

**UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO RIO GRANDE DO SUL
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JÉSSICA PAULA SZEWCZYK GARCIA

**SPACES AND ANXIETY: AN ANALYSIS OF CHARACTERS'
DISPLACEMENTS IN SHIRLEY JACKSON'S *THE DAEMON LOVER*
AND *THE VILLAGER***

**PORTO ALEGRE
2022**

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BANCA EXAMINADORA

Prof. Dra. Elaine Barros Indrusiak (UFRGS)

Prof. Dra. Sandra Sirangelo Maggio (UFRGS)

Prof. Dr. Claudio Vescia Zanini (orientador) (UFRGS)

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Figure 1 - Shirley Jackson, 1938



(Source: TheNewYorkReview¹)

¹ Available at <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2009/10/08/the-witchcraft-of-shirley-jackson/> Access on 27 Sep. 2022

To a rather haunted lady.

*Some women marry houses.
It's another kind of skin; it has a heart,
a mouth, a liver and bowel movements.
The walls are permanent and pink.
See how she sits on her knees all day,
faithfully washing herself down.
Men enter by force, drawn back like Jonah
into their fleshy mothers.
A woman is her mother.*

That's the main thing.

Housewife. Anne Sexton. 1962.

RESUMO

O presente trabalho visa investigar como a autora Shirley Jackson desenvolve o sentimento de ansiedade e as respostas emocionais de suas personagens dentro de sua obra, a partir do seu deslocamento físico e transitando entre espaços delimitados e não delimitados (o interior e o exterior). Essa análise será feita tendo como exemplo dois de seus contos: “The Daemon Lover” e “The Villager”, ambos presentes no seu livro *The Lottery and Other Stories* (2009). Os pontos de análise para compreender como Jackson desperta esses sentimentos e suas respostas serão dados principalmente a partir da relação que elas mantêm com o ambiente ao seu redor e como a sua mudança influencia suas atitudes e sentimentos. Uma análise sobre esses espaços e sua importância dentro da narrativa literária também é de extrema importância para este trabalho, já que eles acabam sendo o ponto de gatilho para mudanças psicológicas e por vezes podem ser lido como um reflexo do estado mental de Daisy (“The Daemon Lover”) e Hilda Clarence (“The Villager”). Como aporte teórico para este trabalho, o uso de Cohen (2011-2012), Franklin (2017), Freud (1966), Barbieri (2007) e Bachelard (2014) serão utilizados. Outros textos secundários também serão usados para contextualizar a análise que proponho fazer. Os resultados esperados deste trabalho são provar que os espaços escolhidos para comporem essas histórias não foram escolhidos aleatoriamente e que ao removê-los ou trocá-los, esta análise traria resultados diferentes. A contribuição esperada deste trabalho é uma tentativa de trazer a autora Shirley Jackson de volta para o contexto acadêmico, em especial, dentro da academia brasileira. Ela é uma autora que está ganhando atenção novamente no contexto internacional, mas ainda existe uma lacuna se olharmos para a produção nacional.

Palavras-chave: Shirley Jackson; *The Daemon Lover*; *The Villager*; Ansiedade; Espaços.

ABSTRACT

The present work aims to investigate how the author Shirley Jackson creates the feeling of anxiety and the emotional responses to it for her characters, from the point of physical displacement and while they navigate between limited and unlimited spaces (the inside and the outside). This analysis will be conducted while looking at two of her short stories: “The Daemon Lover” and “The Villager”, both present in her book *The Lottery and Other Stories* (2009). The points of analysis to comprehend how Jackson awakens those feelings and their responses to her characters will be made from their relationship with the environment surrounding them and how this change influences their attitudes and feelings. An analysis of those spaces and their importance in the literary narrative is of extreme importance for this work, as they work as a trigger for psychological changes and can often be interpreted as a reflection of Daisy (“The Daemon Lover”) and Hilda Clarence’s (“The Villager”) mental state. As theoretical support for this work, Cohen (2011-2012), Franklin (2017), Freud (1966), Barbieri (2007) and Bachelard (2014) will be used. There are also secondary texts used in the analysis to support the relation between the instances. I am aiming to prove that the spaces selected by the author to compose these stories are not a random choice and by removing or changing them, this analysis would not be the same. The expected contribution of this work is to raise awareness of Shirley Jackson’s work inside the academy, especially in the Brazilian context. She is an author that is slowly regaining attention internationally, but the gap is still present when looking nationally.

Keywords: Shirley Jackson; *The Daemon Lover*; *The Villager*; Anxiety; Spaces.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	11
1. THE HAUNTED LADY	15
2. THE SHORT STORIES	20
2.1 The Villager	20
2.2 The Daemon Lover	23
3. THE ANALYSIS.....	28
3.1. The Spaces	28
3.2. The Mind.....	30
CONCLUSION	36
WORKS CITED.....	39

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 - Shirley Jackson, 1938.....	6
Figure 2 - Shirley Jackson in 1963.	16
Figure 3 - Sketch of the first floor of Hill House.....	29

INTRODUCTION

In 2018, the widely famous streaming service Netflix released to the general public the first season of their anthological horror series, “The Haunting of Hill House”. In this story, we get acquainted with the Crain family, its parents Hugh and Olivia, and their children Shirley, Steven, Theodora and the twins Luke and Eleanor (known as “Nell”). The Crain family labors in the architectural field, precisely with restoration of old houses or houses that are no longer in the market due to lack of interest and poor maintenance. After searching for a house in need of repairs, such as broken windows, walls falling apart, missing doors, as well as a poor interior design, they will buy it and start working on it. Basically, they bring back to life a house that was no longer considered up to the task. They give back what is needed for it to become a *home* again.

The show was a huge success and opened the door for Shirley Jackson, the author of the novel in which this season was based, to be back in the public's mind. She became extremely known in the United States when in 1948 *The New Yorker* published “The Lottery”, a story of a village and their taste for tradition in this bright community. Although she wrote several other short stories and a few novels, Jackson slowly left the people’s mind. Her early death with only 49 years old was probably a factor that contributed to this oblivion, as well as the distinct topic of her writing. A few of her works were kept alive, such as the already mentioned novel “The Haunting of Hill House” (1959) and her last novel “We Have Always Lived in the Castle” (1962), published three years prior to her death.

Jackson was a master of confusing her critics, as she was able to combine the literary art of suspense and with things from the daily life (domestic comedy), two very different genres, in the same works. Her psychological and horror stories are grounded in domestic life, making the combination of those two distant types remarkably overfamiliar and not so foreign. The trauma she is conveying with her words can be understandable because, at the end of the day, the underline story that she is telling was not so unexpected and distinct from reality — minus the ghosts. When writing a letter to her college boyfriend in 1956, Sylvia Plath imagined a life with ‘babies and bed and brilliant friends and a magnificent stimulating home’. In 1962, the same year Jackson published “We Have Always Lived in the Castle”, Anne Sexton wrote a poem named “Housewife” where the first line was ‘Some women marry houses.’.

It is possible to see that there were expectations set upon a woman, for both her public and private life. Plath was looking for a place not only to grow love but also mutual understanding, a place to share intellectual growth. Sexton reminds society that, after marriage,

women are bound to their new reality and might even cease to exist as an individual outside the social structure set for a nuclear family in the 50s. The attention that Jackson was directing to what is considered a *housewife life* was not an isolated case. In her married life, she accomplished Plath's dream at the same time she lived Sexton's prediction. Her early stories were 'already exploring the unmarried woman's desperate isolation in a society where a husband was essential for social acceptance' (FRANKLIN, 2017, p. 3).

Through her *oeuvre*, Ms Jackson has probably inadvertently shown readers the impact of larger social and political forces on the lives of particular individuals. Instead of confining her characters to fantastic locations such as castles or haunted places — as gothic and horror fiction often do — she showed us how historical and social forces play out in the lives of the ordinary people she depicted. (COHEN, 2011, p. 203).

