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## Exploring Repressed Desires and Their Effects on the Emergence of Varied Kinds of Violence in the Selected Novels of Stephen King

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**Dr. Hoda Shabrang**

Department of English Language and Literature, Khatam University  
Tehran, Iran

**Mohsen Amely**

(Corresponding Author)

Department of English Language and Literature, Khatam University  
Tehran, Iran

### ABSTRACT

This research provides a psychological review of Stephen King's *Misery* and *The Dark Half* based on Slavoj Zizek's ideas of violence and its veiled dimensions. In this investigation, the issue of encountering violence promptly and abominating all kinds of violence in the actions of human beings as well as commiserating with victims have been scrutinized. There are diversified critical assumptions to the statement of what psychology is considerably worth applying to the works of Stephen King who has gained achievements as a gothic author and who has paid attention to unconscious gothic components and psychotic characters. It can be argued that these two novels reveal the doctrine of violence which is the result of dualism and failure in attaining interior desires as explained in Slavoj Zizek's conceptions: subjective and objective violence (symbolic and systematic violence). For the reason that Stephen King is referred to as a gothic novelist, this research will concentrate on the leading characters' psyches in two of his most thrilling novels to determine if the author's ideas keep in line with the definition of psyche and unconscious are effective in the representation of violence, trepidation, affliction, torment and madness and of the protagonists in Stephen King's *Misery* and *The Dark Half*. As a theorist and a philosopher, Zizek emphasizes on the doctrine of violence and its effects on changing the mood and on carrying out frenetic activities. Consequently, it is being explored that unfulfilled intrinsic and intellectual desires in the real world and truly the potential uncertainties of mental demands and the unfulfillment of these desires in the real world, novel's characters as well as individuals can cause violence in the society.

**Keywords:** *Psychoanalytical Criticism, Slavoj Zizek, Subjective violence, Stephen King, Gothic Elements*

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### 1. Introduction

One of the most experienced American gothic writers who has found much success in gothic literature in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is Stephen King (September 21, 1947). His style in writing was the usage of "author characters" as protagonists in the novels such as Paul Sheldon who is the main character in *Misery*, as well as Thad Beaumont in *The Dark Half*. Stephen King wrote several books under a pseudonym, Richard Bachman. Darkness and cynical atmosphere were the main characteristics of Bachman novels rather than the psychological gothic style common in many of King's famous works. He wrote *The Dark Half* which is about an author with an ominous leechlike twin in response to his

expedition under the pen name of Bachman. Therefore, King's novels include how to depict the emotions of hope intermingled with his own personal incidents and horrifying elements. He keeps using clear imagery which is set in a realistic place as well as symbols and unique characterization. King looks for unifying and exploring gothic elements with strong significances of psychological analysis. The gothic novels have been included the images of shadowy, retaliation, agony as well as hereditary secrets. The role they play in the formation of individuality and psychological impacts on the mind is very notable. Stephen King is an author who helps the development of modern horror fiction. He is best known for "the father of horror" in literature. He wrote

contentious novels, which deal with the illustrations of different personalities under the impact of unfulfilled desires of the protagonists. Many important elements such as blood, wound, gothic components, trepidation, and affliction are to be analyzed in the works of Stephen King for which he is best known. But the most important one is the various psychological notions recommended in this study which can be extended to the society in the real world as well. This research strives to investigate King's novels on grounds of components such as horror, torment, violence relied on which the society formed its norms. In *Misery* and *The Dark Half* uniformities can be seen between Slavoj Zizek and Stephen King. Both suggest the concept of violence and its impacts on the society as well as the relationship between savagery and veiled layers of social structures. So Zizek's doctrines of violence are to be discussed in King's selected novels to see how this renowned author keeps in line with modern tendencies in his main characters and social structures. The central issue that the current study is going to investigate is to see how King delineates the conventions of violence (subjective violence and objective one) in his novels. It is obvious that the conception of violence is regarded as an idea which is compelled by social systems.

