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The Uncanniness of *The Shining*

Cinnet'in Tekinsizliği

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Abstract

Stanley Kubrick's 1980 film *The Shining* has been examined and analyzed countless times up until today. Even though 40 years have gone by since its release, the film's full meaning and the events happening to the Torrance family are still unclear. The film unfolds in a limbo-like state, between dream and reality. While writing the script, Kubrick states that he was inspired by Sigmund Freud's *Das Unheimlich* (1919) essay. According to Freud, things or people that arouse feelings of dread and horror belong to the realm of the uncanny. The uncanny is related to what is frightening, but more importantly it entails a duality, an ambiguity because it encompasses the familiar with the unfamiliar. This study aims to locate the uncanny elements in *The Shining*, while also examining how conflicting desires that have been repressed can come to the surface through the dream-like setting of the Overlook Hotel.

Keywords: Uncanny, ego, repressed desires, ambiguity.

Academic disciplines/fields: Cinema, psychoanalysis.

Özet

Stanley Kubrick'in 1980 yapımı *The Shining* (Cinnet) filmi, bugüne kadar sayısız defa incelenmiş ve analiz edilmeye çalışılmıştır. 40 yıl geçmiş olmasına rağmen, filmin gerçekte neyi anlatmak istediği, Torrance ailesinin başına gelen olayların aslı, hala tam olarak anlaşılmamıştır. Hayal ile gerçek arasında, belirsiz bir alanda süregelen filmin senaryosunu oluştururken Kubrick, Sigmund Freud'un *Das Unheimlich* (1919) isimli makalesinden yararlandığını belirtmiştir. Türkçe'ye tekinsizlik olarak çevrilmiş the uncanny, aşina olduğumuz insan ve şeylerin içinde yatan rahatsız edici duyguların neden olduğu korku ve endişe olarak nitelendirmektedir. Terimin temelinde bir ikilik yatmaktadır. Bu ikilik, tanıdık bir şeyin yabancılık içermesinden kaynaklanmaktadır, yani, tanıdık olan ile yeni beliren arasında oluşan bir haldir. Bu çalışmanın amacı da *Cinnet* filmindeki tekinsiz duygulara yol açan öğelerini tespit edip, filmdeki bastırılmış ve çelişkili olan arzuların Overlook Oteli'nin rüya-vari ortamında ne şekilde yüzeye çıkıp, egonun parçalanmasına tehdit oluşturduğunu incelemektir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Tekinsizlik, ego, bastırılmış arzular, ikilik.

Akademik disipin(ler)/alan(lar): Sinema, psikanaliz.

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Introduction

The Shining is a film directed by Stanley Kubrick and released in 1980. It is based on Stephen King's novel of the same name, although there are significant differences between the two[1]. Until this day, the film has been deconstructed countless times in order to arrive at an understanding of what exactly it is about. So much so that in May 2012, a feature documentary entitled *Room 237* premiered at the Cannes Film Festival; directed by Rodney Ascher, the documentary explores the hidden meanings within the film. Moreover, in 2019, a sequel to the film was made; in *Doctor Sleep*, Danny is a grown-up and uses his shine to help save children from shine-eating spirits. Thus, despite its release 40 years ago, the film still has enthusiasts trying to grasp its full meaning and further detail its universe.

The Shining tells the story of the Torrance family who head to the Rocky Mountains for the winter period to be the new caretakers of the Overlook Hotel. Jack Torrance is a writer and welcomes the isolation that the hotel has to offer during the off season. His son Danny possesses psychic abilities – the ability to "shine" – which enable him to see things that happened in the past and things that will happen in the future. Wendy is 'normal'; excited to spend the winter in the enormous hotel. Yet the hotel has a dark past, and although Jack is aware of it, he is not bothered by it. Even before their arrival, Danny begins to see the ghosts that haunt the Overlook Hotel. Jack too sees his own ghosts and he slowly descends into madness, attempting to murder his wife and son with an axe, like one of the previous caretakers of the hotel. The film is eerie from the outset; Stanley Kubrick's use of music sets the atmosphere of the film, putting the audience on edge and making them feel like something is not quite right.