In her collection "The Lottery and Other Short Stories" (2009), there are two stories in particular that exhibit the delicate and unstable relation with spaces, this silent character. In "The Daemon Lover", we have the story of a nameless character (who will be addressed as "Daisy" in this) and how her life drastically changes from the moment she decides to leave the safety of her apartment and go to the outside world to search for her missing fiancé. With a contrasting movement in "The Villager", we follow Hilda Clarence, a disappointed secretary that was forced to abandon her dream as a dancer and is now facing the consequences.

The main character of Jackson's "The Daemon Lover" is a nameless one and it is only called Daisy in this work. Presuming that Jackson decided to keep her a character without a name as way to express that the particular situation that this character finds herself — a woman in her mid-thirties and single —, would not be the ideal one to be by that time period and social standards, and as the character, it might be expected that those women who found themselves in similar terms would have a similar reaction to this marital status and do the possible and impossible to change her situation, the decision to name her in this study arose from not only a need, but also from a common character in Jackson's fictional work. Cohen (2011) presents us the concept of the *dazed woman*, a woman that by particularities in the story, will either start the narrative in a dazed state of mind or be induced to it throughout the work. Due to this categorization and the fact that I have the intention to compare and understand on a deeper level both characters, it allows me to do this analysis in a clean way. Also, it provides a more meaningful connection with them, more intimate.

Another figure to inhabit Jackson's fictional universe is the *dazed woman*, generally a young adult who either begins the narrative at a dazed state of mind and maintains

it throughout the narrative or, more commonly, starts in an unexceptional state of mind which then gets ever more benumbed as the story progresses. In both cases, these female characters present a disorganized state-of-mind in the sense that they “lack core of identity [which] forces them to seek meaning and direction in the world outside themselves” (HAGUE, 2005, p. 76) and *there* is where they usually get lost. In the SJL, the comfort lies within oneself or within symbolical, or real, walls, a notable symptom of the author’s agoraphobic tendencies (COHEN, 2011, p. 94).

Both Hilda and Daisy fit the described figure by Cohen. With Daisy, there is extensive evidence of the state that she starts the story: the lack of sleep, the black coffee that is consumed early in the morning when she wakes up. It cannot be confirmed that it is the only meal that she will have throughout the day, but that it is the only thing in her stomach at least until one in the afternoon, the time that she decides to go after her fiancé on the run. There is also an addiction to nicotine, just as Hilda has, and a severe headache that started to bother her.

Although there are opposite movements from the main characters (inside and outside), in both stories, it is possible to observe how the new spaces in which the characters found themselves affects them on a psychological and emotional level. In “The Daemon Lover”, while Daisy searches — with no results — for her fiancé James Harris, she starts to doubt and not trust her own memories, and even question herself if there really existed a James Harris. At least this is what the outside world is telling and showing her. Meanwhile, Hilda finds, in a small and messy apartment, objects that force her to imagine the life that she could have had and leans into this fantasy with the help of a writer to be, Mr. Harris.

By bringing the look that Jackson provides of the relationship of women and houses, expectations and family, the idea of this work is to investigate how Shirley Jackson uses spaces (rooms, apartments, bathrooms, etc.) and the lack of them (the outside world) to provoke in her characters the feeling of mental instability. Or trigger feelings that are already there. It might seem as a physical displacement, since the characters are moving inside the narrative — Daisy leaves her house in order to find Jamie, and Hilda goes inside an apartment —, but in reality the psychological displacement that they face is where I intend to focus this work.

Since I am aiming to understand the way that Jackson makes these connections of houses with the outside world in a way to evoke in their characters a particular feeling or reaction, the work of Gaston Bachelard “The Poetics of Space” (1958) will be used. In his book he dissects how we relate to the spaces that we are presented and connect since the start of our life. How we understand intrinsically that our first house is our new shell, our first universe, a real cosmos in every sense of the word (BACHELARD, pg. 26). It is a substitute for the womb of our mothers and how the connections with the boundaries, closets, drawers, chest, have much more meaning than mere spaces.

Another factor that ignited the desire to research Jackson and her work was to understand the reasons that might have led to her erasure as a writer not only after her death but throughout her life as an author. Her short stories and novels had their fame, but, as the creator of these stories, she did not receive the same treatment. In an essay published after her death, her husband Stanley Edgar Hymen brings attention to the fact that no recognition was granted to her during her lifetime and that he believed — and hoped — that this would change in the future decades:

“For all her popularity, Shirley Jackson won surprisingly little recognition,” he wrote in an essay published after her death. “She received no awards or prizes, grants or fellowships; her name was often omitted from lists on which it clearly belonged”. He ended his lament with a prediction: “I think that the future will find her powerful visions of suffering and inhumanity increasingly significant and meaningful, and that Shirley Jackson’s work is among that small body of literature produced in our time that seems apt to survive.” (FRANKLIN, 2017, p. 9)

Along with Stanley Edgar Hymen, Jackson’s husband, Gustavo Cohen is also interested in trying to aid Jackson’s work to once again be in the spotlight, be it in her country, in her language, inside and outside the academic world as well. His work focuses on her literary reception and will be a very important resource in this project. Cohen’s doctorate thesis was the only academic information that I was able to find after research for Jackson’s work in some online library catalogs of universities in Brazil (such as LUME, USP, UERJ, UFRJ, UNB and UFU). This result does not mean that in other catalogs it is not possible to find any research related do Shirley Jackson, but the lack of them can be seen as an answer to how the Brazilian Academy looks at her.

It is my wish to see Ms. Jackson being read, analyzed and divulged not only inside but also outside the United States. If she failed to cause an overall positive impression in her own lifetime I feel that it is still time for a whole new generation of national and international readers to discover her work and learn to appreciate it with due merit (COHEN, 2011, p. 202).

Lastly, to introduce the issue of anxiety faced by the characters in their moments of tension, I will look at Anna Freud’s work regarding the mechanisms of defense of the Ego (FREUD, 1992). It is a work that follows her father’s, Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939), psychoanalytic study of the human psyche. As Miss Clarence and Daisy go through unexpected situations on their journey, it is easily noticed that their actions and wording are a physical response of their affected and delicate psychological state of mind.

1. THE HAUNTED LADY

Shirley Jackson was born on December 14th, 1916 in San Francisco, California and died in North Bennington, Vermont, on the 18 of August, 1965. She was only 49 years old when she went upstairs to take a quick nap after lunch and never woke up again. She was married to Stanley Edgar Hymen, a literary critic and university professor, for twenty-five years and was the mother of Barry, Laurence, Joanne and Sarah. Her parents were Leslie and Geraldine Jackson, to whom she had a loving yet disturbing relationship.

She had an outstanding and unusual life for a woman in her time. World War II was a reality that left profound marks in the United States society at different levels. From the sociological point of view, one of the marks that are still possible to be seen in today's society was the culture of domesticity — also known as the “cult of domesticity”². The term is often used by historians to describe the value system that seems to be the pattern among the upper and middle classes in the 19th century. In this system, the woman’s role, work and family dynamics were very well delimited. She was considered the center of the family, so it was expected of her to be at home and be responsible for the functioning and maintenance of it, meanwhile, the husband would be outside working and taking the role of provider.

Although that was a system that prevailed in the 19th century, we can see this social structure returning to become the pattern after the end of the war. During those years, there was the need for women to leave the house and assume the man’s role in factories, companies, etc., while they were at war. With the end of it and their return to their normal lives, the women were supposed to assume their previous role and go back to where they belong: inside the house. However, after tasting the independence and freedom, this readaptation was not as easy as expected. According to Franklin (2017) a cultural anxiety surrounding the reorientation of women’s lives around the domestic sphere was taking place.

The idea that a woman’s identity might comfortably encompass more than one persona - wife, mother and professional, for instance - threatened a male-dominated culture invested in glorifying the stability of family life based on traditional gender relations and keeping a woman out of the workforce. (FRANKLIN, 2017, p. 332).

