

Patrycja Antoszek

Shirley Jackson's Affective Gothicism: The Discourse of Melancholia in *The Bird's Nest*

Abstract: The article discusses the discourse of melancholia in Shirley Jackson's most critically neglected novel *The Bird's Nest* (1954). I argue that Jackson's narrative not only illustrates a melancholic subject's pathological attachment to the past, but is itself melancholic in its mourning for the loss of female inherent multiplicity. While the novel may be seen to anticipate in many ways Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, it may be read as a commentary on the 1950's cultural politics and the problem of the medical pathologization of women whose complex subjectivity rendered them psychologically unstable. Through its critique of scientific methods of treating female melancholy and through an implicit defense of "madness," the novel combines the psychological and the social to make an important political statement.

Keywords: Shirley Jackson; Affect; the Gothic; Imaginary; Melancholia; Psychoanalysis.

PATRYCJA ANTOSZEK

The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin,
Poland
patbar@kul.pl

DOI: 10.24193/cechinox.2018.35.04

The fiction of Shirley Jackson, rediscovered by literary scholars and critics in recent decades, was rather neglected by the academic circles during her lifetime. While her short stories appeared regularly in *The New Yorker* (including the eponymous and now canonical "The Lottery"), she was also known and admired by the readers of mass women's magazines, such as *Good Housekeeping* or *Ladies' Home Journal*, where she regularly published domestic sketches recounting everyday struggles of a typical middle-class mother in postwar America. Her serious work, including *The Road Through the Wall*, *Hangsaman*, *The Bird's Nest* or *The Sundial*, combined disturbingly Gothic protagonists and claustrophobic settings with psychological terror, and even elements of the supernatural in her most successful novel *The Haunting of Hill House*. As T. S. Joshi observes, "[c]ritics rarely knew what to make of her unclassifiable work, with the result that she was largely ignored both by the mainstream community and by the cadre of Gothic devotees."¹ Indeed, during the postwar era, America's most notable literary critics, such as Harry Levin and Leslie Fiedler,

“plac[ed] the Gothic at the center of the (newly invented) American canon as both a national countertradition and the main artery of the classics” and believed it was only in the Gothic genre that “American fiction produced tragic figures of Faustian dimension.”² Jackson’s writing, though undoubtedly permeated with Gothic affect and paraphernalia, clearly eluded the strict traditional categories of the convention, and her novels, distinct as they are, were classified by reviewers and critics as realistic (*The Road Through the Wall*), psychological (*Hangsaman*, *The Bird’s Nest*), satirical (*The Sundial*), supernatural (*The Haunting of Hill House*) or fantastic/demonic (*We Have Always Lived in the Castle*).³ In *Shirley Jackson’s American Gothic* Darryl Hattenhauer contends that the author’s themes “are often found in some modernists and even naturalists, especially her historicist rendering of gender and class,”⁴ and considers Jackson one of the forerunners of postmodernism. Yet, what is characteristic of nearly all of her fiction, and what makes it so remarkable and Gothically disturbing is her unwavering interest in and exploration of themes of “alienation and withdrawal, fear, phobia, disassociation and paranoia, in ways that often leave the reader uncertain as to whether things are real or imagined.”⁵ As opposed to the mainstream male Gothic tradition, Jackson focuses on the unsaid and unseen of her culture to reveal the uncanny underside of the white, middle-class, female experience in America of the 1950s. Rather than celebrating Faustian figures, she populates her fiction with troubled, perplexed, and often emotionally unstable women, whose complex subjectivities and anxieties about the boundaries of the self serve to

articulate the psychological reality of the era. In her explorations of her heroines’ conflicted psyches Jackson often seems to portray what Betty Friedan has called a “schizophrenic split” of many women torn between the reality of their lives and the image to which they were trying to conform, while her use of the Gothic serves to address unspeakable fears and repressed desires.

My aim in this article will be to demonstrate that Shirley Jackson’s work, unclassifiable and elusive as it might be, not only encompasses the essential features of the Female Gothic tradition but also offers the most nuanced and penetrating analysis of the author’s immediate cultural context and emotional atmosphere. Just as the original Gothic was used as a mode for articulating contemporary fears and uncertainties in terrifying but defamiliarized forms, Jackson’s fiction employs mental instability, fragmented selves and confining domesticity to channel concerns about the plight of women in the middle of the twentieth century in the United States. In many ways, then, Jackson’s work anticipates Betty Friedan’s groundbreaking study *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and illustrates with masterly precision and sharp intelligence what Friedan has famously called “the problem that has no name.”⁶ As Rebecca Munford is right to observe, the feminine mystique is a peculiarly Gothic phenomenon, which, as Friedan puts it, “has succeeded in burying millions of American women alive.”⁷ What is more, in the 1950s’ perpetual celebration of motherhood and the many traditional roles assigned to women, Jackson probes the unspeakable – the dark, repressed undercurrents of female subjectivity, where motherhood is inherently related to feelings

of guilt and reproach and her vision of white middle-class womanhood is ambivalent at best. Finally, Jackson's depiction of female insanity seems to confirm Phyllis Chesler's observation that women confined to American mental institutions should often be seen as rebellious individuals whose "madness" is a penalty for "being 'female' as well as for desiring or daring *not* to be."⁸

Though images of mentally or emotionally unstable women loom large in Jackson's writing, I want to focus on one particular example of a troubled female and her problematic subjectivity as presented in Jackson's probably the most critically neglected novel *The Bird's Nest*. Though the narrative contains such typically Gothic elements as the dark and oppressive building, the distressed heroine, and the powerful male antagonist, *The Bird's Nest* has been almost unanimously called by critics "a psychological horror novel." The book's protagonist is the twenty-three-year-old Elizabeth Richmond, who suffers from a multiple personality disorder, and when the novel appeared in 1954, it was, like *Hangsaman*, part of a larger market for literature and films about mental illness inspired by the postwar interest in psychology and psychiatry. As Jason W. Stevens observes, Jackson's novel also featured one of the major motifs of the 1950s: "the madwoman whose presence not only showed a genuine fascination with the bewildering inner world of the ill but also stressed the imperative for medical intervention in women's lives."⁹ Indeed, for the major part of the narrative the protagonist is undergoing a psychiatric treatment at the hands of an aging psychotherapist aptly named Dr. Wright. As the perspective shifts in the subsequent sections of the novel from

Elizabeth (and her selves) to the doctor to Elizabeth's Aunt Morgen, the reader becomes witness to the process of gradual molding of the protagonist into a "self" as a product of the doctor's paternalistic manipulation and conformist expectations of the aunt.

