

Fragmented Selves and Haunted Minds: A Psychoanalytic Reading of Shirley Jackson's *Hangsaman*

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Abstract—*Hangsaman* (1951) by Shirley Jackson emphasizes the rewrite of Gothic horror as it goes inward, revealing the vexed psyche through internal terror portrayed by turning its Gothic horror into an internal phenomenon. This essay uses psychoanalytic horror to discuss *Hangsaman* with references to the theories of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Jacques Lacan in terms of how Jackson creates fear by repressing, doubling, and ambiguity of the narrative. This paper insists that the protagonist, Natalie Waite, of the study by Jackson, is about to experience identity breaking that is brought about by internalizing a patriarchal authority and repressing the creative instinct. Her delusional experience and her association with her own duplicate Tony demonstrate how the unconscious works, the reemergence of repressed desires, the projection of the shadow self, and the disintegration of the ego. Combining Freudian repression, Jungian shadow theory, and Lacanian misrecognition, Jackson places horror by focusing on the organization of the mind rather than that of the outside world. The lack of clarity and the stylistic fragmentation of the novel recreate the rhythms of the unconscious, and *Hangsaman* is not just a story about madness but a symbolic critique of repression based on gender. The paper will ultimately argue that the vision of horror Jackson had reveals the gothic architecture of the self, where the borderline between the imagination and identity is forever erased, and the psyche itself is the most horrifying topography of all.

Keywords— Shirley Jackson; *Hangsaman*; Psychoanalytic Horror; The Uncanny; Doubling

I. INTRODUCTION

Hangsaman (1951) by Shirley Jackson is one of the most disturbing yet most thought-provoking pieces of American fiction of the mid-twentieth century. *Hangsaman* promises, however, the style of Jackson in manhood, into which the mundane and the spectral, the domestic and the hallucinatory are entirely united, although here, frequently

overshadowed by *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959) and *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* (1962). The novel places the focus on a female character, Natalie Waite, whose coming out of adolescent life as an adult turns into a nightmare of alienation, repression, and psychic disintegration. *Hangsaman* is unique among the many traditions of Gothic fiction in that it does not depend on external ghosts or physical terrors. Instead, Jackson manifests terror in the consciousness of Natalie, making psychological instability become the narrative of the horror, which is intimate and general.

Not long after the *Hangsaman* was authored, Jackson wrote in the era where American culture was influenced by conformity to postwar, patriarchal domesticity and the newly developed discourse of psychoanalysis. Since rational males and the submissive, self-sacrificing female were idealized in the 1950s, the binaries continued to be shaken by the fiction of Jackson. Natalie, who is a sex offender in the *Hangsaman*, is a father, a domineering writer, and an intellectual who serves as the figure of repression and patriarchal authority. His intellectual arrogance, which is covered with love, figuratively intrudes into the psyche of Natalie and invents her vision of reality and language. As it has been pointed out by critics, the words of the father make the prison of the daughter that is created by Jackson (Oppenheimer 132). The claustrophobic home atmosphere and the social restrictions of the college environment, s/her inner conflict, imply that the actual horror is not in the external persecution but the psychic reverberations of the male domination.

The fear that prevails in the novel is created by the careful use of the uncanny, which forms the focus of the psychoanalytic theory, on the part of Jackson. According to Sigmund Freud, *Uncanny* (*das Unheimliche*) is the time when something familiar

turns out to be strange, because of repression or re-emergence of the repressed (Freud 241). One constantly perceives this quality throughout the narration of Jackson: seemingly ordinary places, homes, and dormitories, or even social events, become mental retaliators filled with reflections of her disjointed identity as Natalie tries to face. The enigmatic figure of Tony, the so-called friend of Natalie, or her alleged twin, is a reflection of her subconsciousness, her repressed urges, fears, and imagination. Tony is, as one person points out, no ghost; it is an image of the self that Natalie cannot even stand to think about (Hattenhauer 59).

Jackson draws on the breakdown of the line between reality and imagination through the journey of Natalie, one of the key elements of psychoanalytic horror. This psychological disintegration is represented by the narrative voice that switches between clear observation and an imaginative dream of distortion. The reader roving in the unreliability of the point of view of Natalie, is in the same ambiguity as that which characterizes the consciousness of the main character. Jackson, therefore, makes his horror not out of supernatural things but out of the horrifying instability of perception as such. This approach places *Hangsaman* into a context of literary modernism, as well as demarcating the psychological horror of subsequent authors such as Sylvia Plath and Margaret Atwood.

In addition, *Hangsaman* can be interpreted as a female subjectivity allegory of a patriarchal ideology. The psychoanalytic model demonstrates the repression and especially the suppressed female voice, which leads to internal conflict and anxiety. The fact that Natalie experiences hallucinations and breaks down is the indicator of not only the inability to assimilate socially, but the appearance of forbidden knowledge as well, and the acknowledgment that selfhood cannot be experienced in the conditions of control. Jackson converts madness into a kind of female authorship, as Elizabeth Cushman puts it, and where imagining is the only possible rebellion (Cushman 104). The horrifying aspect of the novel, therefore, lies in the conflict between self-expression and the silence of society, between the creative fruitfulness of the mind and its strict confinement.