Along with Diane Johnson who co-wrote the screenplay of the film, Stanley Kubrick also read Freud's essay on the uncanny before they began writing the script and elements found in the essay regarding uncanniness can be clearly detected in the film (Kagan, 2000, p. 204). It is in this context that Kubrick's *The Shining* will be analysed in this article. Moreover, a look at horror film conventions present in the film will also be examined in the light of Barbara Creed's *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism and Psychoanalysis and Phallic Panic*. By locating the uncanny elements within the film and the use of horror-film conventions, the article will aim to contribute to the understanding of Kubrick's vision for the film, and understand the sources of influences on Kubrick during the process of adapting King's novel.

The Uncanny

According to Sigmund Freud (2001), things or people that arouse feelings of dread and horror belong to the realm of the uncanny (p. 219). The uncanny is related to what is frightening, but more importantly it entails a duality, an ambiguity because it combines the familiar with the unfamiliar (something 'heimlich' – which, in German, means 'homely' can become 'unheimlich' –'unhomely' – such that 'unheimlich' is a sub-category of 'heimlich' and not simply its opposite). Analysis bringing together *The Shinin*g and the concept of the uncanny is not without precedent. In her article on the film, Catriona McAvoy analyses pre-production documents relating to *The Shining* as well as conducting an interview with Diane Johnson in order to trace the various sources of influence on Kubrick and how they made their way into the final version of the film. McAvoy (2015) confirms that Kubrick incorporated a wide range of literature from works from the early psychoanalytic movement, Gothic novels about obsession and loss, books exploring the lives of loners and outsiders, and theoretical texts on ghost stories, fairy tales, and classical tragedy (p. 347). Among these texts, *The Uncanny* too finds its place and McAvoy proceeds to give a list of the uncanny elements within the film. Yet, the most pertinent argument she makes in this regard is that *The Shining* is itself an object which has become uncanny: "It has some of the heimlich (homely) appeal of King's original text but the fragmented, diverse nature of Kubrick's narrative additions and interventions deliberately creates an unheimlich (unhomely) atmosphere" (p. 360).

In his study of contemporary subjects of popular culture and literature, Roger Luckhurst (2008) situates the uncanny as a "toxic side effect" (p. 132) of the rediscovery of suppressed traumas. He states that post-traumatic effects can lead to supernatural tropes, which "catastrophises the subject" (p. 130). In this context, Luckhurst positions *The Shining* as a study of Jack Torrance's psychic failings. Yet it is Danny's abuse

[1] Stephen King has, on several occasions, voiced his dislike of Stanley Kubrick's visual adaptation of his novel, labelling it as "cold" (McAvoy, 2015, p. 360). While there are many details that have changed in the adaptation process, such as the hedge maze, and the death of Jack Torrance, the main axis on which the two diverge is in terms of their approach to the elements of horror: while King's story is clearly a haunted house tale, Kubrick's version questions this very premise and provides an ambiguous portrait in this regard.

at the hand of his father and his psychic abilities to see flashes of future violence that are characterized as "instances of uncanny return" (p. 137). Thus, for Luckhurst, what is uncanny about *The Shining* is its depiction of the return of repressed trauma.

Others such as Walter Metz (1997) draw attention to the hesitation between the marvellous and the uncanny at the heart of *The Shining* (p. 43). Indeed, while some critics suggest that *The Shining* is simply the story of a family who descends into insanity together (Muir, 2007, p. 129), there is also evidence in the film that the supernatural – or in Metz's words "the marvellous" – is, in fact, there and is exemplified in the scene where the ghost of Grady, the former caretaker of the hotel, lets Jack out of the food locker in which his wife Wendy had imprisoned him. Metz states that the uncanniness of *The Shining* related to its roots in melodrama, wherein "the familiar domestic problems of the heim conceal the unheim, the darker desires of familial annihilation and horrific behaviour" (1997, p. 42). Like in Lockhurst's reading, the uncanny is positioned in relation to family trauma, yet the appearance of the supernatural undermines this, exhibiting thus the text's allegiance also to the horror genre.

