also a reflection of the man he would have been, if he had not become a famous writer. It is this mix between reality and fiction that makes *The Shining* a unique and complex literary work.

### 3.2. “The Shining”: the movie adaptation

Right after the literary success of the novel *The Shining*, many adaptations have been made through various forms of art. The first and most famous one is the film adaptation “The Shining” by director Stanley Kubrick in 1980. After this movie, “The Shining”, a television miniseries by Mick Garris appeared in 1997. It was written and produced by Stephen King. More recently, “The Shining” is also an American opera by Paul Moravec and Mark Campbell

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<sup>49</sup> RAJADURAI, R, Dr. ARPUTHAVEL RAJA. G. “Autobiography, Doppelganger, and Alcoholism in Stephen King’s *The Shining*”, *Palarch’s Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*, 2020. p.8.

<sup>50</sup> ROGAK, Lisa. *Haunted Heart the Life and Times of Stephen King*. Thomas Dunnes Book, Saint Martin’s Press: New-York, 2008. p.6.

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Shining-novel-by-King>

in 2016. Thus, interest for this work is endless, since a play is coming soon in 2023, written by Simon Stephens and directed by Ivon Van Hove. The passion around this literary work proves its impact on American culture. After the 1980 film adaptation of Stanley Kubrick, most of King's novels have been adapted in the cinema (around 80), including "Carrie" (1976), "Christine" (1983), "Stand by me" (1986), "Misery" (1990), "The Shawshank Redemption" (1994), "The Green Mile" (1999), "It" (2017) and many others. This makes Stephen King on the list of writers with the most adaptations into film of all time. If some people have never read books from King, they might at least have watched a movie adapted from those.

The movie by Stanley Kubrick "The Shining" was co-written with the American novelist Diane Johnson and is based on Stephen King's 1977 novel. It starred the main characters, Jack Nicholson (Jack Torrance), Shelley Duvall (Wendy Torrance) and Daniel Edward Sidney Lloyd (Danny Torrance). The psychological horror film by Kubrick is considered as one of the greatest movies ever made, even though it differs in many ways from the original 1977 novel. Consequently, it is not a surprise that Stephen King did not appreciate the 1980 film adaptation of his novel. To him, there were too many changes in the script, which caused the elision of the story's main themes discussed in the novel. Those changes can be explained by the short amount of time in a movie (around 144 minutes) compared to 400 pages in a novel. The director had to make choices in order to include the main elements of the plot. In comparison with the novel, these choices led to significant changes in the movie.

The most significant changes lie in the description and characterization of the Torrance family. In the novel, Jack Torrance is a complex character, he loves his son and wife, and he is struggling with alcoholism. Jack sees his new job as winter caretaker in the Overlook Hotel as an opportunity to fight his own demons. In the movie, however, Jack appears eccentric and crazy from the first scene. Even though Jack's struggles with alcoholism are mentioned, it is not in the center of the plot. The audience do not have any information on Jack's abusive childhood, so that they cannot sympathize with him. This choice of portrayal makes Jack a frightening character who sent shivers down one's spine from the very start. In the novel, Jack gradually becomes mad because of both isolation and alcoholism, until he is possessed by the hotel to murder his family with a roque mallet. In the movie, it is worth mentioning that it is Jack's mental health which caused his madness to murder his family rather than the influence of the hotel. In Kubrick's film, Jack uses an axe as a weapon of choice. Jack Nicholson's maddening performance as he appeared through a splintered door



Image 6: *The Irish Times*, Jack Nicholson in "The Shining".



while screaming “Here’s Johnny!” is the most iconic scene of the movie. In the novel, the hedge animals are really important as they are protecting the hotel from the outside. The Overlook Hotel presented by Stephen King is more alive. On the contrary, in the film, the hedge animals are replaced by a hedge maze which creates another atmosphere. The hedge maze has a very mysterious and terrifying side too. It can also be the symbol of isolation and loss which are significant themes in the novel. At the end of the novel, Jack almost kills Wendy and Dick Hallorann but he also saves his son. He is possessed by the hotel, badly beaten with his own mallet and he rushes to relieve the pressure of the boiler, but it is too late. Danny, Wendy, and Dick escape but Jack is killed by the explosion which destroys the Overlook completely. In Kubrick’s adaptation, Jack and Dick’s fate are different, Jack murders Dick with his axe, and tries to kill both Wendy and Danny. Jack runs after his son in the Hedge maze until he collapses and freezes to death in the snow. There are two different endings and thus two different deaths, one in the fire and the other in the cold. Fire and ice are opposite but both result in death.

Moreover, Dick Hallorann’s death in the movie contradicts the sequel of *The Shining* since Dick is presented in the novel *Doctor Sleep* (2013). In a 2013 interview with the BBC, Stephen King criticized Kubrick’s version of Wendy Torrance as “one of the most misogynistic characters ever put on film. She is basically just there to scream and be stupid and that’s not the woman that I wrote about.” Indeed, in the novel Wendy is a beautiful wife and protective mother, who worries to keep her family together. After Jack breaks Danny’s arm, she seriously wants to divorce. She also has her own familial issues with her parents to overcome, but she is always putting family first. Moreover, she wishes to have a closer relationship with her son. She always does everything in her power to protect her son.

In the movie “The Shining”, Kubrick presents a complete other version of Wendy Torrance.

All the features that made her a strong and powerful woman are replaced by a simple and weak portrayal. She is a plain woman, who appears to be submissive to her husband. She is helpless and afraid of him. And first and foremost, she is always crying, which makes her a stupid and dull character. In addition to that, Danny is much closer to her mother in the movie than in the novel. On

the contrary, Danny keeps his distance towards his strange father. In Kubrick’s adaptation, Danny does not differ from the novel. He is still a smart child who shines and foresees the threat coming. However, there is one difference in the description of his imaginary friend, Tony. In the movie, Tony manifests himself in a husky voice from within Danny to communicate with



Image 7: Warner Bros picture of Shelley Duvall’s performance as Wendy Torrance.

him by wagging the boy's finger. He also uses Danny to speak with other members of the family, which does not happen in King's version. Most importantly, Danny's visions and nightmares are not an integral part of the story, whereas in the original version Tony is the key to all these mysteries.

