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**Haunted by the Family: A Psychoanalytic Study of Natalie
Waite in Shirley Jackson's "*Hangsamen*"**

***A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for a
Master's degree in Literature and Civilisation***

Submitted by:

Beneddine Ahlem

Supervised by:

Dr. Kersani HasnaHasna

Board of Examiners:

President: Dr. Belahmar Louzani

MCB

University of Ain Temouchent

Supervisor: Dr. Kersani Hassna

MAA

University of Ain Temouchent

Examiner: Mrs. Houari Rayhan

MAA

University of Ain Temouchent

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Haunted by the Family: A Psychoanalytic Study
of Natalie White in Shirley Jackson's 'The Hangman'

أصرح بشرفي أن التزم بمراعاة المعايير العلمية والمنهجية ومعايير الأخلاقية المهنية والنزاهة الأكاديمية المطلوبة في انجاز مذكرة الماستر المذكورة أعلاه.

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أنا الأستاذ(ة) المشرف(ة):

كرماني حسناء

على مذكرة التخرج في الماستر والموسومة بـ:

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of Natalie White in Shirley Jackson's The Hangman

من انجاز الطالب (بين):

1. بن الدين أحلام

2.

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الاسم واللقب

Belahmar L. A.

امضاء المشرف

الاسم واللقب

Kerami Henna

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Dedications

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Abstract

This dissertation offers a psychoanalytic reading of Natalie Waite, the protagonist of Shirley Jackson's *The Hangsaman* (1951), by examining the family as a central source of psychological trauma and haunting. Drawing primarily on Freudian and post-Freudian psychoanalytic concepts such as repression, the unconscious, the uncanny, and identity fragmentation, the study argues that Natalie's mental disintegration is not an isolated pathology but a direct outcome of dysfunctional family dynamics. The Waite household is presented as an oppressive psychological space marked by emotional neglect, intellectual domination, and symbolic violence, all of which contribute to Natalie's unstable sense of self. The dissertation further explores Natalie's divided psyche through the emergence of the double, interpreted as a manifestation of repressed fears and desires that surface in response to familial control. Although the college setting appears to offer Natalie an escape from her family, the analysis demonstrates that this space ultimately reproduces similar structures of authority and alienation, reinforcing rather than resolving her psychological conflict. By situating Natalie's madness within a broader psychoanalytic framework, this study reconsiders mental breakdown as a complex form of survival and resistance. Ultimately, the dissertation highlights how the family's haunting presence persists throughout the narrative, shaping Natalie's identity and preventing any definitive resolution of the self.

Key words: Psychoanalysis – Family trauma – psychological haunting – Repression – The Unconscious – Alienation – Madness

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General Introduction

The General Introduction:

By the mid-nineteenth century, American gothic literature began to focus less on traditional Gothic elements such as haunted castles, monsters, and the supernatural aspects and redirected its attention toward inner, psychological fear. It increasingly explored disturbed mental states, guilt, and the pressures of social and moral repression. Horror was no longer located in ghostly architecture but within familiar houses and the divided self, a development that continued to intensify throughout the twentieth century and eventually shaped the modern psychological thriller.

Shirley Jackson occupies a central place in twentieth-century American Gothic for her sustained exploration of psychological disturbance, isolation, and female subjectivity, particularly in relation to domestic and familial structures. Critics repeatedly read her haunted spaces and troubled families as figures for women's psychic injury under mid-century patriarchy, where the nuclear family functions as both ideological ideal and site of oppression. In works such as *The Haunting of Hill House* and *Hangsaman*, Jackson links controlling or neglectful parents to daughters whose sense of self becomes fragmented, anxious, and increasingly haunted by internalized voices of authority. Biographical work on Jackson has further emphasized how hostile parental relationships and rigid gender expectations shaped both her life and her fictional daughters, including Natalie Waite. She utilized the female gothic to explore identity, alienation and the uncanny in a world where ordinary life becomes terrifying and marking the transition from traditional haunted houses to the haunted mind.

Published in 1951, *The Hangsaman* tells the story of Natalie Waite, who leaves her suffocating family home to attend a women's college. Instead of growing into a stable,

confident adult, Natalie slowly drifts into confusion, dissociation, and a sense that her mind is splitting apart.

The novel constantly shifts between what may be real and what may be imagined. It begins and restarts stories, drops hints that go nowhere, and is full of strange references. All of this creates a confusing, unstable world on the page that reflects how broken and uncertain Natalie feels inside. Natalie is called by different names, and eventually a second self, “Tony,” appears. This alter ego shows the inner battle between different, opposing versions of Natalie. It is as if the “real” Natalie can never appear directly.

This dissertation aims to study how the Waite family operates as the primary site of psychic trauma and haunting in the novel. Jackson depicts Mr. Waite as a strict and critical father and Mrs. Waite as an emotionally distant mother, thereby exposing how parental authority enforces narrow rules of femininity and creativity. Under these pressures, the daughter’s sense of self is shaped in damaging ways, leaving her to feel either invisible or excessively abnormal. In psychoanalytic terms, the family becomes the scene where unconscious conflict is first inscribed, the home is where repression is imposed, where the child internalizes parental judgment as a persecutory inner voice, and where unprocessed experiences return later as symptoms, doubles, and uncanny disturbances.

Guided by the objectives above, the following questions are addressed:

How does the Waite family home in *Hangsaman* function as a dysfunctional and oppressive space in which parental authority produces trauma, repression, and Natalie’s fragmented unconsciousness?

How does Jackson show that Natalie's sense of self is haunted by her family, so that past traumas, suppressed desires, and the internalized voices of her parents continuous to controlling her thoughts and feelings?

How does the college reproduce Natalie's sense of alienation and contribute to the continuation of her identity fragmentation rather than serving as a refuge?

After further readings, the following hypotheses are proposed to lead the investigation: Firstly, it is suggested that the Waite family home in *Hangsaman* works as a deeply dysfunctional and oppressive psychological space; Natalie's identity is strongly controlled by the expectations and judgments of her family. Old hurts and hidden wishes come back to her as disturbing inner voices and repeated, obsessive thoughts.. In this setting, Natalie's growing sense of self cannot develop in a stable way. Instead, her unconscious becomes fragmented and her identity remains unstable, this reflects how repressive family environments leave lasting psychological and even bodily traces of trauma on a child.

Secondly, it is suggested that Natalie's breakdown causes serious problems in self-expression and communication, which deepen her sense of alienation from others and push her toward dissociative withdrawal from reality.

Thirdly, it is suggested that Natalie's madness at college is not only a sign of mental breakdown, but also a strange way of surviving and fighting back. By using dissociation,

fantasy, and mixing reality with imagination, she builds a private inner world that protects her from the heavy pressure of her family and society.

This research work is divided into three main chapters. It begins by presenting the Waite household as a dysfunctional space marked by emotional coldness, intellectual domination, and a lack of genuine care. It then analyses parental authority and psychological control, focusing on Arnold Waite's narcissistic power and the mother's emotional absence and silent complicity, to show how these dynamics repress and silence Natalie. Moreover, it explores how early trauma and repression shape Natalie's unconscious, arguing that the family environment becomes the main cause of her inner fragmentation and unstable sense of self.

The second chapter investigates Natalie Waite's fragmented identity and the haunting presence of the uncanny in the novel. It first focuses on her divided psyche, showing how her unstable sense of self, feelings of alienation, and episodes of dissociation reveal deep inner conflict that can be read through psychoanalytic theories of identity fracture. It then studies the uncanny through the figure of the double, analyzing how Natalie's imagined companion reflects Freud's notion of the uncanny as the return of repressed desires and fears, and how this double functions both as a source of comfort and a potential threat. Lastly, it examines Natalie's relationship to language and silence, explaining how her difficulties in speaking and communicating, as well as the novel's use of silence and ambiguity, mirror her psychological breakdown and the gradual disintegration of her sense of reality.

The third chapter explores how *Hangsaman* represents madness, escape, and the illusion of autonomy in Natalie's life. It first considers her mental breakdown not only as an illness, but also as a strategy for surviving the intense pressure of her family and social environment,

showing how psychoanalytic theory can explain her withdrawal into an inner world. It then studies the college setting as a space that appears to offer freedom from the Waite household but in fact repeats similar patterns of authority, control, and emotional isolation, demonstrating that family trauma continues beyond the home. Finally, it analyses the ambiguous ending of the novel, focusing on the unresolved nature of Natalie's identity and the lingering influence of her family, which leaves her autonomy uncertain and incomplete.

Chapter one

Trauma and Psychological Suffering in American Gothic Literature.

Chapter 01: Trauma and Psychological Suffering in American Gothic Literature.

1.1. Introduction

American gothic shifted the focus from old gothic traditional features such as haunted houses and ghosts to focus on psychological suffering and to explore inner fear and the haunted minds. In this landscape, the haunted house is no longer a physical structure, but a symbol of the mind itself, a place where the repressed memories and the unresolved anxieties persist in.

This shift transforms the genre to explore more the psychological suffering, where the most terrifying specters are not ghosts or monsters but the fragmented inner self of the character. At the heart of this literary evolution is the concept of trauma, trauma in the American literature has a role in destroying the character's identity and it creates a psychological sense of haunting.

This chapter establishes a theoretical framework for understanding how internal fear can reshape the identity and leave the individual to navigate in a world where the familiar has become uncanny. Furthermore; it explores how the repressed memories and unresolved repression may lead to a form of psychic haunting in the daily life of the character.

1.2. American Gothic Literature and the Shift toward the Inner Self

American gothic redefines the Gothic space as internal rather than architectural, to emphasize the haunting power of the mind and the inner suffering, moral anxiety, guilt, mental conflicts and trauma. This shift reflects a growing of interest in psychological experience and the change that the narratives did to modify the Gothic tradition to conform the cultural context of the American literature.

1.2.1. The Evolution of American Gothic from Traditional Gothic Elements to Psychological Suffering

Gothic literature first emerged in the late eighteenth century as a response to tensions surrounding Enlightenment rationality, religion, and rapid social change. It relied on horror, gloom, and supernatural figures such as ghosts, monsters, and vampires as its central aesthetic tools. Haunted castles, monasteries, and medieval landscapes became common settings in early British and European Gothic fiction, symbolizing fear of a demonized past associated with feudal oppression, superstition, and rigid hierarchical power structures.

However, American gothic fiction developed a distinct form of the genre after the nation's founding. Rather than relying on medieval ruins or ancient European spaces, American Gothic was set in recognizably American environments and reflected concerns central to American society, including religion, racial tension, wilderness and nature, and the conflict between rationalism and the irrational. In this context, Gothic fiction merged with Dark Romanticism, a branch of Romanticism that emphasized sadness, madness, psychological depth, and the grotesque, while foregrounding the individual's inner struggles and moral conflicts. As Victoria Madden in her thesis on American gothic and mental illness writes:

Since its inception, American gothic fiction has distinguished itself from its European predecessors through a chief concern with mental apparitions rather than physical ones. In the absence of stereotypically Gothic settings found in British and continental texts, Gothic fictions set in the New World frequently turn inward, placing the locus of uncanny occurrences in the ordinary family home and, perhaps even more disturbingly, within the diseased mind it-self. (Madden 1)

The increasing use of psychological elements in American Gothic can largely be explained by the different sources of fear present in American society. Unlike European writers, American authors lacked a medieval past filled with castles, ruins, and long-standing traditions that could serve as Gothic settings. As a result, they turned inward, relocating horror to the human mind and using guilt, madness, and repressed trauma as primary sources of terror.

Consequently, this absence of traditional Gothic spaces encouraged American writers to adapt psychological elements to reflect forms of horror rooted in the human psyche often shaped by social pressure, hidden sin, and inner moral corruption. This is clearly illustrated in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown" (1835), where fear emerges not from a physical Gothic setting but from the protagonist's internal conflict, religious anxiety, and psychological disintegration.

By the nineteenth century, writers such as Edgar Allan Poe further established psychological instability as the central source of horror in American gothic literature. Poe's tales foreground psychological fear, obsession, paranoia, and unreliable narration, most notably in *The Tell-Tale Heart* (1843) and *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839), where madness and guilt drive the terror rather than external supernatural forces.

As psychological suffering became increasingly central to American gothic narratives, the human mind itself began to function as the primary Gothic space. This shift allowed readers to experience what lies hidden within characters through distorted perceptions, hallucinations, interior monologues, and fragmented consciousness. Gothic Writers played a crucial role in shaping this transformation by employing unstable narrators whose perceptions cannot be trusted, leaving readers uncertain about what is real and what is imagined. As a result, the mind

is represented as a dark, enclosed structure to Gothic building filled with hidden rooms, secrets, and repressed fear.

1.3. Trauma and Memory: Psychoanalytic Approaches

The relationship of trauma, memory, and the unconscious has been fundamentally shaped by the work of Sigmund Freud and contemporary theorists such as Cathy Caruth. they change the way trauma is interrupted , rather than viewing it as a simple memory of the past event , these psychoanalytic perspective dive a way to understand how trauma represent a disruption in the mind's ability to process reality. Through concepts such as repression, belatedness (Nachtraglichkeit), and the compulsion to repeat, these studies contribute to illustrate how unresolved trauma continues to shape the individual's identity. In this framework trauma is not remembered like a normal and clear memory, instead it remains unprocessed in the unconscious mind and haunt the psyche.