While Metz associates this binary between the uncanny and the marvellous in relation to *The Shining*'s incorporation of both the horror and melodrama genres, Christopher Hoile (1984) suggests that ambiguity arises because of the film's positioning of man in relation to an animistic universe. Referring to Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment*, he positions animism in relation to children and adults, where animism is the belief that objects, places and animals have a living soul; something that children easily believe in because for them "there is no clear line separating object from living things and whatever has life has a life very much like our own" (Bettelheim, 1976, p. 46). This is in opposition to adults, who "have been estranged from the ways in which young people experience the world" (p. 47) and thus understand this anismistic conception as fantastic rather than true. Hoile (1984) suggests that while Jack and Danny are both possessed, it creates opposing perspectives due to their status as adult and child. While adults should have surmounted the animistic stage, Jack's inability to progress beyond animism leads him to "re-experiences it in the "uncanny," when what is imagined and real seem inseparable" (p. 11). This directs him to his alter-ego from the past, Grady; he accepts identification with his double from the past, thus on the path of destruction. On the other hand, Danny's relation to animism is labelled as natural, providing him with confidence and leading to his achievement of maturity. Hoile states that Danny's doubling as Tony is therapeutic and helps him get stronger, as children accept that "there is more than one frame of reference for comprehending the world" (Bettelheim, 1976, p. 45).

Whether described as a hesitation or in relation to the animistic world, Stanley Kubrick intended for a sense of ambiguity in his rendition of King's story; according to the film's producer Jan Harlan, nothing had to make sense because the whole story doesn't make sense – it's a film about ghosts (Wigley, 2015). This ambiguity creates an intellectual uncertainty which renders its viewers uncomfortable. According to German psychiatrist Ernst Jentsch (2008), intellectual uncertainty can raise feelings of uncanniness (p. 221). This is exactly what the audience undergoes upon first viewing of *The Shining*, during which we are not sure if we are simply watching the growing psychosis of a family or if we are really confronted with the world of the supernatural.

The haunted house

In her book The Monstrous Feminine, Barbara Creed (1993) states that when the house is the central location in the horror genre, the narrative leads the audience back to a terrible crime committed by or against a family that once lived there (p. 55). This, she says, is particularly horrible since the crimes are committed within a familiar context. Therefore, the haunted house is horrifying; "it contains cruel secrets and has witnessed terrible deeds" (p. 55). The audience discovers the dark past of the Overlook Hotel at the beginning of the film; Mr. Grady murdered his wife and twin daughters with an axe. Though this story is revealed in a nonchalant manner by Mr. Ullman, the manager of the hotel, it will constitute the gist of the narrative, the starting point for everything that is to unfold. The uncanniness arises from the repressed past of the hotel. Something horrible has happened there and it is triggered once the off season sets in.

The isolated location of the hotel is highlighted from the very beginning of the film. It is a massive, grey, peaked building, perched on a massive, grey, pointed mountain. The long roads along the mountain hills create a dizzying effect as the camera which flies above, following the advancing car. The isolation aspect is further emphasized later on during Jack's interview with Mr. Ullman where he points out that the roads are blocked in the winter and it is too costly to open them (hence why the hotel is closed for the whole of the winter season). Mr. Ullman repeatedly underlines the fact that there is "tremendous sense of isolation" that comes with staying at the hotel during the off season, yet Jack does not seem to be bothered by this fact whatsoever and instead interprets it as "five months of peace". When Mr. Ullman reveals Mr. Grady's

"claustrophobic reaction" in the form of the murder of his whole family, Jack is still not impressed or remotely bothered. Throughout the film the hotel's isolation is reiterated, with sporadic news reports on snowstorms and a "weather emergency". The vastness of the hotel isolates the characters from one another and when the supernatural takes over, each character undergoes their haunting individually as the apparitions reflect something personal to each of them.