Many of the most iconic supernatural scenes in the movie are not in the book. For example, the bloody elevator, the creepy voice of the twins and their apparition and the hedge maze. Moreover, Jack never finds the scrapbook in the movie but there are only a few references in the news he left on his desk. In the novel, the supernatural presence are less explicit and more mysterious. One of the less noticeable differences is the famous room 217 which changed in the adaptation to room 237. Mrs Massey's decaying body in the bathtub is one of the most terrifying scenes in both the novel and the movie. Stanley Kubrick changed the number of the room at the request of The Timberline Lodge hotel, where the establishing shot was filmed.

Kubrick uses the conventions of horror cinema to deliver a story of evil that is not supernatural but human. Indeed, according to Nicola Camoglio, in the movie: "the supernatural is presented as a manifestation of something deeply human, rather than a physical entity that interacts with the characters. This ultimately blurs the line between what can be explained by psychology and what can be attributed to supernatural causes"<sup>52</sup>. Kubrick depicts another way to create horror, which is more rational than the American writer Stephen King. More than a Gothic novel, Stephen King uses a horror form of literature to deliver strong messages on the dangers of addictions and the power of family. In the movie, these important themes are less present since it is other themes linked to the history of America that the film director wanted to put forward. America is the land of opportunities and dreams. But in both the novel and the film adaptation, despite this notion of pursuit of happiness with the new job opportunity, the reality is not what the Torrance family has expected. Jack Torrance represents most white Americans of the Seventies. He is a working-class white male, frustrated by the realities of his life. He is a struggling writer and feels like a loser who cannot financially support his family. He was an abusive father and husband because of his addictions, and he sees this job as an opportunity to overcome his struggles. At the Overlook Hotel, Jack still does not have any inspiration for his play, and in the movie, he puts himself down by repeating: "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." In both the novel and the movie, there is a criticism of the history of American capitalism. Indeed, there is a significant dividing line between Jack (a middle-class man) drinking in the bar to mourn and the 1940s class in the gala of the hotel's gold room. Those

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<sup>52</sup> CAMOGLIO, Nicola. "*The Shining*: A Separation a Fundamental Flaw in Adaptation Studies", Gothenburg University, 2020. p.18.

1940s people appear as ghosts but seem to be real to Jack. In the novel sometimes the characters can hear them laugh, enjoying life when they are struggling:

But it wasn't really empty. Because here in the Overlook things just went on and on. Here in the Overlook all times were one. There was an endless night in August of 1945, with laughter and drinks and a chosen shining few going up and coming down in the elevator, drinking champagne and popping party favors in each other's faces. (p.334)

These people are enjoying their wealth, they are freed from struggles, they do not work, they are only interested in their self-image. On the contrary, Jack is constantly anxious and lonely. More than a gothic novel, *The Shining*, revealed the American psyche of that time. As a white male, Jack embodies the dominant culture of America, which can be noticed in the novel, for example, in race relations, as Grady refers to Dick as the "nigger cook" (p.389). There are other examples in the text of racist acts which shows the reality of the 1970s racist American society:

He articulated his own proposal that all persons of Negro blood return to their native continent. He expressed his sincere belief in the position the limo driver's soul would occupy in the afterlife. He finished by saying that he believed he had met the limodriver's mother in a New Orleans house of prostitution. (p.345)

Moreover, some fans of Kubrick's adaptation considered the foundations of the Overlook Hotel, with the many doors and passages, as references to the traumas of the western culture. The bloody horrors of the American past from the slaves, the period of colonialism, to the Holocaust of the 1940s are haunting the rooms and the corridors of the hotel. Others interpret the film as a metaphor for Native American Genocide, notably because of the famous scene with gushing blood from the elevator, which can be the symbol of the massacred dead. Nonetheless, the interpretation of a work of art is rather subjective. The legendary adaptation of Stephen King's novel *The Shining* is not faithful to the plot, even though there are similarities. We can therefore consider that they are two distinct works. The emergence of this adaptation and many others proves the worldwide impact of American culture.

### 3.3. Proposition de séquence

*This part is written in French as it is required for this master.*

Actuellement en poste au lycée général et technologique Étienne Mimard à Saint-Étienne, je suis enseignante du secondaire en tant que stagiaire contractuelle en anglais LV1. J'ai sous ma responsabilité deux classes de première technologique STI2D (Sciences et technologies de l'industrie et du développement durable).

Madame Benhammou, qui enseigne au lycée Honoré d'Urfé à Saint-Étienne, est ma tutrice.

La séquence que je présente dans ce mémoire a été réalisée par mes soins afin de pouvoir un jour la mettre en application.

#### **Plan de séquence :**

Niveau de classe : Cycle Terminal - 1ère Générale – enseignement de spécialité LLCER

Thématique : Imaginaires

Axe d'étude : Imaginaires et effrayants

Nombre de séances prévues: ~ **10 séances**

**Extrait du programme de langues, littératures et cultures étrangères - anglais - de première générale, B.O. spécial n°1 du 22 janvier 2019, thématique « Imaginaires », axe d'étude « Imaginaires effrayants » :**

« Cet axe explore la façon dont l'imagination vient donner corps à ce que l'être humain ne comprend ni ne maîtrise, à ses fantasmes et terreurs les plus enfouies, à ses angoisses métaphysiques, tout en les plaçant à une rassurante distance dans des univers surnaturels. On peut s'intéresser par exemple au motif du monstre (de *Dracula* de Bram Stoker à *Elephant Man* de David Lynch), ou étudier les techniques propres aux genres du gothique et de l'horreur, en littérature et dans les arts (*Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* de Stevenson, *The Shining* de Stanley Kubrick). »

Titre du scénario d'apprentissage : Here's Johnny!

