

The Architecture of Anxiety: A Psychoanalytic Study of Freud's Defense Mechanisms in Genndy Tartakovsky's *Hotel Transylvania* (2012) Movie

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English Literature: Literary Criticism

Boanerges: Makarios Education Journal

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*"When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD,
He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him."*

Proverbs 16:7

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the hidden psychological struggles of overprotective parenting, trauma passed down through generations, and unhealed trauma through the character of Count Dracula in Genndy Tartakovsky's animated movie *Hotel Transylvania* (2012). A qualitative analytical method is used to look past the surface-level story and determine how Dracula's deep internal anxieties show up across the movie. The data collection technique involves a detailed, scene-by-scene analysis of the movie, focusing specifically on the script, character design, the voice actors' emotional delivery, and the overall animation style. The theoretical framework of this research relies on Sigmund Freud's structural model of the psyche and theory of defense mechanisms (1923), applying concepts like the Id, Ego, Superego, denial, avoidance, isolation, rationalization, and the *"return of the repressed."* The results shows that: **1)** Dracula's Ego builds the heavily isolated hotel as a physical "fortified ego" to balance out the Superego's trauma-driven terrors of the past with Mavis's natural Id demands for freedom; **2)** Dracula creates a complex *"Fake Village"* to act as a hyper-vigilant, scary Superego, projecting a made-up trauma to completely crush Mavis's natural Id impulses to become independent; and **3)** Jonathan's unexpected arrival completely breaks down Dracula's rigid Ego walls, destroying the long-standing defense mechanisms and forcing a confrontation with 100-year-old repressed trauma so healing can finally occur. In conclusion, *Hotel Transylvania* serves as a deep psychological story proving that real parental protection and mental peace do not come from locking someone up or being overly controlling, but from having the bravery to trust and let go. The significance of this study lies in highlighting modern "helicopter parenting" and showing how basic animation and filmmaking choices can visually paint a picture of family trauma. For future research, it is suggested that other student researchers use this exact approach on different animated movies to see how a character's inner fears are brought to life through the surrounding environment.

Keywords: *Cognitive Dissonance, Helicopter Parenting, Hotel Transylvania, Psychoanalysis, Transgenerational Trauma*

INTRODUCTION

Every human behavioral trait serves as a roadmap to an underlying cause, revealing that no aspect of character is accidental. Revealing a chance to see depth into the lives of others and the reasons why people act the way they do. Literature serves as a primary record of this human

experience, a medium that truly comes to life within contemporary cinema. Moving pictures in movies portray how individuals navigate their everyday lives, often masking deep-seated societal issues, hidden messages, and psychological anxieties. In particular, children's animated movies often convey deep meanings through their animation. Movies use the "monster" trope in children's movies to symbolize repressed fears within the collective cultural psyche. In classical narratives, monsters functioned purely as external threats that represented what society fears and rejects. However, contemporary animation shifts these figures into complex characters that reflect humanity's internal psychological struggles by humanizing them. Today, monsters are no longer just shallow enemies; they operate as complex symbols of pain, memory, and the psychological burden of inherited, unresolved histories.

Cinema has long served as an outlet for the human mind. Both adult movies and children's movies often disguise society's issues. Especially through the "monster" trope in children's movies, which commonly symbolizes repressed fears in society. In classical narratives, monsters functioned as the external threats that represent what society fears and rejects. However, contemporary animation shifts these figures into complex characters that reflect humanity's internal psychological struggles by humanizing them. Monster narratives have changed. The creature on screen is less often a straightforward enemy and more often a stand-in for grief, memory, or trauma passed down through generations. Genndy Tartakovsky's *Hotel Transylvania* is a useful case. Count Dracula builds an isolated hotel to keep his daughter Mavis away from the human world, and the film plays this as comedy. But underneath the jokes sits something harder to laugh at: a father who cannot let go of his own fear, who mistakes control for protection, and who never actually works through the past that put him there.