1.2.2. Female Gothic and the Domestic Space as Psychological Entrapment.

Female Gothic writers were fundamental in evolving the genre by shifting the terror from supernatural to sociological. In their works, women writers adapted the Gothic genre to explore the specific social and psychological struggles of their constraints by patriarchal norms. Furthermore, these writers demonstrated that the big monsters and ghosts are not the only frightening things; rather, it is within the familiar things, such as the domestic sphere where, women often face the threats and remain silenced.

The Female Gothic presents female identity as unstable and damaged, in order to demonstrate the crumbling castles and decaying structures of traditional Gothic fiction. As Ellen Moers argues in *Literary Women* (1976), where she famously coined the term “Female

Gothic,” eighteenth and nineteenth-century Gothic novels by women employ Gothic plots and imagery as coded expressions of women’s anxieties about domestic entrapment and female sexuality. These narratives expose the real dangers embedded in marriage, the family home, and male authority over women’s bodies and lives.

Building on this framework, Female Gothic writers transform the home, the bedroom, and the domestic sphere more broadly into central sites of horror and psychological suffering for the heroine. Rather than symbolizing safety or intimacy, the domestic space becomes the setting in which the female character experiences restricted childhood, disciplined freedom, and increasing feelings of alienation and oppression. As Ji Dou observes : "in Female Gothic fiction domestic space becomes a nightmarish terrain for the heroine , spaces such as the home and bedroom ,widely recognized as spaces of intimacy, are instead marked by suppression, constraint, dread, and solitude " (Dou 1).

Through this domestication of horror, female Gothic writers criticize rigid gender roles and male authority, revealing that inequality and violence persist even within the private sphere. Subsequently, the female characters are often portrayed as psychologically unstable or fragmented, where their damaged identities reflect the traumatic effects of domestic confinement and patriarchal control.

1.3.1. Trauma as Indirect and Belated Experience

Freud’s concept of *Nachträglichkeit* or deferred action explains trauma as an experience that is not fully comprehended at the moment it occurs. During the traumatic event, the mind is overwhelmed and unable to assimilate what is happening; as a result, the experience does not immediately become traumatic in a conscious sense. Instead, it acquires traumatic meaning belatedly, when the mind later assigns significance to the event. Because the traumatic

experience exceeds the psyche's capacity for understanding at the time of its occurrence, it is not fully integrated into consciousness.

Consequently, trauma returns indirectly in the form of intrusive memories, flashbacks, nightmares, or compulsive repetition. Freud illustrates this mechanism in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, where he analyzes war neuroses and traumatic dreams to demonstrate that trauma is an experience that the mind cannot fully process. Rather than being remembered as a coherent narrative, the traumatic event compulsively repeats itself, particularly in dreams. As Freud argues: "the traumatized individual is possessed by the event and does not gain mastery over it; instead, the subject remains unable to fully claim or control their own history" (Rabelhofer 58).

Central to this process is the concept of latency, the period between the traumatic event and the emergence of its symptoms. During this phase, the traumatized individual may appear psychologically stable, until a later event triggers or reactivates the original trauma. Throughout the latency period, the event is neither fully understood nor emotionally processed, it remains present as an unassimilated experience what later theorists describe as an unclaimed experience.

In *Moses and Monotheism*, Freud refers to this temporal gap as a period of latency that lacks proper registration of the traumatic event in memory. It is precisely this belatedness, Freud suggests, that pushes trauma to the limits of comprehension (Rabelhofer 59). Building on this framework, Freud conceptualizes trauma as unfolding in two temporal moments:

The first scene consisting of the initial traumatic moment is not fully emotionally experienced and intellectually understood, but can only be lived through at the time of its occurrence. It cannot be grasped because it comes too early in the child's development to be assimilated. The second scene sometimes a rather trivial trigger could reactivate the first after a period of latency. With regard to sexual child abuse

as depicted in the Katharina case, Freud posits that the actual abuse in childhood has no meaning to the child, even though it has sexual content. It is only after puberty that the adolescent through a second scene that is in some relation to the first one realizes the sexual meaning of the first experience. And it is only from this “belated” point that traumatization sets in: It is the second scene that makes the first scene “retrospectively” traumatic (Rabelhofer 59-60).

This paradoxical temporality explains why trauma symptoms such as panic attacks, nightmares, or bodily reactions often emerge before the individual fully understands their origin. Thus, trauma continually brings the past into the present, collapsing linear time and disrupting narrative continuity.

Cathy Caruth further develops Freud’s theory of deferred action in *Unclaimed Experience*, agreeing that trauma is defined by belatedness. However, she extends Freud’s model by arguing that trauma cannot be narrated as a complete or coherent story. Instead, it can only be approached indirectly, through fragments, symptoms, and disrupted narratives. As Caruth writes :” Trauma is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available” (4). Since this truth emerges belatedly, it remains partially inaccessible, existing between what is known and what remains unknowable within language and action.

Accordingly, she describes trauma as a wound that continues to speak even when the survivor remains silent, expressing itself through involuntary repetition and uncontrollable symptoms. This produces a persistent gap between what can be consciously articulated and what remains hidden or repressed.

This delayed and repetitive nature of trauma is not only something that happens in a person's mind or emotions. It also appears in the way stories about trauma are told the structure of the narrative itself becomes delayed, repetitive, and fragmented, just like the traumatic experience as she explains : "the story of trauma... is a kind of double telling, the oscillation between the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival" (7). Trauma narratives therefore move between past and present, not because memory simply recalls a prior event, but because trauma continues to assert itself through ongoing psychological effects. As a result, trauma cannot be confined to a single moment in time, giving rise to fragmented, repetitive, and non-linear narrative forms that mirror the survivor's fractured experience of temporality.

1.3.2. Memory, Repetition, Psychic Haunting in Trauma Studies

Traumatic memory differs from ordinary memory in the way it is formed and later recalled. While normal memories are flexible and constantly reshaped over time, traumatic memories resist such transformation. Every time an ordinary memory is remembered, the brain temporarily retrieves it and then stores it again with slight changes. Because of this process, two people can experience the same event yet remember it very differently. Individual emotions, interpretations, and perspectives influence how the memory is reshaped each time it is recalled.

In the case of non-traumatic memories, this process is generally beneficial, as it allows memories to soften over time and become less emotionally intense or painful. As individuals grow and change, they are able to reinterpret past events and create new meanings around them. In this way, ordinary memories are gradually integrated into the personal narrative and do not remain emotionally overwhelming.

Meanwhile, traumatic memories force themselves into the mind, pushing the individual to feel as though they are in danger, even when they are objectively safe. Unlike ordinary memories, which are voluntarily recalled and integrated into a coherent narrative, traumatic memories are stored differently. They are often encoded as fragmented images, bodily sensations, and intense emotions rather than as organized, linear stories.

Additionally, they are not clearly situated within chronological time, which makes them feel immediate and present rather than past. As a result, the person may experience a sense of detachment, feeling separated from their own identity or as though the traumatic experience exists outside the continuity of the self. In many cases, the mind represses the painful event into the unconscious. However, the experience does not disappear; instead, it returns indirectly through repeated patterns in the individual's relationships, behaviors, or emotions rather than through conscious recollection.

This idea is emphasized by Sigmund Freud in *Remembering, Repeating and Working Through* (1914): "we may say that the patient does not remember anything of what he has forgotten and repressed, but acts it out. He reproduces it not as a memory but as an action, he repeats it, without, of course, knowing that he is repeating it" (150). This experience is what Sigmund Freud refers to as repetition compulsion, a condition in which the individual does not fully perceive the traumatic event as something that has ended; rather, they remain psychologically trapped within it.

Repetition compulsion is not limited to the simple repetition of actions or events; rather, it refers to the way in which the past becomes incorporated into an individual's personality and patterns of behavior. This idea is further discussed in the scholarly article "The Repetition

Compulsion as Narrative Action” (1992). According to Glenn Fleisch, who interprets Sigmund Freud’s concept of repetition compulsion as a form of narrative action:

The repetition compulsion refers to the way that the past has been appropriated and incorporated into the patient’s generalized, embodied way of being (or, in other words, their character style). In analytic psychotherapy, the best access to this realm of being, to uncover the forces that empower the patient’s embodiment, is to attend to the manner with which the patient’s material is presented. The mode of communication, particularly the nonverbal reactions and style of speaking, and their effects on the therapist, offers an important inroad into the patient’s early life history (or, as I would prefer to say, to the tacit background horizon) particularly primitive affective states, internal object relations and preverbal trauma. This is enacted within the transference/countertransference (i.e. intersubjective) field (Fleisch 1).

Consequently, the past trauma becomes visible in every part of the personality of the character such as his tone of voice, emotional reactions and body language, This matches broader psychoanalytic views that repetition compulsion shows up as repeated patterns of relating and not just memories in the mind .Traumatic repetition can cause an individual to become psychologically stuck in an unresolved past, making it difficult to move forward and live fully in the present.

When a person remains trapped in past experiences, they may develop a sense of lost direction and identity confusion. For this reason, trauma theorists describe such a condition as an endless present, a state in which the past does not remain in the past but continuously

intrudes upon and shapes the present. In this context, in the recent academic literature is that Avery Gordon (1997) described haunting as a social phenomenon and a result of oppression she writes in her book *Ghostly Matters*:

I used the term haunting to describe those singular yet repetitive instances when home becomes unfamiliar, when your bearings on the world lose direction, when the over-and-done-with comes alive, when what's been in your blind spot comes into view. Haunting raises specters, and it alters the experience of being in time, the way we separate the past, the present, and the future" (xvi). .

Thus, haunting disrupts the individual's sense of temporal continuity, blurring the boundaries between past and present and reinforcing the condition of the endless present described by trauma theorists. However, psychoanalysis is not only about being haunted by the past, an individual can be also be haunted by elements he does not fully understand.

This occurs as a result to the influence of experiences that do not belong to his identity and this is called by the dimension of haunting. This concept is about how human beings can pick up on each other's feelings and traumas. Consequently, psychoanalysis focuses not only to understand the individual behaviours but also on studying the environment and surroundings from which he came, accordingly this is what leads to know what haunt the individual.

1.4. Psychoanalytic and Trauma Based Framework

Unconscious mental processes such as repression and dissociation play a crucial role in shaping how individuals respond to childhood trauma. Early traumatic experiences are often pushed into the unconscious mind, where they remain hidden yet continue to influence behaviour,

emotional responses, and identity formation later in life. In this sense, trauma does not simply disappear; rather, it persists in indirect and fragmented forms.

In this context, concepts such as psychic fragmentation, the uncanny, and repetition compulsion further demonstrate how traumatic experiences destabilize the self. Trauma may fracture the individual's sense of identity, producing internal division and recurring emotional disturbances. The return of the repressed, often experienced through uncanny feelings or compulsive repetition, reveals the mind's inability to fully process overwhelming events.

Influential theorists have examined the ways in which trauma is internalized, repressed, and fragmented within the psyche. By combining clinical insights with theoretical analysis, this psychoanalytic approach offers a nuanced understanding of the complex and long-term psychological effects of trauma. Ultimately, it provides deeper insight into how early traumatic experiences shape mental functioning and identity over time.

1.4.1 Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Repression, the Unconscious, and the Impact of Childhood Trauma on Self-Formation

Repression refers to the psychological process through which the mind pushes painful, unacceptable, or overwhelming experiences out of conscious awareness. However, Sigmund Freud argued that repression occurs in two different stages. The first stage is known as primary or constitutive repression. This occurs when a child experiences certain drives or early traumatic feelings that are too overwhelming to tolerate. Because the child is unable to process these emotions, the mind prevents them from becoming conscious in the first place. In this way, primary repression plays a fundamental role in forming the structure of the unconscious self. As a result, the child may grow up without consciously knowing that these feelings exist, yet they continue to influence and shape the child personality.

Furthermore, secondary repression is described as an ongoing defense mechanism. Unlike primary repression, it deals with thoughts or impulses that have already appeared in consciousness at some point. When these thoughts create psychological discomfort or conflict, the mind pushes them back into the unconscious in order to reduce anxiety. This process can repeat itself continuously, as the mind repeatedly blocks the reemergence of disturbing impulses. Consequently, the constant effort to maintain repression may contribute to anxiety and other psychological symptoms.

In this context, the impact of childhood trauma varies from one child to another depending on individual experiences and environmental factors. As Kimberley N. Frazier explains in her article “Childhood Trauma” in the Encyclopedia of Human Services and Diversity:

All children process traumatic events differently; thus, each child presents a unique set of symptomology in reaction to that trauma. A child can be stunted in their developmental stage and unable to transition into adulthood, while another child can transition into adulthood with minimal manifested symptomology. Factors that determine how a child mitigates the effects of childhood trauma are the emotional, social, and physical resources that are available to the child. Another factor that determines how children process traumatic events is their parents' reaction to the traumatic event. If the parents are coping well (i.e., good coping skills and resilient behaviors) the child is more likely to model that behavior and develop coping skills and resilient behaviors (Frazier 1).