Though the character's split personality problem certainly takes central stage in the novel, Jackson's preoccupation with the conflicted female psyche goes far beyond the era's growing fascination with psychotherapy and mental disorders. From the initial pages of the novel, Elizabeth Richmond appears as someone who, like the Kristevan melancholic, "[has lost] all interest in words, actions, and even life itself."¹⁰ She holds a dull job at a town museum answering letters offering new items to the museum's collections, and since the death of her mother four years earlier she "had spoken intimately to no person."¹¹ Her dependency and a tenuous sense of identity are rendered through a series of negations that stress her radical disattachment from the world: "[s]he had no friends, no parents, no associates, and no plans beyond that of enduring the necessary interval before her departure with as little pain as possible."¹² What is more, withdrawal from life and lack of agency are accompanied by suicidal thoughts: looking down into a long shaft she feels "an almost irresistible temptation to hurl herself downward into the primeval sands upon which the museum presumably stood."¹³ Introverted, "blank and unrecognizing," and repeating mechanically the same simple activities every day, Elizabeth confirms Kristeva's idea of a melancholic subject as "a living death."¹⁴

In his seminal paper "Mourning and Melancholia," published in 1917, Freud

argued that both mourning and melancholia are directly linked to the experience of loss, which could refer to “the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one’s country, liberty, an ideal, and so on.”¹⁵ He also made a basic distinction between mourning as an experience of grief and a long and painful process of disattaching oneself from the lost object, and melancholia, which he perceived as a pathological inability to complete the process of mourning. In other words, in mourning the subject may withdraw from the world, which has suddenly become poor after the loss of a beloved object but “when the work of mourning is completed the ego becomes free and uninhibited again.”¹⁶ In contrast to this “normal,” if psychologically deeply distressing reaction to loss, melancholia may be seen as “the mysterious and ‘pathological’ double of mourning.”¹⁷ As Freud observes, in the state of melancholia the ego, unable to accept the loss, identifies with the lost object, which becomes incorporated into the ego bringing suffering to the subject. As a consequence, “an object-loss [is] transformed into an ego-loss and the conflict between the ego and the loved person into a cleavage between the critical activity of the ego and the ego as altered by identification.”¹⁸ The process of melancholia, then, involves a complex relationship between loss, the denial of loss and its incorporation into the ego.

In their rereading of Freud in “Mourning or Melancholia: Introjection versus Incorporation” Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok propose that the lost object is “introjected” when it is acknowledged as loss and the process of mourning is complete. In the case of melancholia, the

refusal to part with the lost object leads to a fantasy of “incorporation” of the loss into the ego, which is meant to protect the object and help the mourner deal with the loss.¹⁹ Thus, Abraham and Torok, like Freud, explain melancholia as involving “the transferring of the object from the external to the internal world”²⁰ and perceive the effects of such incorporation in spatial terms. The “gap within the psyche” they refer to clearly alludes to the image of a mental “hole,” which Freud identifies in one of his earliest writings,²¹ and which he replaces later with the metaphor of “an open wound.”²² For Abraham and Torok, a refusal to acknowledge loss leads to the creation of a psychic crypt, which preserves and shelters the lost object.

A similar spatial imagination, including crypts, vaults and black holes inside the mind can be found in Julia Kristeva’s *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (1989). Drawing on Freud’s as well as Abraham and Torok’s evocative imagery, Kristeva talks about “an abyss of sorrow” and “the *crypt* of the inexpressible affect” in which the lost object is “walled up” and buried alive.²³ In her analysis of a melancholic patient, she also demonstrates that a denial of loss and fantasy of incorporation may provoke bodily reactions, including the feeling of nausea and vomiting. While the patient may remain unaware of the fact that she had buried the lost object inside the ego, her “body as tomb” produces signs of an Other “locked up” within.²⁴ At the psychoanalytical level, then, the loss experienced in melancholia is always of “the archaic attachment to the maternal body that has become Other – a Thing that simultaneously supports and threatens.”²⁵ In this sense, the primal Thing should be understood as the

Kristevan Semiotic, which she identifies with “those ‘representations of affects’ – informed by the primary processes of unconscious displacement and condensation – which *precede* all verbal representations.”²⁶ In Kristeva’s theory, the Semiotic – the realm of unrepresentable affects of the maternal body – is opposed to the Symbolic order of signification based on the Law of the Father. Entering the Symbolic compensates for the primal loss with a system of signs, which become substitutes for the lost Thing. In order to become a speaking subject, it is necessary to separate oneself from the Thing through identification with an imaginary father. In the absence of the father figure, one becomes forever entangled in the relationship with the archaic (m)Other and trapped in “the semiotic *chora* that makes up the melancholic imaginary.”²⁷ Thus, unable to develop an identity separate from the mother and enter the domain of signification, the melancholic subject finds herself psychologically stuck.