Activité(s) langagière(s) dominante(s) : Expression orale et compréhension écrite

Niveau CECRL visé : B2

Problématique : *Is Gothic an immortal genre?*

**Tâche finale : Using the methodology, write a sequel to a Gothic novel studied in class or write one based on one of them. (250 words minimum).**

## Objectifs de séquence :

### **OBJECTIFS CULTURELS**

Les caractéristiques intemporelles du genre gothique sous différentes formes d'art du XVIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle à aujourd'hui dans le monde anglophone.

### **OBJECTIFS LINGUISTIQUES**

Grammaticaux :

- Modaux (*can/could/shall/should/may/might...*) + exprimer la probabilité/possibilité.
- Temps du passé: le prétérit et le present perfect (have + -en)

Lexicaux :

- La peur : « terror »; « horror » ; « shrieked » ; « shuddered »
- La fuite : « escape » ; « pursuit » ; « hurried »; « secret passage »
- La détresse/ le désespoir : « dismay » ; « hopeless » ; « agony of despair »
- Isolement : « locked »; « gates »; « cut off from the outside »; « claustrophobia »
- La mort : « tragedy »; « murdered »; « suicide »; « killed »
- Violence : « violence »; « hallucinations and violence »
- La maladie/accident : « flu, pneumonia, a broken arm, even appendicitis »; « fractured skull »
- Le surnaturel/ la fiction : « ghost »; « human form »
- Les sons : « wind »; « wrathful voice »; « sigh and steps »

Phonologiques :

- rythme (mots porteurs de sens-lexicaux/réduction et le phénomène des chaînes parlées)
- l'intonation (placement du noyau et syllabe tonique).

### **OBJECTIFS COMMUNICATIONNELS**

Socio-linguistiques :

- Savoir adapter le registre de langue à son auditoire

Pragmatiques :

- exprimer son point de vue/savoir argumenter
- savoir écrire une scène de roman
- savoir établir des liens entre les informations

### **PARCOURS D'ÉDUCATION ARTISTIQUE ET CULTURELLE**

- Étudier différentes formes d'art (littérature-peinture)
- L'écriture/réécriture d'un art
- La représentation/l'illustration d'un art

Étape 1				
Objectif langagier : EO				
Support: Tableau d'Henry Fuseli "The Nightmare" 1781				
Parcours de compréhension	Productions attendues	Éléments facilitateurs	Éléments obstacles	Intérêt pour la tâche finale
<p><b>Anticipation-</b> commencer par le titre seulement pour que les élèves puissent émettre des hypothèses :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Read the title of this document, what do you expect to see?</li> </ul> <p>Projection ensuite de l'image de l'œuvre ce qui va leur permettre d'affirmer ou non leurs hypothèses :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What can you see? What does this painting represent?</li> <li>- What about the colors And the effect that this painting produces?</li> <li>- In pairs make links between the title and the painting, what can you say? And with the main question of this chapter (lien avec la problématique).</li> </ul>	<p><i>-It can be the representation of a nightmare. Something horrible. -I expect to see something scary like the representation of the devil.</i></p> <p><i>-There are a woman sleeping and a demonic figure on her chest. -We can also see a head of a ghost horse looking at her. -Maybe she is dead.</i></p> <p><i>-the main colours are white, red and black. Despite the white woman, it is a rather dark painting. -It creates tension and insecurity.</i></p> <p><i>-it seems real but as the title suggests it is a nightmare (so it is fictional). -the scene is part of the reality, but the creatures create a gap between reality or imagination.</i></p>	<p>-titre évocateur.</p> <p>-support iconographique.</p> <p>-les thèmes principaux du gothique se trouvent dans l'œuvre.</p>	<p>-faire la distinction entre ce qui est de l'ordre du réel et de la fiction.</p> <p>-un rêve peut faire référence autant à des éléments du réel comme de l'imaginaire.</p>	<p>-introduction au sujet.</p> <p>-introduction aux thèmes généraux du genre gothique.</p>