But, at the end of it all, *Hangsaman* alters the definition of horror by the introspection of the

psyche. Jackson takes fear out of haunted houses and transfers fear to haunted minds by revealing the horrors that are inherent in identity-construction, linguistic subjugation, and manhood. This paper has advanced the argument that *Hangsaman* reflects the psychoanalytic horror through the dramatization of Natalie Waite's psychic fragmentation as a reaction to repression and alienation. Jackson develops a distinctively psychological Gothic through the play of the uncanny, the doubling, and narrative uncertainty, a finding that brings out the horror of the self, a narcissistic slip into the depths of the self when the barriers between imagination and madness and socialization are completely eradicated.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Critical scholarship on Shirley Jackson has traditionally focused on the ability to make domestic and psychological realities disturbing images of horror. *The Haunting of Hill House* and *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* have received most of the critical interest to date, yet *Hangsaman* (1951) has become one of those texts that most readily preempts Jackson in her interest in the psyche as a horror venue. The novel, placed between the postwar realism and the Gothic tradition, encourages the interpretations that combine the psychoanalytic theory with the feminist criticism. This review literature reviews significant critical approaches to *Hangsaman*, applicable psychoanalytic theories, and the gap in research occupied by this paper, the expression of psychoanalytic horror as a psychological and cultural construction in the work of Jackson.

Critics who reacted early to *Hangsaman* were inclined to interpret the novel in the tropes of the American Gothic and the female bildungsroman. In the short story, *American Gothic by Shirley Jackson*, Darryl Hattenhauer notes that Jackson plays around with the standard Gothic tradition by pushing the haunted house into the main character's mind (Hattenhauer 54). To Hattenhauer, the deterioration of mental space experienced by Natalie Waite can be linked to the repressive domestic ideologies in 1950s America that intended to make the domestic space a Gothic architecture unto itself. This is also seen in Joan Wylie Hall, who stresses that the fiction of Jackson makes the psychological crumbling of women as a response to the imprisonment of feminine demands. In *Hangsaman*, the psychosis of

Natalie is a symbol of the highest reach of these tensions- a defiance which takes the form of fragmentation of the mind instead of blatant rebellion.

Modern feminist critics have applied this questioning to deeper levels and believe that the psychological breakdown of Natalie was a coded attack on gendered repression. In *Shirley Jackson: Essays on the literary legacy*, Bernice M. Murphy is of the opinion that the heroines of Shirley Jackson perceive the mind as a battlefield between self-assertion and the voice of the authority within them that is patriarchal (Murphy 82). The father of the novel, the manipulative writer intellectualizing emotion and manipulating language, turns to a symbolism of the intrusion of the patriarchal discourse into feminine subjectivity. The speech of the daughter is both inspired and silenced by the very same rhetorical domination of the father in a way that the daughter creates a sort of psychic ventriloquism where the self is somehow alien to what it is saying (Murphy 83). Such a relationship can be said to echo the psychoanalytic ideas of repression and specifically, the Freudian idea of the return of the repressed, where previously repressed desires and traumas are re-experienced in deformed, uncanny ways (Freud 242).

The Uncanny (das Unheimliche) by Freud is a great source of interpretation of psychological horror in Jackson. Through the essay he wrote in 1919, Freud defines the uncanny as that type of frightening, which draws upon what was known of the old and long familiar (Freud 220). The discomfort in *Hangsaman* comes just out of such a destruction of the familiar and the strange: the family life, education, and social rituals are all this is rendered disturbingly unfamiliar by the distorted view of Natalie. This process is exemplified in the character of Tony, who is the supposed friend or twin of Natalie. Following Susan Garland Mann, Tony, according to her, serves as an expression of the repressed creative power of Natalie and submerged sexuality, the twin in which her subliminal can be heard (Mann 96). The figure of the double, or Doppelgänger, has traditionally been a psychoanalytic figure of internal division and alienation, and Jackson uses it as a motivational element in creating dramaturgical horror in the face of the self.

Continuing Freud, Jungian theories shed some light on how Jackson is interacting with archetypal

structures of the psyche. The idea of the shadow by Carl Jung is the repressed part of the personality, which represents the expression of the instinctive drives in the human being, and the moral conflict, and derives an analogy with the connection between Natalie and Tony. The duality turns into the shadow-self, the embodiment of what the conscious mind of Natalie tries to disregard. According to Lisa Kroger, the fiction by Jackson plays out the conflict between the conscious ego and the figure of the shadow and reveals the fact that the impossibility of dealing with instincts results not in the moral truth but in the psychological destruction (Kroger 58). *Hangsaman* is then viewed as a metaphorical process of individuation that has gone astray, where the integration of the shadow does not happen, but instead leads to madness as opposed to wholeness.

In recent psychoanalytic works, the Lacanian aspect of Jackson's work has also been addressed. The idea of the mirror stage, proposed by Jacques Lacan, in which the subject does not realize himself to be a complete organism by the reflection in the mirror, mirrors the doomed attempt of Natalie to find herself with the aid of the mirror. The mirror is a place of horror in the story of Jackson instead of self-validation. The instability of identity and language is revealed by Natalie because of her interactions with reflective surfaces, such as her discussions with Tony. Gina Wisker also believes that the story of Jackson generates horror by the falling of the symbolic order, or the time the language does not assure the meaning or the self anymore (Wisker 174). Such disintegration of signification concurs with the argument put forward by Lacan, that the unconscious is organized as a language, as a space of slips, substitutions, and distortions, and where the subject is perpetually misrecognized.