Therefore, the way a child handles trauma depends on the support that they receive. If a child has strong support, they are more likely to cope with trauma more effectively. Such support

may include emotional, social, and physical resources, as well as the development of good coping skills that the child acquires from their parents, such as calmness, problem-solving abilities, and emotional regulation.

Accordingly, since children often learn coping strategies by observing their parents, parental behavior plays a crucial role in shaping how the child responds to and manages traumatic experiences. Consequently, when there is an absence of these external supports, the child's mind may begin to rely on internal structural defenses, such as dissociation.

In contrast to repression, which pushes experiences into the unconscious, dissociation plays a different role. Instead of pushing experiences down, it causes the mind to split the experience into separate parts that can exist at the same time. This theory was developed by Onno van der Hart, Ellert Nijenhuis, and Kathy Steele, who suggest that: "trauma during early developmental stages can cause the personality to split into distinct segments" (25).

According to their theory, the mind divides into two main parts, the Apparently Normal Parts (ANPs) and the Emotional Parts (EPs). The ANPs represent the part of the personality that is responsible for handling daily life and functioning in normal activities. In contrast, the EPs are the parts that hold the traumatic memories and the intense emotions connected to those experiences.

Dissociation and repression are both a coping mechanism that protects the child from psychological collapse, however at the same time, it can also contribute to the formation of the self in adulthood. As a result, and these mechanisms may lead to emotional numbness, memory gaps, identity fragmentation, and a sense of detachment from oneself.

In this regard, theorists such as Judith Lewis Herman agree that these mechanisms function as survival strategies. As she notes in her book *Trauma and Recovery* (1992):

“Dissociation is a creative lifesaving adaptation that allows a child to survive an impossible environment” (101). Furthermore, she also explains that when physical escape becomes impossible, the mind becomes the only place where the child can feel free. As she writes: “The child who is trapped in an abusive environment and who cannot flee or change that environment must resort to internal flight” (101).

Taken together these psychological perspectives, they show that the different type of childhood abuse or neglect have a strongly effect on the regulation of emotions because these emotions do not remain in the past. Rather; it actually influences the development of the unconscious part of the mind and effect the transformation of the child’s identity. Due to this neglect and abuse, the child loses the sense of feeling himself, which in turn predicts depression, loneliness, stress and suicidal behaviors. Therefore, trauma is directly linked to identity disturbance in adolescence.

1.4.2. The Uncanny, Doubling, and Psychic Fragmentation

The uncanny (*das unheimliche*) refers to a psychological experience in which something appears simultaneously familiar yet strange, as it is something that was supposed to remain hidden. This concept was introduced by Sigmund Freud , who argued in his work *The Uncanny* (1919) that : “ Uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien , but something which is familiar and old established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression”(241).

The mind of the traumatized person may split into different parts as a coping mechanism .According to the theory of dissociation by Onno Van Der Hart , Ellert Nijenhuis and Kathy Steele , the personality may divide into two main parts : the Apparently Normal Part

(ANP) and the Emotional Part (EP) .In trauma survivors, the Emotional part plays the role of holding the traumatic emotions and memories ,and it is often the part that remains hidden .

These emotions were repressed or dissociated during childhood, what leads the adult version of the Apparently Normal Part may find it difficult to recognize or understand them. As a result, when these emotions suddenly emerge, the person may experience them as a strange or unfamiliar. In this sense, the uncanny moment appears when overwhelming emotions surface and feel as if they belong to a stranger. This is why Freud describes the uncanny as a form of familiar strangeness, where something that once belonged to the self-returns in an unfamiliar way. As Philip M. Bromberg mentioned in his work *standing in the Spaces* that:

Dissociation is a way of maintaining a sense of self continuity ...when the mind is forced to live in the spaces between 'selves' that cannot be integrated. The uncanny arises when one self-state suddenly 'sees' another that it has been trained to ignore” (Bromberg 12).

Building upon this foundation, the Double is an external “detached personification” of the self; it was first explored by Otto Rank in 1914. Then later on Freud argued in his book *The Uncanny* (1919) that doppelgänger can be found in: “Mirrors, shadows, guardian spirits, with the belief in the soul and the fear of death. The idea of the eternal soul allows us an energetic denial of the power of death. This was the first double of the body. From having been an assurance of immortality, it becomes the uncanny harbinger of death”. (p. 235)

Thus, the split that happened in the person’s childhood, which takes the form of the double, initially functioned as a guardian that helped the child to survive the traumatic experience. However, this split may later transform into an uncanny presence in adulthood, as it begins to feel like a threat to the adult identity, as the mind matures, the double no longer

appears as a protective mechanism but rather as a reminder of the individual's inner fragmentation .Consequently, it may return in disturbing ways and continue to haunt the person's sense of self.

Due to the overwhelming amount of stress, the survivor finds himself unable to express his experience, since the brain work to save energy to survive. Consequently, while the individual feels everything, but stay silent not by choice but, as a direct biological consequence of trauma. In this regard, Bessel Van Der Kolk writes in his book *The Body Keeps the Score* (2014) that:

During traumatic situations, activity in the Rational Brain (left side) decreases dramatically or goes off- line altogether. This includes the area responsible for speech (Broca's area) and explains why rational speech is difficult or non- existent for trauma survivors. The author says, "All trauma is preverbalOur bodies re-experience terror, rage, helplessness, as well as the impulse to fight or flee, but these feelings are almost impossible to articulate. Trauma by nature drives us to the edge of our comprehension..." Consequently, the trauma becomes "trapped" inside us with no means of expressing it and thereby expelling it. (04)

Therefore, because the ANP only works to recognizes narrative memory, it often fails to recognize the EP as a memory from the past. Instead, it experiences it as something terrifying and unknown that is happening in the present. Consequently, this reaction can be understood as the neurobiological root of the uncanny.

1.4.3. The Divided Self as a Consequence of Trauma

The traumatized person may experience a divided self because trauma disrupts the unity of the self. Therefore, this division helps the person survive .it involves a split in the personality,

memories or consciousness. In this sense, this mechanism often works by hiding internal pain while allowing another part of the self to manage the external life, and this is what creates a disconnection in thoughts and feelings of the individual.

Additionally, severe trauma, abuse or even neglect, particularly in childhood, may push the mind to split. In this case, only one part of the self is affected by the traumatic event or abuse, while the other parts try to survive and maintain everyday functioning. Thus, The divided self appears as a form of psychological split.

As R.D Laing (1960) described it, this split occurs between an authentic self and the false self that is presented to the world. He concludes that individuals, who develop a schizoid personality, usually in their adolescence or later, often grow up in abnormal family relationships that may lead to ontological insecurity. In such cases, the person begins to feel insecure about his life and even his existence, and over time, he may feel also confused about his identity, becoming unsure of who he truly is.

Consequently, the self is detached from other people since the world starts to feel unfamiliar and unsafe. This leads the child to stop trusting others and to begin living inside his own mind as a protective mechanism. In this state, the child no longer feels connected to others and instead relies on his own emotions and imagination. This situation creates a sense of hate toward the external world, while at the same time generating feelings of guilt and self-blame, as the individual may believe that he as himself is the problem. As a result, the self may attempt to destroy itself or may split further, leading the person to become internally divided.

The true self contains his real feelings, anger, fear, and imagination, while the false self is the one presented to the external environment. It acts normal, smiles, obeys, and adapts to what others expect. However beneath this external appearance, the inner self often feels empty

and disconnected. Overall, the person feels unsafe being his true self and this condition is deeply rooted in a traumatic or unstable family environment.

Even though the false self may seem like a negative impact on the individual's personality, it is, in fact, a choice of survival. The divided self is not only a sign of a broken identity, but also a sign about how strongly the mind fights to protect the individual and the silence he has gone through. As D.W. Winnicott explains in his paper *Ego Distortion in Terms of True and False Self* (1960), this idea provides a foundational understanding of why the false self should not be seen as a sign of a failure. He mentions that:

It is possible to trace the point of origin of the False Self, which can now be seen to be a defense, a defense against that which is unthinkable, the exploitation of the True Self, which would result in its annihilation. If the True Self ever gets exploited and annihilated this belongs to the life of an infant whose mother was not only 'not good manner. The mother here has as part of her illness a need to cause and to maintain a muddle in those who are in contact with her. This may appear in a transference situation in which the patient tries to make the analyst mad. There may be a degree of this which can destroy the last vestiges of an infant's capacity to defend the True Self (146).

Therefore, the worst kind of trauma is not only caused by the bad parents, but also by the unpredictable ones who make their child live in constant uncertainty. They can be cold at times and loving at others, which creates for the child a confusing environment.

On the surface, it may seem peaceful, but subconsciously the child is living an indirect form of trauma, because he is reacting to something he is not fully understood. As a result, the child cannot trust the person who is supposed to be his first place of safety and comfort. Instead

that person becomes the cause of confusion and anxiety, leaving the child feeling insecure and emotionally unstable.

1.5. Trauma Theory and the Divided Self in Modern American Literature

In literary studies, trauma is understood as an internal force that reshapes identity, memory, and the individual's behaviors and interaction with the external world. Trauma theory, as developed by Cathy Caruth (1996), argues that the traumatic events are never fully understood at the moment of happening, rather, returns later in response to a trigger, often in fragmented and indirect forms. Consequently, trauma is characterized delayed and repetition, which contributes to confusion and inner struggles.

From a psychological view, the concept of the split or fragmented identity delve the way to understand more about division and what trauma can cause to the individual's life ,as Freud states when the mind live in a pressure and experience an overwhelming events, the mind try to protect itself therefore it uses the defense mechanisms like repression and dissociation . As a consequence of this mechanism the individual may fall in a division between conscious and unconscious parts, leading to feelings of alienation, confusion and psychological instability .In literary narratives, when the divided self is repressed it returns through doubling, hallucination or the creation of alternative identities.

Within this framework, Shirley Jackson has contributed to redefining the gothic genre by rooting terror in everyday domestic life and suburban conformity. Jackson succeeds in turning safe and familiar settings into sources of fear .Her novel *Hangsaman* offers a complex portrayal of trauma and the inner struggles. Natalie the protagonist of the novel is a character who's suffering from a split in identity due to emotional neglect and control pressure .Her

trauma is not portrayed as a singular event but rather as a result of familial pressure, isolation, and lack of love.

Additionally, Shirley Jackson published *Hangsamen* in 1951, and it has occupied a unique position in American gothic literature. At the time, *Hangsamen* was a confusing work for literary critics, as they struggled to classify it. However, modern scholars have been able to better understand it and often classify it within the Female Gothic traditions, since Jackson presents through it the psychological struggles of women and the experience of the adolescent subject. Several critics have examined Natalie's psychological condition; some of them argue that her split identity reflects a way of resistance against the patriarchal system, suggesting that her imagination and her behavior is a defense mechanism to escape her reality.

Regarding scholarly interpretations, researchers such as Desirée Varner (1988) have focused on a feminist psychoanalytic reading of *Hangsamen*. She argues that the family in Jackson's work play a role in consuming the daughter's identity and that the patriarchal family reshapes the identity of the daughter. Instead of seeing the novel as a story about haunting or evil, Varner contends that it is specifically about women's oppression in a patriarchal society.

From this perspective, the protagonist Natalie's madness and her split in identity are not presented as a sickness instead, they are a result of an oppressive environment. The confusion that Natalie feels is actually a kind of loss and a search for a way to live in a world that denies her identity. Varner focuses heavily in her study on the control of the father over the life of Natalie and her choices.

Central to this argument, Varner's use of mirror theory which suggests that Arnold wants Natalie to be a mirror of himself, he does not want her to build her own decisions and

have a separate identity, he wants her to be a version of him. She said that: “The father wants her accomplishments to mirror his own and to challenge him, but not too much” (Varner 29).

Therefore, Varner studies the father’s behaviors such as testing Natalie and the games that he used to play with her as a form of psychological violation that happens long before the event in the woods. As she said: “Natalie Waite is the seventeen-year-old protagonist who reluctantly leaves for college even though it means finally escaping from a father who dominates and tries to determine her every thought” (25) .The study also addresses the unnamed rape that happened to Natalie and the impact of this event on the personality of Natalie, The rape event also contributed in the shatter of Natalie connection to her body.

Ultimately, the lack of domestic safety leads Natalie to repress the pain because she knows that her family is not a safe place to share with them what happened to her, this leads her to remain silent and internalize the experience. Therefore, the trauma remains trapped .Varner links the repression of trauma to the creation of Tony and describes it as the way for Natalie to identify with feminine in a world dominated by men.

While Varner interprets Natalie’s psychological fragmentation as a direct result of the oppression and the manipulation inherent the patriarchal domination, other researchers offer different perspectives on Natalie’s case. Specifically, Susan J. Behrens in her article “The Essential Self of Natalie Waite in *Hangsaman* by Shirley Jackson.” She interprets the novel, to explore how Jackson utilizes naming schemes to shift realities, that reflects Natalie’s inner life and identity struggles, “Natalie’s internal journey has been, all along, tracked by her public and private names” (2).