	- <i>this painting represents the nightmare of this woman, or it can be the representation of the gothic genre to Henry Füssli.</i>			
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<b>Étape 2</b>				
<b>Objectif langagier : CE</b>				
<b>Supports:</b> Article de presse: ‘How to tell you’re reading a Gothic story – in pictures’, Adam Frost & Zhenia Vasiliev, theguardian.com (9 May 2014) et extrait littéraire du roman <i>The Castle of Otranto</i> (Horace Walpole, 1764).				
<b>Parcours de compréhension</b>	<b>Productions attendues</b>	<b>Éléments facilitateurs</b>	<b>Éléments obstacles</b>	<b>Intérêt pour la tâche finale</b>
<p><b>Anticipation – article :</b> Commencer par le titre et leur demander de répondre à cette question : ⇒ Émission d’hypothèses.</p> <p>- How can you tell you are reading a Gothic story?</p> <p>- What about the main elements that are used to create a Gothic story?</p> <p>Distribution de l’article en précisant de ne s’intéresser qu’aux 7 premières vignettes :</p> <p><b>Identification-</b></p>	<p><i>-It is a scary story filled with supernatural elements (ghosts; demons...).</i> <i>-it is a fictional and horror story, in a bad weather setting.</i></p> <p><i>-to create/imagine a Gothic story, you need a haunted place and unhappy people. Usually there is an unhappy ending, related to death.</i></p>	<p>L’article : -résumé des caractéristiques principales qu’on retrouve dans le genre gothique en littérature sous forme de vignettes colorées (plutôt ludique). -la présence d’images et d’explications pour aider à la compréhension.</p> <p>L’extrait de roman : en lien direct avec l’article (aide à la compréhension globale du texte).</p>	<p>L’article : -certaines œuvres citées dans l’article vont leur être totalement inconnues. -certaines vignettes vont leur être plus utiles que d’autres (les 7 premières= à préciser lors des consignes).</p> <p>L’extrait de roman : Certains mots de vocabulaire : « subterraneous » ; « recoiled » ; « dismay » ; « dread » ; « dismal »...ect. Pour faciliter l’accès au sens je peux donner des synonymes.</p>	<p>- l’article : avoir connaissance et savoir reconnaître les principales caractéristiques littéraires d’un roman gothique.</p> <p>- l’extrait du roman : découverte de l’univers d’Horace Walpole (considéré comme le premier exemple du roman gothique).</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Read the article and focus on the seven first pictures.</li> <li>⇒ Vérification des hypothèses.</li> <li>-Take notes of the seven titles, does anything strike you?</li> </ul>	<p><i>-this article used a humorous tone to describe the main characteristics of a Gothic story.</i></p> <p><i>-it shows that most of the 18<sup>th</sup> Gothic novels used The Castle of Otranto as an example to follow.</i></p> <p><i>-there is no originality, they cannot be distinguished from one to another.</i></p>			
<p><b>Anticipation- extrait littéraire:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- After studying The Guardian article, what features can you anticipate in the <i>The Castle of Otranto</i>? Justify your choices.</li> </ul> <p>Je divise le texte en deux, lecture et repérages des deux premiers paragraphes puis des deux derniers.</p> <p>Une partie de la classe prends donc en charge la première partie du texte et l'autre la seconde.</p> <p><b>Identification-</b></p>	<p><i>-I expect to read a story about a monster.</i></p> <p><i>-It may be about a woman in a haunted castle.</i></p> <p><i>-It can maybe be about a murderous villain in a castle in winter.</i></p>			



<p>⇒ Vérification des hypothèses.</p> <p>- Read the text and focus on the narrative voice and on people, what can you say?</p> <p>- Focus on repetitions, does anything strike you?</p> <p>- Pick out expressions/words related to lexical fields.</p>	<p><i>-It is a third person narrative voice or an heterodiegetic narrator: “the lady” or “Isabella”. The main character is a “lady” or “Isabella”. There are also a prince Manfred and some domestics/servants who are pursuing her. Conrad is mentioned at the end of the extract.</i></p> <p><i>In the first part of the text: there are a lot of repetitive words such as “castle”, “staircase”, “pursuit”, “subterraneous”, “passage” and “lamp”. In the second part of the text there is no repetitive words.</i></p> <p><i>In the first part of the text, we can notice several lexical fields such as:</i></p> <p><b>Fear:</b> “terror”; “anxiety”; “dreaded”; “her blood curdled” and “horror”.</p> <p><b>Escape:</b> “pursuit”; “escape”; “hurried”; “secret passage”;</p>			
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<p>- In pairs (one from the first part of the</p>	<p>“subterranean passage”;  “intricate cloisters”;  “labyrinth of darkness”.  <b>Sounds:</b> “An awful silence”;  “blasts of wind,”;  “Every murmur”;  “wrathful voice”.  <b>Religion:</b> “the church of St. Nicholas”; “to profane the sacredness”;  “convent” and “cathedral”.</p> <p><i>In the second part of the text there are also a lot of lexical fields:</i></p> <p><b>Despair:</b>  “dismay”;  “alone”; “dismal place”, “hopeless of escaping”;  “agony of despair”.  <b>Fear:</b> “terror”;  “dread”;  “darkness”;  “horror”;  “trembling”;  “shrieked”;  “ghost”.  <b>Sounds:</b> “gust of wind”; “sigh and steps”.  <b>Hope:</b> “hope”;  “courage”; “joy”;  “eagerly”.  <b>Religion:</b> “every saint in heaven”;  “implored”.</p>			
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text and one on the second part). Compare what you have found between each other. What do all these writing strategies create?	<p><i>-The repetition of words and of some lexical fields create suspense and tension throughout the extract.</i></p> <p><i>-the repetition and the use of lexical fields are used as gothic strategies to create suspense.</i></p>			
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<b>Tâche intermédiaire</b>				
<b>Objectif langagier : EO</b>				
<b>Supports : extrait littéraire du roman <i>The Castle of Otranto</i> (Horace Walpole, 1764) + pages de couverture de d'autres romans gothiques.</b>				
<b>Consigne</b>	<b>Idées/ mots clés attendus</b>	<b>Éléments facilitateurs</b>	<b>Éléments obstacles</b>	<b>Intérêt pour la tâche finale</b>
In pairs create the cover of the novel <i>The Castle of Otranto</i> and present it to class by justifying your choices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- mettre à profit ce qui a été vu dans les documents précédents.</li> <li>-le but étant de représenter de manière visuelle les caractéristiques gothiques et de savoir opérer des choix et pouvoir les justifier.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-les élèves peuvent s'inspirer de d'autres pages de couvertures de romans gothiques.</li> <li>-les documents précédents permettent d'avoir des idées de représentation d'un roman gothique.</li> </ul>	- le passage d'un support écrit à visuel (ici dessin).	<p>Permet de mettre en application ce qui été élucidé par les élèves sur le genre gothique.</p> <p>Permet également de mettre à profit l'imagination des élèves dans l'art.</p>