There are several works that brought a debate regarding the role of a woman in a society, such as Virginia Woolf’s “A Room of One’s Own” (1929), “The Second Sex” (1949) by

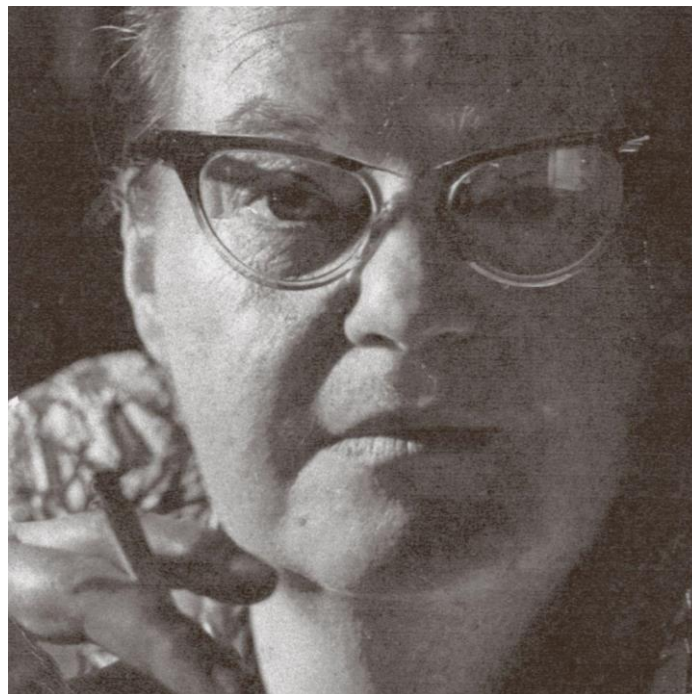
² America in Class from the National Humanities Center. Available at <https://americainclass.org/the-cult-of-domesticity/>. Access on 27 Sep. 2022

Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan’s “The Feminine Mystique” (1963). This debate was alive but not easy to be discussed.

The problem lay buried, unspoken, for many years in the minds of American women. It was a strange stirring, a sense of dissatisfaction, a yearning that women suffered in the middle of the twentieth century in the United States. Each suburban wife struggled with it alone. As she made the beds, shopped for groceries, matched slipcover material, ate peanut butter sandwiches with her children, chauffeured Cub Scouts and Brownies, lay beside her husband at night—she was afraid to ask even of herself the silent question—“Is this all?” (FRIEDMAN, 2001, p. 44).

This return to home that was expected of women would go beyond the lifestyle of a wife. Their physical appearance, clothing choices or even leisure taste had expectations that women were supposed to live up to and Jackson did not have an affinity with them. Jackson preferred books over boys and in those times, this was not seen as a positive thing. In an interview for the New York Post on September 30, 1962, she was asked if she was encouraged to write by her family to which she replied ‘They couldn’t stop me’ (FRANKLIN, 2017, p. 11).

Figure 2 - Shirley Jackson in 1963.



(Source: The Wall Street Journal³)

³ Available at: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-letters-of-shirley-jackson-review-the-artist-as-mad-housewife-11625844577>. Access on 27 Sep. 2022.

One of the most conflicted relationships on this aspect was with her own mother, Geraldine, who was not pleased with Jackson's decision in life even throughout her adulthood. In one particular occasion, after a photoshoot for *Time* magazine in 1962 — to which the published photo received the description “*Deranged but enchanting*”—, she received a very harsh letter from her mother, who would always seem to search for any opportunity to diminish her. To this particular insult, Jackson wrote a letter that she never sent to her mother, but was later added into the book “The Letters of Shirley Jackson” (2021), a compilation of Jackson's letters over the years organized by her oldest son, Laurence Jackson Hyman.

i wish you would stop telling me that my husband and children are ashamed of me. if they are, they have concealed it very skillfully; perhaps they do not believe that personal appearance is the most important thing in the world. as far as the picture in time is concerned, i think it is strange to blame me. time sent a photographer from new york, who spent a morning taking sixty or seventy pictures of me, most of which were presentable and pleasant. time chose this one, which was by far the worst, from some perverted sense of humor. (...) will you try to realize that i am a grown up and fully capable of managing my own affairs? i have a happy and productive life, i have many good friends, i have considerable stature in my profession, and if i decided to make any changes in my manner of living, it will not be because you have nagged me into it. you can say this is “wilful” if you like, but surely at my age i have a right to live as i please, and i have just had enough of the unending comments on my appearance and my faults. (JACKSON, 2021, p. 526-527).⁴

Jackson also suffered from body image issues throughout her life and was a user of amphetamines⁵ for weight loss. Stanley being a university professor — making her a *faculty wife*⁶, another definition that she carried with heavy shoulders — they would host different gatherings, where she would also abuse of alcohol. Jackson was also a heavy smoker and due to that, she developed chronic asthma and other symptoms that followed until the end of her days. Jackson also developed severe anxiety at a certain point in her life which evolved into agoraphobia⁷, making it difficult to execute simple tasks such as going to the grocery store, the post office, going out with her children and so on. Her intake of medication for her agoraphobia

⁴ In Jackson's letters and drafts, she would usually type using only lowercase letters. Based on that, I decided to preserve her style.

⁵ Prescription stimulants used to treat Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Used as a study aid, to stay awake, and to suppress appetites. May lead to paranoia and hallucinations. United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Available at <https://www.dea.gov/factsheets/amphetamines>. Access on 25 Sep. 2022

⁶ Term used to describe the wives of professors from university. The term had the preconceived notion of a stay-home mom. Available at <http://science-professor.blogspot.com/2007/02/faculty-wives.html>. Access 25 Sep. 2022.

⁷ Agoraphobia is a fear of being in situations where escape might be difficult or that help wouldn't be available if things go wrong. United Kingdom National Health Service. Available at <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/agoraphobia/overview/#:~:text=Agoraphobia%20is%20a%20fear%20of,traveling%20on%20public%20transport> Access 25 Sep. 2022.

(barbiturates⁸) and the amphetamines for her weight loss led her to a cycle of drug abuse that would counteract the effects of each other.

it was literally impossible for me to go through the door; if i tried, i would start to shake and my legs would give way and everything would go around and around and i would begin to pass out, unless i got back inside fast. it was very strange and most unpleasant, and it kept getting worse, with all kinds of wild attacks of panic and nightmares and finally i could not even answer the phone. (JACKSON, 2021, p. 552-553)

Despite all the issues that Jackson found, she had a fruitful life, in the personal and also in the professional environment. It is noticeable when looking at the accomplishments that she achieved and the number of narratives she created, even if her harvest would come years later. The short story that made her famous and that it is also part of the title of her short stories collection, “The Lottery”, was a blessing and a curse at the same time. The story describes a particular day in a village where they have a lottery among them. The winner of this lottery is chosen as sacrifice in order to expect a good harvest in the coming year. The way this person would die is by stoning. Every single person will be part of this celebration, even kids would help to celebrate the lottery. After reading her creation, people canceled their subscriptions of *The New Yorker*, at the same time, she would receive letters questioning where she heard that story or even where that village was located. A rather suspicious interest for a regular audience, but for Shirley Jackson’s readers, a somewhat common answer. She was very receptive to her fans and engaged in friendships with some of them. While writing her bibliography, “A Rather Haunted Life” (2017), Ruth Franklin uncovered some of these relationships, one being Jeanne Beatty.

how enchanting to have your letter on hallowe’en while i was making octopus costumes; i resolutely put aside unopened because of course duty to the little ones comes first and all the time i was stapling tentacles i was thinking ha a letter to read as a reward for all my sacrifices and working my fingers to the bone by making octopodes and i suppose it might very well be. it was very fine. i read my letter and giggled and wriggled (...). (JACKSON, 2021, p. 480)

From her life experiences, it becomes clear that Jackson had an uncommon experience with spaces, regardless if they were physical spaces that might have been difficult for her to navigate, or metaphorical ones, where it was expected for her to present herself as one thing, but ended up acting differently. Her decision was clear despite all her mother's intentions and

⁸ Depressant drug used to help sleep and relieve anxiety. Can lead to paranoia and suicidal thoughts. Available at <https://www.dea.gov/factsheets/barbiturates>. Access on 25 Sep. 2022

society's projection: she was going to be herself and this consists of a wife, mother, writer to her drafts, author to her stories. Nobody would define her except herself.