In *The Bird's Nest* the protagonist’s condition is rendered spatially through the metaphor of the museum as a building whose “foundations had begun to sag.”²⁸ Jackson consciously employs the familiar Gothic metaphor of the house or building as mind to suggest the character’s own psychic disintegration: “[i]t is not proven that Elizabeth’s personal equilibrium was set off balance by the slant of the office floor, nor could it be proven that it was Elizabeth who pushed the building off its foundations, but it is undeniable that they began to slip at about the same time.”²⁹ What is more, the museum, which like a Gothic castle preserves “unperishing remnants of the past,” is, like the heroine’s mind, a melancholy space, burdened by

“the extraordinary weight of some of the antiquities contained therein”³⁰ which refuse to be forgotten. The spatial correlative of loss, which Freud refers to as a “hole” or “open wound,” and which creates a psychic void inside the subject, appears in the text as a literal hole that runs from the roof to the cellar of the building and right through Elizabeth’s office. On the one hand, as a metaphor for the inner void, it can be seen as a negative space, which refers to the state of emptiness or deprivation experienced by a melancholic person. On the other, the “black hole” inside the subject is a form of preserving the Thing, or the real, while simultaneously denying its conscious representation.³¹

The mechanism of melancholia understood as an inability to mourn, that is, to articulate the grief after the loss of a love object, is presented in the novel with another spatial image. While treating his patient with a use of hypnosis, Dr. Wright, who would dread to be called a psychoanalyst, assumes a decidedly Freudian perspective and approaches his female patient as an object rather than subject. He sees Elizabeth as confined “in an iron cage of uncommunicativeness and fear,” and elaborates on her condition by employing a somewhat peculiar metaphor:

I may liken this state and its cure to (if my reader will forgive such an ignoble comparison) a *stoppage* in a water main; Miss R. had somehow contrived to *stop up the main sewer of her mind* (gracious heaven, how I have caught myself in my own analogy!) *with some incident or traumatic occurrence which was, to her mind, indigestible, and could not be assimilated* or passed through

the pipe. This stoppage had prevented all but the merest trickle of Miss R.'s actual personality from getting through, and given us *the stagnant creature* we had known.³²

As the metaphor implies, the woman's loss of self must be a result of past trauma(s), which has not been "digested," or worked through properly, but stored inside the mind like an unnecessary burden. Ironically, although the doctor feels somewhat embarrassed by his awkward phrasing and fears it may bring him "wickedly close to your psychoanalytic fellows, those plumbers to whom all minds are cesspools and all hearts black,"³³ the figure of speech he uses provides an apt visual representation of the working of the Freudian melancholic ego. Indeed, as Freud implies, mourning and melancholia display the same affect, but "in melancholia, mourning had been for some reason prolonged or blocked."³⁴ In other words, the "blockage" occurs when instead of decathecting the energies from the lost object in the process of mourning, the melancholic subject refuses to part with it and incorporates the loss into the ego. As a consequence of such an incorporation of her own loss(es) into her psychic crypt, Elizabeth becomes like a dead woman; she is emotionally stuck within "the enclosure of an exitless personal vault."³⁵ With her cathectic energies still tied to the loss locked inside her ego, the woman becomes a prisoner of the inexpressible affect.³⁶

Indeed, Elizabeth displays a whole array of melancholic symptoms: apart from inhibition and lack of interest in the world around her, she suffers from persistent headaches, backaches and insomnia, which are disturbing enough to make

her otherwise inattentive aunt take her to a doctor. In his own record of Miss Richmond's symptoms, Dr. Wright mentions also "periods of forgetfulness, panic, fears" and *aboulia*, which he explains in a footnote as: "a state which I can describe for a layman who reads and runs as an inhibition of will, preventing a desired action; Miss R. showed this largely in speech, almost as though she were prevented from uttering a syllable."³⁷ In Kristeva's description of melancholic patients, "the spectacular collapse of meaning" they experience has its reflection in the "dead language" they speak, revealing the abyss which separates language from affective experience.³⁸ The inability to accept loss may also be manifested in "the withdrawal of desire from objects and signs into the autistic, autoerotic non-space of psychic fragmentation."³⁹ According to Freud, one consequence of the incorporation of loss is the splitting of the self, in which part of the ego identifies with the lost object buried inside. The internal splitting of the melancholic also reveals the ambivalence towards the lost object, which is both loved and hated (for abandoning the subject and leaving one in pain). Consequently, Kristeva draws on Melanie Klein's concept of "parcellary splitting" to suggest that a melancholic self can "literally [fall] into pieces" and explains that such parceling may be perceived as a defense mechanism of the mind to avoid traumatic experiences.⁴⁰

In Jackson's novel, Elizabeth's personality disintegrates into four separate identities, which reveal themselves one by one in Dr. Wright's hypnotic sessions. In the description of his treatment of Miss Richmond, the doctor openly refers to a medical authority on the problem of

disintegrated self – he quotes from Morton Prince's *The Dissociation of a Personality* (1906), the psychological study Jackson herself consulted when writing her novel.⁴¹ Dr. Wright not only uses the same method as Prince in his groundbreaking text, but also the case of Elizabeth Richmond bears a strong resemblance to that of Sally Beauchamp described by Prince. Both women lose their mothers when adolescents, begin their treatment at the age of twenty-three, display similar symptoms, including *aboulia*, and disintegrate into four separate and strikingly different personalities. More importantly, however, both Elizabeth and Sally have had strenuous and psychologically draining relationships with their mothers and experienced “continuous nervous strain and depressing emotional influences” during their childhoods.⁴² While Prince's patient was frequently ignored and reprimanded by the mother, Jackson's Elizabeth feels emotionally abandoned and ruthlessly manipulated by both her mother and her lover Robin. With the premature loss of the father at the age of two, Elizabeth also “loses” the mother who starts drinking and gets involved in a series of love affairs. The protagonist's traumatic childhood memories return when one of her personalities – the unruly Betsy – takes her back to New York and back in time (she is sixteen years old again, the age she was when her mother died) to search for the mother, who was never there for her. The unbearable emotional stress she had to endure as a little girl reveals itself already in the opening lines of Betsy's confused narrative:

Everything was going to be very very very good, so long as she remembered

carefully about putting on both shoes every time, and not running into the street, and never telling them, of course, about where she was going; she recalled the ability to whistle, and thought, I must never be afraid.⁴³

Betsy's trip to New York brings back a whole mixture of conflicting emotions about the mother and her pathological inability to grieve her death may be attributed to the traumatic emotional deprivations and lack of love that the girl experiences throughout her childhood. What is more, Elizabeth was not shown how to mourn when, after her father's death, her mother loses herself in excessive and destructive behavior. Unlike her mother, Elizabeth reacts to the loss by taking refuge in regressive withdrawal of all life energy into the melancholic space of psychic fragmentation. Therefore, the affect of melancholia, which seems to be transmitted to Elizabeth from her widowed but emotionally frozen mother, is present in Elizabeth's life since early childhood.⁴⁴ In an attempt to protect herself from the overwhelming grief after losing the archaic maternal bond, and “not knowing how to lose,” Elizabeth retreats into “an abyss of sorrow” which simultaneously protects and isolates her from the outside world.⁴⁵