According to Freud (2001), the haunted house is one of the areas that relates significantly to the uncanny (p. 241). The hotel's chef, Dick Holloran points out that "some places are like people: some shine, some don't". Dick describes shining as the ability to have conversations without opening your mouth. In stating that the Overlook Hotel shines, he links it with the supernatural. Furthermore, Dick warns Danny about room 237; he tells him to "stay out" of the room, suggesting that there is something that should not be discovered there. Freud cites German philosopher Friedrich Schelling's definition for the uncanny as shedding new light on our understanding of the concept: "everything is unheimlich that ought to have remained hidden but has come to light" (2001, p. 225). This definition of the uncanny describes word for word the situation that unfolds upon the entrance of room 237; it echoes Dick's warnings.

Moreover, within the horror genre, the haunted house can also represent the womb; because feelings of uncanniness stem from the return to what is "known of old and long familiar" (Freud, 2001, p. 241) that is something which is familiar and long-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression. Upon arrival, Jack refers to the hotel as "homey". He says that he felt like he had been there before; that he was overwhelmed by a moment of déjà-vu. This not only relates to something which is uncanny, but also to the womb itself. Jack's feelings of familiarity relate back to the time spent in the mother's womb. In fact, he feels so comfortable, so happy there – he wants to stay there "forever and ever" – that he withdraws from the reality surrounding him and sinks into the spectral world of the hotel. Creed (1993) points out that blood is one of the most common images of horror associated with the house: "the blood drips from walls, fills cellars, and gushes in waves along corridors" (p. 55). Indeed, in The Shining, the walls of the hotel come alive and are gushing with blood like the womb of a woman. Thus, the hotel literally becomes "the body of horror" (p. 19).

Uncanny doubles

Though all the members of the Torrance family have seen the ghosts of the Overlook Hotel by the end of the film, the character related to the supernatural from the outset is Danny. Danny is characterized as a lonely and odd boy from the outset of the film. In the compound in which they live in Denver, he has no friends and appears to be quite shy and introverted. Despite his mother Wendy's attempts to cheer him up and create excitement about the fact that they might spend the winter at the Overlook Hotel, Danny remains nonchalant, even sceptical about the possibility that anything could ever be "fun".

Danny has paranormal abilities which connect him to the spiritual world. Later when he arrives at the Overlook Hotel and has a conversation with the hotel chef Dick Holloran, we find out that this ability is called "shining". Shining entails the ability to have conversations without verbally talking. This ability is beyond the senses, and 'normal' people cannot believe nor understand it.

According to Freud (2001), the creation of the double "was originally an insurance against the destruction of the ego, an 'energetic denial of the power of death'" (p. 235). We can see this principle apply to both Jack and Danny, whose respective doubles both appear at moments where they are personally threatened and come into harm's way. We find out through Wendy that Danny's imaginary friend Tony, whom Danny describes as "the little boy who lives in [his] mouth", first appeared after an accident wheen Jack dislocated Danny's shoulder. Thus, Danny creates Tony as a form of protection against his father. This reading is corroborated by Christopher Hoile (1984). He states: "It is clear that Danny has created a double to overcome his isolation and to protect his ego by channelling all his negative thoughts about his father into someone supposedly distinct from himself. Through 'Tony' Danny expresses his disapproval of the move to the hotel" (1984, p.7). Furthermore, according to Barbara Creed (1993), a child's ability to enter the "phantasmic realm" is directly related to abusive parenting (p. 161).