Étape 3				
Objectif langagier : CE				
Support: <i>The Shining</i> , extrait littéraire du chap 1 “Job Interview” (Stephen King, 1977).				
Parcours de compréhension	Productions attendues	Éléments facilitateurs	Éléments obstacles	Intérêt pour la tâche finale
<p><b>Anticipation -</b> Projection de l’auteur, du titre et du chapitre :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What do you expect from the text?</li> </ul> <p>⇒ Émission d’hypothèses</p> <p><b>Identification-</b> -Read the text and focus on people and what, what can you say?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on the repetitive words, does anything strike you?</li> </ul>	<p>-<i>Stephen King is a very famous American horror writer. The Shining is one of his well-known bestsellers.</i> - <i>I have heard of him but I never read his books. I suppose in this chapter the main character is doing a job interview for a particular job.</i></p> <p>-<i>Mr. Ullman is interviewing Jack Torrance for a job at the Overlook Hotel during winter. The last person Delbert Grady killed his family up there.</i> -<i>there are other characters mentioned such as Mr. Shockley and Mr. Watson.</i></p> <p><i>There are a lot of repetitive words such as “tragedy”, “winter”, “hired”, “wife”, “radio”, “telephones”, “hotel”, “cut off”, “snowmobile”, “helicopter”, “fractured skull”, “murdered”, “suspect, “drunk” ...</i></p> <p><i>All these words are related to gothic</i></p>	<p>-extrait de roman plus contemporain. -les mots de vocabulaire difficiles n’entravent pas la compréhension globale du texte.</p>	<p>-certains mots de vocabulaire/expressions américaines : « appraisingly » ; « hot grin » ; « toothy PR grin » ; « refurbished » ; « chopper » ; « nonplussed ».</p>	<p>-découverte de l’univers du roman gothique du 20<sup>ème</sup> siècle du célèbre Stephen King, qui a été fortement inspiré par celui d’Horace Walpole du 18<sup>ème</sup> siècle.</p> <p>-permet d’avoir de nouvelles inspirations plus actuelles.</p>

<p>- In pairs pick out expressions/words related to lexical fields.</p>	<p><i>themes of death, bad weather and isolation.</i></p> <p><i>There are different lexical fields in the text such as:</i></p> <p><b>Alcoholism:</b> “drunk” ; “I’ve retired”; “drink”; “cheap whiskey”; “generous supply”.</p> <p><b>Isolation:</b> “cut off from the outside world for five to six months”; “solitude”; “people are shut in together over long period of time”.</p> <p><b>Violence/madness:</b> “you lost your temper”; “claustrophobic reaction”; “claustrophobia”; “hallucinations and violence—murder”.</p> <p><b>Death:</b> “killed”; “committed suicide”; “hurt”; “hatchet”; “shotgun”.</p> <p><b>Illness/accident:</b> “your son or your wife tripped on the stairs and fractured his or her skull”; “seriously injured”; “a fractured skull or an accident”; “a serious case of the flu, pneumonia, a broken arm, even appendicitis”.</p> <p><b>Fear/horror:</b> “a tragedy. A horrible tragedy”; “coolly”;</p>			
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<p>- In pairs, compare what you have found between the extracts of <i>The Castle of Otranto</i> and <i>The Shining</i>, what can you say? What effect does the use of these lexical fields have on readers?</p>	<p>“mistake”; “unfortunate”. <b>Bad weather:</b> “blizzard”; “winter”; “harshness of the winter season”; “temperatures”; “twenty-five below— or forty-five below, if you added in the wind chill factor”.</p> <p>-As a matter of conclusion, we have noticed that in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Victorian era) and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (American writer), the same gothic strategies to create suspense, tension, and fear are used. The main themes are escape and fear. Alcoholism is a more current theme.</p>			
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<b>Étape 4</b>				
<b>Objectif langagier : CO</b>				
<b>Support:</b> Vidéo- bande annonce officielle de “The Shining” (Stanley Kubrick, 1980)				
<b>Parcours de compréhension</b>	<b>Productions attendues</b>	<b>Éléments facilitateurs</b>	<b>Éléments obstacles</b>	<b>Intérêt pour la tâche finale</b>
<p><b>Anticipation –</b></p> <p>- After studying the extract of <i>The Shining</i>, what do you expect in the trailer of the movie adaptation?</p>	<p>-I expect to see the <i>Overlook Hotel and the Torrance family and maybe supernatural presences.</i> - I think the trailer presents a horror movie, with fragmented terrifying</p>	<p>-support vidéo en lien direct avec le document précédent. -après l’étude de cas de l’extrait certains éléments se retrouvent dans la vidéo, ce qui facilite la compréhension.</p>	<p>-certains éléments se différencient ou ne se retrouvent pas dans l’extrait étudié précédemment.</p>	<p>-Permet d’apporter aux élèves une vision visuelle d’un extrait littéraire écrit. -Certaines scènes peuvent être développées/utilisées dans leur tâche.</p>

<p><b>Identification-</b> Visionnage de la vidéo : En trois écoutes avec pauses entre chaque écoute.</p> <p>1<sup>ère</sup> écoute: - watch and take notes of the words/sentences that you understand. - 1min to have a look at the words you've got.</p> <p>2<sup>ème</sup> écoute: ⇒ Brainstorming -let's share the words/sentences you have found.</p> <p>3<sup>ème</sup> écoute: - In pairs make a recap of the video.</p>	<p><i>scenes to create suspense.</i></p> <p>- "tragedy"; "winter"; "in 1970"; "seemed completely normal individual"; "mental breakdown"; "killed his family" ...</p> <p>-This video is the official trailer of the novel's adaptation The Shining by the film director Stanley Kubrick. At the beginning Jack is being interviewed for a job as a caretaker. Mr. Ullman warns him about the</p>			
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<p>- In pairs: In comparison with the extract <i>The Shining</i> of Stephen King, what are the main similarities and differences between the two?</p>	<p><i>last caretaker who had a mental breakdown and kill his family. And that is what is going to happen with Jack because of isolation. Then they are successive terrifying scenes including the famous "here's Johnny" and the evil laugh of Jack.</i></p> <p><i>-In both the extract and the video there is the job interview. In the trailer Jack is weird, he already seems crazy. The problem of alcoholism is not mentioned. In the trailer it is isolation that led to mental breakdown and murder.</i></p>			
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<b>Tâche finale</b>	
<b>Objectif langagier : EE</b>	
<b>Support :</b> Méthodologie de l'expression écrite « écrire une scène de roman », du manuel « Shine Bright » p228.	
<b>Consigne</b>	<b>Idées/ mots clés attendus</b>
Using the methodology, write a sequel to a Gothic novel studied in class or write one based on one of them. (250 words minimum).	-repandre les caractéristiques étudiées d'un roman gothique et les mettre en application. -faire un choix d'époque littéraire et s'y tenir lors de l'écriture. -le but est de mettre en application ce qui a été remarqué chez ces différents auteurs à l'écrit. Les élèves vont donc s'en inspirer mais aussi utiliser leur imagination.