Behrens contends that Natalie’s journey to discover her true self is related to the names she is given, each adopted name reflects a side of her personality, a process that ultimately

contributes in shifting the cohesion of her identity. She added that the way her father was naming her by possessive names has an impact on her identity: “To Mr. Waite, she is addressed in person or through his letters sent to her as Natalie, my child; Natalie, my dear; my daughter; my little daughter; daughter mine; and my dear captive princess. All his names for her contain the first-person possessive pronoun” (3)

Furthermore, Behrens argues that this struggle with identity serves as a core theme of the novel, she depicts Natalie as a heroine who struggles to maintain her internal world with the external one, this perspective suggests that Natalie has strength to create and manipulate her own reality and survival mechanism. However this struggle leads to the manifestation of the new gender ambiguous name Tony, Behrens notes that in an original draft, Tony was a male demon, the tension between Natalie and Tony reflect the internal struggle between the true self and the multiple identities of Natalie, “Natalie first mentions this out nowhere student in a letter to her father as a Tony Something” (Jackson 138), “someone interesting to know, who Natalie ultimately find terribly interesting” (Jackson 150). “Tony is female, a student at the college, and fascinating to Natalie. But is she real or another part of Natalie? Tony first appears at the end of another nightmare or hallucination. Natalie is being led to fruitless midnight search for a little girl who is always just out of sight. In this dream state Natalie refers to plural Natalies and to herself as we” (Jackson 143)

According to different scholarly perspectives, Natalie’s creation of an imaginary double can be understood as a reflection of the divided self. More specifically, this doubling emerges as a response external oppression; as she seeks to escape her painful reality by creating a distant internal space. The critics offer different explanation regarding the forces that drive Natalie toward this fragmentation however, both of the scholar view that her split is a defence

mechanism. In this sense, her psychological state is marked by confusion between her reality and fantasy, thus reflecting how trauma impacts not only memory but also perception.

Unlike the traditional narratives that present trauma as a visible experience, Jackson portrays trauma in her work as a complex event. In particular, she blurs the line between the protagonist's reality and her imagination; thereby this gives an opportunity for the reader to dive into the events and to feel the struggle of Natalie with her fragmented self. Furthermore, the novel expressed how emotional neglect and familial problems can lead to fragmentation, whereby the self becomes divided as a survival mechanism.

All in all, trauma theory and psychoanalytic approaches contribute to make the idea of fragmented identity in *Hangsaman* clearer, showing how emotional neglect and paternal control reshape the identity and create a divided self. Within the narrative, trauma is not represented as an individual event but rather as an external force that operates through repression, dissociation, and the return of the repressed. In this context, Jackson portrays Natalie's double, Tony, thus emerges not as a sign of madness, but as a result of external pressure, a divided consciousness and unresolved trauma. In contrast to critical approaches that isolate the identity formation and the social pressure, this perspective study the impact of the paternal control and the emotional neglect on shaping the identity of the protagonist and emphasizes the relation between trauma, fragmentation self . Taken together, these elements suggest that *Hangsaman* does not simply a gothic novel but depict a psychological breakdown, challenging the stability of identity.

1.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has shown an idea about American gothic literature and how it was the shift in the genre of American Gothic and how it shows the psychological suffering and the

inner fear, rather than the traditional gothic elements. American gothic relocates horror within the human mind, presenting it as a space haunted by trauma, repression and unresolved anxiety .Through the integration of psychoanalytic theories, Those of Freud and later trauma theorists.

This chapter has explained that childhood trauma does not remain in the past but continues to shape the individual identity in adulthood and this is through repetition, fragmentation, and unconscious split process .Concepts such as repression, belatedness, dissociation and the uncanny help to explain more how the mind works through traumatic events and how it struggles to survive, leading to a disruption in the unity of the self and the identity.

In this concept , the divided self emerges as a central psychological consequence of childhood trauma .As explored through theorists such as R.D.Laing and D.W.Winnicott, the individual develops a split in his identity as a defense mechanism to unstable environment and survival ,this split happens between his true self and his false self, thus , this division should not only understood as a psychological damage but also a strategy that helps the individual to adapt the conditions in his space .

Ultimately, this chapter provides a theoretical framework for understanding how childhood trauma reshapes identity and how the first space of safety for the child can returns to be the haunted space and cause a divided self , which is often reflected in the themes , characters , and narrative structures of American Gothic literature .

Chapter Two

Family Trauma and the Fragmented Self in *the Hangsaman*

2.1. Introduction

In *Hangsamen*, Shirley Jackson manages to portray the family as a silenced space that leads the protagonist into psychological instability. She portrays the home not as an ordinary space full of warmth, intimacy and protection, rather, it becomes the first traumatic environment in Natalie's life, as she grows up with emotional neglect and oppression, while witnessing a paternal dominance and maternal marginalization. Within this environment, the family becomes the first traumatic environment that forced Natalie's weakness and unstable sense of self instead of being a nurturing space.

This chapter focuses on how dysfunctional family relationships contribute in shaping the child's identity. The huge difference between the parent's roles in Waite's household is particularly significant. Arnold appears as a dominant and controlling father, whereas Mrs. Waite is presented as a neglected and passive mother. Consequently, this imbalance within the household creates an oppressive environment that denies Natalie's security and freedom to build a stable identity.

2.2 The Waite Family and the Oppressive Domestic Space

The home is the primary place for the child to learn his first interactions about himself; it is the space of formation for the self, usually associated with protection, intimacy, and the development of a stable identity. Additionally, the family allows the child to express his emotions, to be understood, and to make mistakes because the supportive environment allows the child to build a stable sense of self and confidence.

2.2.1. Representation of the Waite Household

Home is the first site where the child learns how to develop a healthy personality and stable way of thinking. However, in *Hangsaman* the Waite's household is characterized by an authoritative father who dominates the family through his voice and controlling behaviour, alongside a passive and emotionally absent mother. Within this environment, the teenager female protagonist, Natalie, struggles to maintain her sense of self and is portrayed as psychologically fragile. The wait household is emotionally cold, and lacks any sense of familial intimacy or affection, instead of functioning as a safe and nurturing space.

The Waite household lacks the genuine communication that creates an environment in which Natalie feels isolated and lonely since "she had lived completely by herself allowing not even her father access to the farther places of her mind." (Jackson 12). Rather than sharing her ideas and dreams with her family, she is constantly positioned as a responding to their questions. She has no opportunity to have a normal conversation with her parents as the majority of children in her age do. This oppressive atmosphere transforms the way she view her family. As the home becomes a site of discomfort and alienation through the eyes of Natalie.

From a trauma theory perspective, such an environment contributes in the development of the lack of trust and safety, the absence of emotional security can cause the repressed emotions that can returns later, according to trauma theorists such as Cathy Caruth (1996), trauma is not an experience that fully experienced at the moment but it returns as indirect and fragmented form. In this sense, Natalie's family neglect and paternal control does not result in immediate reaction but infect her personality and her psyche indirectly .Similarly, Judith Herman emphasizes that the spaces that lack safety have an impact on the individual's psyche leading to dissociation and self-instability. This is evident to Natalie's case, the lack of

emotional atmosphere at home lead her to feel isolated even in the presence of her family members.

Particularly drawing on Sigmund Freud theory (1915), the repressed events do not disappear; rather it returns as a sign of fragmentation, he describes it as a return of the repressed. Consequently, the household participate in shaping the identity of Natalie Waite by leading her to isolate herself and depend on herself instead of having validation from her parents , the judgmental atmosphere at home prevent her to create a dissociative space to feel her true self , she repressed her feeling of loneliness as Jackson revealed in the novel that :

she did not really prefer the garden to several other spots in the world; she would rather, for instance, have been alone in her room with the door locked, or sitting on the grass by a brook at midnight, or, given an absolutely free choice, standing motionless against a pillar in a Greek temple or on a tumbril in Paris or on a great lonely rock over the sea, but the garden was closest (15-16).

Natalie prefers isolation over being with her family and this is due to the lack of comfort at home. As a result, her complex and cold relationship with her family leads her to seek a certain spaces within the house, where, she spends most of her time alone; diving in her imagination far away from reality . Furthermore, she has a desire to lock herself in her room or stays in the garden, since it was the closest place she could escape to. This is a reflection of the Waite household as an uncomfortable place for Natalie to feel her complete self, and feel free to communicate her thoughts with her family, as it mentioned that:

the garden belonged exclusively to Natalie; the rest of the family used it, of course, but only Natalie regarded it as a functioning part of her personality, and she felt that

she was refreshed by ten minutes in the garden between the arbitrary pleasures assigned her by other people” (Jackson29).

This suggests that the garden was the comfort zone for Natalie that she feels her personality in, and the temporary refuge from the atmosphere of home. Particularly in the work of Judith Herman (1992), the emotional neglect and the lack of safety make the individual searches for internal or alternative spaces where he feels psychological secure.

In Natalie’s case, the garden becomes her own space of expressing herself with no need to be filtered, it reminds her by the beautiful memories of her childhood, as the narrator reveals that: “the garden and the view from the cliff had taken such a hold on her, she had delighted in playing pirate and cowboy in armors among the trees” (29). Natalie spent her childhood in that place, enjoying her time alone and creating her own world, and those memories reflect Natalie’s imagination as a coping mechanism. In the contrast, as Natalie grew up, she loses this part of herself where she once enjoyed her reality; instead, she now seems lost in searching for her identity again. As Cathy Caruth (1996) explains when trauma is not completely processed, it returns in fragmented way and affect the continuity of experience.

This is evident in the way Natalie now feels toward her memories in the garden since “now, however, for some reason only remotely connected with knights in armor, the tree on the grass belonged to her, and she ignored the trees below as dark and silent and unprovocative” (29). Consequently, Natalie begins to view the place that she once enjoyed as a dark places and unfamiliar, which in turn, indicates a grow of her emotional numbness. Thus, the garden no longer represents a space of comfort but reflects her inner fragmentation and her disconnection.

From a psychological perspective, according to Freud concept of repression (1915), Natalie's sense of self has changed, she used to feel free to be herself as a child however, as she is growing up, she didn't lose her identity rather she repressed it and this is due to the external pressure. The mind pushed the real sense of self into the unconscious as survival mechanism.

2.2.2. The Home as Natalie's Oppressive and Destabilizing Environment

The Waite household may appear to be an ordinary family that spends time together. However, deeply; it functions as a psychologically oppressive environment that actively shapes Natalie's identity. Rather than providing a space where family members can express their authentic selves and emotions, they establish a rigid boundary at home. This, in turn, results from the absence of communication.

Consequently, the home imposes restrictive expectations that constrain Natalie to be limited, both in her ability to express herself and her emotions. Moreover, her mother consistently avoids expressing her emotions and fails to engage with her daughter or provide the emotional support. As result, Natalie is left without the emotional validation that she needs to build a stable identity, as it mentioned in the novel that:

One thing that Natalie most disliked about her mother was Mrs. Waite's invariable trick of putting serious statements into language that Natalie classified as cute. Mrs., Waite, too long accustomed to seeing her most heartfelt emotions exposed, discussed, and ignored, had long since fallen into protecting herself by stating them as jokes, with an air of girlish whimsy which irritated both Natalie and Mr. Waite as no flat statement of hatred could have. Because of this, Natalie who had sometimes thought of running to her mother with a voluntary expression of affection said briefly, "You'll find something to do" (27).

The boundaries between the family members irritate Natalie, as she is unable to take her parents seriously or as a source of protection. As a result, she does not feel comfortable to complain her concerns to them, which makes the emotional connections almost impossible. Consequently, relationships within the household become superficial. Therefore, Natalie chooses not to share her emotions, since, she knows that she neither be understood or takes her seriously. From a psychological perspective, this creates lack of trust to the individual toward his environment. Therefore, Natalie begins to seek an internal escape, although she wants connection but she is unable to find it on her surroundings .Thus, she adopts coldness and isolation.

The Waite household begins to feel uncomfortable and strange for Natalie, according to Freud concept of uncanny (1919), when something familiar that established in the mind becomes uncomfortable and a site of alienation this is due to the process of repression .In *Hangsaman* the household is homely but uncomfortable for Natalie because she is obliged to perform according to her parents need, instead of expressing her spontaneous self.

Although the family lives a normal routine, such as eating together, preparing parties, and even the father assisting Natalie with her studies. The atmosphere at home remains emotionally cold, this is evident when the narrator states that: “they all laughed, and the sudden family gesture was so pleasant to them that they immediately took steps to separate themselves from one another” (15).that suggest that even the moments that express familial intimacy appears weird and strange to them. Consequently, this led Natalie to not express herself because there is no opportunity at home to be herself or to enjoy her identity as Natalie not as a daughter who has to perform under a set of boundaries.

Additionally, Natalie feels the anxiety every time when she interacts with her parents, as she is not used to such emotional closeness. Consequently, she reacts with avoidance rather than interacting normally. This is illustrated when “terror lest she be left alone with her mother made Natalie almost speechless; as her mother opened her mouth to speak (perhaps to say, “Excuse me”, to Natalie said quickly, “Busy now”, and went with little dignity out of the French doors behind her chair and down the flat steps into the garden” (15). Thus, Natalie’s response reflects how she adapts the fear of expressing emotional interaction, and creating a limit for her true self. In consequence, this enforces the idea that the home is an oppressive space that shape Natalie’s psyche.