Although the feminist analysis and the psychoanalytic one have brought some helpful information, the gap, as far as the category of works of psychoanalytic horror is concerned, still exists. The psychological richness or feminist symbolism has been studied most, but little has been done on how the aspect of horror is created using the machinations of the unconscious. Jeanine Bassinger notes that the horror of the situation is not visible but in the gradual uncovering that the mind is haunted too (Bassinger 102). This point highlights a fundamental change: Jackson turns the horror into a subjective, analytical process, as opposed to its performance. Her

horror is not monstrous but cognitive, the one brought about by the annihilation of rationality and the encounter with the suppressed self.

Thus, this paper places *Hangsaman* in the criticizing genre of psychoanalytic horror, a genre that embraces the Gothic mood of the literature along with psychological realism. This paper builds on the existing body of literature to suggest that the techniques of the narrative used by Jackson, namely its ambiguous nature, broken narration, and unreliable subjectivity, perform the practices of the unconscious as a whole. Not only a description of madness, *Hangsaman* is a dramatization of the narrative instability of the psyche itself. The Gothic tradition is remodeled by Jackson, who goes to the inside to show the most frightening terrain of all, the human self. The setting of the horror is described by Natalie.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Psychoanalytic aspect of *Hangsaman* offers a very important insight into the way of how Shirley Jackson builds up horror not by the outer forces but by the work of the unconscious mind. Natalie Waite's disintegration can be read thoroughly using the theoretical prism of Freudian, Jungian, and Lacanian psychoanalysis. Such frameworks shed light to understand how the horror in the novel of Jackson is created due to psychic tension- confrontation between the repressed and conscious self, desire to live as a whole, and inevitability to be fragmented.

3.1 Freudian Psychoanalysis: The Uncanny and Repression

The ideas of repression and the *Uncanny* (das Unheimliche) of the works by Sigmund Freud form the basis of psychoanalytic horror. According to Freud, the uncanny is a category of the horrifying that brings one to what is familiar with the old and long known (Freud 220). This contradiction, the commonplace made alien, is reflected in the consciousness that Natalie Waite has of her own. The house, the college, and even her imagination become a place of discomfort in that they represent what her conscious mind is unable to come to terms with. The hallucinations that Natalie experiences and especially the vague appearance of Tony, are the expressions of the suppressed desire and the feared, as Freud calls it, the return of the repressed (Freud 241). The uncanny

is then the means by which Jackson projects the inner disturbance, projecting a topography of horror.

The tripartite model developed by Freud on the psyche, which includes the id, ego, and superego, explains the internal struggle that Natalie is going through. Her father symbolizes the superego, the control of the intellect and morality, whereby Tony is the id or unregulated drives of emotion, sexuality, and creative liberation. The ego of Natalie, which fails to arbitrate between these extremes, is afraid of psychic pressure. According to Darryl Hattenhauer, Jackson is adapting the psychological model of Freud in her narrative. This means her fiction brings to life the meaning of being divided between social conscience and instinctual rebellion (Hattenhauer 66). What ensues is a genuinely Freudian horror, where the mind itself turns out to be the haunted house.

3.2 Archetypes of Jung: The Shadow and Individuation

In contrast to Freud, who concentrates on the aspects of repression and neurosis, the system developed by Carl Jung concentrates on the symbolic and mythic aspects of the psyche. The shadow described by Jung is what is termed as an unfavorable, hidden, and unacceptable partner of the personality, which must be incorporated so that the individual can experience wholeness (Jung 145). Tony, used as the doppelganger of Natalie, is the embodiment of this shadow self, this aspect of Natalie's consciousness that harbors a prohibited desire and innovative needs. In *Hangsaman*, the experiences that Natalie had with Tony follow the individuation process by Jung, which is the psychological process of the unification of the conscious and unconscious mind. But the failure of Natalie to embrace her shadow causes psychic disintegration, not enlightenment.

The dream-like quality of the novel and its repetitions, such as mirrors, doubles, and changing lives, represent the Jungian archetype of the anima (feminine soul) and self. It has been noted by Lisa Kroger that, despite the fact that the Jung model of the narrative is not used to heal but to terrify, the changes in the journey of the self portray the individuation as annihilation (Kroger 61). Jackson is defying the Jungian aim of psyche integration. Natalie going mad is not a development of a person spiritually; it was the loss of self under the pressure of repression and alienation.

3.3 Lacanian Psychoanalysis: The Mirror and Language

Jacques Lacan continues the explanations of Freud into the linguistic and structural world, in which he asserts that the individual is constituted by a misrecognition process in the mirror stage. At this, the subject recognizes itself in its reflection in a unity of the whole, which, in fact, is an illusion (Lacan 4). This state is reflected in Natalie and her perpetual attempts at defining herself, her fixation on the mirror, letters, and conversation with her mirror self, as well. The reflection is literally reflected in *Hangsaman*: each instance of the self breaks Natalie apart. The subjectivity of self comes out in her recognition of Tony, a beacon that falls apart due to her loss of consciousness.

The fact that the unconscious is structurally designed as a language (Lacan 147) enriches the evaluation of the narrative style of Jackson and his text. These fractured sentences, the ellipsis, and the flow between an internal monologue and an external narration are duplicates of the associative and non-linear nature of the unconscious mind. According to Gina Wisker, the prose of Jackson evokes the disintegration of the symbolic order, and even the language is haunted (Wisker 176). And therefore, in *Hangsaman*, the theme of horror is not merely thematic but linguistic; it is created in the disequilibrium of meaning and identity at the narrative form level.