King's novels according to gothic elements such as terror and torment strive to indicate the concept of "dualism" which the society scrimmage with it in a large scale on account of the unfulfilled desires of individuals that sabotage the entire being of the society. What distinguishes King from his companions in the field of gothic literature is the belief that lack of consummating human wishes can bring dualism in characters' personalities, which raise problems for the individuals (Hitchcock, 2014, pp. 7-10).

Therefore, repressed desires can cause violence in the social-familial structures. So the mere solution is paying much more attention to these desires in order to have a dynamic, healthy as well as unwearied society. Regarding to the major notions of violence (subjective and objective ones) by Slavoj Zizek, the following questions are debatable in the Stephen King's selected novels:

How do *Misery* and *The Dark Half* depict subjective and objective violence?

How does the process of violence reveal itself in the diabolic characters of the novels?

This article tries to debate these questions and find an appropriate result in order to solve one of the major problems with which human beings are contending

## 2. Approach and Methodology

The method chosen to demonstrate how unfulfilled repressed desires of individuals can cause violence in the real world as well as society emphasized by the theory of subjective and objective violence in Stephen King's *Misery* and *The Dark Half* as a valid study. One of the Stephen King's main themes is the quarrel between the individual and the hidden personalities which are shown in the dual personalities of *Misery's* Annie Wilkes as well as *The Dark Half's* Thad Beaumont. The sudden change in the mood of the characters means as a contradiction of heartlessness in the captivation the reader and victim feel toward the very power that threatens them (Spector, 1984). Violence as it indeed becomes discernible in realistic conditions is about the interlacing of humankind sensations of fright, fury, and agitation in such a manner that cross exactly the traditional ethics of usual status. It is merely this surprising and abrupt trait of violence as it in fact provides hint to the sentimental ever changing at the core of the assumption of violence (Collins, 2008, p. 4).

People believe that violence is the manifestation of our animality, bursting when learned cultural regulations failed. Violence is also viewed to be the gist of devil; it is the paradigm system produces of depravity. Nevertheless, the review of violent actions and habits throughout cultures and within history demonstrates only the contrary when people wound or murder somebody; they commonly achieve this goal because they believe they have to. They believe that it is ethically correct or even compulsory to be violent. In addition, the impulses for violence broadly develop out of a linkage between the culprit and the victim. The criminal is brutal to make the relation proper\_ to make the connection what it should be based on his or her cultural appliances of worldwide kindred righteous tenets. That is, most violence is ethically prompted. Integrity is about controlling societal relations, and violence is one method to manage relations.

In lieu of encountering violence immediately, Zizek's recent book forms six sideways views. There are causes exploring the matter of violence. The fundamental assumption is that there is something essentially enigmatic in a direct struggle



with it: the compelling fear of violent actions and compassion with the victims relentlessly act as a temptation, which impedes us from thinking. A disinterested theoretical growth of the classification of violence have to overlook its painful effects. Moreover, there is a perception in which an aloof scrutiny of violence somehow duplicates and contributes in its fright. At the same time, the evident signs of violence are actions of malefaction and horror, social upheaval, universal combat.

Zizek has been elected for the intention of this research because of his main idea on the expansion of frequent ideas of violence, which means "subjective violence" which reflects the intentional use of power to impose on trauma or on human beings wound towards social injustice as a systematic violence (Zizek, August 2008, pp. 11-12). In this article violence towards human beings especially for social purposes is explored. Psychological pressure, intense paltriness and intimidation as well as different types of torture are the influential elements in creating violence (Van der Linden, January 15, pp. 3-7). Zizek expresses violence by noting, "when we think about violence we tend to think about criminal acts, acts of terror, civil unrest and war." On his account if we wish to understand violence, we must refuse the 'fascinating lure' of this type of subjective violence that is "violence performed by a clearly recognizable agent" and we must look at the violence in the background that generates subjective violence, which is called objective kind of violence (Zizek, August 2008, pp. 9-11). Objective violence is a kind of violence which is unseen since it suffers the zero level standard against which we comprehend something as subjectively violent. This sort of violence is divided into two categories: "symbolic violence" which reflects the violence embodied in language and its forms and "systematic violence" which points to the catastrophic outcomes of economic systems or injustice in order to evaluate the differences between systematic violence and subjective violence which is too easily adopted in the society but the social roots of violence are often ignored (Zizek, August 2008, pp. 12-15). Zizek asserts, "It is difficult to be really violent; to perform an act that violently disturbs the basic parameters of social life" (Zizek, August 2008, pp. 205-209).