## CONCLUSION

The Gothic genre has a very complex history due to its variety of meanings and styles. This genre has often been criticized because of its fictional and supernatural characteristics. Many Gothic features come from the pioneer Horace Walpole, who inspired many others. His novel, *The Castle of Otranto*, gave birth to the Gothic style and influenced various Gothic works. However, more than a genre, Gothic literature is first based on horror and mystery, but it has changed and developed significantly through the centuries.

I chose the 1977 novel *The Shining* by Stephen King as my case study to illustrate this evolution and reveal the complexity of the horror genre. As a master of storytelling, King revives early Gothic characteristics and incorporates modern elements to create an authentic literary work. Moreover, I have also intended to demonstrate in my thesis the autobiographical dimension of *The Shining*. By writing this novel, Stephen King confronts his inner struggles that he experienced to heal them.

On the cinematographic level, the legendary film adaptation “The Shining” by Stanley Kubrick is the most famous one, even though it is not faithful to the Stephen King novel’s plot. But the never-ending emergence of adaptations of King’s novels proves the worldwide impact of the Gothic genre and of American culture.

As an English teacher, I am hoping to enlighten my pupils with a broader perspective on the Gothic genre. I am very enthusiastic to study it in class and share my knowledge with them. By doing so, I will also contribute to their open-mindedness on this subject to increase their literary culture. Indeed, I will show them, as I did in my work, how a literary work that first seems only to be entertaining, can hide complex aspects and characteristics.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K15OybatkTU>, consulté le 07/07/2022.

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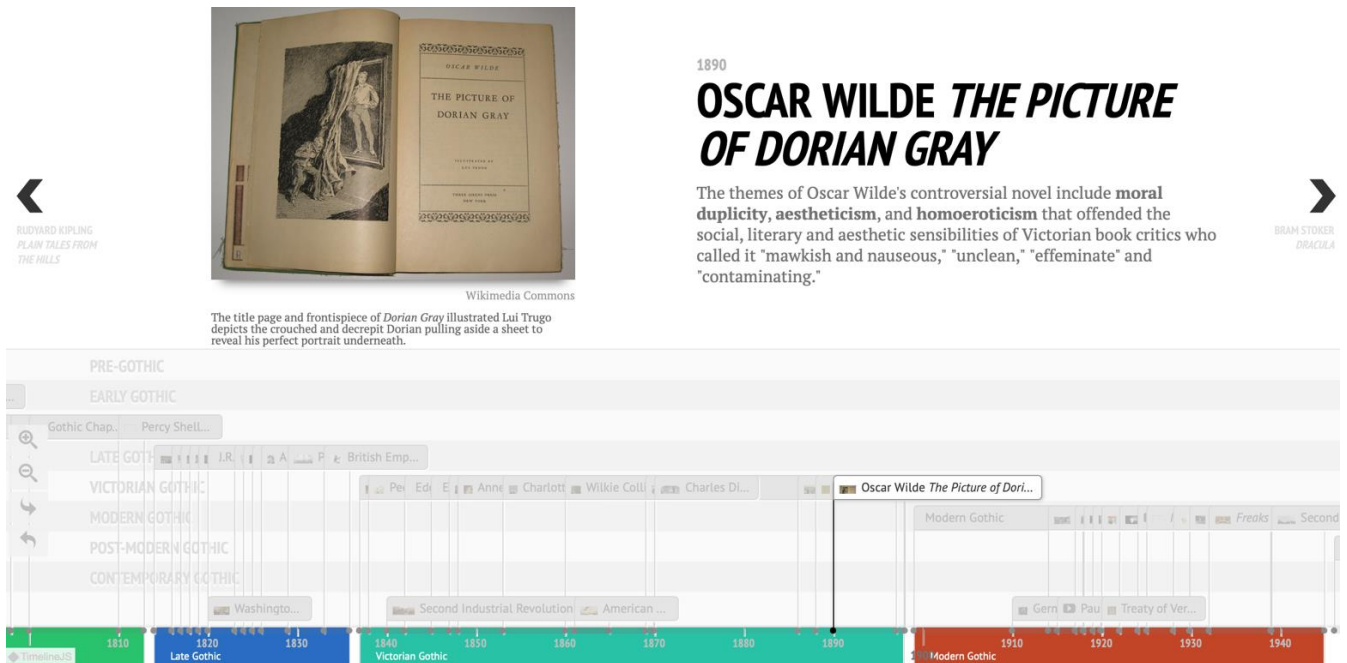
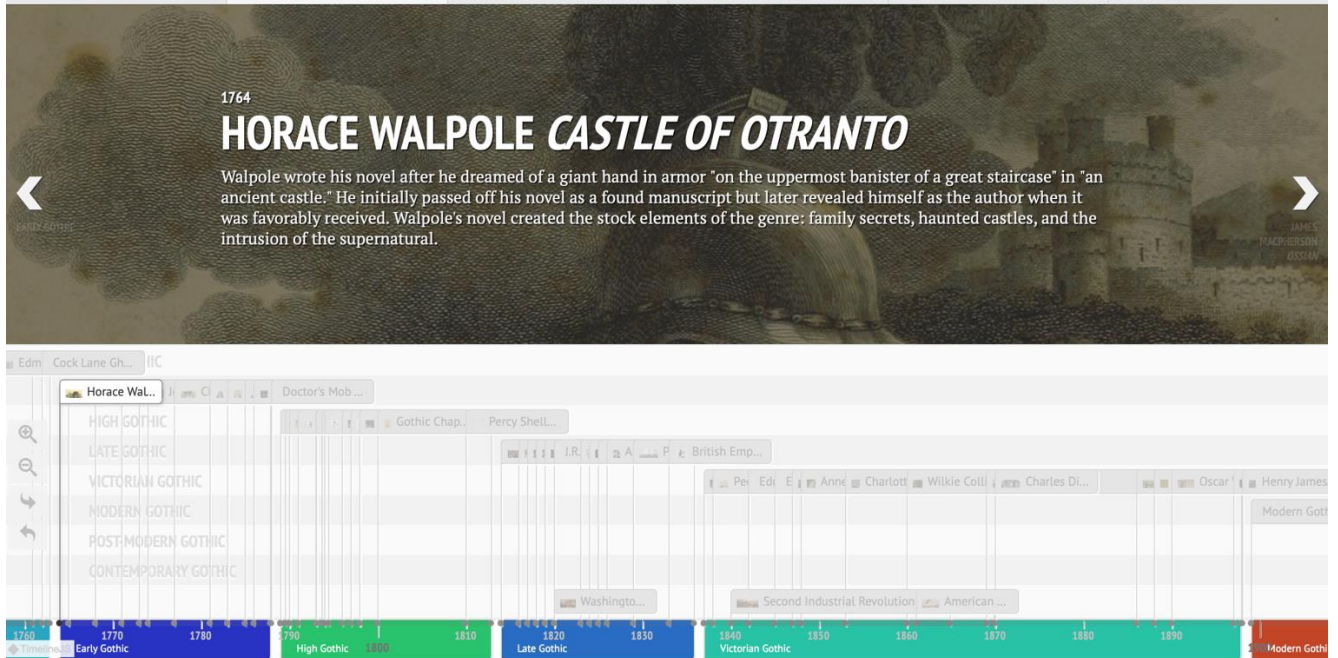
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# **APPENDIX**