2. THE SHORT STORIES

In this section I will go over the stories in a detailed way and bring attention to meaningful and relevant descriptions and dialogues. In the next chapter the psychological analysis of the characters and a description of the spaces and the characters movement inside Jackson's work will be discussed.

2.1 The Villager

In her short story "The Villager", we have as main character Hilda Clarence, thirty-five years old successful — as much as a woman could be at that time — secretary that is on her way to visit an apartment and check the available furniture. The owners are moving and leaving the country and in an attempt to get rid of their assets, they noticed in the newspaper, *Villager*, as the owners are moving. It is important to highlight that Hilda did not have the intention to be a secretary as a career. She came to New York from a small town with a dream to become a dancer, however, due to situations that appeared to her during her life, she had to retrace her path. Hilda thought this work would be something temporary, to get her by while she was trying to become a dancer, but life and the plans that people make not always work as expected and she abandoned her dream.

Miss Clarence was about thirty-five, and had lived in Greenwich Village for twelve years. When she was twenty-three, she wanted to be a dancer, and because everyone who wanted to study dancing or sculpture or book-binding had come to Greenwich Village then, usually, with allowances from their families to live on and plans to work in Macy's or in a book-shop until they had enough money to pursue their art. (...) Now, after twelve year, she was a private secretary in the same concern, and was making enough money to live in a good Village apartment by the park and buy herself smart clothes. (JACKSON, 2009, p. 49)

Although Hilda left her dream in the past and is now a professional in a future that she could not imagined herself earlier in life, she is proud of herself. She is an independent woman who is capable of paying for her clothes, food and is able to afford her own place to live. There are two ways to look at this story: with the eyes of failure and the eyes of success.

When Hilda arrives at her destiny, the 4B apartment of Artie and Nancy Roberts, there's a note in the door left by Nancy. She had to leave to do some errands and she asked Hilda to proceed and check the furniture while she was not there. Miss Clarence enters the place and finds a chaotic domain. Every room, from the living room to the kitchen and bathroom are not quite as she expected them to be.

The room was in confusion: half-empty boxes of papers and books were on the floor, the curtains were down, and the furniture piles with half-packed suitcases and clothes. The first thing Miss Clarence did was go to the window; on the fourth floor, she thought, maybe they would have a view. But she could only see dirty roofs (...). (JACKSON, 2009, p. 51)

The kitchen was a graphic display of the empty life that the couple lived in the 4B apartment. A dirty two-burner stove, with a tiny refrigerator built underneath it and a small sink on the side. In it there were three bottles of Coca Cola, half a peanut butter jar and a bottle of milk. Hilda took a look and saw only one glass and a bottle opener, no cutlery to be seen which led her to believe that they would only eat outside most of the time if not always. No mugs, no coffee in the morning, no expected routine from a married couple. The other glass that should be making company to the one in the cupboard was in the bathroom. When she looked closely, there was a roach living in the cupboard. “She opened the bathroom door and glanced in: an old-fashioned tub with feet, no shower. The bathroom was thirty and Miss Clarence was sure there would be roaches in there too.” (JACKSON, 2009, p. 51).

Hilda then returned to the living room and started to analyze the furniture that was inside the space. Most of them were marked with tags and post-its with different prices. Later in the story, in a phone call looking for his wife, Mr. Roberts explained to Hilda that they were moving to Paris as he was a painter and since the couple was moving, they ought to sell most of their possessions. None of the furniture was good enough for her, be it a scratch in a bookcase or the maple color of the chairs — that furniture was not good enough for Hilda Clarence nor for the life that Hilda Clarence was planning.

Miss Clarence, in a mild resentment of the coal and coke company, had done her quiet apartment in shades of beige and off-white, and the thought of introducing any of this shiny maple frightened her. She had a quick picture of young Village characters, frequenters of bookshops, lounging on maple furniture and drinking rum and coke, putting their glasses down anywhere. (JACKSON, 2009, p. 49)

While taking a closer look in the bookshelf, Hilda found books of modern dance photographs, some of them signed “Artie Roberts” and she indulged in the thought of Nancy being a dancer and both of them sharing the same taste and affection for this art. If so, the difference between them is that Nancy thrived, while Hilda did not.

Miss Clarence ended up finding a book that took her back in time. It was a book with a particular dancer — Martha Graham⁹ — with a photograph of her in a pose that Hilda herself used to practice while she was a dancer. This finding triggered some memories on her and she decided to try to reproduce the dancer's pose. She stood up, raised her arms and realized that it was not as easy as she thought it would be — she would feel it in her shoulders later on in the day. Suddenly, a knock in the door startled her. A young man, who had the same interest in her regarding the furniture, entered. His name was Mr. Harris. Their conversation began as Mr. Harris apologized for entering the room like this, but the door was partially opened and he simply walked in. They talked about the furniture and Hilda informed him that the price was on them and that he could take a look if he wanted. He then asked if Hilda was Mrs. Robinson, to which she neither denied or confirmed. They proceed to talk. Harris revealed he was a writer and that he had just moved to New York to pursue his dream. Just as she did years before.

Their whole conversation occurred without her clarifying this mistake and Hilda was able to live a life where she and her husband were moving to Paris, and he was a writer, and she was a dancer, and her dream came true. At least for that brief moment.

“You an artist too?”

“No,” Miss Clarence said. She took a deep breath. “Dancer,” she said.

He smiled again, pleasantly. “I might have known,” he said. “When I came in.”

Miss Clarence laughed modestly.

“It must be wonderful,” he said.

“It's hard,” Miss Clarence said.

“It must be. You had much luck so far?”

“Not much,” Miss Clarence said

(JACKSON, 2009, p. 55)

“We have to get rid of everything,” Miss Clarence said. She hesitated. “Artie's going to Paris,” she said finally.

“Wish I was.” He sighed. “Well, good luck to both of you.”

“You, to,” Miss Clarence said, and closed the door behind him slowly.

(JACKSON, 2009, p. 56)

The story ends with Hilda leaving a note to Nancy, the real Mrs. Robinson and informing her that the furniture is not what she expected to be and would not be buying any of it for her place. She left the note in the same place that she found Nancy's previous post-it, closed the door and left. When she took the stairs and was leaving the apartment 4B in Greenwich Village,

⁹ Martha Graham (1894 – 1991) was an American dancer, teacher and choreographer of modern dance. Available at <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Martha-Graham>. Access on 03 Oct. 2022.

she realized that her shoulders were aching, without leaving clear if it was due to the brief recollection of the past while posing as the dancer of due to something else.

2.2 The Daemon Lover

‘She had not slept well’. This is how Jackson’s second short story begins, with a sleep deprived young woman — that will be addressed as Daisy in this work —, that was excited and anticipating for the day to start, the first day of her new life as she was going to become a married woman. Mrs. Harris. However, the turn of events made her day still a memorable one, but not according to her expectations.

Daisy slept a little less than six hours, five hours and a half to be exact, all due to her excitement that the new day will bring to her life. The necessity to have everything perfect even made her overly look at her window, losing herself in the thought of having the perfect sunny day. She made her coffee, her bed, and decided which clothes she would be wearing, trying to wonder if her final choice will be sufficient to reproduce the idea with her appearance.