Stephen King is a novelist who undoubtedly refers to a temple of multiple

sterling authors in the category of horror fiction. Critics like Anthony Magistrale, additionally accept the truth that King establishes the mere literary offspring dropped from the writers such as Edgar Allan Poe and Howard Philips Lovecraft (Magistrale, March 1992, p. 27).

Works of horror are organized to evoke a certain kind of influence. Violence is always distinguished as the impressment of physical force so as to wound, and the word usually represents drastic human devastation of belongings or injury to individuals, usually intentional and forceful verbal abuse that injures others (Valentic, pp. 1-5). The introduction for language and formal rejection of violence are often understood as two dimensions of one and the same characteristic: "speaking is the bedrock and structure of socialization and it is to be distinguished by the abandonment of violence." In a particular social context, all correlations with others can be regarded as a balance of forces; and injustice is a result of a lack of harmony of forces in which the weaker is tyrannized and oppressed by the stronger. The aim is to create a balance in which everyone's rights are respected; it follows the action for justice (Muller, 2002, pp. 23-25).

### 3. Discussion

The intention of this study is to read Stephen King's *Misery* and *The Dark Half* as well as to plumb human being's psyche and his or her unfulfilled desires and psychic constitute and how the concept of violence and its divisions influence the main characters in those selected novels. As a gothic novelist, telling stories of horror genres, Stephen King's beliefs, both psychoanalytic and otherwise, can be seen through the main characters he produces. As the relations between the characters indicate, he does believe that the characters can emphasize on the stories from the others' perspective. Because of the capabilities of King's works in depicting psychological disorders, Zizek's notions of subjective and objective violence can function as appropriate hypothetical background to negotiate their relationships in question. Therefore, a large amount of the significance of this scrutiny emerges from the harmony between King and Zizek that can bestow upon a deeper recognition of both. Reviews of Stephen King's *Misery* and *The Dark Half* concentrated on trepidation, psychological disorders, physical tortures and categorized it as both narrative and gothic fundament.

On a deeper level, the researcher hopes to uncover King's narration of psychopath characters through a study of horrifying forms he exploits within his works and how they interact with lines of psychoanalytical theories. In particular, King's novels (especially, *Misery* and *The Dark Half*) lend themselves to a discussion and analysis of psyche and problematic backgrounds. King's novels often represent the psychotic characters in both zenith moments and extemporary actions. The lack of stability in the character's personality and psychological disorders as well as the sense of horror, violence, torture and torment are highlighted in these novels. The supreme purpose of this article is to use Zizek's critical view for novels to show the complexities of psychological problems and more importantly, the concept of violence that is revealed through different types of tortures (Harris, August 2004, pp. 199-200). Torture is among the repulsion of human revelations, any action by which harsh, hurt or torment, whether bodily or psychologically is deliberately imposed on an individual for such intentions as gaining from him or an absentee information or a declaration, pushing him for an action he has done or threatening, or compelling or for whatever reason in accordance with discernment of any sort where such ache or torment is imposed by or at the abetment of or with the agreement or compliance of a public formal capability. The chief target of torture is not always to oblige the prey to squeal and supply information; it is to disintegrate the identity of the prey. The wound consists in the devastation of the personality (Elsass, 1997, pp. 2-10)