3.4 Synthesis: Towards a Model of Psychoanalytic Horror

Coming together to create a Freudian, Jungian, and Lacanian paradigm, *Hangsaman* is a work of psychoanalytic horror, which is a mode in which fear is rooted in the self encountering its unconscious. Freud introduces the emotional system (repression), Jung unveils the symbolic one (the shadow), and Lacan unveils the structural system (language and misrecognition). They combined have the effect of enlightening us about the collapse of Natalie as an epistemological, ontological crisis: she is unable to differentiate the real and the imagined, the language and thoughts, the self and others. This way, the horror that Jackson presents is not psychological, but also existential. According to Elizabeth Cushman, the associations of the main characters in the works of Jackson are not ghosts but the reflection of the characters in a dark mirror of the soul (Cushman 112).

IV. HORROR PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTION IN *HANGSAMAN*

Hangsaman by Shirley Jackson creates no fright by way of specters or ordeal, but by the slow destruction of the afterworld of the protagonist. The structure, tone, and image of the novel evoke the action of the unconscious, one can call it psychoanalytic horror - the state in which fear is caused by instability of perception and failure of rational identity. The states of isolation, repression, and doubling would grant Natalie Waite a psychic space where terror would be a new name of self-recognition. This part of the paper will examine the ways that Jackson builds psychological horror using four key mechanisms: projection of repression, father-daughter relationship, social alienation, and the development of the double.

4.1 Repression and Projection: The Inner as the Source of Terror

Repression in *Hangsaman* is a kind of engine of the narrative and one of the psychological engines. Overall, Jackson manages to create the psychological mindset of Natalie using slight disjunctions of what is said, what is thought, and implied. What starts the novel is the aspect of family domination, whereby the father of Natalie interrogates her mind in the name of love. What the father says, in the very lengthy monologues, is dominated in an unnerving way: the father has to write, he must write as he does, very carefully, very precisely, with logic (Jackson 8). This obsession with rational order forms the onset of internal repression by Natalie. Her instincts of imagination and emotion are subordinated to the logic of patriarchy, which makes her psyche split into the instincts of conformity and desire.

The concept of the repressed, as proposed by Freud, explains why these repressed emotions come back as ghostly events. The less Natalie tries to bring her imagination into discipline, the more unconscious comes out in automatic fantasies and hallucinations. It is not the world she is afraid of, but her mind that is uncontrollable. According to Freud, the uncanny effect is met when infantile complexes, which have been repressed, have been triggered by something (*The Uncanny* 241). The complexes in Natalie are displayed in the form of constant images of drowning, mirrors, and voices that echo to find expression in her mind, symbols of the unconscious mind. The horror of acceptance by Natalie, and the reader, is that the maniac that creates horror is the

self, a head that can no longer differentiate between fantasy and reality.

4.2 Father-Daughter Dynamic and Tyranny of Language

The presence of the character of a father to Natalie overwhelms her consciousness and the texture of the narrative in the novel. According to Darryl Hattenhauer, Jackson takes the patriarchal discourse and puts it in the context of psychic enslavement of being; her females are not chased by the ghosts, but rather by the words of their father (67). Intellectualism and control of language by the father can be an example of what Jacques Lacan refers to as the Law of the Father, or the symbolic order that shapes identity by means of words and through repression. His reward to Natalie for the fact that words are not wasted is a form of psychological violence (Jackson 9). All the creative urges pass through this paternal power, and Natalie falls into a state of subservience in language.

Such a dynamic is part of what Elizabeth Cushman talks of as the ventriloquism of the feminine voice (Cushman 106). Natalie makes her father voice her so that it becomes unheard until it is lost here in the internal speech of Elizabeth Submarine, which Jackson has recreated stylistically using second, third, or vague pronouns and varying narrative point of view. The reader is frequently unable to tell whether the thought is that of Natalie or of the paternal voice that is in her. Such a linguistic confusion plays out the act of psychic colonization: the identity of Natalie is erased by the language of patriarchal authority. Thus, there is the horrification of recognizing that the consciousness of oneself has been invaded by the words of another person instead of the external force coerced upon him.

4.3 Isolation and Alienation in the Social World

As soon as Natalie joins college, the story projects her anxiety onto a larger social level. Campus, which is supposed to be a place of freedom, turns into an alienating location. The shallow conversation of her peers and the strict social stratifications of the institution make her even more estranged. This claustrophobic distance is evident in the first party that Natalie attends, described by Jackson: the air was filled with voices, laughter that circled around her without ever coming into direct contact with her (Jackson 74). The picture also communicates a

physical and psychological distance, accentuating the lack of a real human relationship.

According to the Freudian definition, such social alienation helps to strengthen the struggle between the desire of the ego to be coherent and the id to escape. The fantasies are compensatory behaviors of release; in withdrawing herself from social reality, Natalie extends her imagination to fill her emptiness. But this is a way of self-construction which is self-destruction. The fact that actual relationships are not able to fulfill her psychic needs contributes to the creation of imaginary companionship with Tony. The college contexts depicted by Jackson, as Bernice Murphy describes it, imitate that of the superego, which is an environment of surveillance and moral restraint (or primitiveness) within which rebellion is expressed through psychological dissociation (Murphy 87). The interiors of *Hangsaman*, the classroom, dorm, and faculty parties reflect the same patterns of repression that control Natalie since she is the subject of this repression. Her loneliness is, therefore, a cause and a symptom of her mental breakdown.