As a consequence of her refusal to part with her primal object of attachment and love, Elizabeth preserves the archaic/ideal mother inside her psychic crypt. She loves the mother but also hates her for abandoning and hurting her, and the aggressiveness between her different selves is the aggressiveness towards the object she has lost incorporated into her psychic crypt. Looking so desperately for her New

York mother, she is looking for the symbiotic maternal unity when they “danced together, and sang.”⁴⁶ Betsy’s melancholic identification with the mother is most blatantly expressed in the chant she repeats to herself: “My name is Betsy Richmond, and I was born in New York. My mother loves me more than anything. My mother’s name is Elizabeth Richmond, and my name is Betsy and my mother always called me Betsy and I was named after my mother.”⁴⁷ The necessity to say these words over and over again testifies to the girl’s fluid sense of her own identity as she feels it is “urgently important to be some person, to have always been some person.”⁴⁸ Having the same name as her mother and feeling unsure about her own boundaries as a subject, she repeatedly confuses her identity with that of the mother she refuses to lose: “If I had a husband then my mother could marry him and we could all hide together and be happy. My name is Betsy Richmond. My mother’s name is Elizabeth Richmond, Elizabeth Jones before I was married. Call me Lisbeth like you do my mother, because Betsy is my darling Robin . . .”⁴⁹ By imagining herself forever bound with the archaic maternal body, Jackson’s protagonist rejects also the possibility of this ideal yet destructive unity ever being threatened by a man.

In *The Bird’s Nest*, the problem of melancholic identification with loss is made central by the fact that out of the four personalities, which coexist as Elizabeth’s selves, Betsy’s is the only one that is given a separate section in the novel. Like in a classic Female Gothic narrative, the confused daughter’s dramatic search for the lost pre-oedipal unity with the mother during her trip to New York is experienced as a re-immersion into the maternal

sphere of the Semiotic, where “somewhere in the center was the solitary figure which was her mother, and radiating out from that figure in all directions were signals and clues which she might find and which would lead her surely to the center of the maze.”⁵⁰

The return to the pre-oedipal space of the city is also, unavoidably, a regression to the Lacanian Imaginary, an archaic, pre-Symbolic realm where there is no distinction between self and other.⁵¹ The Imaginary is a world of illusion, where the psychic fragmentation of the subject is reflected in the image of the fragmented body, the Lacanian *corps morcelé*. After the mirror stage, “which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality,”⁵² the “body in bits and pieces” is repressed into the unconscious and the child enters the Symbolic domain of language and representation. The memory of the pre-oedipal fragmentation, however, forever threatens the subject and can manifest itself in images of mutilation, dismemberment, or bursting open of the body. Thus, following Lacan, Kristeva argues that a speaking subject is “a ‘split subject’: a radical heteronomy belonging to both the semiotic *chora* and the symbolic order of signification.”⁵³ In her essay “On the Melancholic Imaginary”, she argues that the realm of the Imaginary always, almost by definition, appears as a response to the affect of loss. As Kearney has put it,

While the imaginary expresses itself through discourse, it derives from a semiotic order of ‘affects’ which ‘cannot

be understood on the basis of a linguistic model deploying verbal signs as signifiers and signifieds.' The experience of melancholy holds the key to this semiotics of the Imaginary. . . The passion to unite with the other itself presupposes the melancholic experience of separation from the other. The imaginary originates in despair – the affect of utter loss. All imagination for Kristeva is, in the first and last instance, an expression of melancholy.⁵⁴

In this sense, the melancholic imaginary as understood by Kristeva "epitomizes the subject's 'affective' experience of inner contradiction and loss."⁵⁵

Symbolically, Betsy's solitary trip to New York becomes a mental journey back to the archaic maternal sphere, which is manifested in her physical return to the place of her earliest childhood memories and away from the Symbolic represented so ostensibly by Dr. Wright and his psychoanalytic methods. With no intention to ever come back, she surrenders to the pull of the unmourned maternal object and believes that "all that time, long years ago, her mother had been leaving clues for Betsy to find her someday, building against a future when she and Betsy might be free together."⁵⁶ The reunion with the mother is imagined as a downward movement indicative of a descent into an underground psychic crypt, where the mother is singing: "and my Betsy went down the stairs and down the stairs and *down* the stairs, and I sat at the bottom and waited and waited and *waited* . . ."⁵⁷ Like any melancholy person, she manifests a peculiar memory: trying to preserve the lost object she holds on to the "overinflated, hyperbolic past,"⁵⁸

which blocks any possibility of the future. "A dweller in truncated time," Kristeva explains, "the depressed person is necessarily a dweller in the imaginary realm."⁵⁹ The maze-like, uncannily familiar space of New York appears as a psychic territory of Betsy's own haunted memory, in which the mother is still disturbingly alive but forever beyond her reach as the integrity with the maternal Thing has always been an illusion. While the girl initially strives to protect her coherence as a speaking subject by repeating her name to herself, she soon confuses her name and identity with that of her mother, thus re-immersing herself into the pre-oedipal (imaginary) symbiosis with the Other. In what may look like a direct allusion to the Lacanian mirror stage, Betsy's psychic disintegration is paralleled by the image of the fragmented body she sees in the mirror: "Where in the tightness of the skin over her arms and her legs, in the narrow bones of her back and the planned structure of her ribs, in the tiny toes and fingers and the vital plan of her neck and head . . . where in all this was there room for anyone else?"⁶⁰ Finally, as she stands naked in front of her hotel room mirror, she seems to disassemble her illusory wholeness back into the Lacanian *corps morcelé*:

For a moment, staring, Betsy wanted frantically to rip herself apart, and give half to Lizzie and never be troubled again . . . Lizzie could have the useless parts, the breasts and the thighs and the parts she took such pleasure in letting give her pain; Lizzie could have the back so she would always have a backache, and the stomach so she would always be able to have cramps;

give Elizabeth all the country of the inside, and let her go away, and leave Betsy in possession of her own.⁶¹

Betsy's imaginary parceling of her body may be seen to correspond to the "real" splintering of her self as a defense mechanism against the anguish of loss.