It occurred to her that perhaps she ought not to wear the blue silk dress; it was too plain, almost severe, and she wanted to be soft, feminine. Anxiously she pulled through the dresses in the closet, and hesitated over a print she had worn the summer before it was too young for her, and it had a ruffled neck, and it was very early in the year for a print dress, but still... (JACKSON, 2009, p. 9)

The plan had been decided the previous night. Jamie would leave for the last time, they would start their days separately, they would meet at the city hall and become a husband and wife. Happily ever after. And everything had to be perfect, everything must be correct. Daisy starts to make sure that her home is proper to receive Jamie as her husband and she is horrified that she forgot to change her bed sheets and immediately goes to her room and makes their bed with fresh, clean sheets. After checking everything that was possible to be checked in her apartment, from bathroom towels — which she would throw at the hamper and hang a new one at every use — to the imperfect skin under her eyes, she sat down and began her long and sufferable waiting journey for Mr. Harris. He agreed to meet her by ten o’clock and she waited for him until one o’clock in the afternoon. Then, she decided to leave her apartment and look out for him. Something must have happened as he would never have stood her up at her place, their place, on the day of their marriage.

Arriving at her destination, Daisy rang the bell marked ‘Superintendent’ to ask for Jamie’s apartment, since she realized she did not know what was his apartment and his name was also not displayed with the other residents. To her surprise, there was no James Harris in the building.

“Lady here,” the man said “Lady looking for a guy name of Harris, lives here. Anyone in the building?” “No”, the woman said. Her voice sounded amused. “No man named Harris here”. “Sorry,” the man said. He started to close the door. “You got the wrong house, lady,” he said, and added in a lower voice, “or the wrong guy,” and he and the woman laughed (JACKSON, 2009, p. 15)

“But he *does* live here”, Daisy affirms. The woman started to question Daisy how Jamie looks like, what type of clothes he used to wear. “He’s rather tall, and fair. He wears a blue suit very often. He’s a writer” (much like Mr. Harris from Jackson’s “The Villager”), she replies. After some thinking, the superintendent’s wife remembers a man in a blue suit, but he was not a permanent resident in their complex. He was living in the Royster’s place, apartment 3B, while they were away. He has been there for a month, the exact time that Daisy and Jamie knew each other. Daisy went to the third floor, and took a deep breath before knocking at their door and quickly Mrs. Royster greets her. At first, it looked like she did not know who Mr. Harris was, but with a little insistence from the bride to be, she remembered him and marched to her husband inside their apartment. Daisy found out that the apartment was lend to Jaime by then but he was no longer there, might have left earlier on the morning before they arrive, according to Mr. Royster. “Not a thing out of place”, Mrs. Royster said. She moved her bread and peanut butter inclusively. “Everything just the way we left it.” she said (JACKSON, 2009, p. 18). As if he was never ever there.

Daisy had to find him, no matter what. But how could she? Where to start? She decided that maybe she could try to go to places where a young man would visit around the neighborhood, as if she was redoing his steps. She tried first the delicatessen next door to the apartment complex, but she only found a rude owner. Following the path that Jamie might have to take to go to her place, she found herself near a newsstand.

“Can you possibly tell me if a rather tall young man in a blue suit went past here this morning around ten o’clock?” When the man only looked at her, his eyes wide and his mouth a little open, she thought, he thinks it’s a joke, or a trick, and she said urgently, “It’s very important, please believe me. I’m not teasing you.” (JACKSON, 2009, p. 20).

The newsdealer did not seem much of a helping person, but he gave her the information that her man might have been there around ten and that he headed to uptown — as suggested

by her as this could be the shortest path to her house from where she was now — and after thanking his information, she left. Her next stop was a florist's shop. 'This is my wedding day after all, he might have gotten flowers to bring me', she thought. Daisy approached the florist in a hurried way, not willing to give him the chance to welcome her in his establishment. She was in a deep hurry.

"It's *terribly* important that I get in touch with a gentleman who may have stopped in here to buy flowers this morning. *Terribly* important. She stopped for a breath and the florist said, "Yes, what sort of flowers were they?" "I don't know," she said, surprised. "He never —" She stopped and said, "He was a rather tall young man, in a blue suit. It was about ten o'clock." (JACKSON, 2009, p. 21).

After much insistence, the florist remembered that a man fitting Daisy's description *might* have bought a dozen of chrysanthemums. However, this was not her Jamie. He would not have chosen this type of flower for this occasion. She moved on and for a brief moment she considered going to the police, but she gave up on that after realizing she would not have substantial information besides Jamie's name, looks and the approximate time of his "disappearing", which would be solid information in other circumstances, but with her current situation it would sound slightly doubtful. Daisy was three blocks away from her home when she saw a shoeshine in the coming corner. She approached him as she did the others but in a very distinct tone from her prior meetings, already losing her temper and pose.

"Look," she said, the words coming before she thought of them "I'm sorry to bother you, but I'm looking for a young man who came up this way about ten this morning, did you see him?" And she began her description, "Tall, blue suit, carrying a bunch of flowers?" The old man began to nod before she was finished". "I saw him," he said. "Friend of yours?" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 24).

She could not believe him. To her surprise, the shoeshine did see her Jamie. Daisy desperately searched for a change in her pocket to give him but could not find it. Apologetic by this, she marched towards the direction where the old man guided her, the direction of her own apartment.

For the first time she was really sure he would be waiting for her, and she hurried up the three blocks, the skirt of her print dress swimming under her coat, and turned into her own block. From the corner she could not see Jamie looking out, waiting for her, and going down the block she was almost running to get to him. (JACKSON, 2009, p. 25).

At least she was going to find her beloved Jamie and would be there, at their place, expecting her with his blue suit, his rather tall figure and a dozen of chrysanthemums. He must

surely found a way to enter the apartment. No barrier is too impenetrable for true love. With trembling keys and fingers, she opened her door and it was empty. With the same fresh clean sheets and a cold cup of coffee and used bathroom towels. Everything was exactly the same and there was no one there, let alone Mr. Harris.

Desperate, Daisy went back to the shoeshine for further information and he clarified that he did went into that direction and entered the house. 'I watched him', the old man said, offended by her tone, 'There's a young man's got a girl, and I watched him right into the house' (JACKSON, 2009, p. 25). That was enough to alarm her and she ran toward the house, barely thanking the man for the information. In a blink of an eye, Daisy was walking in the block pointed by the men, not sure which house to search for him. She calmed her pass and started to walk slowly, trying to pay attention if she saw Jamie in one of the front windows or if his laughter was able to be heard from outside. There was a woman pushing a baby carriage in from one of the houses with her twelve year boy right next to her and there Daisy saw the opportunity to once again, make her inquires about James Harris. The woman did not reply as she expected, but the twelve year old did. 'Big bunch of flowers?', the boy asked, pulling at her coat. "Big bunch of flowers? I seen him, missus." (JACKSON, 2009, p. 26). He said that he followed Jamie to the house next door, gave him a quarter and said that this was a big day for him. Daisy gave him a dollar bill for the information that he was on the top floor.

The street door of the apartment house was unlocked; there were no bells in the outer vestibule, and no lists of names. The stairs were narrow and dirty; there were two doors on the top floor. The front one was the right one; there was a crumpled florist's paper on the floor outside the door and a knotted paper ribbon, like a clue, like the final clue in the paper-chase. (JACKSON, 2009, p. 27).

She decided to knock. When doing so, she believed that some voices and noises were coming from that apartment and she suddenly froze with the idea of confronting Jamie in case he suddenly appeared in this strange home. The voices stopped and she knocked again, but the only thing that she found was deep silence. She decided to check the other door in case the little kid got the wrong place, but she found not only an empty place, but also a place that seemed forgotten by time.

Finally she went to the other door on the floor, and knocked. The door swung open beneath her hand and she saw the empty attic room, bare lath on the walls, floorboards unpainted. She stepped just inside, looking around; the room was filled with bags of plasters, piles of old newspapers, a broken trunk. There was a noise which she suddenly realized as a rat and then she saw it, sitting very close to her, near the wall, its evil face alert, bright eyes watching her. She stumbled in her haste to be out with the door closed, and the skirt of the pint dress caught and tore. She knew there was

someone inside the other apartment, because she was sure she could hear low voices and sometimes laughter. She came back many time, every day for the first week. She came on her way to work, in the mornings; in the evening, on her way to dinner alone, but no matter how often or how firmly she knocked, no one ever came to the door (JACKSON, 2009, p. 27-28).

