

Elizabeth Lesatz
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 Dr Laurie MacDiarmid
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Casebook Research for *Carrie*

Stephen King's novel *Carrie* has been a new age classic since its first release in 1974. *Carrie* tossed around ideas that were relevant at its release, and it continues to toss ideas that are relevant today. Many of its themes and contexts can be explored deeper. In this essay I will explore how two sources can give insight to two relevant aspects shown in Stephen King's novel *Carrie*: telekinesis and child violence, specifically parental abuse.

The first source that will help in the exploration of *Carrie* is an editorial by Donald R. Morse, *The Evidence for Psychokinesis*. Psychokinesis, or PK, is derived from the Greek words "psyche" and "kinesis," translating to mind motion. Psychokinesis is also referred to as telekinesis, or TK. Telekinesis can be described as spontaneous effects, "the spontaneous movement of objects without deliberate intention...is considered by some to be related to...processes of the subconscious mind" (Morse 122). Telekinesis can be spontaneous instances that some would rather believe are poltergeist cases instead of the human mind. There are, of course, skeptics of this phenomenon. According to the editorial, "scientists have been investigating [psychokinesis] since the mid-19th century but with little success at demonstrating that anyone can move even a feather without trickery involving something as simple and obvious as blowing on objects to move them" (Morse 122). Skeptics of psychokinesis, or telekinesis, would simply reply that magic tricks were used to give the illusion of being able to move things with the mind. Psychokinesis is an umbrella term for various special abilities, one of which besides telekinesis is relevant to *Carrie*, telepathic projection. Telepathic projection is a physically perceived object, person, animal, etc. that is created in the mind and projected to others. There are even some parapsychologists, those who study psychic phenomenon and supernatural events, that believe the Bible shows events that could be considered examples of psychokinesis and telekinesis. Moses parted the Red Sea, Jesus turned water to wine and multiplied food (Morse 123). These events can be considered as psychokinetic events.

The Evidence for Psychokinesis gives us a deeper understanding of Carrie's power. Telekinesis is commonly thought of as being able to move objects, which is it, but there is much more to learn about this phenomenon. Most people would probably think it is only for the movies and theatrical purposes; however, real life studies of this have been done. This gives more meaning for Carrie's abilities. In the beginning of Carrie discovering her powers, she has spontaneous movement of objects. She has yet to understand her power and is undeliberately moving objects, "Carrie flinched away. At the same instant, a rack of softball bats in the corner fell over with a large, echoing bang" (King 14). When Carrie would get upset, things around her would start moving or shaking. This seems to be common with telekinesis. There is a branch of psychokinesis, telepathic projection, that Carrie also seems to possess. When Carrie is on her way to destroy the roadhouse, The Cavalier, she 'sends' Sue the 'directions.' On page 265 Carrie starts showing Sue her route, "[Sue] was not even aware that she was following Carrie's progress towards The Cavalier...It was three miles out to The Cavalier, even cross country, as Carrie was going. Sue (watched? thought? doesn't matter) as Carrie fell in a brook and dragged herself out, icy and shivering" (King 265-66). Sue is able to watch Carrie on her journey because Carrie is seemingly sending it out. Conversely, Carrie is able to look into someone's mind. Sue, after

being attuned with Carrie's journey, is connected with Carrie's mind. Carrie is then able to go into Sue's mind, "And Carrie looked. The sensation was terrifying. Her mind and nervous system had become a library" (King 274). Telekinesis and the possibility of telepathic projection allowed Carrie to not only move objects, but project her mind to others and see into their minds. Whether real in this life or just in fictional life, this editorial gave helpful insights into telekinesis, specifically Carrie's powers. In terms of rating the helpfulness of this source to understanding *Carrie*, I would give it a six out of ten. It could have used more examples explaining the effects and possibly causes of psychokinesis. The editorial mostly gives further information on what can be inferred from the novel.

The second source is a review by Conor Kinney, "Stephen King's *IT*: Child Violence in the Horror Genre." This source explains the plot of Stephen King's novel *IT*. Then it reviews the novel focusing on child violence through other children being violent or parental figures being violent towards children. According to Kinney, "these innocent children do not deserve the horror, but time and again children are preyed upon in the most shocking and upsetting ways" (Kinney 61). Many horror novels and movies open with an attack on an innocent being, which tends to be a child. It is discussed how violence between children can be detrimental. The gang of bullies torment this group of kids who coin themselves the 'Losers' because they are outcasts. The relentless bullying does get graphic. Kinney then goes on to criticize how the parents raise their children, which is a fair assessment. There is neglect, Munchausen's by Proxy (which is when a parent causes their child to believe themselves ill), and straight-out physical abuse with factors that allude to sexual abuse too. Kinney states, "any parent has the potential to be secretly an AI [father who abuses his daughter]. He is well liked by members of the community and no one ever speaks up against him until Bev [the daughter] takes matters into her own hands and knocks him [unconscious] when he tries to sexually abuse her...Bev has to be her own advocate at eleven-years-old and fight back against her father, all the while the town and her mother just sit idly by and watch this abuse manifest" (Kinney 62). Kinney found this relationship gave light to what might happen behind closed doors and viewed it as important.

"Stephen King's *IT*: Child Violence in the Horror Genre," gives a further look at King's work, in this case *IT*, and how child violence appears to be a common theme. From this review we can connect common aspects between two of King's more famous novels. *IT* is a coming-of-age story just like that of *Carrie*. Both also grapple with the idea of bullying in school. The Losers are all bullied and tormented; Carrie is bullied and tormented. Each of the Losers' homelife is not ideal; it is the same with Carrie's homelife. One of the Losers' homelife is closer related to that of Carrie's--Beverly. Beverly's father abuses her. On the other side, Carrie's mother abuses her. Whenever Carrie did something that Momma deemed sinful, she would abuse Carrie, "Momma had been walking towards her, and now her hand flashed with sudden limber speed, a hard hand, laundry-callused and muscled. It stuck her backhand across the jaw and Carrie fell down in the doorway between the hall and the living room, weeping loudly" (King 62). Momma perceived Carrie's first period as sinful and decided to hit her, and then shove her into a closet to repent. This abuse had clearly been happening for years, and similar to Beverly, Carrie fights back. Beverly knocks her father unconscious. Carrie, on the other hand, had bigger plans. Carrie commits matricide, killing one's mother. This source gives us a deeper dive into how King portrays his 'victims.' Bullying and the violence either done onto children or that children possess seems to be a common theme in King's novels. For rating purposes, I would give this article an eight out of ten. Although it does not directly talk about *Carrie*, this review

sheds light on common aspects King writes about. We can use this source to further our understanding of King's other novels, such as *Carrie*.

These two sources, "Stephen King's IT: Child Violence in the Horror Genre" and *The Evidence for Psychokinesis*, can enhance our understanding of telekinesis and child violence in Stephen King's novel *Carrie*. Telekinesis, or the broader term psychokinesis, is being studied in real life today. Violence towards children is a common theme in horror novels. Both of these sources, and many others like them, should be evaluated in understanding *Carrie* and its meanings better.

Works Cited

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