Regarding Danny's double Tony, Stanley Kubrick states that "Danny has had a frightening and disturbing childhood. Brutalized by his father and haunted by his paranormal visions, he must find some psychological mechanism within himself to manage these powerful and dangerous forces. To do this, he creates an imaginary friend, Tony, through whom Danny can rationalize his visions and survive" (Ciment, 2001, p. 192). Thus, we can say that Danny's biggest fear is to be hurt by his father. His fear is thus projected in the form of the haunting by the ghosts of the Grady twins: not only does he have a link to "the realm of the marvellous" (Creed, 1993, p. 153) but also he is linked to the twins because of the fact that they have all

been hurt by their father. Even though Danny escapes his father at the end of the film, the haunting of the twins is a warning to Danny that something bad might happen to him too.

Freud suggests that uncanny feelings stem from a person's repressed instincts. For Jack, the Overlook Hotel serves as a catalyst for his repressed feelings towards his family. According to the interview Michael Ciment conducted with Stanley Kubrick; "Jack comes to the hotel psychologically prepared to do its murderous bidding. He does not have very much further to go for his anger and frustration to become completely uncontrollable. He is bitter about his failure as a writer. He is married to a woman for whom he has only contempt. He hates his son. In the hotel, at the mercy of its powerful evil, he is quickly ready to fulfil his dark role" (Ciment, 2001, p. 194). Jack creates his doubles when Wendy accuses him of trying to strangle Danny. His repressed anger and alcoholism come out in the Golden Room through the 'spectral' character of the bartender, Lloyd. We know that he is talking to his unconscious as he pours his heart out, repeatedly underlining the fact that what had happened – the dislocation of Danny's shoulder – was an accident, a "momentary loss of muscular coordination". He is guilt ridden over it, and the fact that he is accused of strangling Danny renders him crazy because he is not to blame this time. He resents Wendy for the accusation. Furthermore, whenever there is a mirror in a scene, Jack retreats into his unconscious. This happens in his scenes with Lloyd but also with Mr. Grady in the bathroom, covered on all sides by mirrors. Because the use of mirrors creates doubles, it is considered as an uncanny effect (Freud, 2001, p. 235).

Wendy is presented as a positive and happy character. Supportive of her husband and son, she is a "confirmed ghost story and horror addict". She is overly excited to be spending the winter at the Overlook Hotel, which she deems "fantastic" and "gorgeous". She is especially in awe of how big the hotel grounds are and feels like it is "an enormous maze". This point also accentuates the fact that the actual maze outside of the hotel serves as a double for the hotel. Her hallucinations reflect her horror-film knowingness, whereby she sees the lobby of the Overlook Hotel covered in cobwebs and with the skeletons of the old guests, a conventional image of any horror story.

Stanley Kubrick makes us identify with all the characters. The viewer is placed in the position of Jack, Wendy and Danny at different points throughout the film. Yet, point of view is also constructed using the steadicam. A new invention at the time and only used in a handful of films before *The Shining*, the steadicam gave possibilities that were never there before, as it was able to film from positions that the dolly and the crane could not access. Steadicam inventor Garrett Brown was heavily involved in the production of the film. According to Brown; "most of the film feels like an endless subjective shot: we appear to be watching the hotel and its inhabitants through the eyes of an unearthly prowler, someone who sees very differently from the way we see" (Kagan, 2000, p. 205). Indeed, the presence of the supernatural is represented through subjective camera use, so that even when we do not see it, we feel like there is still someone watching over. This helps build an atmosphere of uncanniness, because it creates unease in an environment we supposedly have gotten to know.

What is key in the concept of the uncanny is transformation of something familiar into the unfamiliar. The hotel itself is at first 'heimlich' and eventually turns into a space which is 'unheimlich'. This is literally the case as the Torrances are familiarized with the grounds of the hotel through a tour given by Mr. Ullman. They not only find out where everything is located, including their own quarters, but also are given information about the European as well as Native-American history of the building. Furthermore, during the tour, they step out of the elevator and walk down the corridor from which, earlier on in Danny's shining, blood was spurting out of the walls.