Daisy left her apartment searching for answers and for her loved one and instead what she found was the judgment from several men throughout her day and an empty apartment that no matter how much she insisted, silence was the only reply she had.

3. THE ANALYSIS

The first part of this section will be a description of both starting points of each narrative and in sequence, I will delve in the psychological analysis. Although there are several places that Daisy navigates when looking for James Harris and that Hilda stays a while in a cafeteria, as well as a description of her private life is given, both scenarios will be named “the outside world” and variations in this work. This will facilitate the analysis that I propose and will delimitate the difference from the “inside world” (both apartments).

It is also clear the importance that James Harris has in both stories — and in other stories from Jackson’s lore —, but for this study in particular, he will not be the focus.

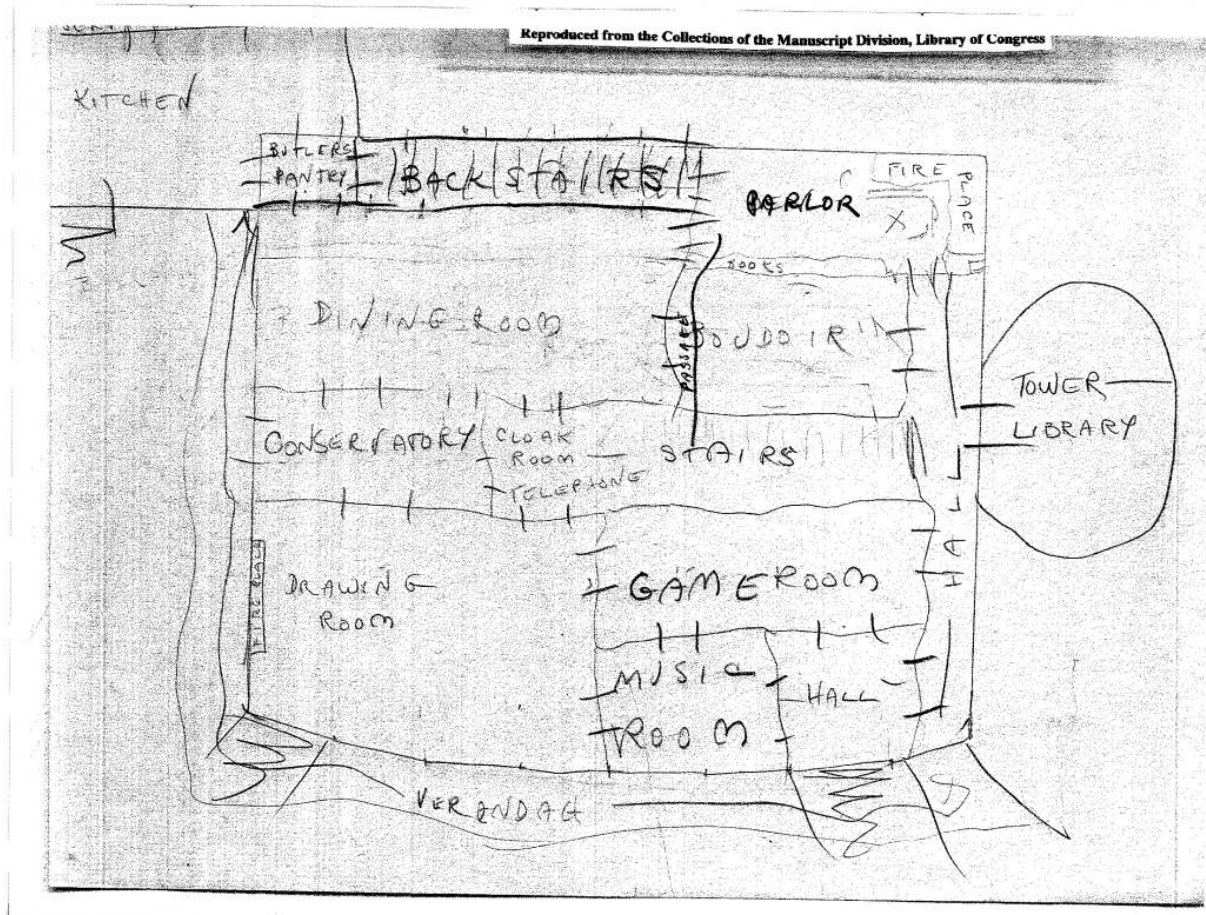
3.1. The Spaces

When readers make the decision to dive in the adventure of a new book, a contract is sealed between both parts and the conversation with the book begins. In this conversation, the reader is responsible to bring their life experience and what made them be who they are. The book then has the duty to bring the plot. This conversation can either end on good terms, when the reader decides to assimilate the outcome in a positive way and might even recommend the reading to someone else, or they can add this book to their list of worst experiences ever.

Certainly, there are countless factors that will weigh on the scale to make the reader decide their taste or distaste for this book, but the plot has a lot to offer. They need to bring meaningful characters to keep the reader engaged with their story and often when the reader can see themselves in the story — their story and the characters resonate —, a powerful connection is established. Another important factor that can decide this conversation is the ambience that the story provides — it’s *aura*. It is here where the spaces and their importance reside. Barbieri (2009) affirms that the spatial construction of the narrative stops being a passive agent and becomes an active one: the space becomes an articulator of the story.

In Jackson’s work, spaces are often an important part of the narrative. They demand the same attention as her words do. Unquestionably, her close relationship with her agoraphobia gives a lot of reasons for Jackson to provide a more attentive look to the surroundings in a narrative. As an example, when she was writing “The Haunting of Hill House”, she took the time to sketch the floor plants of the residence, the outside and the big haul.

Figure 3 - Sketch of the first floor of Hill House.



(Source: All Arts.¹⁰)

When looking at the places and spaces in “The Villager” and “The Daemon Lover”, we have in both works the “same” places: the inside (the apartments in both narratives) and the outside world (the café from where Hilda is in the start of the narrative and all the places Daisy goes when she’s looking for Jamie). According to Bachelard (1964) “the house shelters the daydreaming, the house protects the dreamer, the house allows one to dream in peace”. Inside Daisy’s apartment, she is building the foundations of her dream life as a wife, mother, and housewife.

“(she) let her mind slip past today and tomorrow, into the farther future, when Jamie was established with his writing and she had given up her job, the golden house-in-the-country future they had been preparing for the last week. “I used to be a wonderful cook,” she had promised Jamie, “with a little time and practice I could remember how to make angel-food cake. And fried chicken,” she said, knowing how the words would

¹⁰ Available at <https://www.allarts.org/2018/10/woman-of-halloween-writer-shirley-jackson/>. Access on 27 Sep. 2022

stay in Jamie's mind, half-tenderly. "And Hollandaise sauce." (JACKSON, 2009, p. 12)

She organizes the food for the perfect breakfast she will have as Mrs. Harris, the bed is well made, the bathroom clean and tidy.

"(...) looking carefully around the one-room apartment. They planned to come back here tonight and everything must be correct. With sudden horror she realized that she had forgotten to put clean sheets on the bed; the laundry was freshly back and she took clean sheets and pillow cases from the top shelves of the closet and stripped the bed, working quickly (...). The bed was a studio bed, with a cover to make it look like a couch, (...). She took the old sheets and pillowcases into the bathroom and stuffed them down into the hamper, and put the bathroom towels in the hamper too, and clean towels on the bathroom racks (JACKSON, 2009, p. 10)."

This is not what Hilda *needs* to find. Miss Clarence has the necessity to find an untidy, imperfect, messy apartment to corroborate her choices in life and sustain the decision she previously made. While Daisy creates her future with affection, Hilda glance it with disdain. When looking not only at the furniture in the living room and their condition, but also to the negligible kitchen and bathroom, with roaches everywhere and the certainty that the life and relationships that live in that apartment must not be the first choice of any person.