Moving back to the pre-linguistic realm of the maternal Semiotic, Betsy carries with her a dictionary "in case she needed help in talking or writing or spelling."⁶² This lack of confidence in her own ability to use words not only displays Betsy's precarious position as a speaking subject, but also displays the need to translate her moods and experiences into signification. Soon after arriving to the hotel, however, Betsy finds the dictionary torn up, "its pages pulled out and crumpled, its millions of good, practical, helpful words hopelessly destroyed."⁶³ With the most tangible token of her existence in the Symbolic taken to pieces, Betsy throws the dictionary at the mirror in a gesture, which may be seen as "an exit from language, which is also an exit from subjectivity."⁶⁴ More importantly, while the act of throwing the dictionary at her own mirror image points to the girl's repudiation of herself as an identity separate from the (m)Other, it simultaneously manifests the melancholic distrust of language as a system of signification. For Kristeva, "[d]epressed persons . . . *disavow the negation*: they cancel it out, suspend it, and nostalgically fall back on the real object (the Thing) of their loss, which is just what they do not manage to lose, to which they remain painfully riveted."⁶⁵ In other words, the melancholic subject questions the signifier's "capacity to signify loss and to carry affect into the field of signification."⁶⁶

Indeed, in the Semiotic realm of affective experiences, language appears useless and largely inadequate as signs begin to lose their meanings. Not only does the name Elizabeth Richmond refer to both Betsy *and* her mother, but as Betsy realizes peering into a phone book, there are other people with exactly the same name. If the same signifier can refer to numerous different signifieds, the system of signification based on such signs becomes rather problematic. As Kristeva asserts, as "[m]essengers of Thanatos, melancholy people are witness/accomplices of the signifier's flimsiness" and "foreigners in their maternal tongue."⁶⁷ The unspeakable experience of loss has to remain forever beyond signification.

The gap or "abyss" that, according to Kristeva, separates language from affective experience is one of the major themes of the novel, and one most overlooked by critics. The more we learn about Elizabeth's disturbing psyche and the internal conflicts of her disintegrated personality, the more we are struck by the discrepancy between her nearly ghostly presence and her extremely complicated inner selves. Early in the novel the reader is cautioned about the reductive nature of signs as well as a subject's rather tenuous relationship to the Symbolic:

where the living, engrossed daily with the fragments and soiled trivia of the disagreeable past, or the vacancies of space, kept a precarious hold on individuality and identity, Elizabeth remained nameless; she was called Elizabeth or Miss Richmond because that was the name she had given when she came, and perhaps if she had fallen down the hole in the building she

might have been missed because the museum tag reading Miss Elizabeth Richmond, anonymous gift, value undetermined, was left without a corresponding object.⁶⁸

While the act of labeling Elizabeth's presence with a tag brings to mind the Lacanian view of the self as constituted through language, it also unavoidably reveals the slipperiness of the signifying system. As the protagonist splinters into four unmistakably distinct personalities, each with her own name – Elizabeth, Betsy, Bess and Beth – we are reminded of the oversimplifications inherent in Saussure's concept of the sign. In Jackson's novel not only are four different signifiers almost equivalent to one another (all these names are in fact different versions of the same name), but also all four names refer to the same person, whose traumatized psyche disintegrated into four separate selves.

Yet the most radical questioning of language as a system of representation is achieved through the figure of Dr. Wright and his pseudo-scientific description of Elizabeth's case. In the manner practiced by most psychoanalysts, and in a playful allusion to Freud's and Pierce's method of producing meticulous reports on their patients' mental condition throughout the therapeutic process,⁶⁹ Dr. Wright composes a written account of Elizabeth's treatment. In fact, both sections of the novel narrated by the therapist appear in the form of his elaborate notes on Elizabeth's case as well as his own role in molding the character into the person "she was meant to be." Patronizing, vain and pretentious, Victor Wright envisions himself as an embodiment of the most noble and powerful

masculine roles: he is a father "addressing [his patient] as a fond parent speaks to a precious child," a prince charming "setting free a captive princess" and a god-like scientist "much like Frankenstein with all the materials for a monster ready at hand."⁷⁰ But above all, as his name implies, he is Dr. RIGHT as well as Dr. WRITE: "I daresay a good writer is much the same as a good doctor; honest, decent, self-respecting men, with no use for fads and foibles."⁷¹ Calling himself "Author," the doctor not only suggests that he feels in control of his patient, but also that his method involves the use of language – the tool of the Symbolic. Wright's therapy is presented to the reader in the form of a written report, in which Elizabeth Richmond's separate personalities are initially labeled as R1, R2 and R3 – a reductive numerical system that has nothing to do with the complex nature of each of the patient's selves. Quite clearly, then, Dr. Wright's psychoanalytic methods, together with his coarse metaphors and stylized language, are rooted solely in the formal, paternalistic realm of the Symbolic, which stands in sharp contrast to the confused melancholic fragmentation of his patient. Though the doctor rightly assumes that the source of Elizabeth's problems must have been "an emotional shock" experienced in childhood, he appears totally oblivious to the affective dimension of the experience. Quite rightly, then, Betsy, constantly ridicules Wright's efforts to cure "Elizabeth" and keeps calling him "Dr. Wrong." Thus, ironically, the doctor's name itself, in its many possible readings, contains what Anne Williams has referred to as "the deepest, darkest secret of the Father's Law: the arbitrariness, instability, and deceptiveness of words themselves."⁷²

It is no accident, either, that Betsy's emotional, highly subjective, trance-like account of her entrapment in the Imaginary appears right in between the two parts of the doctor's narrative, highlighting two totally opposite perspectives: patient's/doctor's, female/male, child's/adult's, Semiotic/Symbolic. In a sense, Betsy's confused but impassioned narrative reads like an eruption of affect and repressed memory in the midst of Dr. Wright's sensible but dispassionate report, illuminating the unavoidable cracks in the Symbolic governed by "the Law of the Father."