4.4 The Double: Tony, Projection of the Unconscious

The most blatantly psychoanalytic theme of the novel is the appearance of Tony, the unclear friend of Natalie and the potential alter ego of the character. Tony enters following a sequence of psychic crises, initially being a source of reassurance, then disrupting the whole situation. According to Freud and Otto Rank, the double (Doppelgänger) is a character of narcissism and self-division; it is an insurance against the death of the ego that would turn into the emblem of death subsequently (Freud 234). Such a dual role is executed by Tony in *Hangsaman*. First, she shields Natalie against the wilderness of loneliness; later on, she drives her into greater delusion. Their friendship has no borders of friendship, fantasy, or identity.

The work of the archetype of the shadow by Carl Jung gives more insight into what Tony does. The shadow represents those parts of the self that are repressed or denied, and these tend to manifest themselves in dreams or hallucinations. Tony, her confidence, and assertiveness are all things Natalie is not able to express consciously: sexuality, defiance, and creativity. In the scene of Natalie and Tony talking without words, the sleeping pre-linguistic unity to the illusion of wholeness before the fragmentation due to

language is induced by Lacan (12). But this is a dream that cannot endure. The fact that Tony eventually disappears from the complete breakdown of Natalie, which fits the description of what Jung refers to as the failure of integration, that is, the inability of the individual to integrate the shadow without being overwhelmed by it (Jung 148).

The terrors of *Hangsaman*, then, come to their peak as Natalie realizes that her friend was only a dream of hers. The self seeking a connection would only see the reflection of its own, and the fear that comes consequently is existential rather than supernatural. Jackson, as Jeanine Bassinger rightly writes, turns madness into the final Gothic location - the mind turns into the spooky house (Bassinger 108). The doubling device is not just a plot device, but the structural manifestation of psychoanalytic horror, the horror of meeting one of his unconscious personified.

4.5 The Collapse of Reality and the Unreliable Mind
This psychological horror is heightened by a narrative ambiguity at the end of this novel. The lines between fantasy and reality are unclear, and the reader does not know whether Natalie has overcome her seclusion or gone mad. The last scenes with their dreamlike imagery and out-of-place dialogue repeat what Lacan states that the real is that which cannot be symbolized under any conditions (Lacan 66). The way Natalie gets out of the college is open to interpretation, either way of liberation or full psychosis, but either way is vague, which is maintained by Jackson purposely.

The disillusionment of Natalie's psyche is reflected in the fragmentation of her narrative: the changes in tense, sense of dislocation, and internal monologues. The reader is horrified not by the scenes of violence but by being in the mind of a person where even reality is not clear anymore. This stylistic technique makes *Hangsaman* an experiment of literary form, which realizes the repressions, projections, and dissolutions. It is cognitive terror, denied by cognizantness of the fact that meaning as well as identity is created, and can fall out of touch.

V. THE FEMALE PSYCHE AND REPRESSION

The center of *Hangsaman* by Shirley Jackson is a thorough investigation of female subjectivity, the inner world of womanhood in the capital of the patriarchy, and conformity with the image of a

woman. The case of Natalie Waite disintegrating into a psychological state cannot be seen only as a personal neurosis, but as a more general state of women whose identity is contrived, oppressed, and torn by the impacts of cultures. Jackson reveals the psychic horror created by the patriarchal set-ups through the repression, alienation, and creative suffocation of Natalie. In this part, the theorist will utilize the feminist-psychoanalytic theoretical framework, relying on feminist theorists Julia Kristeva, Helene Cixous, and Luce Irigaray, to show how *Hangsaman* defines the female psyche as the battle between self-expression and silence.

5.1 Repression and Internalization of Patriarchal Voice

Natalie's mind is ruled by her father, someone who occupies both intellectual and emotional influence over the story. In the first pages of the novel, Jackson creates the atmosphere of the father as the dominating power in the psychic development of Natalie. His monologues and lectures, which appear to be a semblance of affection, are tinged with possessive nuances that render his daughter an object of conversation: the client who could not respond but rather a character with whom he needed to deal (Jackson 12). This kind of dynamics is what Luce Irigaray describes as the way female subjectivity is reproduced by language, wherein the speech of the father is devolved to be the reflecting-glass upon a woman's self, in which woman becomes obliged to study how to gaze upon herself (Irigaray 92).

Jackson makes this linguistic and dramatic. Natalie frequently switches between the thoughts she has and those of her father, confusing demarcations between interior and exterior speech. This becomes the effect of allowing patriarchal discourse to colonize Natalie, who is creating what Elizabeth Cushman refers to as the ventriloquized self, a consciousness that speaks a different language (Cushman 108). This method of narration is similar to the psychoanalytic state of introjection, where the external power is internalized and confused with identity. The outcome is a distinctly female horror, the horror of realizing that her voice, thoughts, and even desires are not hers.

5.2 The Body as Subject of Control and Resistance

Although the father of Natalie is the depiction of intellectual supremacy, physical conformity is imposed by the social setting. The college can be seen as a continuation of domestic space - an

institutionalized area where the female gender is conditioned to be submissive in the name of learning. The characterization of female pupils by Jackson focuses on their uniformity, that is, on walking in pairs, being clean, and appearances as measuring their spots (Jackson 71). It turns the body, in this case, into a means of control and control over a situation, as Simone de Beauvoir has stated that: woman is taught to make herself an object, to perceive herself as she is perceived by others (*The Second Sex* 288).