- 1) Screenshots of a Gothic literature timeline, created by Dr. Jeanette A. Laredo for the open source “A Guide to the Gothic”.



2) Class documents, Sequence “Here’s Johnny!”

Étape 1 :

**Document : Tableau d’Henry Fuseli, “The Nightmare”, 1781.**



## Étape 2 :

**Document 1: ‘How to tell you’re reading a Gothic story – in pictures’, Adam Frost & Zhenia Vasiliev, [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com) (9 May 2014).**

*Source:* <https://www.theguardian.com/books/interactive/2014/may/09/reading-gothic-novel-pictures>

**Document 2 : extrait littéraire du roman *The Castle of Otranto*, Horace Walpole, 1764.**

The lady, whose resolution had given way to terror the moment she had quitted Manfred, continued her flight to the bottom of the principal staircase. There she stopped, not knowing whither to direct her steps, nor how to escape from the impetuosity of the Prince. The gates of the castle, she knew, were locked, and guards placed in the court. [...] Yet where conceal herself? How avoid the pursuit he would infallibly make throughout the castle? As these thoughts passed rapidly through her mind, she recollected a subterraneous passage which led from the vaults of the castle to the church of St. Nicholas. Could she reach the altar before she was overtaken, she knew even Manfred’s violence would not dare to profane the sacredness of the place; and she determined, if no other means of deliverance offered, to shut herself up for ever among the holy virgins whose convent was contiguous to the cathedral. In this resolution, she seized a lamp that burned at the foot of the staircase, and hurried towards the secret passage.

The lower part of the castle was hollowed into several intricate cloisters; and it was not easy for one under so much anxiety to find the door that opened into the cavern. An awful silence reigned throughout those subterraneous regions, except now and then some blasts of wind that shook the doors she had passed, and which, grating on the rusty hinges, were re-echoed through that long labyrinth of darkness. Every murmur struck her with new terror; yet more she dreaded to hear the wrathful voice of Manfred urging his domestics to pursue her. She trod as softly as impatience would give her leave, yet frequently stopped and listened to hear if she was followed. In one of those moments she thought she heard a sigh. She shuddered, and recoiled a few paces. In a moment she thought she heard the step of some person. Her blood curdled; she concluded it was Manfred. Every suggestion that horror could inspire rushed into her mind. [...] She was going to advance, when a door that stood ajar, at some distance to the left, was opened gently: but ere her lamp, which she held up, could discover who opened it, the person retreated precipitately on seeing the light.

Isabella, whom every incident was sufficient to dismay, hesitated whether she should proceed. Her dread of Manfred soon outweighed every other terror. The very circumstance of the person avoiding her gave her a sort of courage. It could only be, she thought, some domestic belonging to the castle. Her gentleness had never raised her an enemy, and conscious innocence made her hope that, unless sent by the Prince’s order to seek her, his servants would rather assist than prevent her flight. Fortifying herself with these reflections, and believing by what she could observe that she was near the mouth of the subterraneous cavern, she approached the door that had been opened; but a sudden gust of wind that met her at the door extinguished her lamp, and left her in total darkness.

Words cannot paint the horror of the Princess’s situation. Alone in so dismal a place, [...] hopeless of escaping, expecting every moment the arrival of Manfred, [...] she was ready to sink under her apprehensions. She addressed herself to every saint in heaven, and inwardly implored their assistance. For a considerable time she remained in an agony of despair.