More importantly, however, the figure of Dr. Wright and his scientific treatment of Elizabeth elucidate patriarchy's understanding of the female, placing Jackson's therapist firmly among other powerful men in the Male Gothic tradition. Dr. Wright's attempts to suppress Elizabeth's troublesome selves and leave only one – the docile, uncomplicated, feminine Beth – confirms Anne Williams' interpretation of the Male Gothic convention as that in which the source of horror is not 'the female' in general, but rather the anxiety about the abject she embodies: the uncontrollable, all-powerful "*mater*/mother who threatens to swallow or engulf the speaking subject."⁷³ Out of Elizabeth's four personalities, it is Betsy, whom the doctor describes as "wanton and wild"⁷⁴ and who incorporates most clearly the repressed pre-Oedipal maternal, that causes greatest unease in Dr. Wright. She is not only unpredictable and rebellious but also acts as a disturbing reminder that the transition from the pre-linguistic Kristevan Semiotic to the Symbolic based on language and culture is never complete. Betsy is also, though only vaguely, associated with sexuality. While there is a hint

of her being a victim of sexual abuse, there is also a sense of Betsy being involved in a tragic sexual triangle: her mother's lover ran away because "I said I'd tell my mother what *we* did."⁷⁵ Thus Elizabeth's psychic disintegration is terrifying not only because it reminds one of the split between the conscious and the unconscious, but also because it uncovers "those 'female' forces that Western culture had always excluded: sexuality, nonlinguistic modes of meaning, madness, dreams."⁷⁶

If, at the novel's conclusion, Jackson's heroine, like many of her predecessors in the Female Gothic tradition, experiences a rebirth, it is an ironic one. After two years of Dr. Wright's therapy and three months spent at a mental institution, Elizabeth feels as if she "was awakened from her enchantment"⁷⁷ and the first thing she does is cut her hair. As Elizabeth watches her hair being cut for the first time in her life, she symbolically parts with her painful memories and affective states, to which the hair has always been a quiet witness. Indeed, Elizabeth's emotional history is rendered through the story of her hair: an intimate script of her difficult relationships and traumatic experiences. By cutting off the hair that still remembers her mother's touch, the character finally separates from the maternal Thing as well as from all the memories and emotions that have constituted her identity as Elizabeth Richmond. "I have no name," she repeats to herself, and Dr. Wright compares her to "a vessel emptied." "Much of what was *emotion* has been lost; the facts are there, the memory clear, but the feeling for these things is suspended."⁷⁸ Indeed, in order to acquire a place in the Symbolic order, but also to become a woman in the society,

and especially the American society of the 1950s, certain emotions have to be erased, the unspeakable things remain unspoken. As in other Gothic texts, then, Dr. Wright and his rational methods manage to turn a living woman into a hollowed-out figure.

In a playful allusion to the Gothic convention, in which narratives often end with a revelation of an heir, the last chapter of *The Bird's Nest* bears the title: "The Naming of an Heiress." In a parody of a Western nuclear family, Aunt Morgen and Dr. Wright assign themselves the roles of Elizabeth's parents as Morgen suggests to the doctor: "You can be her mommy, and I'll be her daddy."⁷⁹ Wright's sense of responsibility, paternalistic and pompous as it sounds, combines patriarchal culture's attitude to women with, what Caminero-Santangelo has called, "Pigmalion fantasies:" "She will owe to us her opinions, her discriminations, her reflections; we are able, as few others have ever been, to recreate, entire, a human being, in the most proper and reasonable mold, to select what is finest and most elevating from our own experience and bestow!"⁸⁰ Finally, Elizabeth's symbolic birth is marked through the act of naming – as if to manifest a total suppression of her former, chaotic self, she is named with a combination of the doctor's and the aunt's own names: Victoria Morgen. Clearly, the new name, like the linguistic system to which it belongs, reveals an attempt to define and confine the subject at the same time. More importantly, however, the process of "curing" Elizabeth corresponds to the process of the subject's entry into the Symbolic: only after she has suppressed the maternal inside herself, can she say "I am."⁸¹

Thus, if Elizabeth's final words: "I'm happy" and "I know who I am" sound

hollow, it is because her newly gained "sanity" and forced admission into the Symbolic result in another loss: as Oppenheimer reflects, it is a loss "of potential, of possibility, of self."⁸² Elizabeth's new identity, alienating and uncertain as it is, is not her own, as there is nothing left of Elizabeth Richmond. By observing that this brand new being has "eaten [her] four sisters," Dr. Wright suggests a theory of existence based, as in "The Lottery," on human sacrifice: "Each life . . . asks the devouring of other lives for its own continuance; the radical aspect of ritual sacrifice, the performance of a group, its great step ahead, was in organization; *sharing* the victim was so eminently practical."⁸³ Thus pointing to Elizabeth as another female victim whose "sacrifice" will ensure the stability of the social order, Jackson, like many Female Gothic writers before her, makes a claim for madness as a shield against the debilitating patterns of proper femininity imposed by patriarchal culture.⁸⁴ When, during the same conversation, Dr. Wright associates mental instability with witchcraft, the reader is reminded that in Jackson's *oeuvre* both madness and witchcraft function as key metaphors for uncanny models of female resistance to the conformist and confining social expectations imposed upon women. But the carefully employed metaphor of "eating" one's true, though necessarily conflicted selves, points again to a loss that is melancholic: in Freud's formulation, "[t]he ego wishes to incorporate [the lost] object into itself, and the method by which it would do so, in this oral or cannibalistic stage, is by devouring it."⁸⁵ Hence, in *The Bird's Nest* the problem of melancholia goes beyond the case of Elizabeth Richmond's unfinished

mourning for the maternal Thing, which is only one of many unavoidable losses. The “rebirth” of the protagonist at the end of the novel suggests an emergence of a new woman, whose unruly, incompatible female selves forever attached to the maternal have been buried inside a secret melancholy crypt. While the suppression of these feminine, Semiotic energies is necessary for a speaking subject to exist, there is a sense of elemental loss as the “happy” but hollow Victoria Morgen replaces Elizabeth’s melancholic multiplicity. What the novel mourns but refuses to lose, what it grieves but cannot forget is the loss of the repressed, mysterious, dark yet potentially liberating energies inside all of us.