This research reveals the hotel as a physical manifestation of a "fortified ego". A fortified ego is a reinforced sense humans have, built by a strong defense against external threats or internal insecurities, which results in shaping the identity and self-worth of one being. The central theme within this narrative shift is transgenerational trauma, the transmission of parents' unresolved grief to the child, shaping the lived reality of the child. In *Hotel Transylvania*, this trauma is not just a distant memory; rather, the very structural foundation of the story. Analyzing Dracula's motivation behind constructing *The Hotel Transylvania* for his daughter. The hotel wasn't just a simple sanctuary, but the architecture itself is an extension of the protagonist's psyche. The specific design choices by Dracula—labyrinthine corridors, high-altitude isolation, and the "human-proof" security measures—are a representation of Dracula's internal fears and his defense mechanism. By examining Dracula's defense mechanism, such as making a "fake" village full of humans that later on was revealed to be zombies

in the hotel. Dracula's Overprotective Parenting, Helicopter Parenting, represents a psychological phenomenon. Its origins in parental trauma, and the way they relate to real-world circumstances. As a single dad who lost his wife in a traumatic experience, his coping mechanism is to protect his daughter, Mavis, with all his might. In fact, this reveals how humans respond after going through traumatic events. The brain constructs a barrier of protection so that the same event does not occur again.

While this cinematic piece offers a lighthearted examination, this research views the Hotel as a manifestation of the 'fortified ego.' Through analyzing Dracula's dialogue, the interactions he has with his daughter Mavis, and his frantic rejection of the human world, we can define the boundaries of a mind controlled by fear. Count Dracula has constructed an architectural creation, the Hotel Transylvania, which serves as a temporary refuge created by the suppressed fear and trauma inside of himself.

This study aims to identify the psychological phenomena of Overprotective Parenting and Helicopter Parenting. The goal of this study is to identify the way the psychological phenomena of Overprotective Parenting, Helicopter Parenting, and their origins in parental trauma that Dracula experience relate to real-world situations. Trauma affects people's psychology from the inside out and is brought on by experiencing or witnessing horrific events that result in extremely unsettling thoughts. Similar to how Dracula erects a physical castle to keep the outside world out, parents in the real world often create "metaphorical hotels" around their kids. This creates a very human yet heartbreaking cycle, in which the immense love of parents turns into suffocating shackles. The fear they project onto the present is not a form of authority or a desire for power, but rather a cry from past wounds that have not yet healed, a belief born of the pain that the best way to protect a loved one is to shield them from the real world.

A recent study titled "The Pragmatic Analysis of Deixis in Hotel Transylvania Movie Script 2025" by Muhamad Rizky Fathurrahman Subekti and Endang Fauziati inspects the communicative mechanics and narrative functions of contextual linguistic expressions in contemporary animation. Focusing on the movie's dialogue, their work clearly exhibits how personal, spatial, and temporal deixis delineate character relationships and reinforce the narrative dichotomy between the secure monster sanctuary and the threatening human realm. Their study relies on Yule's (1996) and Levinson's (1983) pragmatic frameworks to challenge traditional textual interpretations by showcasing how language choices directly drive emotional depth and contextual humor. However, Subekti and Fauziati's structural approach stops there; while it successfully identifies how characters point to their environment through language, it treats the script primarily as a vehicle for explicit

dialogue exchange. Moreover, their linguistic framework struggles to discuss the deeper, latent psychic instabilities and subconscious defensive structures that motivate these character interactions. As a result of these uncertainties, current scholarship lacks a comprehensive understanding of how the movie structural and auditory architecture—such as defensive parental trauma and cinematic framing—subversively reflects underlying psychological conditions like parental trauma and transgenerational trauma.

Just like Dracula, building high castle walls, parents in real life often erect “metaphorical hotels” around their children. They restrict their children’s movements not because of a lack of truth, but as a desperate attempt to ease the anxiety in their own hearts. Behind the facade of this protection lies a heavy price: children’s freedom is often sacrificed to calm the “ghost” of the past that still haunts their parents. Ultimately, a child’s journey to adulthood is no longer a natural process but an exhausting negotiation with a dark history they have never even experienced. This research touches on the most fragile point in human relationships, the struggle between the desire to protect and the necessity to let someone grow.

Binary Opposition

The Fear (Dracula)	The Love (Mavis & Johnny)
Dracula’s fear is rooted in the past, which is the death of his wife, Martha, at the hands of humans. To him, the human world is a source of destruction. This trauma led him to create a "fake" human village to terrify Mavis. <i>“The ego is not sharply separated from the id; its lower portion merges into it... But the ego is also separated from the id by resistances”</i> (Freud, S., 1923, <i>The Ego and the Id</i> , p. 24). This is a crucial detail where he uses <i>fear as a pedagogical tool</i> (a teaching method) to keep her compliant. It shows how Fear acts as a wall, dividing two worlds apart; every rule Dracula makes is driven by fear disguised as “protection”.	The "Zing": This is the movie’s specific terminology for a "soulmate" connection. In the movie's mythology, a "Zing" only happens once. This raises the stakes, if Mavis doesn't follow her love, she loses her one chance at a meaningful life. Love requires Mavis to leave the "protected" zone. <i>“The tendency to create ever greater unities is characteristic of Eros; it is a manifestation of the striving for life”</i> (Freud, S., 1940, <i>An Outline of Psycho-Analysis</i> , p. 20). To love Johnny, she must accept the risk that he is different—a mortal being, that he will die, or that he might be rejected by her society.