3.2. The Mind

Returning to the concept of *dazed woman*, is it possible to find examples in the beginning of "The Daemon Lover". Daisy starts her day, she reminds the reader that she is not in her right state of mind. She is slept deprived and without any food in her stomach.

She had not slept well: from one-thirty, when Jamie left and she went lingeringly to bed, until seven, when she at last allowed herself to get up and make coffee, she had slept fitfully, stirring awake to open her eyes and look into the half-darkness, remembering over and over, slipping again into a feverish dream (JACKSON, 2009, p. 9)

She turned on the burner under the coffeepot, and went to the window; it was sunny. When the coffeepot began to crackle she came back and poured herself coffee, into a clean cup. I'll have a headache if I don't get some solid food soon, she thought, all this coffee, smoking too much, no real breakfast. A headache on her wedding day; she went and got the tin box of aspirin from the bathroom closet and slipped it into her blue pocketbox (JACKSON, 2009, p. 10).

There is another thing that can be noticed when paying attention to Daisy's state of mind. In the first pages of the narrative, it is evidenced by her attention to organization and perfectionism. It can be discussed perhaps if this is a case of obsessive-compulsive-disorder,

also known as OCD, since she changes the towels whenever she uses one and fixed it to be well balanced in the hanger, as well as her extreme attention to the bedsheets and to the dress that she will be wearing. But, she does break her pattern when she notices that Jamie is not coming. She washes her hands in a rush and does not change the towels, she leaves her empty coffee mug wherever she is in the house and at a certain point her dress gets ripped. Her attention to detail seems more a reflection of how well put a house and a woman were supposed to be, how impeccable and perfect everything should be, especially now that Daisy would no longer be just a woman, she would become someone's wife.

This brings to my attention that there is a flaw in the theory proposed at this work, a misunderstanding. By saying that Hilda and Daisy suffer the effects of a mental or psychological displacement by their physical displacement throughout the course of their stories, I am not taking into consideration Anna Freud's theory of Ego defenses (1992). While revisiting his study, Sigmund Freud (1923) understood that the initial analysis of the mind was not sufficient to comport the whole concepts of his psychoanalytic theory, known as first topography. In his work, "The Ego and the Id" (1989), he divided the psyche into three systems: the conscious (Cs), the preconscious (Pcs) and the unconscious (Ucs). From that revisitation, he came up with a new set of concepts, or the second topography: *Id*, *Ego* and *Super-ego*. The *Id* is human's primal instincts, it is there to satisfy the basic needs and desires, the part of the mind with sexual and aggressive drives as well as hidden memories. The *Ego* is an extension of the *Id*, and it is there to restrain the impulses that the *Id* wants and needs, but expressed in a morally accepted way, without causing a disruption in the real world. Lastly, the *Super-ego* is the concept that balances the *Id* and the *Ego*, composed by the ideals that people learn and assimilate in the childhood by the influence of society, or more directly, through their parents or the ones responsible for their upbringing.

From her father's work, Anna Freud (1992) developed a study regarding the defenses of the *Ego* towards anxiety, a set of psychological reactions in relation to situations that occurred in the real world to avoid (or confront) those moments of conflicts that most likely will cause a trauma or reliving one. One of these key reactions is the *Displacement aggression*. This coping mechanism is activated when you reallocate your frustration or anger to a less threatening target, be it a person or an object. This information is crucial for this work because it is possible to address this reaction in an informal way of a *psychological displacement*, read as a relocation of someone's state of mind, but by bringing an academic and psychoanalytical analysis, this term is no longer acceptable. Still, it was possible to look at Anna's work and find other *Ego* reactions that are suitable for the analysis that this work proposes. Vaillant (1994) describes the

defense mechanism as an “innate involuntary regulatory processes that allow individuals to reduce cognitive dissonance and to minimize sudden changes in internal and external environments by altering how these events are perceived”. The defense mechanisms have the ability to alter the affected perception of themselves (subject), the others (object), of an idea or even of a feeling (VALLIANT, 1971). Both Hilda and Daisy fit in those description throughout their stories. Both have an affected perception of themselves as Miss Clarence is constantly reassessing her clothes and possessions to affirm the successful single woman that she is, even if she gave up on what she wanted to be, while Daisy struggles to identify qualities in herself if not related to a relationship.

When Miss Clarence gave the matter any thought at all, she was apt to congratulate herself on her common sense in handling a good job competently and supporting herself better than she would have in her hometown. Confident that she looked very well in her gray tweed suit and the hammered copper lapel ornament from a Village jewelry store, Miss Clarence finished her frosted and looked at her watch again (JACKSON, 2009, pg. 50).

In one of the most memorable passages in “The Daemon Lover”, Daisy flirts with the idea of going to the police and requesting them to search for Jamie, since, by all means, he was missing and was a person — until proven the contrary. Except, she restrains herself from doing that and starts to imagine the dialogue with a policeman in the police station. The way Jackson created this scene and developed the internal dialogue/external monologue is so remarkable that in case she does not have an attentive reader — and this is the last thing that a reader of Jackson should be —, they would believe that this scene really took place in the real world.

There was a policeman on the corner, and she thought, Why don't I go to the police — you go to the police for a missing person. And then thought, What a fool I'd look like. She had a quick picture of herself standing in a police station, saying, “Yes, we were going to be married today, but he didn't come,” and the policeman, three or four of them standing around and listening, looking at her, at her print dress, at her too-bright make-up, smiling at one another. She couldn't tell them any more than that, could not say, “Yes, it looks silly, doesn't it, me all dressed up and trying to find the young man who promised to marry me, but what about all of it you don't know? I have more than this, more than you can see: talent, perhaps, and humor of a sort, and I'm a lady and I have pride and affection and delicacy and a certain clear view of life that might make a man satisfied and productive and happy; there's more than you think when you look at me (JACKSON, 2009, pg. 23).

This is also the first moment where Daisy gives herself value and is able to point out her qualities. Although they are made when inserted in a relationship, in a marriage, she would be all that because someone (Jamie) has the need of someone like her, it is not possible to see a meaningful and gentle look from herself in no other moment, even if under the described

circumstances. It is as if she requires this reaffirmation to see that yes, she is worthy of being loved and happy.

Opposing Daisy, Hilda does not present alteration in the perception of others. The encounter with James Harris worsens her mental state and her perception of her surroundings, but it does not have a particular effect in the way she perceives other people. Also, mostly because Hilda does not interact with such a large group as Daisy does. In her case, Daisy has several characters that she has an interaction in some degree — mental or physical. From those interactions I believe two points are important to be mentioned. First, Daisy mostly has negative interactions in her narrative, excluding the shoeshining man and the little kid that helped her by the end. All the others had either a negative outcome with people pitying her or talking back at her rudely, or simply not able to provide any sort of help. Second, in her whole narrative she was the only woman alone, making her encounters even more heavy than they already were — and mostly with men. The women were always depicted in a family-oriented environment, either accompanied by their husbands, like the superintendents and the Royster's, or like the women towards the end of the story, in front of her house with her baby in her arms. Jackson reminds her that Daisy is completely alone.

To complete Valliant's propose of the defense mechanisms, there is the alteration of an affected feeling. I believe that it is suitable to look at this and think of expectations. Their narrative is a living reminder that they failed to become who they should and desired to be. No matter how much success Hilda is capable to achieve, in her heart she is a failure. The heavy shoulders that she has by leaving the apartment can be seen as a sign of defeat, not only physical tiredness due to the pose she was in earlier.

She collected her pocketbook, *The Charterhouse of Parma*, and the *Villager*, and closed the door. The thumbtack was still there, and she pried it loose and tacked her note up with it. Then she turned and went back down the stairs, home to her own apartment. Her shoulders ached. (JACKSON, 2009, p. 56).