We are introduced to the Grady twins in a vision that Danny has at the beginning of the film, when Jack receives the news of the job offer. When they are at the Overlook Hotel, Danny sees the twins again as he plays darts. They simply stand there, looking at him and then walk away. Now we know the twins and that there is some sort of connection between them and Danny. The next time we see them, they block Danny's path when he tricycles through the hotel corridors. They are once again standing there looking at him, but then with a jump cut, the twins are no longer alive and standing; they are dead, on the floor, covered in blood, with an axe next to them. This is a moment of uncanny transformation, wherein something – or rather someone – we have become accustomed to and have familiarized ourselves with, turns into something unfamiliar, frightening and uncanny. In one moment, everything changes, and we are faced with an image of horror. Furthermore, we are familiarized with Danny's tricycle path in the hotel corridors as well; hence why the appearance of the twins creates an uncanny effect because it is unfamiliar and unexpected upon the path, yet because the tricycle shot is repeated on three occasions, the feeling of eeriness grows and it is as if we are expecting something bad to happen. The patterns on the rug and the never ending twists and turns give the effect of a maze; these twists and turns echo those of the maze right outside of the hotel,

where Wendy playfully chases Danny through it. This chase is furthered echoed at the end of the film, where this time Jack hunts down Danny in order to kill him. At this point Danny is familiarized with the maze and thus knows how to trick Jack to lose his trace.

A similar uncanny transformation occurs later in the film. Jack heads to room 237 where Wendy has informed him a "crazy woman who tried to strangle Danny" is residing. The scene is shot from Jack's point of view. As Jack heads into the room, what is revealed is everything but a crazy woman – a young, beautiful naked woman is taking a bath. When she sees him, she stands up and heads towards Jack. Jack is in shock but somewhat excited at the prospect of being with the beautiful woman standing before him. She approaches him and they begin to kiss. However, this sexual moment does not last; as soon as they begin to kiss, the young and naked woman transforms into something frightful. Through the mirror, we see her turn into a rotting old woman, who begins to laugh hysterically at him. According to Creed (2005), the uncanny duo of ghostly female forms (young woman/hag) converges on the boy's father in an attempt to unsettle even further his already disturbed mind, leading him to try to dismember his own family with an axe" (p. 157). As the scene unfolds, it is cut with shots of Danny convulsing, reiterating once again Danny's link to the supernatural. Furthermore, the entrance to the room 237 brings to light what ought to have remained hidden; no wonder Dick warned Danny at the beginning of the film to "stay out".

According to Freud (2001) one of the uncanniest themes is the reanimation of the dead (p. 248). There is an abundance of these moments in the film; we know the tragedy that happened to the Grady family. In the film, they are resurrected; the twins to Danny and Mr. Grady himself to Jack. Furthermore, the ending of the film also suggests that Jack too may be long dead, and we are seeing something past play out.

The use of doubles, patterns, numbers, and mirrors constitutes what Freud calls "the constant recurrence of the same thing" (2001, p. 234) which is uncanny. The patterns on the rugs of the Overlook create a sense of endlessness and of being in the same place repeatedly. Jack's screenplay consists of the repetition of the sentence "All work and no play make Jack a dull boy" for pages on end. According to Freud, the repetition of numbers can also create an uncanny effect. Kubrick repeats certain numbers extensively in the film. For example, the numbers 21 and 42 appear on more than one occasion creating an unsettling effect. 21 is the number of framed photographs on the wall at the end of the film. The camera zooms in on a photograph taken at the 4th of July Ball, in 1921. At the center of the photograph stands Jack Torrance. The number 42 first appears on Danny's jersey at the beginning of the film. Later, we see Wendy and Danny watching the Summer of '42 on the television at the hotel. Furthermore, Dick's rented car's license plate also contains the number 42. All these repetitions do not have an extra meaning per se; they simply add a feeling of unease; they make us feel like something odd is going on because this number of coincidences cannot be accidental.