METHOD

The core of our research, drawn from Sigmund Freud’s theory, is the concept of the Id, Ego, and Superego, as well as his theories on Repetition Compulsion and Defense Mechanisms. Dracula’s behavior in Hotel Transylvania is not merely that of a “strict parent,” but rather a reflection of severe trauma stemming from a tragic event in which Dracula lost his wife, who was burned alive by

humans. His Id was flooded with terror from his past; in his mind, it is like screaming, “Humans are dangerous! Run! Build a Shelter!” His Superego took that trauma and made it into a strict rule, a barricade made from guilt after he failed to save his wife. Dracula’s Ego looks at reality to find a practical solution to satisfy both sides (Id and Superego), which is the idea of building a hotel. It also uses rationalization, where it invents logical-sounding reasons to keep her confined. Through a Freudian lens, we seek to explore how Dracula’s “hotel” serves as a physical manifestation of defense mechanisms (avoidance and displacement). By confining Mavis to the hotel, he seeks to prevent a “repetition” of what occurred in the past. This research involves a scene-by-scene analysis of how the camera focuses and moves, examining how its framing can affect the audience's subconscious, allowing them to experience Dracula’s trauma and fear. We observe how the camera “shakes” and zooms in suddenly when Dracula feels anxious or panicked. This technique mimics Dracula’s psychological state, specifically symptoms of panic or anxiety, forcing the audience to share in Dracula’s response to trauma.

In this study, we analyze how the camera works in the movie *Hotel Transylvania* and how the choice of camera angles can serve as a benchmark for how the audience perceives Dracula’s trauma and panic. Although Drac appears very strong, the camera sometimes frames him from a narrow perspective, as if focusing solely on Drac himself, which makes it seem as though he is battling his own internal conflict. Drawing on German Expressionism, a movement linked to psychoanalysis, the shadow of the castle from the hotel that Drac built is a “shadow self”, a part of the past that Drac finds difficult to forget.

Voice acting in this movie is not merely dialogue; it is a “resonance of the soul.” This study analyzes how Adam Sandler’s vocal choices influence the audience’s psychology. The shift in Drac’s voice, which is always authoritative in front of all the monsters, suddenly becoming high-pitched and stuttering every time Mavis mentions the phrase “human world,” indeed serves as a trigger signal for Drac’s psychology. The vocals in this movie act as a bridge between the character and the audience. Drac’s vocal vulnerability in quiet moments leads the audience to perceive him not as a protective and controlling father, but rather as a grieving survivor.

DISCUSSION

1. Dracula’s Id, Ego Superego

The opening sequence relies on familiar gothic signifiers, fog-bound forest, looming castle, to establish tone before a single character appears on screen. The construction of Hotel Transylvania serves as a striking physical manifestation of what Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytic



theory defines as a "fortified ego," a reinforced psychological architecture built as a strong defense mechanism against external threats and internal insecurities. This structure fights back against the constant threat of external dangers and inner chaos. Dracula enters through the balcony door making his scary iconic entrance, portraying his fangs and

sharp claws. However, as Dracula approaches his daughter—Mavis, the ambience of the castle warms up. Dracula cradles little Mavis in his arms, a father's love for his daughter is revealed through this act. Moreover, the first scene shows how deep his love is for his daughter and how much he is willing to do to protect her for his whole life.

The movie states this deep psychological conflict early on with Dracula's protective declaration, "I built this place for your mother, to keep you safe." Through this unspoken statement, viewers are informed that this architecture will not follow the commonly seen purpose of a standard home or vacation spot, where visitors freely come and go and exploration is encouraged. *"Transgenerational transmission is the depositing of a traumatized ancestor's image into the developing psyche of a child... The child becomes a carrier of the parent's unhealed past."* Volkan, V. D.