The slow loss of social interaction with other people is an indication of Natalie's revolt against this objectification. Her physical alienation, which is denying attending parties and meals or even engaging in talks, is a denial of patriarchal norms on a subconscious level. However, a resistance is at the same time alienating her and draws her deeper into insanity. Repression of the body and the emotional expression turn inside, causing anxiety and hallucination. This process is explained according to the theory of abjection created by Julia Kristeva: such a state, the self has to force out to survive and stay a self, but which comes back every time and tries to break its limits (Kristeva 3). The abjected self can be deciphered as the repressed feminine energy in Natalie that is denied to her because of her visions and breakdowns. The atrocity of *Hangsaman*, therefore, comes out of the dialectic between regulation and outburst, dominion and disorder.

5.3 Women, Creativity, and the Proscribed Imagination

One of the themes in *Hangsaman* is how Natalie attempts to balance her genius of imagination and the repressed values of feminine decorum. Her creativity as an intuitive being is in direct opposition to her father, who thrives on rationality and discipline. In the beginning of the novel, he praises her writing, claiming that it was too emotional, too unstructured, too feminine (Jackson 14), which best describes the historical oppression of the female voice. Due to the discourse of patriarchy, where women are required to write like men, think like men, and forget their bodies have a language, as Helene Cixous contends in *The Laugh of the Medusa*, women are expected to be like men (Cixous 881). The story of Jackson is also a subversion of such a tradition, with *Hangsaman* expressing in advance those attributes that male authority is attempting to repress, that is, emotion, ambiguity, and irrationality.

Natalie is symbolized by the imaginary person Tony, who prohibits imaginative power. Tony is very confident, witty, and independent, which intriguingly contrasts with the hesitancy of Natalie, coming out to indicate that Tony is the emblem of the liberated side of Natalie's imagination. In the instances where the two have silent dialogues, Jackson performs a scene of repression and expression, social conformity and artistic revolt. Both muse and double, Tony is both writing the body (Cixous writes the body) and expressing emotion and desire in a way not defined by the syntax of patriarchy. But due to the fact that such an expression cannot be spoken in the world of Natalie, it can only be in the form of a hallucination. The eventual disappearance of Tony announces the victory of repression over creativity, which is a metaphor of the cultural annihilation of women's voices.

5.4 Madness as Feminine Resistance

The deconstruction of Natalie as depicted by Jackson is in line with an extension of feminist re-evaluation of madness as a protest. In patriarchal society, women who do not adhere to the typical passive behavior are either pathologized as hysterical or insane. In her book, *The Female Malady*, Elaine Showalter has observed that 'Madness' has been used as a social penalty on female intelligence and independence (Showalter 4). Jackson does twist this paradigm by showing Natalie's madness as a symptom, as well as an analysis of this patriarchal oppression.

There is ambiguity in the climactic scenes of the psychological breakdown does Natalie is going through, and it is difficult to say where delusion and insight meet. The act reminds us of a symbolic initiatory journey when she goes into the forest with Tony, a descent into the unconscious where the social logic of disillusionment takes place. This scene can be interpreted as a reassertion of agency by madness, which Kristeva calls the sacred revolt of the subject on symbolic captivity (Kristeva 9). Forest, which is also a reiterated Gothic defiance of the absurd and the wild, is a place where Natalie, temporarily, shakes off the verbal and social limits that she is made of. Although such escape is dissolute, it is also a temporary detachment of patriarchal coherence.

This duality is supported with the help of the narrative technique Jackson uses. The disintegration of the syntax, changes of the point of view, and

phantasmagoric rhythm turn the very text into the manifestation of the unconscious. Natalie is mad, but this is not merely the madness that she has told about; it frames the narrative of this novel. According to Lisa Kroger, the prose of Jackson carries out feminine resistance; it loses its linearity, coherence, and the impression of control (Kroger 63). Madness thus becomes more than just a theme; it is also a style: a rebellion which is carried out by means of a word.

5.5 Psychoanalytic Horror of Female Silence

The nightmare in *Hangsaman*, however, is not in the madness of Natalie but the circumstances that surrounded it. The suppression of female voice and creativity creates a mental blank in which identity will have no weak grounds. The fact that Natalie remains silent at the end of the novel, her loss of words into unidentifiable space, is the illustration of what Kristeva refers to as the negative sublime the point at which the meaning fails under pressure of repression (Kristeva 12). This is, therefore, an existential horror in Jackson, the psychic death of the self when all outlets of expression have been shut.

Jackson uses Natalie to depict the female psyche as a place of victimization and resistance. Patriarchy and individuality fight to the extent of the mind. The horror of *Hangsaman* is the horror of inner contradiction, the awareness that being female in the world created by Jackson is only possible by self-destruction. Rather than simply a psychological phenomenon, repression revealed in the novel is also a cultural design, a design that turns the creative woman into her own ghost.

VI. THE UNCANNY, THE DOUBLING, AND NARRATIVE AMBIGUITY

Throughout *Hangsaman*, Shirley Jackson masterfully creates a style of psychological horror that is not based on an external monstrosity but rather is the disturbing familiarity of self. Her story turns even the most common practices, crashes among understanding the family and social gatherings, and personal contemplations, into strange and unordinary ones, the mix between perception and delusion. The mood of dread is dominant throughout the novel due to the meticulous employment of the uncanny (das Unheimliche) and the double, which serve as psychological engines of horror. This part, basing on the discussion of the seminal Freudian essay *The Uncanny*, and the theory of the double by Otto Rank,

examines how Jackson builds up terror with the use of doubling, narrative ambiguity, and decentering of boundaries between the real and the imagined.