Moreover, an uncanny atmosphere can also be created through sound. In *The Shining*, the music is an important part of the narrative. Eerie, macabre and unsettling, Kubrick's inspired use of music to create uncanniness is impeccable. According to Wendy Carlos, who composed the original music for the film along with Rachel Elkind, "Kubrick's now famous method of using existing recordings of music, in this case by Bela Bartok, György Ligeti, and mostly the Polish modernist Krzysztof Penderecki. The soundtrack becomes a dissonant wailing pounding but seductive symphony of human fear as it makes contact with irrational energies buried deep inside its heart" (Kagan, 2000, p. 205). The music serves to reflect the psychological horror that the characters are going through. Furthermore, the music also serves to foreshadow what is to come: in the scene where Jack calls Wendy to let her know that they had offered him the job at the Overlook Hotel, the music is quite haunting, even though at that point in the film, nothing 'wrong' seems to be happening. It anticipates the evil that will come later. Whether it is a more playful, mystical tune as Wendy chases Danny through the maze or a more tormented scream-like sound when the Grady twins appear in front of Danny, the music underlines key moments and keeps the audiences on the edge of their seats, making them feel like something might happen at any moment.

Conclusion

If we are to look to the ending of the film, the audience is not faced with what is expected, that is an explanation. The resolution does not really resolve anything, and the film ends on an uncanny note. A slow zoom in on one of the 21 photographs on one of the walls of the hotel, reveals Jack Torrance at the 4th of July Ball in 1921. Is Jack a ghost? Was anything we watched real? There is a sense that we are in a continual loop and that history will repeat itself. Moreover, the reference to America's day of independence could also suggest that Jack is finally free; yet free at the expense of the lives of others, much in the way America owes

its independence to the massacre of the natives of the land.[2] This uncanny ending relates back to Jentsch's idea of the intellectual uncertainty created by that which is uncanny. Furthermore, critic Stephen Shiff believes that this unresolved ending makes Stanley Kubrick a sadist: "not because it tortures us with fear, but because it refuses us pleasure – the cathartic pleasure of a real confrontation with the terrors it promises" (Kagan, 2000, p. 214). This is perhaps why 40 years after its release the film is still boggling the minds of filmmakers and cinema enthusiasts worldwide.

This article traced the uncanny elements present in Stanley Kubrick's adaptation of Stephen King's novel *The Shining*. Furthermore, the article has also looked at the film's fidelity to the horror film genre, through its symbolic use of horror film conventions and motifs. While previous research in this regard has been conducted, the article aimed at reviving the debate surrounding the ambiguity of the film, especially at a time when the sequel of the film has been released. Looking at *Doctor Sleep*, it can clearly be seen that the director Mike Flannigan chose to prioritize the supernatural aspects of the story and delves into detailing aspects of Danny's shine and its functioning.

Yet *The Shining* itself stands exactly in this space of ambiguity where we are not quite sure what just unfolded before our eyes, creating uncanny effects as a result of the erasure of the distinction between imagination and reality (Freud, 2001, p. 244). Hence, we are not done with this film; we are not done with Kubrick as his film will continue to haunt us until we can find some graspable and plausible explanation for it.

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[2] Reference to Native Americans occur at several instances in the film; Mr. Ullman states early on in the film that the hotel itself is built on an Indian burial ground, while the interior decoration of the hotel is adorned with Native American motives. David Cook argues that the true horror of the film "is the horror of living in a society which is predicated upon murder and must constantly deny the fact to itself" (1984, p. 3). He argues that even the name of the hotel – Overlook – is indicative of the way American people turn a blind eye to the inherent violence at the foundation.

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