(2020). This kind of defensive structure is rooted in Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory (1923) which suggests that the human psyche is divided into competing forces constantly seeking balance. When Dracula speaks of building a sanctuary "to keep you safe," it tells the viewer about the painful history where humans are portrayed as monsters and vampires as helpless victims.

This history reinforces a traumatic narrative where the external world is treated as a threat, while his family represents the vulnerable objects needing to be hidden away, locked up, or used as a sanctuary to protect his fragile peace of mind. The phrase "keep you safe" announces that Dracula's Ego will reject the chaotic and unpredictable nature of the outside world entirely. In Hotel Transylvania, the narrative acknowledges the external reality of danger but seeks to hide from it completely. The hotel functions as a sanctuary in the literal sense: a space where monsters no longer have to anticipate human violence. Furthermore, this defensive architecture serves as a thesis for Dracula's entire parental philosophy. Through the building of the hotel, it reframes the viewer's

expectations of Dracula's character. As the film progresses, Dracula's composure starts to slip. His concern for Mavis tips into something closer to panic, visible in his stammering explanations and his refusal to let her out of his sight. His journey is not focusing on simple overprotectiveness, but reclaiming control over an environment that once violently stripped away his happiness.

The movie's animated cinematography and camera work play a critical role in visualizing this psychological negotiation. In the early shots, the hotel mimics classic gothic castle compositions along with the grand scales and heavily isolated structures. As the movie continues, and Dracula realizes that Mavis's natural Id demands to leave the sanctuary can no longer be ignored, the cinematography adopts narrower and more claustrophobic angles as the scenes show him trapped between his duties and his deep panic. This realization itself acts as a turning point in *Hotel Transylvania*. Dracula's perspective changes from the comforting delusion that a hidden sanctuary will satisfy his daughter forever to realize he must actively manipulate reality to keep her inside.

This shows a desperate response to the traditional development of a child which used to be about natural growth and separation. The tight framing becomes a visual trap for Dracula, who must recognize that his emotional stability depends entirely on maintaining these physical boundaries. From the perspective of Sigmund Freud's theory of defense mechanisms, especially his concepts on isolation and avoidance, this moment symbolizes what it means for a traumatized psyche to block out the natural urges of life to avoid repeating past pain. Freud's account of the ego rests on this idea: painful memories generate anxiety the mind cannot tolerate directly, so the ego deploys defense mechanisms, repression chief among them, to keep that anxiety out of conscious awareness. Dracula's tight control over the hotel environment reflects this, by no longer letting the hotel be just a place of hospitality but an instrument of psychological containment. The hotel's rigid walls can be read, in Freudian terms, as an externalization of Dracula's superego: the internal structure of rules and prohibition given physical form. Usually, a father's guidance is built around preparing a child for the world: danger is explained, boundaries are taught, and the child is eventually allowed to leave. By shutting out the world entirely, *Hotel Transylvania* collapses this natural progression. As Freud argues, when a trauma is left unresolved, the Ego will go to extreme lengths to warp reality just to keep the anxiety hidden "*The ego is not sharply separated from the id; its lower portion merges into it... But the ego is also separated from the id by resistances.*" Freud, S. (1961). *The Ego and the Id* (J. Strachey, Trans.). W. W. Norton & Company. (Original work published 1923).

When Dracula tries to trick Mavis with the fake human village, his panic is delivered in chaotic isolation, surrounded by fast-paced camera movements. The framing is also tight and unstable. During the time of this narrative, there is a distinct lack of calm, open spacing, which underlines the

complete absence of actual mental peace. Through the cinematography, it reinforces that Dracula's strict control is not a calm choice, but an exhausting psychological necessity to keep his fears contained.

Hotel Transylvania displaces the assumption of normal parental guidance. The statement rewrites the script so that there is no room for growth, no outside future, and only Dracula's rules, his fears, and his traumatic memories are portrayed as the ultimate truth in this castle. Another understanding from Freud's psychoanalytic theory emphasizes that an individual must process and



integrate trauma rather than burying it under heavy defense mechanisms. He writes about the "return of the repressed," where hidden fears will always find a way back to the surface. Mavis being brought up to accept her isolation, trusting her father's rules, and staying inside the den reflects the mental cages Dracula has raised her to follow. However, this quote signals his act of reinforcing the traditional walls