While the garden represents a comfort zone for Natalie, on the other hand, her father’s room is a site of anxiety, because it represents the place where she faces her father’s control and criticism about her writing, or even her reading taste in books, as if she is not his daughter but his student. Therefore, Natalie is obliged to think like her father in order to be seen by him; at the same time she is afraid of her father’s judgment of her way of writing and her ideas, as it mentioned by the narrator:

While he read, Natalie, her initial nervousness over (once she had given him the notebook each morning her step was taken; it was irrecoverable then, and she had only to wait for it to be returned to her), surveyed the study freshly, as she did every morning (19).

Although, the Waite’s home is big, it becomes limited because of the dominance of Natalie’s father. As a result, her world begins to shrink, not physically but psychologically, When she was still a child, she had some spaces that she expressed her imagination and spent time freely

in, However, Her father's control starts to haunt her in every part of her life, including the way she thinks ,writes, and behaves .

As a result, Natalie can no longer feel her true self or think of her own ideas without trying to impress her father. Even in her private space, she constantly thinks about what to write to her father or how to complete his assessments. Therefore, she loses the ability to differentiate her identity from his expectations. As a result, the external world begins to feel suffocating, because she is no longer has a private space where she can feel her own identity. Ultimately, she decides to escape into her internal world; therefore, she feels free and is able to build her own world. However, this escape from the external world to the inner space leads Natalie to the psychological fragmentation.

2.3. Parental Authority, Repression, and Psychological Control

The parents are the first source of guidance emotional security, and care. In Natalie's case her relationship with her parents didn't provide these essentials, however she grows up with lack of emotional comfort and guidance. This section examines how the parental authority and paternal dominance can influence Natalie's sense of stability, and her psychological control.

2.3.1. Arnold Waite as a Figure of Symbolic and Narcissistic Paternal Authority

Arnold Waite, Natalie's father, is portrayed in *Hangasman* as a controlling figure within the household. His powerful manipulation plays a significant role in shaping his daughter's identity, as his personality tends to dominate everything within the domestic space. As a result, his presence at home does not represent the image of the normal father who takes care of his

family and tries to maintain a warm and supportive atmosphere. Instead, his authoritative personality creates an oppressive environment especially for his daughter Natalie.

By contrast, Arnold imposes a rigid authority on his family by embodying a narcissistic father that enjoys underestimating the member of his family. As it indicated in the novel, “God Mr. Waite said this morning, and laughed, “I am God,” he added” (12). Through such statement, he frequently positions himself as a “God” in order to assert his superiority within the home and to feed his ego.

Consequently, this attitude contributes in shaping Natalie’s identity by preventing her from being independent. He makes her believe that he is the powerful authority as the God who can create her story, as it is suggested when: “small Natalie had asked her mother what God was, and Mrs. Waite did not tend to let such remarks be forgotten” (12). In this sense, Arnold narcissistic personality seeks to position God to set rules and create sense of fear from him within the household.

He attempts to manipulate his daughter to write for him and share her own thoughts, not as a part of fatherhood, but in order to deny her from having any private space. In addition, this control serves to satisfy his need of judgment and superiority, he deny understanding her instead focuses only to what he wants to see in her. As a result, their relationship is not as a daughter and father, rather; it seems like a student and teacher, who is constantly giving instructions. Moreover, the way they communicate revolves only around writing and studying as the narrator mentioned:

“In the first place”, Mr. Waite said, choosing his words carefully, I’m going to quarrel with your whole attack in regard to the problem of description. No

description can be said to describe anything and I've told you this before if it's in mid-air, so to speak, unattached. It's got to be tied on to something, to be useful. You have apparently neglected this in today's work" "but I thought you said" Natalie began, but her father held up his hand; he disliked being interrupted (20).

Arnold does not give Natalie the opportunity to communicate with him, rather; he is always asking her questions, and she is supposed to answer his question with something can impress him and represents her as an intelligent daughter. As it shown in the scene, Natalie tries to defend herself when he criticizes her writing, however, he stops her. Therefore, his interpretation is not a way of fatherhood guidance, but rather a form of criticism, to silence Natalie. The way they communicate does not take a form of dialogue, but instead reflects a one sided domination.

Consequently, this system contributes in Natalie's self-sabotage, as she begins to doubt herself and her own thoughts to always impress her father and seeks his approval. Instead, of building a stable personality and being able to be voiced and heard, she is forced into his critical environment ,which later shapes her fragmented identity and leads to the loss of her voice.

Arnold repress the feeling of his daughter through the control in writing, he limits her to be to be free in her expressions and ideas. According to Sigmund Freud concept of repression (1915), the repressed thoughts and emotions do not disappear; however, they remain hidden in the unconscious and continue to affect the individual's behavior indirectly. In this context, Natalie's thoughts and emotions are repressed by the control of her father , therefore, this leads her to self-doubt and psychological struggles.

Mr. Waite lacks sense of empathy, makes him unable to understand his family's feelings. He does not listen to his daughter thoughts and treats her emotions as unimportant. Moreover, his narcissistic personality constantly seeks attention, and this is a reason that he constantly turns the situations to himself to show his superiority, while neglecting his child's emotions. For instance, when he gives his daughter an assignment to describe him, he criticizes her work and said:

“I am not a vain man,” he began slowly. “I do not hold myself in undue estimation. As a matter of fact, my own description of myself would be much harsher than yours. You do not mention my pettiness” (21)

In this scene, Arnold criticizes the fact that Natalie describes him as a vain man, as he does not accept her point of view toward him. However; he tries to present himself as he is in harmony with himself, instead of trying to understand why she is thinking about him that way. Moreover, his behavior can be a form of gaslighting, as he manipulates her idea by saying “you do not mention my pettiness”, in order to normalize his actions and calls them as a pettiness. As a result, he shifts the focus from Natalie's perspective to make her doubt the way she thinks.

Consequently, the emotional neglect of the father toward Natalie affects her identity, as she grows up without sharing her thoughts. As a result, Instead of developing emotional confidence, she begins to seek the external validation. Therefore, this later contributes to the inner split, since she is not aware about what she truly wants, because she constantly doubts herself and her behaviors.

Arnold is determined that Natalie grows up to be intelligent, in order to show his friends that he has such a capable daughter to be proud of, in that way; he attempts to improve his image as a good father. For instance, during the parties he organizes at home, he often tries to

present Natalie to the guests. However, she is most of the time trying to adapt to the atmosphere. Consequently, because she lacks communication skills, she is limited only to answer her father's friends questions, as it mentioned in the novel:

“Natalie went carefully around the group, presenting the plate to one person after another, answering their questions and watching their feet.

“Natalie, when do you go to college?”

“Aren't you growing, though; you make me feel ancient.”

“Aren't you looking forward to education, after all these years with your father?”(39)

This passage highlights Natalie's avoidance to the social situation. In particular, her avoidance of eye contact reflects her desire to escape the guests' judgment. Moreover, because her father has always controlled the conversation, she has used to the passive role. As a result, when she finds herself in a normal conversation, she becomes emotionally paralyzed.

According to the trauma theory perspectives, particularly the work of Cathy Caruth (1996), trauma returns to disturb the individual's perception of reality and his sense of self .In Natalie's case, her father criticism and judgment are not reflected as a physical trauma, however, they appear in Natalie's behavior and her emotional reactions, in addition to a psychological trauma that develops over time.

Consequently, this leads her to a lack of confidence, as she is not able to trust her own ideas and express her personality without thinking about her father's expectations. Furthermore, according to Caruth, this return of a delayed experience leads to an inner split, when the individual is forced to act through a false self and hide his true one. Therefore, Natalie's

struggle with her unstable identity and the inner split can be understood as a result of repeated external pressure that makes her unable to fully experience the moment.

2.3.2. The Mother's Emotional Absence and Passive Complicity

In the Waite household, the family members do not lack the physical presence, but the absence is defined by the emotional silence. As it common that the mother is the source of warmth within the home, however, Mrs. Waite, Natalie's mother, failed to provide this part of motherhood. Although, she is physically present In Natalie's life, she does not offer the emotional presence.

Natalie's father does not only control his daughter but his authority is all over the household, including his wife. Mrs., Waite is presented in *Hangsaman* as the marginalized character. Her limited position at the household makes her unable to face Natalie's father behaviors and control, as she exists at home however without participating to maintain the paternal balance at home. In fact, this passivity at home makes her contribute explicitly in supporting Arnold authority, as the narrator mentioned that:

The kitchen was, in fact, the only place in the house that Mrs. Waite possessed utterly; even her bedroom was not her own, since her husband magnanimously insisted upon sharing it. He shared also the dinner table and the services of the radio in the living room; he felt himself privileged to sit on the porch and to use a bathtub. In the kitchen, however, Mr. Waite amusedly confessed himself "inadequate" and so Mrs. Waite, one day a week, was allowed a length of time unmolested except for the company of her daughter (24).

This passage reveals that Arnold dominates every space within the house. While Natalie's mother is allowed to experience a limited freedom only at the kitchen, as the space that can be considered her own. However, this ownership does not represent her authority, rather; the kitchen becomes a symbol of limitation especially that Arnold allowed it to her just because he does not want it. In this sense, the fact that she feels "unmolested" in the kitchen reflects the depth of the impact of his control on her psyche. Because, even in the spaces of privacy such as the bedroom, are not truly hers.

Mrs. Waite's lack of emotional presence makes her unable to manage the relationship with her daughter. Although, she appears that she enjoys spending time with her daughter, she does not establish a deep emotional connection with her, as she fails to provide reassurance or guidance. As a result, their relationship lacks warmth and intimacy. Moreover, due to her passive role within the household, she is also unable to defend Natalie from her father's control.

Consequently, this absence leaves Natalie without validation that reflects the lack of depth in their relationship. As it is mentioned in the novel that the kitchen is the only place where Natalie and her mother share a form of conversation and where "she and Natalie were associated in some sort of mother-daughter relationship" (24). However, even this interaction does not reflect a form of care; rather, it seems superficial. In fact, their conversation is more temporary, described as "separate, at least for a time, the family into women against men" (24). Therefore, instead of creating a depth for their emotional connection, the mother failed to understand her daughter's need of intimacy, which later on leads to Natalie's sense of isolation and alienation.

This leads to the Freudian perspective about repression (1915), the absence of Mrs. Waite's emotional support leads Natalie to unresolved emotions that are repressed into the

unconscious, since she has no source to share her feeling. As a result of this, those emotions are repressed, to return later on as a fragmented form such as inner conflict. As it plays a role in shaping Natalie's identity and the emotional stability.

Natalie as a teenager girl is in need of emotional understanding in order to develop a confident personality and stable sense of self. This lack of maternal emotional support creates a sense of emptiness and loneliness in Natalie's life. As it plays a crucial role in shaping her identity and leads her to seek internal validation, because she finds herself struggling to understand herself and navigate her emotions without guidance that the parents should provide. Additionally, Natalie loves spending time with her mother; however, she is not finding herself secure since their relationship is superficial. Although, she is physically close to her, she still feels that there is a gap that needs to be filled as the narrator noted:

Natalie admired her mother at these times, and, although she would go to any length to avoid even the slightest conversation with her mother in the living room, she enjoyed and profited by the kitchen conversations more than even Mrs. Waite suspected (24).

This passage highlights the mother's lack of awareness to the importance of these moments, when Natalie feels closer to Mrs. Waite. In fact, Mrs. Waite herself expresses that she values her interaction with her daughter in the kitchen, because she speaks to her as women, more than a mother and daughter. Therefore, this behavior reflects the complexity in their relationship and that the moment of closeness seems strange for them.

According to Winnicott's concept of the False Self (1960), the child creates a false self in order to engage with his environment when he feels a sense of threat. Additionally, he hides his

true self as a defensive mechanism. In this sense, such an unstable environment within the Waite's household leads to the creation of Natalie's false self. She maintains to adapt within the home atmosphere, while hiding her emotions and ideas as a coping mechanism.

Mrs. Waite's emotional absence is not her personal choice, but also as a consequence of the marginalization that she has experience. As she experienced the emotional neglect from her parents the repeated experience faces her also with her authoritative husband. This marginalization makes her live in passivity at the same time unable to feel the motherhood. As a result, her inability to offer the emotion to her daughter, it is because at herself didn't receive such an emotional care. In this sense, her personality is shaped by her oppressive environment in which she lived as the narrator revealed:

"All these years you father has been trying to get rid of me. Not rid of me he doesn't care if I hang around the house, cooking and saying, 'Yes, sir', when he opens his fat mouth. All he wants is no one to think they can be the same as he is, or equal to him, or something. And you watch out the minute you start getting too big, he'll be after you."

"I think you ought to go outside for a while", Natalie said nervously.

"With, me", her mother continued, "it was because i didn't have anyone (42).

This passage, shows the awareness of Mrs. Waite with the control and the narcissistic of her husband, however, she stayed silence instead of challenging his dominance. And this is it may be because she has already grew to be silenced and marginalized. At the same time, Natalie's reaction reflects the lack of the emotional confessions in the family. Instead of comforting her mother, she was unable to act and numb.