6.1 The Uncanny and the Familiar Made Strange

According to Freud, the uncanny refers to a type of frightening that takes one back to old and familiar (*The Uncanny* 220). Jackson in *Hangsaman* uses this paradox, the familiar made strange, as a means of creating psychological uneasiness. Her home, like the one Natalie is living in, is externally secure, intellectual; however, under its exterior floor lies emotional control and suppression. The research of her father, which she refers to as a room of straight shelves and silence (Jackson 5), actually turns out to be an icon of the uncanny: it represents rationality and, at the same time, hides psychological violence. According to Freud, the uncanny is in case uncovered when the repressed infantile complexes have re-emerged as a result of some kind of impression (241). The intellectual power of the father reminds one of the primal dependence and power relationship, only with a twist, to shock the mature conscience of Natalie.

In the same way, Jackson changes ordinary social relations into a place of discomfort. The atmosphere of the college, which is supposed to be a place of enlightenment, turns into the location of alienation and control. Hallways, dorms, and classrooms are characterized as sterile, echoed, and depersonalized. Jackson turns the educational space into a space of haunting to become one of the critics; her architecture reflects an unconscious world, full of repetitions and dead ends (Kroger 60). The impact is more Freudian: the well-known college atmosphere turns 'unheimlich' as the expression of the psychic repressions of fear of conformity to and identification with.

6.2 Tony as the Twin and Projection of the Unconscious

The uncanny aspect of the novel revolves around the character of Tony, whose weird living defines her life and makes the reader keep on doubting reality. Added when Natalie grows more and more psychologically isolated, Tony initially seems to be a reassuring companion, someone who could read her thoughts prior to uttering them aloud (Jackson 119). This instant intimacy speaks to the fact that she was a projection of Natalie's unconscious and not an entity. Based on the work of Rank, Freud sees the double

(Doppelgänger) as a safeguard against the annihilation of the ego, subsequently assumed to be the uncanny herald of demise (Freud 234). Both of these functions are the attributes of Tony. She also shields Natalie against loneliness and is a psychic companion, yet at the same time, she predicts her disintegration.

According to the psychoanalytic approach, Tony is the image of the repressed part of Natalie, the shadow of the personality that harbors her taboo feelings: anger, creativity, and sexual independence. The archetypal meaning of the doubling is that it is the shadow archetype or unconscious part of the personal personality that is not tolerated by the consciousness (Jung 145). Natalie could not fit her identity as a conscious woman whose views of her surroundings are shaped by patriarchal and social expectations, and whose traits do not correspond to the confident and assertive personality of Tony. At the point when Tony is lost at the end of the novel, the fragile nature of Natalie and her self-perception shatters, implying that the psyche will not be able to persist when the shadow has been expelled or denied. The dread in this case is very internal: the non-existence of Tony is the psychic demise of the integration.

As Lisa Kroger rightly points out, the dual presence of self and other facets of Tony is what makes *Hangsaman* the most obvious realization of the Freudian uncanny in the writings of Jackson (Kroger 61). The fact that the reader does not know how real Tony is also reflects the state of cognitive disorientation on the part of Natalie. Jackson also never gives any authorial direction since she never states whether Tony is fictional, supernatural, or real. This ambiguity of the story turns the novel into a performance of the uncanny: the text itself is identified as a place in which the meaning never rests on a single side of the opposites.

6.3 Confusion and the Thwarted Story

A major and one of the most advanced tricks Jackson employs to create psychological horror is her playing with the reliability of the narrative. The third-person narration of the novel often breaks down to form the interior voice of Natalie, and it is not easy to distinguish between the subjective and objective descriptions. This leads the reader to the same instability that characterizes the consciousness of Natalie. This style of ambiguity is in accordance with Freud, who claims that the uncanny frequently exists

when the sense of boundary is wiped out between fantasy and reality (244).

As an illustration, the narration imperceptibly shifts towards being seen externally and being anxious about internality once Natalie arrives at the college party, during which she feels her first sense of social alienation: the laughter was as though being seen by an external observer, but she was standing behind the glass watching herself smile (Jackson 78). Watching herself is a phrase that condenses the main theme of the novel, which is a split of the self against itself. The syntax of Jackson is reminiscent of the dissociation: the doubling effect of the linguistic act through repetition of perception is brought out through language. The reader is left between the real and the imaginary when he or she is involved in the confusion of Natalie.

This uncertainty of the narrative is maintained until the end of the novel, where no closure is presented. The last thing that Natalie does at the end of the story, when she enters the forest upon the disappearance of Tony is either her retreat into insanity or a transcendental act. The fact that these readings are ambiguous is the key to the horror of Jackson. When Gina Wisker comments, it is because Jackson has not resolved the boundaries of delusion and insight that places the reader in the examiner role to face an unconscious that can never be mastered (Wisker 178). The horror of the novel is the interpretation, then, the realization that nothing can be understood, meaning will always be postponed.

6.4 The Aesthetic of Uncertainty

Jackson is of artist because she transformed ambiguity into aesthetics. All the characteristics of *Hangsaman* in its pathos of recognition and alienation, in tone and imagery, reflect the conflict between familiarity and strangeness. Ordinary turns spectral, self-alienated, meaning lost in a state of uncertainty. This aesthetic of the indefinite goes with the psychoanalytic uncanny experience of the uncanny in which horror is the realization of the self as not unique or stable but plural and fluctuating.