Violence is a manner that has little or no equivalent. Exists in the dens, couple of hundred thousand years ago, it has endured every individual's community's effort to annihilate it. As a whole, violence is hostile manner with the purpose to provoke injury (bodily or mentally). The word *purpose* is essential; bodily or mentally harm that happens inadvertently, in the deficit of purpose, is not violence. Violence does not merely "appear" in the healthy grownups; it is an adult ethological disorder that is advanced by distressed manners during childhood (Denno , 1990, p. 85). Cassel (1982) mentions in a scrutiny of the quality of suffering that it achieves its peak what it threatens to liquefy the individual's honesty. Even if the suffering is rooted in physical ache, it is the mental element which is the effective kernel of the suffering and which

terminates when the ache menaces to demolish the individual's integrity and purity (Cassel, 1982, p. 640). Torture is a political rite that happens in the developing countries to an ever-growing scale (Agger, 1991, p. 142). "it is part of ' the liturgy of punishment', and shall satisfy two requirements: to mark and dishonor its prey, and to have an intimidating influence." (Foucault, 1977, p. 35). The significance of this study according to the methodology of Slavoj Zizek is to explore that the unfulfilled intrinsic desires of the novels' protagonists as well as the real world's individuals that will lead to violent behaviors. Therefore, in case of creating conditions in which repressed desires of the individuals whether in the fictional world or the real world from their childhood to the youth are fulfilled correctly and positively, it is not to be witnessed such ill and violent behaviors in the novels as well as extensive level of society.

*Misery* seems an appropriate novel for psychoanalytical study for its use of psychopath character as a central element to scrutinize the psychological problems within the baleful characters. When the heroine demands failed, she tries to show her true personality. This novel reveals dualism in the personality of the protagonist and her mental disorders. So it is great to say that *Misery* is categorized as a gothic as well as psychological kind of novel. However, King's *The Dark Half* also chooses to indicate the darkness behind the real character which leads to a catastrophic outcome and results in the unfulfillment of the desires of the protagonist of this outstanding novel. These novels have a suitable content in which dualism and mental disorders are revealed properly.

Hoppenstand and Browne in "*The Horror of it all: Stephen King of the American Nightmare*", call *Misery*, "a thinly unclear contemplation of the thousands and desires of his proponents and his writing style of his works" (13). However, *Misery* is also a psychological gothic story without the metaphysical-a dreadful narration of the reality of everyday life, of oppressed fears, of suffering, annoyance, solitariness, dander and anxiety, mental disease, psychological state and fragmentation (96).

Torture is differentiated from other harsh harrowing conditions by depicting an excessive form of violation of both psychological and physical character and by an unambiguous target in a particular situation. Torture is aimed to people and



groups with a special goal of causing harm, obliging conformity and ruining political desire, roughly in the deficiency of war (Sominier. F and Genefke, I, 1986).

Slavoj Zizek's *Violence: Big Ideas / Small Books*, argues understanding violence (subjective and objective violence) and its manifestation in the society, especially related to social interests, subjective violence refers to violence that is performed by an individual mostly criminal actions or terrorism. Therefore, objective one has no clear culprit and neglected in the background of subjective violence. For example, the branch of systematic violence which is categorized in the objective violence, is the sign which is revealed through the language of the protagonists of the selected novels. Zizek refers to different kinds of violence, which are depicted and perceived in the social circumstances (Zizek, August 2008, pp. 9-11). Zizek distinguishes between those two kinds of violence in the context of state violence, social agitations and practice of tolerance and language itself as a sign of liberal thought (Zizek, August 2008, pp. 15-20).

Zizek presents a deeper challenge to the norm that many realize and compel us to determine what kind of relation his work has to the standard form and ordinary conditions of the society that sustains them. Zizek has arrived at the conclusion that no ethical act can be strictly guaranteed by existing fact and the ethical act must require a breaking of existing fact (Galt Harpham, Spring 2013, pp. 467-469).