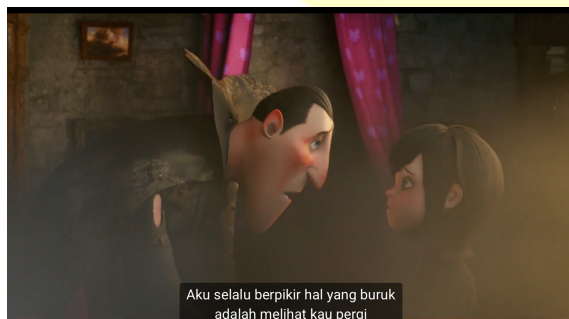
when those defenses begin to fail. Dracula acknowledges that his daughter wants to leave, but instead of allowing her to grow, he uses his own past trauma as a motivation to trick and manipulate her into staying. This aligns with Freud's argument that an unhealed trauma forces the psyche to repeat defensive behaviors over and over again, mistaking control for actual safety. The cinematography work during this narrative reflects a heavy psychological shift. As the framing tightens into extreme close-ups, isolating Dracula from the vast, grand architecture of his own castle, we see the cracks in his authoritative facade. The soundtrack here provides more tension and sudden silences, emphasizing his internal loneliness. The mood is filled with more and more frantic movements, which mirrors the harsh truth of his survival that depends entirely on keeping the outside world out. By combining Freud's structural model of the psyche and his theories on defense mechanisms, the realization that "I have to keep her here" becomes clear that it is not only a line of dialogue, but a desperate act of a fractured Ego trying to keep his entire world from falling apart.

The movie challenges the idea of absolute parental control by presenting the reality that an overprotected sanctuary can become an emotional prison. Through this representation, female characters like Mavis, who used to be completely passive and content under a father's rule, are forced to push back. Mavis claims the ownership of her own life by resisting the historical trauma that has historically locked her family away. When Dracula realizes that his illusions are failing and he must face his daughter's growing independence, there is no grand, triumphant music, but an uncomfortable

silence. The absence of great audio effects allows the audience to see and feel the scene to become more powerful and exposed. This decision aligns with Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, particularly his statements on how the Ego must eventually abandon harmful defense mechanisms like denial and projection to achieve true psychological healing. Dracula decided that rather than performing the role of an all-powerful, fearless leader for his guests and keeping up the perfect facade, he must confront his own internal anxieties that challenge the hidden world of the movie and his style of parenting. The minimalist sound design and introspective cinematography mixed with close-up shots that capture his exhaustion helps deepen his emotional breakdown. Although it is not stated specifically in the dialogue, the narrative shows that Dracula's journey is never just about building a successful business, but about surviving his own mind and reclaiming his peace after a history of deep betrayal. This moment occurs at the climax of the movie, when the focus shifts from maintaining the hotel's walls to restoring genuine emotional connection in a context of shared truth. The movie reinforces the shift with high-contrast lighting that symbols Dracula's rejection of his old, defensive habits. Instead of dark, protective shadows, the different and sharp visual choices emphasize the rawness of his emotional vulnerability. With no protective framing, grand active movements, swelling music, nor hidden secrets repositions his character toward true healing, acceptance, and emotional release. Based on Freud's psychoanalytic theory, Dracula's struggle is not just a personal choice, but a vivid illustration of how a traumatized Ego must learn to lower its defenses to let the next generation thrive.



Dracula's growth is not a product of running away, but the outcome of facing his deepest fears and letting go of his control. Freud's theory shows how *Hotel Transylvania* fractures the idea of a perfect sanctuary, by illustrating a ruler who is not truly "safe" until he stops hiding from his past. Moreover, through Freud's concept of psychological adaptation, and based on his understanding that a



healthy Ego must adapt to reality rather than escape it, it emphasizes that a "happy life" cannot be built on eternal isolation, but must be open to growth and change. And through Dracula's ultimate surrender to his daughter's choice, he is telling us that this movie deconstructs his old defensive myth. By stating his struggle that his castle was never about restriction, but

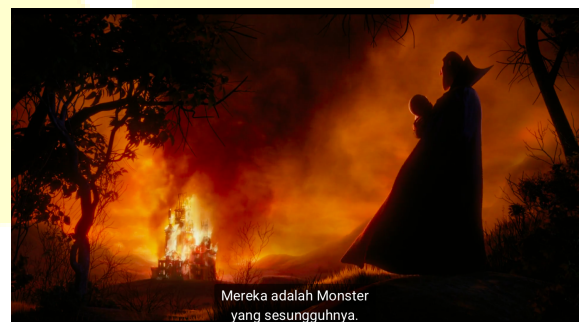
about fear, he subverts the binary opposition of safety versus freedom, and replaces it with a new paradigm where letting go is declared as true empowerment. This statement shifts the audience's expected view of a traditional monster story and supports Freud's idea that emotional maturity requires facing the past honestly rather than locking it behind stone walls. This way, the movie uses Dracula's emotional breakdown to reject the cycle of trauma-driven parenting and define a healthier concept where a child's story is defined by their own future and not their parent's unhealed wounds.