From Freudian perspective in the concept of repression (1915), the emotions of the mother are repressed, instead of translated through actions. This repression leads her to be used to live as a passive and marginalized person. Consequently, her silence reinforces the father dominance and control over the households. That creates an oppressive environment for their daughter Natalie, and participating in shaping her psychological problems.

2.3.3. Family Power Structures as Mechanisms of Repression and Silencing

The Waite's household is not built on a balanced system that a healthy family usually based on, but rather through an enforced mechanism of control that denies individuality. Within this household, the expression of emotions and the presence of a close interaction, in addition to the elements of a healthy family seem strange and hard for the Waite's household. Moreover, both Natalie and Mrs. Waite are silenced under this authoritative system that imposed by Arnold. In this sense, the family represents an oppressive space rather than a supportive source for Natalie.

Arnold does not reflect only a father of Natalie; he is a symbol of the authoritative power within the home. As his voice is the only one that is allowed to be listened to, the impact of his behaviors reaches the identity of his daughter, as he restricted her way of taking and her emotional expression. His authoritative power limited even the comfort spaces at home such as the bedroom, the kitchen and the shared spaces, he transforms the house into a his private property rather than a comfortable place.

Additionally, the imbalance of power between Arnold and Mrs. Waite creates an oppressive environment full of control and silence. Both of her parents failed to understand Natalie's need of love and care. As Natalie observes her marginalized mother and her narcissistic father shaped her expectations in relationships. Consequently she is unable to feel

secure or develop trust on her parents, as the inequality within the home leads her to repression, insecurity and emotional absence.

Within the Waite household, the family environment is shaped by the continuous displacement of responsibility between the parents. Arnold, for instance, repeatedly criticizes Natalie's mother, as it is mentioned in the novel: "He laughed and said, as though in compensation, "I never could have found anyone else as unsympathetic as your mother, and so helpful."(18). In this passage, Arnold criticizes the emotional absence of Natalie's mother and that she is no longer expressing her emotions but doing only her role to be helpful.

On the other hand, Mrs. Waite feels desperate with her marriage, she feels that she was deceived by Arnold and later came to realize his narcissistic personality that has ruined her life. This is evident when she tells her daughter, while drunk: "I keep telling you", she said finally, sadly, "I keep telling you to watch out who you marry. Don't ever go near a man like your father". (40). Mrs. Waite reveals through her words a deep sense of how much she is tired from Natalie's father and his authority, however although she is warning Natalie from repeating her mistake but she is failing to protect her.

This Family mechanism of repression and silencing has a direct impact on Natalie's psychological development. Within the Waite's household, conflict is displaced rather than resolved. As a result, Natalie begins to doubt everything around her, including relationships, since her first interaction is shaped by her parents' emotional distress, as she said:

"I always used to wonder how people made happy marriages and made them last all day long every day. Seemed to me my mother wasn't happy but then of course I didn't know. Natalie, see that your marriage is happy". She turned and looked

earnestly at Natalie, the knife resting against her palm, “See that your marriage is happy, child. Don’t ever let your husband know what you’re thinking or doing, that’s the way. (25)

In this statement, Mrs. Waite expresses uncertainty instead of expressing her true emotions and gives Natalie a sense of validation. This reveals a deep impact on Natalie since every time she asks question she is not having answers from her parents leads her to repress her ideas and thoughts because of the lack of guidance and silencing. From Freud perspective on repression (1915), the Waite household enforces a mechanism of repression, the behavior of the mother shows that emotions and feelings must not be repressed but hidden to avoid conflict.

As result, this shapes Natalie’s emotional sense of expression and the freedom to speak up her perspectives. In addition to that, the confused emotions that Natalie cannot fully understand rather it is repressed leads to the belated experience that is described by Cathy Caruth (1996), the emotional meaning that is not processed at the moment returns as a flashbacks and intrusive symptoms.

2.4 Natalie’s Fragmented Identity and the Divided Psyche

The Waite’s household play a crucial role in shaping Natalie’s identity, as the atmosphere of the home becomes a force of repression rather than care. Natalie’s parents failed in giving her the suitable environment to grow up with stable identity and confident. This section analyses how the home can become the first space that ruins the child’s identity and become a traumatic place instead of his comfort zone.

2.4.1. Natalie Waite's Recurring Hallucinations

Natalie Waite experiences an oppressive environment at home that shapes her instable sense of self. The dysfunctional family structure leads her to struggle from forming a coherent identity, as she suffers to understand herself within an uncontrolled space and emotional neglect. As a teenager girl, Natalie faced from an early age an emotional neglect from her family; this leaved her uncertain about how to express her thoughts and emotions. Moreover, because she does not find reliable figure to depend on, this absence deeply influences her psychological. As a result, she begins to search for an internal world, to express herself without restriction or control.

Natalie's fragmented identity is reflected in both her behaviors and her inner experiences. The narrator expresses this inner division through Natalie's imagination, as she creates imaginative conversations in her mind. However, she often struggles to differentiate between her fantasy and reality .This reflects grow of confusion about her identity. As a result, she is unable to experience herself as stable self, but rather as divided.

Additionally, her tendency to create imaginative scenarios can be translated as an escape mechanism, indicates that her inner world feels more controllable than her familial environment. In her inner space she is able to speak up and express her thoughts. However, this movement blurs the boundary between her identity in reality and imagination. Leads Natalie to fully recognize herself, as it highlights in the novel:

Natalie smiled secretly, moving her shoulders stiffly under her thin white shirt, agreeably conscious of herself going from the flat line of her shoulders all the way down to her feet far below, so that she was, leaning back with her shoulders against

the solid intangible of the air, a thin thing, a graceful thing, a thing of steel and subtle padding. She breathed deeply, satisfied.

“Will you talk now?” the detective demanded, his voice rising a little, although he kept it still under iron control. “Do you think that you alone can stand against the force of the police, the might and weight of duly constituted authority, against me?”

A lovely little shiver went down Natalie’s back. “I may be in danger every moment of my life,” she told the detective, “but I am strong within myself.”(16)

This scene is presenting Natalie as she was enjoying her time at the garden, and creating a scenario while she was talking to an imaginative figure that seems weird and reflected her unstable inner world. Deeply, she imagines herself as a criminal who commits something wrong and that detective is haunting her. However, this detective is becoming more aggressive and that reflects her sub-conscious psychological pressures.

Natalie’s unstable sense of self is reflected in her switch between her inner confident and her external insecurity, when she is talking to the imaginative figure she seems confident such as when she said: “but I am strong within myself”(16). This is evident about her unstable identity and her inner fragmentation that is shaped by paternal neglect. This instability is shown through imagination double imagery and her failure in maintaining between her inner world personality and the external one. In this sense, Natalie's instability reflects Caruth idea on the concept of her Trauma Theory (1996).

That trauma can return with an unexpected form. In Natalie's case, it returns as a shift between confidence, fear, detachment and her silence. Additionally, Natalie is unable to form a stable

identity this is manifested through, her self-doubt. She constantly doubts her thoughts, perspective and even her existence as the narrator mentions:

She was serious this time, because, although her father's expectant air seemed to indicate that this had been a joke, his pointing out that she had seventeen years behind her had given her a sudden sense of the immensity of time; seventeen years was a very long time to have been alive, if you took it into proportion by the thought that in seventeen years more or as long as she had wasted being a child, and a small girl, silly and probably playing she would be thirty-four, and old Married, probably. Perhaps and the thought was nauseating senselessly afflicted with children of her own. Worn, and tired. She brought herself away from the disagreeably clinging thought by her usual method imagining the sweet sharp sensation of being burned alive and turned expectantly to her father (17-18).

In this sense, the narrator shows Natalie's alienation, and her expectation about the standard life. Expecting herself in the future, to be a grown woman living a tired life, this can be understood as she is expecting herself to live a life like her mother, tired and as she described it as a "nauseating" future. Consequently, she depends on her imaginative method as usual to cope with her reality. Another episode of Natalie's hallucinations culminates when she imagines aggressive scenarios. This extreme coping mechanism shows that Natalie is trying to escape from her oppressive life. She prefers a life full of violence. Consequently, her repressed emotions are returning as inner violent ideas, about violent and fragmentation.

2.4.2. Natalie's Alienation, Dissociation, and Inner Conflict

Natalie experiences a sense of alienation in her daily life, with both her family and even when she moved to the college. This alienation is due to her fear from being judged or criticized. This sense of isolation leads Natalie to create a barrier between herself and the external environment as a defensive mechanism. Consequently, this prevents her from forming a stable sense of self and she feels the belonging. Therefore, this does not affect only her relationship with her surroundings but also her connection with her reality.

As she moved to the College, she begins to see the new space as a peaceful place where she can express herself freely. As her college room gave her an opportunity to have a private space, as it represents not only a physical independence but also an imaginative space to express her thoughts as the narrator highlights:

For the first time, standing in this doorway of this precise room on the day she first saw the college, Natalie knew a certain pride of ownership. This was, after all, the only room she had ever known where she would be, privately, working out her own salvation. Briefly, she thought of long nights alone in this room (no one to notice her light, no one to tap on her door and ask was she all right, dear) and long afternoons spent at the narrow desk in the corner, writing whatever she pleased and perhaps making only silly pictures on paper if she chose. If she liked, she might lock her door. If she pleased, she could entertain here; if it suited her pleasure, she could shut the windows, open the windows, move the bed, upset the chairs, go in the closet and hide. A purely mechanical love possessed her; the number on the door, it was; a good number, owning a seven for luck and a two for work, and adding, triumphantly, to nine belonged only to her; she might tell people, "Room

27,” and know that her own dear possessions were surely inside. Tomorrow morning, she thought, and leaned back happily against the door, she would wake up in this room (55).

This passage shows the peaceful thoughts of Natalie after the shift from the oppressive household and the restricted boundaries at home to a private space. Therefore, this reflects her alienation and her independence from the need for performance. Moreover, the shift to the college was the turning point in Natalie's life since she was emotionally restricted before. The passage shows that she is feeling a sense of control over her environment, as she begins to imagine her self-moving freely. In addition, the idea of waking up in that room gives her joy and hope, and reflects her relief at being alone then being uncomfortable with others. However, at the same time this, reflects her alienation and isolation.

Through Sigmund Freud's concept, Natalie's behavior can be understood as a result of her repressed anxiety rooted in earlier familial experiences. Rather than, expressing those emotions, she adopts a defensive mechanism by creating an imaginative world. Consequently her sense of alienation reveals the inner unresolved tension. Within this framework, the college room represents a temporary sense of freedom where Natalie psychologically escapes the external world.

While Natalie's alienation reflects her fear of social interactions and judgment, her dissociation results of a psychological detachment she escapes into the imaginative space to avoid the anxiety. Consequently, this psychological instability creates a sense of inner conflict. Additionally, in moments where she is communicating with her father, she experiences dissociation from the surrounding environment, as it reveals in this scene from the novel:

"If it's happening why does he tell me? Natalie thought briefly, and heard from far away the police detective demanding, "Are you prepared to confess that you killed him?"

For a long minute her father looked at her, obviously expecting some answer which she was unable to give; Natalie, her mind moving swiftly, went back over what he had said: what had there been, for instance, which indicated what she was to say? Had he asked a question, perhaps? Made a false statement she was to correct? Praised her, to hear her disclaim modestly?"(22).

Natalie is present only physically while her father is talking to her. This highlights a mental escape, as Natalie's mind creates an imagined scenario that makes her fully detached, as shown on the passage when she starts asking herself about what her father was talking about. Consequently, Natalie's mind overanalyzes the situation. That leads to an inner conflict because she is unable to control her inner thoughts with her actions.

Furthermore, according to Onno van der Hart dissociation theory (2006), the personality split through two parts, in Natalie's case appears that her personality has split through a part which is (ANP) that engages with daily life while her inner emotions and conflicts reflects the emotional part (EP) that repressed the unresolved emotions and anxiety. Consequently, this division contributes in her unstable sense of identity, since she is not feeling herself as a unified self.

2.4.3. The Fractured Identity of Natalie Waite

Natalie's identity is influenced deeply by her past experiences and the familial neglect. As her unstable identity appears in her actions such as the alienation and dissociation that leads to the

inner conflict. Moreover, her past continues to shape and her performance in the present. Consequently, this influence prevents her from shaping a stable identity in adulthood.

When she moved from the household, she began to feel a sense of freedom however; this feeling was temporary as her unresolved emotions repeat itself. That makes her overwhelmed again. Natalie's past remains in a loop of anxiety. According to Sigmund Freud concepts of repetition compulsion (1914), where the individual cannot remember the past but the emotion is still revealing in the present. In Natalie's case, although she is living in a new space without the control of her father, she is experiencing a sense of overanalyzes for her existence and her behavior, and this is because she grows in a control.

According to Sigmund Freud concepts of repetition compulsion (1914), where the individual cannot remember the past but the emotion is still revealing in the present. In Natalie's case, although she is living in a new space without the control of her father, she is experiencing a sense of overanalyzes for her existence and her behavior, and this is because she grows in control. Additionally, Natalie does not simply attached to her past but unconsciously transforming the memory into a repeated state of confusion and fear.