Not surprisingly, after the publication of *The Bird’s Nest*, Jackson was annoyed by attempts at promoting her book as “a psychological horror story.” According to the author, the novel was “more like *moby dick*, penetrating to the depths of the human heart, and whatnot.”⁸⁶ Indeed, in this intimate and highly personal study of female psychology, Jackson may be voicing her own internal conflicts associated with having to reconcile the role of an imaginative writer with that of a wife, housewife and mother of four. Her protagonist’s melancholic condition, which transforms from an unfinished mourning for the maternal into a quiet refusal to accept the loss of one’s own original multiplicity, may be seen to reflect Jackson’s own deprivations. As her biographers insist, the writer’s distressing relationship with her mother, who “never loved her unconditionally – if at all – [was] a source of sadness” throughout her life.⁸⁷ While Jackson never openly expressed her anguish at being rejected as “not the daughter her mother wanted,”⁸⁸

she translated her emotional despair into disturbing fictional scenarios of loveless mothering, ambivalent mother-daughter relations, or even acts of matricide. At the same time, the emotionally demanding relationship with her husband – a renowned literary critic Stanley Edgar Hyman – was another source of anxiety. Though Jackson would never have called herself a feminist, her writing anticipates in many ways Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* and may be read as a commentary on the 1950’s cultural politics with its clearly defined roles for women. Through its critique of scientific methods of treating female melancholy, and through an implicit defense of madness, the novel combines the psychological and the social to make an important political statement. What is more, Jackson challenges not only the postwar approach to “the female malady” but also the Female Gothic tradition by suggesting there may be no escape from feminine entrapment. As Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar show in *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), the deranged female characters in women’s texts act quite frequently as symbolic representations of the female author’s own anxieties and “anger against the rigidities of patriarchal tradition.”⁸⁹

Finally, Jackson’s fiction as a whole, and *The Bird’s Nest* in particular, prove that the capacity of the Gothic to affect the reader derives from the genre’s almost compulsive preoccupation with affective states and complex psychological realities of its protagonists. As Andrew Smith has put it, in the Gothic “[f]eelings become fictionalized and fiction becomes the site of emotional affect.”⁹⁰ Jackson’s penetrating studies of her disturbed female characters confirm Anne Williams’ interpretation

of the Gothic as “a discourse that shows the cracks in the system that constitutes consciousness, ‘reality.’”⁹¹ Indeed, what makes Jackson’s writing truly uncanny is its exploration of the secret rooms and melancholy crypts of the Symbolic founded on the repression of the forever haunting, unspeakable Other.

WORKS CITED

- Abraham, Nicholas and Maria Torok, “Mourning or Melancholia: Introjection versus Incorporation,” in Nicholas T. Rand (ed.), *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*. Vol. I., Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1994, p. 125-138.
- Bahun, Sanja, *Modernism and Melancholia: Writing as Countermourning*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Caminero-Santangelo, Marta, “Multiple personality and the Postmodern Subject: Theorizing Agency,” in Bernice M. Murphy (ed.), *Shirley Jackson: Essays on the Literary Legacy*, Jefferson, McFarland and Company, 2005, p. 52-80.
- Flatley, Jonathan, *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2008.
- Franklin, Ruth, *Shirley Jackson: A Rather Haunted Life*, New York, Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2016.
- Freud, Sigmund, “Mourning and Melancholia,” in L. G. Fiorini, T. Bokanowski and S. Lewkowicz (eds.), *On Freud’s “Mourning and Melancholia*, London, Karnac Books, 2009, p. 19-34.
- Friedan, Betty, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), New York, Norton, 2013.
- Friedman, Lenemaja, *Shirley Jackson*, Boston, Twayne Publishers, 1975.
- Hattenhauer, Darryl, *Shirley Jackson’s American Gothic*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 2003.
- Jackson, Shirley, *The Bird’s Nest*, London, Penguin Books, 2014.
- Joshi, T. S., “Foreword,” in Danel Olson (ed.), *21-Century Gothic: Great Gothic Novels since 2000*, Maryland, The Scarecrow Press, 2011, p. xi-xvii.
- Kearney, Richard, *Poetics of Imagining: From Husserl to Lyotard*, New York, Routledge, 1991.
- Keltner, S. K., *Kristeva: Thresholds*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2011.
- Kristeva, Julia, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1989.
- Lacan, Jacques, “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I,” in *Écrits: a Selection*, New York, Routledge, 2001, p. 1-8.
- Płonowska Ziarek, Ewa, *Feminist Aesthetics and the Politics of Modernism*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2012.
- Prince, Morton, *The Dissociation of A Personality*, Cambridge, The University Press, 1905.
- Schiesari, Juliana, *The Gendering of Melancholia: Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Symbolics of Loss in Renaissance Literature*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1992.
- Showalter, Elaine, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980*, New York, Penguin Books, 1985.
- Smith, Andrew, *Gothic Death 1740-1914: A Literary History*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2016.
- Stevens, Jason W., *God-Fearing and Free: A Spiritual History of America’s Cold War*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2010.
- “This Week in Fiction: Shirley Jackson,” in *The New Yorker*, July 26, 2013, <https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/this-week-in-fiction-shirley-jackson-2>, accessed on 22 March 2018.
- Wardi, Eynel, *Once Below a Time: Dylan Thomas, Julia Kristeva, and Other Speaking Subjects*, New York: State University of New York Press, 2000.
- Williams, Anne, *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1995.