As it was mentioned before, the aim of this article is to show the relationship between mental disorders which are originated in the unfulfilled desires of the characters and their violent actions during their lifetime. This linkage is a unique and perceivable issue, which lead human beings to brutal punishments, murder, trepidation, torture. This article attempts to depict the manifestation of mental disorder through violence whether in the fictional world or the real world. If language is a manifestation of a person's unconscious psyche, *Misery* is quite a reliable source to perceive the unconscious assumptions of the famous novelist, Paul Sheldon, who is abandoned far from home by his number one proponent, the Dragon Lady. Similar to most of King's fictions, he exploits a limited omniscient narrator that gives us all information about Paul's ideas; with the ones that are silent in italic form. Additionally, Paul's

consciousness has felt a new reality as he stays wounded and sick-abled in the bedroom of Annie Wilkes's house in Sidewinder, Colorado. Primarily, his delight mainly reflected his "agony", "confusion" and "alleviation" as truth (King, Misery, 1988, p. 7).

Paul began to be familiar more and more with Annie Wilkes and with the developing cognition of her; he was able to control how he should behave towards her. He was dissolving her hideous reality because Annie did not protect him from her animosity. Finally, Annie's torments grew more austere when she became furious. For instance, when she fed him from the bucket that had water used after cleaning the wall, to which soup was splashed out of Annie's furious. Paul knew Annie and recognized something about her that aided him to plan his flee and in order to victoriously do so, he had to handle his demand of revealing his pain. Furthermore, the tortures that he had tolerated were the manifestation of the Zizek's concept of subjective and objective (symbolic) violence depicting through the role of the protagonist. On the other hand, these tortures resulted in the unfulfilled desires of Annie Wilkes, which were shown via suffering the victim (subjective violence), and insults in the utterances of her (symbolic violence).

Psychopath individuals have completely lost connection to reality and impute aggressive ideas and purposes to the other people. These issues are continuously doubtful and cynical, sensitized to scorn, with an inclination to assign malevolent purposes, they do not forget a snub and always await for struggle and attack other people in the society. Therefore, the manifestation of this kind of violence within the social groups is related to Zizek's subcategory of objective violence: "systematic violence". Individuals with this disorder (mental illness) attack alone and may do violent actions against other people, as well as crimes against racism, which leads to social anarchy and chaos. Violence in psychopath people is perhaps on the extreme. It is a kind of violence, which is related to lack of emotions towards other people. For them, violence is emerged from their unfulfilled desires during their lifetime, which lead to aggressions, as they are reacting to the fictional world of their unconscious psyche, and irrational desires. Therefore, their actions in the real world are unexpected and accordingly temperamental.

#### 4. Conclusion

In both *Misery* and *The Dark Half*, the author-protagonist experiences difficulties, which influences the manner through which they act appropriately. The leading characters closely involved in the demonstration of these difficulties, Annie Wilkes and George Stark, behave in ways that destroy Paul and Thad's sense of self-confidence. Therefore, Paul and Thad, authors snared by their own textual composition, also suffer from another entrapment: a trap within the psyche. Astutely toying with the concept of the death of the writer and the Gothic duple, Stephen King produces protagonists so realistic and extremely profoundly linked to him that they are particularly more non-fiction than fiction. King's specific usage of the Gothic duple relates his main characters to real life and world.

These famous novels demonstrate the impact of the unfulfilled desires on changing the mood and doing frenetic activities of the individuals. These novels show dualism and psychological disorder in the personalities of the main characters.

Violence occurs in the universe around us. In a terrifying way, Zizek asserts that, "In the time it takes you to read this paragraph, ten children will die of hunger" (Zizek, August 2008, p. 7). The events in the two novels are the external aspect of what Slavoj Zizek believes as violence which means the conceptions of horror, trepidation, affliction, torture and torment according to which the hidden personalities of the human beings being affected. Gradually, Annie Wilkes' or George Stark's unfulfilled desires lead to madness, torture and violence. Therefore, characters are trapped in the ill-performed psyche and psychological disorders, which also cause them to act inappropriately in the society. The protagonists of the novels: Annie Wilkes and George Stark both got stuck in the irrational demands and desires which cause them to torture their victims and to act madly in the society. So if the intrinsic desires remain unfulfilled, there is no escape from the society in which torture, violence, trepidation and torment are done violently and eternally. Therefore, the mere solution is to pay close attention to the demands and attempt to fulfill them on the basis of the norms of the society. Accordingly, this study strives to show how the claim support effective understanding of the research problem.

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