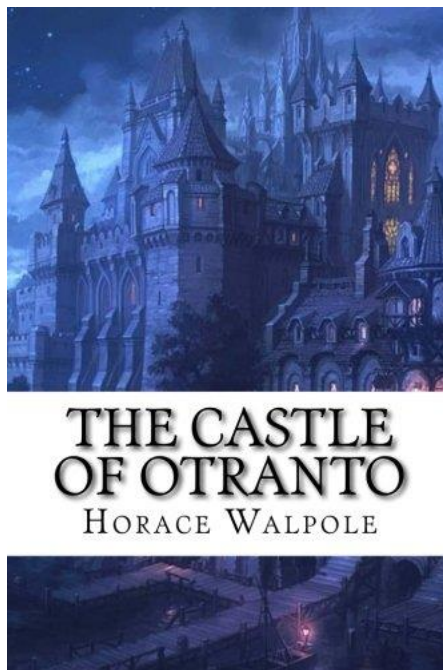
At last, as softly as was possible, she felt for the door, and having found it, entered trembling into the vault from whence she had heard the sigh and steps. It gave her a kind of momentary joy to perceive an imperfect ray of clouded moonshine gleam from the roof of the vault, which seemed to be fallen in, and from whence hung a fragment of earth or building, she could not distinguish which, that appeared to have been crushed inwards. She advanced eagerly towards this chasm, when she discerned a human form standing close against the wall.

She shrieked, believing it the ghost of her betrothed Conrad.

Tâche intermédiaire : page de couverture que les élèves peuvent s'inspirer.

**Document 1** : *Page de couverture, The Castle of Otranto, d'Horace Walpole, édition 2017.*

*Source* : <https://www.amazon.fr/Castle-Otranto-Horace-Walpole/dp/1545240582>



### Étape 3 :

#### **Document 1 : *The Shining*, extrait littéraire du chap 1 “Job Interview”, de Stephen King, 1977.**

[...] “During our first winter I hired a family instead of a single man. There was a tragedy. A horrible tragedy”.

Ullman looked at Jack coolly and appraisingly.

“I made a mistake. I admit it freely. The man was a drunk.”

Jack felt a slow, hot grin—the total antithesis of the toothy PR grin—stretch across his mouth.

“Is that it? I’m surprised Al didn’t tell you. I’ve retired.”

“Yes, Mr. Shockley told me you no longer drink. He also told me about your last job ... your last position of trust, shall we say? You were teaching English in a Vermont prep school. You lost your temper, I don’t believe I need to be any more specific than that. But I do happen to believe that Grady’s case has a bearing, and that is why I have brought the matter of your ... uh, previous history into the conversation. During the winter of 1970–71, after we had refurbished the Overlook but before our first season, I hired this ... this unfortunate named Delbert Grady. He moved into the quarters you and your wife and son will be sharing. He had a wife and two daughters. I had reservations, the main ones being the harshness of the winter season and the fact that the Gradys would be cut off from the outside world for five to six months”.

“But that’s not really true, is it? There are telephones here, and probably a citizen’s band radio as well. And the Rocky Mountain National Park is within helicopter range and surely a piece of ground that big must have a chopper or two.”

“I wouldn’t know about that,” Ullman said. “The hotel does have a two-way radio that Mr. Watson will show you, along with a list of the correct frequencies to broadcast on if you need help. The telephone lines between here and Sidwinder are still aboveground, and they go down almost every winter at some point or other and are apt to stay down for three weeks to a month and a half. There is a snowmobile in the equipment shed also.”

“Then the place really isn’t cut off.”

Mr. Ullman looked pained. “Suppose your son or your wife tripped on the stairs and fractured his or her skull, Mr. Torrance. Would you think the place was cut off then?”

Jack saw the point. A snowmobile running at top speed could get you down to Sidwinder in an hour and a half ... maybe. A helicopter from the Parks Rescue Service could get up here in three hours under optimum conditions. In a blizzard it would never even be able to lift off and you couldn’t hope to run a snowmobile at top speed, even if you dared take a seriously injured person out into temperatures. That might be twenty-five below—or forty-five below, if you added in the wind chill factor”.

“In the case of Grady,” Ullman said, “I reasoned much as Mr. Shockley seems to have done in your case. Solitude can be damaging in itself. Better for the man to have his family with him. If there was trouble, I thought, the odds were very high that it would be something less urgent than a fractured skull or an accident with one of the power tools or some sort of convulsion. A serious case of the flu, pneumonia, a broken arm, even appendicitis. Any of those things would have left enough time.

“I suspect that what happened came as a result of too much cheap whiskey, of which Grady had laid in a generous supply, unbeknownst to me, and a curious condition which the old-timers call cabin fever. Do you know the term?” Ullman offered a patronizing little smile, ready to explain as soon as Jack admitted his ignorance, and Jack was happy to respond quickly and crisply.

“It’s a slang term for the claustrophobic reaction that can occur when people are shut in together over long periods of time. The feeling of claustrophobia is externalized as dislike for the people you happen to be shut in with. In extreme cases it can result in hallucinations and violence—murder has been done over such minor things as a burned meal or an argument about whose turn it is to do the dishes.”

Ullman looked rather nonplussed, which did Jack a world of good. He decided to press a little further, but silently promised Wendy he would stay cool.

“I suspect you did make a mistake at that. Did he hurt them?”

“He killed them, Mr. Torrance, and then committed suicide. He murdered the little girls with a hatchet, his wife with a shotgun, and himself the same way. His leg was broken. Undoubtedly so drunk he fell downstairs.”

#### Étape 4

**Document : Vidéo- bande annonce officielle de “The Shining” (Stanley Kubrick, 1980).**

*Source* : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S014oGZiSdI>

Méthodologie de l'expression écrite utile pour la séquence :  
 Source : « écrire une scène de roman », du manuel « Shine Bright » p228.