NOTES

1. T. S. Joshi, "Foreword" in *21-Century Gothic: Great Gothic Novels since 2000*, edited by Danel Olson, Maryland, The Scarecrow Press, 2011, p. xv-xvi.
2. Jason W. Stevens, *God-Fearing and Free: A Spiritual History of America's Cold War*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2010, p. 221.
3. See Lenemaja Friedman's annotated critical bibliography in *Shirley Jackson*, Boston, Twayne Publishers, 1975, p. 167-177.
4. Darryl Hattenhauer, *Shirley Jackson's American Gothic*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 2003, p. 6-7.
5. An interview with Shirley Jackson's son, Laurence Jackson Hyman in *The New Yorker*, July 26, 2013, <https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/this-week-in-fiction-shirley-jackson-2>
6. Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), New York, Norton, 2013, p. 1.
7. *Ibidem*, p. 406. See also Rebecca Munford, "Spectral Femininity" in *Women and the Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, edited by Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016, p. 126.
8. See Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980*, New York, Penguin Books, 1985, p. 4.
9. Stevens, *op. cit.*, p. 225.
10. Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1989, p. 3.
11. Shirley Jackson, *The Bird's Nest*, London, Penguin Books, 2014, p. 4.
12. *Ibidem*, p. 3-4.
13. *Ibidem*, p. 3.
14. Kristeva, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
15. Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," in L. G. Fiorini, T. Bokanowski and S. Lewkowicz (eds.), *On Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia"*, London, Karnac Books, 2009, p. 243.
16. *Ibidem*, p. 245.
17. Juliana Schiesari, *The Gendering of Melancholia: Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Symbolics of Loss in Renaissance Literature*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1992, p. 39.
18. Freud, *op. cit.*, p. 249. Significantly, in *The Ego and the Id*, Freud reformulates his distinction between mourning and melancholia suggesting that identification and the subsequent introjection occurs with every experience of loss. This means, as Jonathan Flatley explains, that "[t]here is no nonmelancholic loss, no mourning that leaves the ego unchanged" and that "the very character of the ego is formed by its lost objects" in Jonathan Flatley, *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2008, p. 49.
19. See Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok, "Mourning or Melancholia: Introjection versus Incorporation" in Nicholas T. Rand (ed.), *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*. Vol. I., Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1994, p. 125-138.
20. Sanja Bahun, *Modernism and Melancholia: Writing as Countermourning*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 54-55.
21. A reference to a „hole" in the psyche created by melancholia appears in Freud's letters to Fliess, see Bahun, *op. cit.*, p. 54.
22. Freud, *op. cit.*, p. 262.
23. Kristeva, *op. cit.*, p. 3, 53.
24. *Ibidem*, p. 71-76.
25. S. K. Keltner, *Kristeva: Thresholds*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2011, p. 53.
26. Richard Kearney, *Poetics of Imagining: From Husserl to Lyotard*, New York, Routledge, 1991, p. 187.
27. *Ibidem*, p. 191.
28. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

29. *Ibidem*, p. 2.
30. *Ibidem*, p. 1-2.
31. Cf. Kristeva, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
32. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 42-43, italics added.
33. *Ibidem*, p. 43.
34. Flatley, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
35. Kristeva, *op. cit.*, p. 60.
36. Cf. *ibidem*, p. 14.
37. Jackson, *op. cit.*, 32.
38. Kristeva, *op. cit.*, p. 53-54.
39. Eynel Wardi, *Once Below a Time: Dylan Thomas, Julia Kristeva, and Other Speaking Subjects*, New York: State University of New York Press, 2000, p. 16.
40. Kristeva, *op. cit.*, p. 18-19.
41. Ruth Franklin, *Shirley Jackson: A Rather Haunted Life*, New York, Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2016, p. 335; Judy Oppenheimer, *Private Demons: The Life of Shirley Jackson*, New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1988, p. 162.
42. Morton Prince, *The Dissociation of A Personality*, Cambridge, The University Press, 1905, p. 12-13.
43. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 81
44. For a detailed analysis of how affects can be transmitted from person to person, see Teresa Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2004.
45. Kristeva, *op. cit.*, p. 5; 3.
46. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 97.
47. *Ibidem*, p. 89.
48. *Ibidem*, p. 88.
49. *Ibidem*, p. 100.
50. *Ibidem*, p. 96.
51. Cf. Marta Caminero-Santangelo, "Multiple personality and the Postmodern Subject: Theorizing Agency," in Bernice M. Murphy (ed.), *Shirley Jackson: Essays on the Literary Legacy*, Jefferson, McFarland and Company, 2005, p. 76.
52. Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I" in *Écrits: a Selection*, New York, Routledge, 2001, p. 5.
53. Kearney, *op. cit.*, p. 187.
54. *Ibidem*, p. 187.
55. *Ibidem*.
56. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 96-97.
57. *Ibidem*, p. 97-98.
58. Kristeva, *op. cit.*, p. 60.
59. *Ibidem*, p. 61.
60. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 98.
61. *Ibidem*, p. 99.
62. *Ibidem*, p. 82.
63. *Ibidem*, p. 114.
64. Caminero-Santangelo, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
65. Kristeva, *op. cit.*, p. 43-44; italics in the original.
66. Ewa Płonowska Ziarek, *Feminist Aesthetics and the Politics of Modernism*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2012, p. 68.
67. Kristeva, *op. cit.*, p. 20; 53.
68. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
69. As Jason W. Stevens has noticed, Dr. Wright's initial supposition that Elizabeth may be possessed by demons bears resemblance to Freud's interpretation of his famous Dora's case: "No one who, like

me, has conjured up the most evil of those half-tamed demons that inhabit the human breast and seeks to wrestle with them, can escape to come through the struggle unscathed” (qtd. in Stevens, *op. cit.*, p. 230). Significantly, Freud’s Dora may be seen as a prototype of Jackson’s protagonist: in both cases rebellious femininity “expressed in physical symptoms and coded speech, subverted the linear logic of male science” (see Showalter, *op. cit.*, p. 5).

70. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 46, 53, 143.

71. *Ibidem*, p. 32.

72. Anne Williams, *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1995, p. 240.

73. *Ibidem*, p. 106.

74. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

75. *Ibidem*, p. 115; italics added.

76. Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

77. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

78. *Ibidem*, p. 248; italics in the original.

79. *Ibidem*, p. 249.

80. *Ibidem*.

81. *Ibidem*, p. 233.

82. Oppenheimer, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

83. *Ibidem*, p. 254.

84. Cf. Stevens, *op. cit.*, p. 231-232.

85. Freud, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

86. From Jackson’s letter to her parents, qtd. in Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 336.

87. Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

88. Oppenheimer, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

89. Showalter, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

90. Andrew Smith, *Gothic Death 1740-1914: A Literary History*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2016, p. 61.

91. Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 66.