2. Dracula's *Fake Village* acting as a strict *Superego*

In classic Freudian theory, the Id represents the center of basic instincts, drives, and the fundamental desire for freedom and adventure, governed entirely by the pleasure principle. It works without worrying too much about rules, only following its feelings and desires. In *Hotel Transylvania*, Mavis' desire to explore the human world represents her Id. Meanwhile, the superego is the part of the mind that's the opposite of the Id. It is like a strict parent or moral police. It controls people by making them feel guilty or afraid when they want something considered "wrong." In the narrative structure of *Hotel Transylvania*, the "Fake Village" scene acts as a purposeful, constructed amplification of Dracula's outwardly expressed Superego. Instead of letting Mavis cultivate her own internal moral framework, Dracula imposes his own fears onto the surroundings, creating a complex psychological environment specifically aimed at stifling and inhibiting Mavis's developing Id.



Upon Mavis's 118th birthday, her Id calls for psychological individuation, a biological need to engage with humanity, represented by her wish to see "Paradise." Dracula, still dealing with his pain and her growth, realizes the castle's stone walls won't be enough to keep her from leaving. He wants to keep her there, so he tries to control her mind by making her think something terrible happened. To stop her from departing, he decides to invade her thoughts by creating a false trauma. Through a staged attack featuring zombie-actors appearing as aggressive, fire-brandishing humans, Dracula influences Mavis's



emotional state. He intentionally turns her innate curiosity into primal fear, utilizing this false reality to impose a complete boundary of obedience.

In a cinematic manner, Genndy Tartakovsky reflects this psychological oppression via expressionistic staging and vigorous camera movements that replicate a sudden surge of panic. Upon



Mavis's initial entry into the artificial village, the first shot is wide, illustrating her Id's view of the vast, boundless opportunities in the external world. As the orchestrated chaos unfolds, the cinematography transitions sharply into swift, confining dolly shots and low-angle tilts that warp the surroundings. The artificial illumination shifts from cozy, welcoming

hues to intense, dramatic shadows, transforming the artificial humans into towering, fearsome shapes. This visual distortion compels the audience to experience Mavis's sensory overload as her Id is brutally suppressed by the frightening law of the father.

In addition, the voice acting in this segment emphasizes the deep disparity and struggle between these two mental frameworks. As Mavis faces the feigned hostility of the village, her tone shifts from a lively, harmonious expectation to gasping, shrill cries of weakness, indicating a swift withdrawal of her ego barriers. As she comes back to the castle and lets out a whimper about wanting to remain in the hotel forever, Dracula's tone transforms from frantic urgency to a calm, comforting, yet profoundly commanding rhythm. This vocal change highlights the triumph of the contrived Superego; by soothing her with the same barriers that restrict her, Dracula effectively persuades Mavis to embrace his fear as her personal defense mechanism.



In actual psychological interactions, this sequence offers a deep critique of overbearing "Helicopter Parenting". When a parent endures unaddressed historical trauma—like Dracula's lingering sorrow from his wife's unfortunate demise, their internalized fears are often imposed upon their children as a suffocating, overly watchful barrier. These parents frequently create "metaphorical fake villages" in reality, employing exaggerated or invented stories about societal dangers, failure, or betrayal to instill fear in their children and ensure compliance. The educational method employed in this instance is not teaching or mentoring, but rather systemic fear masked as caring affection.

In the end, Mavis's swift withdrawal into the hotel's safety illustrates how excessive parental protection forms a heartbreaking, repetitive psychological cycle. Through the use of falsehoods, the affected parent effectively stifles the child's inherent urge for autonomy and discovery. Beneath the guise of this complete safety exists a high cost: the child absorbs the parent's historical fear, willingly sacrificing their own liberty to appease a familial specter they have never genuinely encountered. Mavis's entry transforms her experience into a tiresome negotiation with Dracula's grim past, illustrating how deep affection, fueled by unresolved trauma, can swiftly become constricting psychological bonds.