In this regard, the novel by Jackson attempts to perform what is called by Elizabeth Cushman as the epistemology of fear, the experience that to know oneself is to discover his or her own abyss (Cushman 114). *Hangsaman* gives no resolution to this confrontation. Rather, it leaves the reader in a state of

ambiguity as a way of being. The fact that the text does not make a distinction between madness and revelation, fantasy and truth, leaves the process of reading a text into a psychological experience. Similar to Natalie, the reader is confronted with the horror of reflection - the realization that the mind is the worst producer of the most frightening ghosts.

VII. CONCLUSION

Hangsaman, the novel by Shirley Jackson, is not just a novel of insanity, but a deeply psychological and cultural document that has turned the Gothic tradition itself into an analysis of consciousness. By exposing Natalie Waite to alienation and falling into disintegration, Jackson reacts with horror as an experience within, which is created in the concept of repression, inner division, and the instability of identity. The strength of the novel is that it combines both psychoanalysis and aesthetics to create what can be described as psychoanalytic horror, a type of terror that results when the divide between reality and imagination, the self and others, is destroyed.

In this discussion, it has been clear that the horror presented by Jackson is more a psychological horror with no supernatural causes. As the representative of the patriarchal authority, Natalie has her father initiate her repression process that controls her psyche. His intellectual harassment is the face of the superego dominating over the self-making Natalie ingrain her outside authority into the inside compulsion. This dynamic can be explained by the Freudian concept of repression and going back to the repressed: the more Natalie suppresses her creative and emotional instincts, the more they resurrect in their bizarre, uncanny manifestations, hallucinations, dreams, and character of Tony (*The Uncanny* 241). The uncanny in *Hangsaman* is then not a thematic ornament or decoration, but a principle of structure. Her narrative is created by Jackson based on the very repression process and recovery, so that all the known scenes, the family house and the classroom, and the forest etc., became alienated and resembled the actions of the unconscious.

Simultaneously, the novel enacts the individuation failure in the sense of the Jungian one. The meeting of Natalie with Tony is a clash between the ego and the shadow, the darker side of the feminine, in which the Patriarchal system requires her to repress. According to Jung, the shadow has to be accepted and

assimilated to achieve psychic completeness (Jung 146). Natalie, though, is unable to balance her divided personalities, including the dutiful daughter versus the fantasizing woman, the reasonable student versus the dreamer. Her descent is not into kindness but a tragic nature of refusal to integrate, conformed by the cultural constructs that do not confirm her stronger realization of blending the intellectual and the instinct. In this way, Jung characterizes the roles played by Jackson, which are a Gothic descent through which individuation turns to be annihilation instead of enlightenment.

The theory of the mirror stage by Lacan also sheds more light on the issue of Natalie struggling to find her identity. This reciprocity between her and Tony functions as both a literal and figurative reflection: she is in need of confirmation in the image that mirrors her, but this very mirror throws her togetherness off course. According to Lacan, the subject in the mirror recognizes itself, and it is at the same time a misrecognition that is an illusion of wholeness, concealment of underlying division (Lacan 5). The ultimate destruction of her identity is caused by Natalie trying to maintain this illusion. The mirror, which is a motif in the novel, is turned into a place of horror: a surface that not only does not reflect but also multiple, the uncontainable, splintered self. Jackson, therefore, parallels her story to that of the Lacanian psychoanalysis, shifting the process of self-perception into the very feeling of terror.

Hangsaman is a highly feminist work, outside the psychoanalytic theory. Repression that kills Natalie cannot be separated from the patriarchal culture that characterizes her and constrains her. Control of her father, social codes of college, and silence on the topic of female creativity are only some factors that add to the picture of the female psyche being under siege in the novel. According to Elizabeth Cushman, the horror created by Jackson is not against sanity, but it is against silence, the silence that the culture imposes on the consciousness of women, which accuses their speech as madness to women (Cushman 112). The breakdown of Natalie is then not the failure of the soul only, but the protest of existence. Her insanity is an extreme means of expression, a language of rebellion which the sensible world does not acknowledge. Jackson perverts women's repression to aesthetic subversion, converting mental torment to literature.

Hangsaman performs that instability itself, stylistically. The disorientation of the unconscious is also reproduced by the broken syntax of Jackson, the interior monologues, and his unfinished end. The novel does not provide closure: Tony's life is unclear, and her future is unclear. Such indeterminacy of the narration is similar to the features of the psyche as such, fluid, contradictory, and unknowable. Gina Wisker explains that the text by Jackson is suspended between revelation and delusion as the reader is in a similar situation, trying to draw the line between understanding and fear (Wisker 179). The horror is not what happens to Natalie, but what the story requires of the reader: the readiness to embrace ambiguity, the readiness to live in the confines of uncertainty as a fact of life.

To sum up, *Hangsaman* is a perfect demonstration of the psychoanalytic Gothic that Shirley Jackson masterfully creates in her works in order to integrate ancient Gothic themes into the contemporary psyche. Combining Freudian repressions, Jungian shadow processes, with the failure of recognition in Lacan, Jackson builds a literary structure of horrors on the fracture of the psyche itself. The novel defines that the hauntings that are the most frightening are not those that are supernatural in nature, but those that are personal- the echoes of what the conscious mind wishes to reject. The tragedy of Natalie Waite is that she does not go insane, but that her insanity unveils too much: the barrenness of rational self, the cruelty of social adherence, and the inability of the self to be a fixed quantity. Horror turns into revelation in the case of *Hangsaman*, and the tormented head is the last inhabitable house.

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