Natalie struggles psychologically in order to find her true self. However, her identity is shaped by trauma and emotional instability. Although she desires love , care and understanding, her repressed emotions continue to haunt her, preventing her from a full experience of herself. Consequently, she is trapped between incomplete childhood and the maturity of adulthood, as she wants independence while at the same time seeking emotional security.

She is stuck between her desire to express herself and her silence because she is unable to understand her inner pain and is overwhelmed by her inability to understand her thoughts.

Consequently, this scene highlights Natalie's confusion regarding the way of expressing her emotions or thoughts when she said:

I wonder what I would say to a psychoanalyst. I wonder where people find words for all the funny things inside their heads. I keep turning around in circles and finding how well things fit together, but nothing is ever complete. I think if I could tell someone everything, every single thing, inside my head, then I would be gone, and not existing any more, and I would sink away into that lovely nothing-space where you don't have to worry anymore and no one ever hears you or cares and you can say anything but of course you wouldn't be any more at all and you couldn't really do anything so it wouldn't matter what you did. (103)

The passage shows Natalie's deep fragmented identity. Her desire to understand how she can express her emotions without feeling the danger, the statement "keep turning round in circles", suggests that Natalie is living in a loop of inner thoughts and unresolved emotions. Therefore, her mind is living in a repetition circle full of overwhelmed past emotions.

Additionally, she believes that if she speaks up all what she has on her mind she could disappear. This way of thinking reflects her fear from revealing the inner self. As a result she took silence as a form of protection. Consequently, Natalie's desire to vanish from "the lovely nothing space" reflects her need to be heard without criticism or judgment.

2.5. The Uncanny Self and the Emergence of the Double

The double in *Hangsaman* is not just a supernatural element; however, Shirley Jackson used the gothic sense in order to show the depth of Natalie's psych instability and the impact of the

household atmosphere on shaping her identity. This section examines Natalie's sense of uncanny due to the unresolved familial trauma, in addition to the emergence of the double.

2.5.1. The Uncanny as the Return of Natalie's Repressed Familial Trauma

The uncanny is a concept developed by Freud (1919). It reflects a psychological experience when something familiar feels unfamiliar. This feeling creates a sense of discomfort and strangeness. In Natalie's case the uncanny is reflected on the return of the repressed, when she begins to feel the emotions that are related to the familial trauma in the new space (college).

As this sense of confusion leads her to feel that she is experiencing familiar emotions that she cannot fully understand. And even her expectations about the new space are influenced by her traumatic familial environment. As she expressed it as: "Anything which begins new and fresh will finally become old and silly"(51) , this statement reflects Natalie's pessimistic mindset, as she expects every place is going to become silly and disappointing just like the Waite's household.

The home for Natalie carries a deep emotional tension and memories with her family. Although she lived her entire childhood there, she is still feeling a sense of strangeness every time she comes back from college. As the narrator reveals:

On the bus, in the hour and a half it took her to reach the bus stop where he met her, Natalie had conscientiously tried to plan out a suitable greeting for him. A theatrical "Daddy!" shouted while throwing herself into his arms was probably undesirable, considering that Mr. Waite could most likely not be counted on to stand agreeably and catch daughters hurling themselves at his head; no more could she consider seriously a brief handshake and a meaningful look, a caught breath, and a

murmured "Father"; her favorite greeting, which she saw vaguely as taking up and carrying on a conversation as though they had just left it off, was impossible because she could not think how to start a conversation which might not have been finished; not, at least, a conversation with her father, who might leave many things undone but never a word unsaid."(144).

The passage reveals that Natalie feels a sense of uncaring and emotional distance before meeting her father. Rather than excitement or happiness, as she spends the whole ride thinking about the meeting. This reflects that the nature of their relationship lacks warmth, and instead of a natural connection as a father and his daughter. It appears complicated, because she does not feel spontaneous affection.

Additionally, when she thinks about the meeting, she feels pressured about how she should behave in front of her father to not be judged. Such a simple moment, therefore, reveals a deep emotional distance between Natalie and Mr. Wait, as their relationship seems more formal and superficial.

The household begins to seem for Natalie as both familiar and strange at the same time and this is what it called by Freud (1919) the uncanny. For Natalie the house represents the traditional idea about the family as she said: "The home where her mother and brother and father lived" (143). However, she also feels the anxiety and the discomfort.

Natalie begins to feel the uncanny at the home because after the period she spent at college and came back the home atmosphere makes her recall the emotional neglect, silence, and criticism. Although, it is not necessary to return as memories, it continues to shape her thinking and emotions.

Consequently, the Waite's household reflects a repetition of an earlier trauma for Natalie. As it is not a new space for Natalie, but she feels stressed and strangeness every time she visit it. In this sense, Natalie's anxiety is not caused by the house itself, but by the experiences she went through. Consequently, the familiar atmosphere revives her sense of the repressed emotions.

2.5.2. The Imagined Companion as a Projection of Repressed Desire and Fear

Natalie grows up in an environment that lacks emotional comfort and love. Her desire to feel the affection leads her mind to create an imaginative companion as she always wished to have someone who could understand her without the need to do an effort as she mentioned: "I want somebody who will fight about it, too. Suppose there is a person, somewhere very near me, right now, who is thinking about me and who watches me and knows everything I think about and who is just waiting for me to recognize"(104) ,this passage shows the deep desire of Natalie to be understood and her sense of loneliness and because of this repressed emotions and absence leads her to the fragmented return of the unconscious.

Natalie imagined companion can be understood through Freud concept of repression and return of the unconscious (1915) the repressed wishes and desires return as an indirect form, such as dreams fantasies or symbolic figures In Natalie's case, she begins to see a fragmented dreams about an imagined figure as the narrator reveals:

"Wake up, please, and be quiet and hurry."

"I'm awake," Natalie said. It was unusually dark and the figure beside her bed was unidentifiable; this then is the time, Natalie thought, the time is upon us, this is the

occasion I have been living until, when crisis and danger and terror are upon us all, and we are awakened in fear and run for safety; who has been thoughtful enough to remember me in the general flight? Fire? she wondered as she had before, and, War?

"What is it?" she whispered.

"Hurry."

"I'm hurrying," Natalie said, reaching in the darkness for her bathrobe, feeling with her feet for slippers; then, suddenly, she heard through the darkness the soft giggle and with it felt the first cold actual fear. War, at least, and fire, were possibilities. This, the giggle, was here in her own room.

"What is it?" Natalie said again.

"Come on. And hurry." Again the giggle. "You don't need your bathrobe, come any old way. I'm naked but hurry."

"Listen," Natalie said, fumbling her hand for the light cord, but her hand was taken in another hand and she was pulled firmly, and the vague figure and the faint enduring giggle led her to the door.(131).

The passage reveals the appearance of unknown figures in the middle of the night at Natalie's room. The mysterious moment shows a form of blur between the reality and the imagination as even Natalie is confused about if she is dreaming or it is a form of hallucination. The darkness of the room can be symbolized as Natalie's hidden mind or the unconscious.

Natalie's reaction suggests that she is controlled by unknown voice since she is trying to understand the atmosphere but she is under control. Additionally, the unknown figure can be interpreted as the return of Natalie's repressed emotions or unresolved trauma.

From Freud perspective, Natalie experiences a sense of uncanny moment where something strange appears within a familiar space such as Natalie's bedroom supposed to be a comfort place, yet it becomes a space where Natalie experiences frightening moments. Furthermore, Natalie's confusion between her reality and if she is dreaming reflects her fragmented identity.

2.5.3. The Double as Both Psychological Refuge and Threat

Natalie's sense of the double can be both a psychological refuge, as she was trying to escape from her oppressive environment into her imagination. However, this escape Begins to reflect a sense of threat for Natalie because she is no longer able to control her imagination anymore . Consequently, the double begins to emerge as a threat when it returns in a form of a hallucination and frightening dreams.

According to trauma theory, the unresolved trauma, returns in a repetitive form that disturbs the individual's sense of development. In Natalie's case the double becomes a threat, because it reflects the repetition of her wound that she has not healed from. Therefore the trauma begins to appear as a double consequently, this sense of repetition prevents Natalie from building and developing a stable identity.

Additionally, the emergence of the double is due to the lack of emotional support and her desire to have someone near her to understand her thoughts and emotions . The double can be a refuge because it gives Natalie's a sense of coping mechanism through having an imagined companion. Therefore, she can express her emotions and not feel lonely. However, it is a threat

at the same time because it reflects her mental instability. Instead of having real relationships with human being she is living through her imagination.

The double offers Natalie's a sense of relief by portraying her feelings through an imagined figure ,because she is unable to reach and understand herself. Therefore, her mind creates the double in order to engage with painful emotions while maintaining the illusion that they belong elsewhere. However, the refuge provided by the double is unstable because Natalie begins to not differentiate between her reality and her imagination. As it highlighted in this scene:

"Little girl? Little girl?" It was a loving call and Natalie, waiting and held outside the lighted doorway, wanted to call too, "Little girl?" Then, "She's fallen asleep again, they're always like that. Leave them for a minute and they're gone asleep. Little girl? Come on, we've got to hurry."

She pulled Natalie violently in through the open doorway into the lighted room, and then closed the door very carefully behind them. "Little girl?" she said lovingly. The bed was rumpled and she went over, still calling, "Little girl?" and giggling, and turned the blankets back, lifted the pillow and looked under it, and then, giggling, looked under the bed (133).

This passage reflects the double as both confronting and threatening for Natalie, as it sometimes communicates with her gently, such as when the figure calls her in a "loving call». However, the apparent comfort quickly becomes disturbing and violent .This, the shift between refuge and threat reflects the unstable sense of self and as well as the nature of the double.

The scene shows a strange figure coming to Natalie's room to take her away and search for a little girl. This little girl may represent Natalie's lost sense of identity or the absence of

emotional support during Natalie's childhood. Furthermore, it suggests that Natalie is searching for something she does not fully know as if she is lost.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter examined how *Hangsaman* presents the family as the central source of Natalie Waite psychological instability and fragmented identity. Rather than portraying the home as place of care and emotional connection, additionally, the impact of the absence of emotional support on Natalie's psych. This lack of family connection will lead Natalie to suffer from lack of confidence and insecurity that makes her live in alienation and constant detachment from the reality. As the next chapter will discuss how Natalie struggles to maintain a stable identity to engage with the public world.

Chapter Three

Madness, Escape, and the Illusion of Autonomy

3.1. Introduction

This chapter examines Natalie continuous struggle to engage with the external world, as she fails to build a stable identity due to the oppressive environment that continuous to haunt her even after she moves to the college to continue her life. While the previous chapter explores how Natalie's home failed to provide the emotional support she needed, which led her to fall into alienation and dissociation from reality, this chapter shows that although Natalie faces a new relationships and new space, her psychological collapse does not stop at home but continues to be shaped by the college atmosphere.

3.2. Madness as Natalie's Psychological Survival

Natalie's psychological develops because of familial pressure and continue because of the social pressure at the college. Her unstable mental health is not a sudden madness but it is a result of constant external pressure, emotional repression and the lack of understanding, as she finally moves from the oppressive environment of home to unfamiliar environment of college. Therefore, her psychological breakdown reflects her inability to cope with the external world.

3.2.1. Mental Breakdown as a Response to Familial pressure and social pressure.

The mental breakdown that happens to Natalie is caused by unhealthy family relationships, as when the individual is exposed to emotional neglect, psychological controlling and criticism in the family. He will grow with repressed emotions and the mind becomes incapable of expressing himself. In *Hangsaman*, Shirley Jackson expressed Natalie's mental breakdown as the product of internal repression from her parents. Consequently, she begins to experience hallucination, inner split, anxiety and repression.

The pressure that she lived at home didn't end when she moved to the college. She struggles to adapt to new environment social expectations,. Rather than creating an independence space. In addition Natalie feels fragmented and still feels the need to impress her father by writing for him everything about her surroundings and the new space. Her father's control didn't end the moment she moved to the college, but continued to control her.

Natalie's mind begins to collapse under the weight of unresolved trauma and the haunting of her father's control. When Natalie moved to the college she faced a kind of bullying from her mates in the college, however, she felt the pressure of isolation because she had no one that can understand this sense of experience and comfort her since " she went, alone and with a realization of aloneness, to her own private, untouched room"(65) . While she wrote a letter for her father thinking that something may change and he understands her feelings through the words while she said:

Dear Dad,

This is going to be my most ambitious letter to date, and please don't criticize, because I am writing fast and not stopping to correct, and even though that might be the way to get things down best, it makes for a lot of mistakes. Because this is going to be about college. I know you saw it that first day when you and Mother and Bud brought me down, but at that time we were all strange and didn't know what it was like, and now, after over two weeks (and it seems like two years, really) I feel so much at home here that I don't really remember what it was like to live anywhere else, and I sometimes think of how that first day is all you know of the place, and you still see it like that, and I can't remember(65).

The passage reveals Natalie's psychological instability as she writes this letter to her father. At the beginning, she appears emotionally unsettled, especially when she asks him not to criticize her writing. This request suggests that she wants him to focus on what she is trying to communicate rather than on her grammatical mistakes or writing style. Moreover, it reflects her anxiety about his judgment and her awareness of his critical authority.