3. Dracula's *Ego* walls towards the *hidden trauma*

Before Jonathan's arrival, Drac had already built his strong psychological and physical defenses. In psychoanalytic theory, the hotel Dracula built was not merely an ordinary place or a refuge, but a place where Sigmund Freud's theory of Dracula's defense mechanisms, specifically denial and isolation, came into play. For over a century, Dracula has lived with deep emotional wounds. He constructed a rigid narrative that "the human world is fundamentally evil" to mask and shield his ego from a painful reality: the fear of losing those he is weak toward. He did this by confining his daughter Mavis and himself within the hotel. Dracula's ego maintains a false sense of absolute control. He creates a false comfort zone where he sees himself as a noble leader and protector, yet in reality, he is merely a prisoner of himself, escaping from unresolved trauma.



Jonathan does not enter the narrative as a physical threat, but rather as a psychological anomaly within Dracula's mind, one that is beyond Dracula's control. His presence indirectly shatters



Dracula's ego through three distinct catalysts. Jonathan breaks down human stereotypes. Jonathan does not fit the stereotype of humans as beings who "carry torches and pitchforks," as Dracula had assumed. Instead, Jonathan exudes a positive aura. He is charismatic, engaging, empathetic, and has absolutely no intention of harming the monsters. For this reason, Jonathan is easily accepted by the

monsters. This forces Dracula's ego to undergo a psychological phenomenon known as cognitive

dissonance. In this state, the reality before his eyes is difficult for him to accept because it contradicts the reality he has created for himself over the past century. Dracula gradually began to lose control of the world he had created. Jonathan arrived, bringing with him the foreign culture of humans, a culture that was spontaneous, diverse, and full of modern energy, disrupting the hotel's stagnant atmosphere. As Dracula lost control of his creation, he slowly began to lose his grip on his own ego. When Jonathan and Mavis experience a surge of "Zinc" love, Dracula realizes that he has failed to keep Mavis locked in his golden cage. Drac realizes that no matter how tightly someone is confined, when love comes, they will break free from their confinement and fall in love, because emotions are a trap.

When Drac's wife, Martha, was burned alive by humans, Drac's way of coping with his grief was not to channel his pain, but rather to become humanity's greatest enemy, a choice that ultimately trapped him in his own self-destruction. Jonathan acts as a mirror, a replica of what happened to Drac. When Drac's deceit and lies are exposed, and Jonathan leaves Mavis alone, Dracula witnesses a replication of the despair he felt when Mavis was heartbroken. At this critical juncture, Dracula's ego crumbles completely, making him realize two undeniable truths. His defense mechanisms have accidentally turned him into a "monster" that stands in the way of his daughter's happiness. Jonathan represents an inclusive future, while Dracula is merely a burden of the past. Humans are not a threat to monsters. After more than a century, Dracula finally steps out of his hotel's confines and even willingly exposes himself to sunlight to retrieve Jonathan. This act symbolizes the collapse of his ego and the beginning of the resolution of his eternal trauma. He finally accepts a profound psychological truth: that true protection lies in the vulnerability to let go, not in eternal isolation.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, *Hotel Transylvania* serves as a deep psychological narrative that moves way beyond a simple surface-level children's comedy, offering a profound look into the cycles of family trauma and recovery. Through the lens of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, Dracula's journey shows how an unhealed past can completely reshape a parent's reality. The heavy stone walls of the hotel and the elaborate trick of the fake human village are not just physical structures; they are visual representations of a fractured Ego desperately using extreme defense mechanisms like avoidance, isolation, and rationalization to bury a terrifying history. Dracula's intense desire to lock his daughter away shows the heartbreaking reality of how genuine parental love, when fueled by a hyper-vigilant Superego, can easily transform into a suffocating cage that crushes a child's natural Id impulses for freedom and independence.

Ultimately, the breakdown of these rigid defensive boundaries—sparked by the unexpected arrival of Jonathan—proves that psychological adaptation and healing cannot be achieved by running

away or locking out the world. True peace and healthy protection do not come from endless control or forced confinement, but from finding the immense personal bravery required to confront old wounds, trust the next generation, and gradually let go. By shedding a light on the hidden anxieties beneath the monster masks, the movie offers a powerful critique of modern helicopter parenting, showing that the only way to stop passing trauma down to the future is to bravely face the ghosts of the past.

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