In Daisy's case, her story seems to leave a bitter taste in the mouth. Differently from Hilda, Daisy was close to become what she desired and wanted. She was not only engaged, but the story presented to us in the day that she was supposed to get married, she was sure that she was finally able to turn this page in the book of her life and a new chapter was going to start. More than once, the reader followed her narrative and shared the feeling of accomplishment, only to find frustration and defeat. This brings the possibility to see Daisy suffering from denial.

Just as, in the neurotic conflict, perception of a prohibited instinctual stimulus is warded off by means of repression, so **the infantile ego resorts to denial in order not to become aware of some painful impression from without**. In obsessional neurosis the repression is secured by means of a reaction formation, which contains the reverse of the repressed instinctual impulse (sympathy instead of cruelty, bashfulness instead of exhibitionism). Similarly, in the infantile situations which I have described, the denial of reality is completed and confirmed when in his fantasies, words or behavior, the child **reverses the real facts**. (FREUD, 1992, p. 89, our emphasis)

More than once she receives blunt evidence that either Jamie fooled her and played with her feelings — which was clearly not acceptable since they were extremely in love with each other — or that Jamie was not going to be there waiting for her anywhere.

Her key trembled in her fingers at the downstairs door, and as she glanced into the drugstore she thought of her panic, drinking coffee there this morning, and almost laughed. At her own door she could wait no longer, but began to say, “Jamie, I’m here, I was so worried”, even before the door was open. Her own apartment was waiting for her, silent, barren, afternoon shadows lengthening from the window. For a minute she saw only the empty coffee cup, thought, He has been here waiting, before she recognizes it as her own, left from the morning. She looked all over the room, into the closet, into the bathroom (JACKSON, 2009, p. 25).

Jackson leaves hints through the narrative that Daisy in fact does not know much about Jamie at all. Specially when Daisy is after him when she leaves the apartment complex and starts for the second time of her day her journey after him.

As she walked toward the corner, she thought, he must have come this way, it’s the way he’d go to get to my house, it’s the only way for him to walk. She tried to think of Jamie: where would he have crossed the street? What sort of person was he actually — would he cross in front of his own apartment house, at random in the middle of the block, at the corner? (JACKSON, 2009, p. 20).

It is also interesting to see the consequences that two objects unfold in the narrative: Daisy’s dress and Hilda’s photography book. When Hilda has finished checking all the rooms in the Robert’s apartment, she is resting in a chair when her eyes meet a book of dance photography. When she picks the object in her hands and starts to pass the pages, one particular photo from the dancer Martha Graham caught her attention and “a sudden picture of herself at twenty came to Miss Clarence, before she ever came to New York, practicing the dancer’s pose” (JACKSON, 2009, p. 53). Hilda decides to try to copy the pose once more, a pose that she was used to make a little less than fifteen years ago and this causes her discomfort, “it catches you in the shoulders”. This action makes her remind herself of a time no longer there, and the following encounter with Mr. Harris, a young man that came to New York to become a writer and is also there in a way to find some furniture for his own place, breaks her a little more. As

described before, Hilda follows Mr. Harris' dialogue as if she was the owner of that place, owner of that life. She imagines that this future perhaps, could easily be the life that she would have ended up with in case she had followed her dream. In a twisted and not conventional way, it seems that Hilda is experiencing another of Anna Freud's defense mechanisms: regression¹¹. She was not capable of fulfilling her dream of becoming a dancer, but she was capable of experiencing a little of how life was as a dancer. She is also aware of her potential and believes that the situation she finds herself — in that particular room — could have been her current life. So she returns, partially, to that feeling and based on that, pretends that what she is experiencing there is reality and not a distortion of her desires.

For Daisy, her dress is her clothing that followed in that journey and suffered in the end of the story. We see that in the start of the narrative, Daisy is very concerned with what style of dress she would wear, mostly to what the dress will convey to society. She will be judged based on the clothing she picks, especially in her condition as a single woman in her thirties. The wrong choice could be fatal. By the end of the story, when she is in the apartment that the little kid pointed at and she realized that there was nothing there and she sees the frightening rat in the hole in the wall, her dress is torn while she is trying to leave in a rush. The dress was the only thing that left with her in that morning that could be seen as a connection to the perfectionism that Miss Jackson depicted in the start of the narrative, and while there is this rupture when Daisy leaves to find Jamie and she does not change her towels after washing her hands — an action she repeated a few times —, the torn dress in that empty, dirty and dark apartment complete her displacement in the narrative, as mentioned in the previous section.

¹¹ A defense mechanism where the ego reverts to an earlier stage of development usually in response to stressful situations. functions as form of retreat, enabling a person to psychologically go back in time to a period when the person felt safer. Available at encurtador.com.br/abjnN. Access on 28 Sep. 2022

CONCLUSION

Through my university years, I dedicated my academic life to study spaces and their meaning in gothic literature. What was their purpose, would they be there by the simple need of a room, a whim of the author, or could they mean something else? After collecting all this information compiling everything, my search began, and Shirley Jackson fitted like a glove. Other works from her could have been chosen for this project, but the combination of “The Daemon Lover” and “The Villager” when analyzing the female characters and particularly, their relationship with where they are located, is easy to notice. The same results can be found for both main characters in those short stories (the mental displacement happens in both), but they have opposite movements when taking into consideration the start and the end of those narratives. In “The Daemon Lover”, Daisy leaves her apartment to look for Harris and it is during this ‘physical displacement’, moving from her home to the outside world, that she ends up psychologically affected. In “The Villager”, it is the opposite. Hilda is in the outside world and her story happens inside a small apartment on the fourth floor.

Throughout this work, it was interesting to notice how these stories are so similar and opposite at the same time. On the one hand, there is a single woman who is happy and proud of who and where she is in life with her own accomplishments, without depending on a man. However, there is a small voice inside her head and a feeling deep down in her heart that insists on questioning whether she *really* believes in the reality that she built for herself, if she is really satisfied. On the other hand, there is a woman who believes that she does not have what it takes to be happy as she is not with the one she loves, and that being with them is the only way out of her reality. One has her life put together; the other is falling apart. One must go to the outworld to confront her fears and insecurities, while the other faces those feelings while inside someone else’s apartment. One has a dream with her happy future, the other relives her promising past. In the end, both stories are about women who wish they could have control over things that do not seem their right to be.

The spaces that Daisy and Hilda inhabited were no mere coincidence. By removing them, it is not only the narrative that will change and will lose its essence, but them will also not be the same. Even if the ending that they faced were not the ones that they desired – either by their expectations or the reader’s – that ending belongs to them. It is part of who they are.

Shirley Jackson goes to both extremes of what a woman's life could be during her time, either by herself and this may be followed by a successful career or belonging to someone and depending on them. The in-between does not seem to have a place in her fiction, yet it was her

reality. She was a mother of four, wife, housewife, *faculty wife*, and an author. These roles walked with her and occasionally played musical chairs: one day she was Shirley Jackson, the mom; on another, Shirley Jackson, the author. What she did not allow was to let these roles become permanent and be the only thing that will define her. She was a lot of things, some say even haunted, but never a woman to be defined by others' terms. Her spaces have followed her and impacted her life in more ways than they might affect other people. Her agoraphobia became an everlasting company in her late years, impacting simple chores such as going to the grocery store or collecting mail in the post office. Turning to her craft, she applied this to her work and from that, her readers can see an intricate relationship between her characters and where they locate themselves in their world. She used this relation to bring into discussion issues that might not have had a place to argue in the past, but in the recent years, the need to revise them became a necessity, her work being one of the possible tools.

With this work, I expect that people will indulge not only in Jackson's work, but also see a possibility to look at this author and see the obstacles that her stories are showing to society. I also hope she can find the door that will lead her to the inside of Brazilian academy, as well as a place to call her own. More is yet to be researched regarding Jackson, be it her life, her narratives, or her letters. There is a sea of possibilities to cast over her – and for some of them, I hope this work can be a lighthouse.

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