At the same time, Natalie repressed her true feelings instead of complaining about the pressure she experiences at college. Instead, she tries to convince both herself and her father that everything is fine. This act of self-reassurance indicates that she knows that she has no one to comfort or protect her. Furthermore, she believes her father will not understand her in any case, which deepens the emotional distance between them.

Furthermore, Natalie's experience aligns with Judith Herman's theory of psychological trauma (1992), Herman suggests that emotional stress and neglect can lead to dissociation. Natalie's transition to the college makes her live another kind of repression, anxiety and social pressure. Consequently, as she lacks emotional support this new experience reinforces her internal instability more. Her statement that she went "alone" to her "own private, untouched room" reflects not independence, but profound isolation and fear from facing problems.

3.2.2. Madness as Resistance Rather Than Pure Pathology

From a psychoanalytic perspective, Sigmund Freud's concept of repression is central to understanding Natalie's condition. Freud argues that the repressed emotions are pushed into the unconscious that can return as a distorted form. Natalie inability to control her identity is a result of her repressed emotions and wishes, her madness; therefore, it is a symbolic return of repressed trauma. It is through these distortions hallucinations, the double, dissociation. This

shows that Natalie's madness is a resistance to what she went through from pressure and unresolved trauma.

However, this resistance allows Natalie a temporary escape and a fragmented sense and it also isolates her from reality and to avoid her repressed emotions that she cannot express it in a meaningful human connection. Her madness does not lead to liberation in a conventional sense; instead, it traps her within an unstable psychological space. This duality highlights the complexity of interpreting madness: it is both empowering and destructive, both a form of protest and a sign of profound suffering.

Natalie madness is a form of resistance because she is aware about herself .Natalie's madness can be understood as a resistance more than pure pathology because she was escaping her oppressive environment by repression as the narrator highlights in this scene :

"I was thinking about when I would be dead," Natalie said.

"Dead?" he said, surprised. "Are we going to die, you and I?"

"I only worry about how," Natalie said soberly; unlike most of the things she found herself saying to Arthur Langdon, this was true. "I keep thinking that of course it's got to happen, and even to me, but then I always think that somehow and someday this interesting person of mine will . . ." She searched for a word. "Subside," she said finally. "I mean, I will be very suddenly aware of an ending, and that there is not going to be any more for me, and that I am not going to be with myself any longer. And all of that's all right," she said, going on quickly as he opened his mouth to speak. "I'm only afraid of being caught unaware, of that terrible fast panic that comes when you're very frightened, and of being afraid when it happens. So then, of course, I always think I'll kill myself before it can happen.(99)

The passage suggests the constant escape from reality and the inner gaslighting that it will be someone waiting for her that he could understand her thoughts and care about her. However, this is not purely self-destructive; rather, it reflects an attempt to manage overwhelming fear.

Therefore, Natalie's madness is reflected in her way of thinking, detachment, and her imagined scenarios should be read not simply as psychological breakdown, but also as a defensive mechanism. Her intrusive thoughts about death make her escape from a panic, and provide her with temporary psychological protection.

According to Sigmund Freud's concept of repetition compulsion (1920), Natalie repeated thoughts about death can be understood as defense mechanism that transforms the repressed emotions into detached thought. In this way, her intrusive thinking functions not simply as panic, but as a strategy of psychological protection.

3.3. The College Space: Freedom or Repetition

The college appears at first as a new space where Natalie discover herself, because leaving the oppressive environment of home gives her the illusion of freedom. However, her psychological struggles reproduced again at college .As a result, Natalie remains trapped between the desire to be independent and the psychological instability.

3.3.1. The college as an Apparent Escape from the Family

At the beginning, the college represents a physical and psychological distance from the familial environment .As she left home she imagined the possibility of freedom from her father's control and the oppressive atmosphere. The transition to the college seems like an escape from the authority, where Natalie can articulate her own true identity so far from the rigid expectations imposed by her father.

However, the father's control haunted her even within the colleges. It becomes a repetitive site of the rigid authority where Natalie's thoughts and behavior are still under the control. Natalie's anxiety about writing constantly for her father about every detail on the college and being criticized about her writing ,demonstrates that the father's authority has been psychologically embedded within her .This suggests that even when her father is physically absent his power and influence are present in Natalie's life .

Additionally, the college environment increases her sense of alienation and dissociation as it doesn't offer the emotional support necessary for Natalie's inner gap. Natalie's experience within the college mirrors her early environment at home .This reinforces the repetition of her psychological distress and reproducing similar dynamics of criticism, judgment, and emotional repression. As it highlighted in this scene:

What a silly routine, Natalie thought, not realizing, sitting there alone on the stool in the center of the ring of girls, how she was jeopardizing her own future in college, her own future for four years and perhaps for the rest of her life; how even worse than the actual being a bad sport was the state of mind which led her into defiance of this norm, this ring of placid, masked girls, with their calm futures ahead and their regular pasts proven beyond a doubt; how one person, stepping however aside from their meaningless, echoing standards, set perhaps by a violent movement before their recollection, and handed down to them by other placid creatures, might lose a seat among them by questions, by rebellion, by anything except a cheerful smile and the resolution to hurt other people(64-65).

This scene shows that the college proposes a same scripted mechanism as the idea of freedom begins to fade in Natalie's mind. This scene reveals that the college operates through its own

rigid system of norms. the masked girls reflects a kind of authoritative figures in the college, and how they actually control the girls and impose a strict games on them .This system makes Natalie feel uncomfortable and stressed as her act of sitting alone, refusing to participate properly, or to be under this new authority.

The text emphasizes that what truly afraid Natalie is her repetitive sense of control and scripted life as she was thinking about her future in the college as something threatening as the college disciplines does not only influence Natalie's behavior but also her thoughts. Just as within her family, Natalie is not allowed to create something by herself but she keeps follow only the external instructions, while repressing her true sense of self.

Natalie's inability to overcome her familial trauma even when she moved to the college can be further understood through Sigmund Freud's concept of repetition compulsion(1920) .which refers to the unconscious tendency to reenact unresolved traumatic experiences. Although Natalie feels a physical freedom, she is still related to her father and unable to detach his authority since he keeps saying: "there can be no father without a daughter. You have thus a double responsibility, for my existence and your own. If you abandon me, you lose yourself."(113).This passage highlights Mr. Waite manipulation instead of offering love and guidance for his daughter, in addition it reflects also the psychological control as he discourages Natalie to build an independent identity. This inversion of responsibilities reflects a dysfunctional family dynamic, as the child becomes emotionally parentified.

The Inability of Natalie to move from the oppressive environment of her family is because paternal authority becomes internalized as a source of guilt, confusion, Instead of guiding her toward discovery of selfhood .Therefore, the college becomes a repetitive space because Natalie's is stuck on the same loop of the authoritative mechanism of her father .

3.3.2. Reproduction of Natalie's Alienation at college

Natalie enters the university with the expectation of having a new experience, yet she quickly faced new forms of authority embodied in the students, and professors .This figures reflects a repeated model of Mr. Wait's judgment and control .The college environment obligated Natalie to return to the same psychological pressure, and to repress her emotions and thoughts .As a result, this judgmental atmosphere leads Natalie to stay on the same loop of doubt and dependence on the internal world.

Natalie does not know how to respond to this different kinds of authority, however, she absorbed it into her psyche .This leads her external systems of control to shape her thoughts, behaviors, and sense of self. As a result, the control becomes as something diffused and embedded within her inner life. The authoritative voice of the father is replaced by a more abstract system of regulation, which she unconsciously adopts as her own. Natalie's inability to draw boundaries between her own desires and the expectations imposed upon her reflects a deeply rooted psychological control that extends beyond physical environments.

Additionally Natalie's sense of alienation at the college was reflected in her failure to build a social relationship .As she leaves in a gap and isolation instead of engaging in friendship, and this is due to her lack of trust and the Inability to attach emotionally .This sense of profound loneliness prevents Natalie from building new relationships, because every time she interacts with her colleagues she doesn't feel the belonging. This scene highlights when Natalie experiences care and love but she still feels an inner gap that she cannot understand:

You're new, aren't you?" added Anne.

And that, Natalie thought, is the extent of my impact upon the college so far; she signified that she was very new indeed, and somehow managed, unwillingly, to imply that she was now in the presence of the first four people she had spoken to as formal acquaintances since she had reached the college. All four of them smiled upon her, for the only time united, in their mutual superiority at having been in this place longer than Natalie had. Perhaps, too, at that moment, something vague solidified within Natalie, in the face of the three lovely girls in the room, so that she became less of a meek and submissive personality and was without warning as good a soul as the rest of them; from within the strongholds of her own possessive pride in herself it became now apparent to her that there were weaknesses of defense in other fortresses. She might, she thought in this minute, choose to pursue an acquaintance with these two girls; it was obvious that both Elizabeth and Arthur Langdon had perceived that, of the vast unidentified face of the new student body, Natalie had become an individual, with a father, and recognizable. Was it and again this thought had never in these words troubled Natalie before worthwhile bothering with any of them? (86)

This passage highlights the deep sense of Natalie's alienation and the lack of self-improvement, as she felt that those four people that she met at the college know her only because she talked about her father. On the other hand the two girls that were there were known because of their own identities. This shows Natalie's inability to express herself and her identity, she feels confused about herself, therefore she introduced herself as the daughter of the famous writer instead of Natalie.

Additionally the passage “the first four people she had spoken to as formal acquaintances”(86) reflects Natalie's alienation and her failure in building relationships within the college .As she remains distant and unable to connect comfortably with her colleagues.

Consequently, Natalie's lack of confidence leads her to think that the confidence those lovely girls had been artificial. She believes that their confidence may represent only a social performance that hides both their insecurities and their true selves. As a result, this behavior weakens Natalie's feelings of inferiority and makes her feel a sense of belonging.

Natalie's inability to define herself and judging people's confidence reflects her weak sense of self. This can be understood as the psychological consequences of repression and the emotional insecurity. As she starts to see people's confidence as a coping mechanism because this is what she herself truly does.

3.4.Natalie's final psychological transformation

Natalie's experience at the college plays an essential role because it marks a new stage in her psychological transformation. At the college Natalie's sense of alienation becomes more visible because, as she searches for a place where she can feel emotionally stable, until Tony appears and things begin to change for her.

3.4.1. Tony as the Embodiment of Natalie's Emotional Desires

The appearance of the character Tony was related to the moment when Natalie felt deep alienation, as she was feeling lonely in one of the college parties because she has no one to interact with she left the party to go and sit outside as the scene shows:

It was almost companionable, and Natalie without intention moved over on the narrow step to leave room. “It’s so cool out here,” she said.

“Then you do want to talk?” said the girl Tony.

“They’re all talking, inside,” Natalie said.

The girl Tony had not been invited within, Natalie knew wisely, and thought, She doesn’t care whether she sits on the steps of people who don’t invite her or whether she stands around with trees or whether she talks to me or not. She knew she ought not to talk because she had said she was not going to and because she knew this calm girl Tony calmly expected her to do what she said she was going to, but she said anyway, “You weren’t invited?”

“No.”

“Would you go if you were invited?” Natalie asked.

“That depends,” said Tony carefully, “on where I was invited to go.”

“This damn place,” Natalie said, “it always turns out not to have the things I want, after all. I get up inside and I knock over an ashtray and everyone looks at me and here I come rushing outdoors because I think it’s where I want to be, and then when I get out here it turns out to be the same old place I passed coming in.”

“That’s because you came out the same door,” suggested Tony.

She stood up, and Natalie thought quickly, She was bored with me, and said, “You going away?”

“I’ll see you again,” Tony said. “Good night.”(139)

In this scene Natalie feels a sense of companionship because she finds someone that can share the same feeling of isolation unlike the people inside the party where judgmental. In this scene Tony creates a kind of emotional calmness for Natalie that makes her comfortable to sit with her. The character Tony reflects a contrast to Natalie's personality, as she doesn't care if she is

included in those social events or not, in addition she doesn't care about judgment or to impress people.

The conversation between Natalie and Tony reflects also how Natalie constantly escapes from the places where she does not feel the belonging and even her movement from the inside to the outside changes nothing psychologically as she said: "it turns out not to have the things I want" (139), however, Tony suggests that changing the physical spaces may change nothing because the problem exists within her psyche as this sentence highlights: "That's because you came out the same door." (139), this is an evident about the emotional alienation that keeps haunting her everywhere. Natalie was always wishing to have someone who could understand her without judging her behaviors or her way of thinking. However, when she begins to hang out with her colleague Tony, all those worries disappear as this scene reveals:

They got out of bed together, enjoying the quietness of the morning when everyone else was asleep, and enjoying, too, the feeling of being together without fear. They did not speak much, but moved as though speech were not necessary: first Tony, rolling out of bed, turned a somersault on the floor and rose laughing silently, then Natalie, stretching and turning to the window to see the rising sun, bent and touched her toes without bending her knees. Together, warning one another not to laugh, they went down the hall full of the sounds of sleep from rooms on either side, into the showers, where they bathed together, washing one another's backs and trying to splash without sound. Then, dry and shivering from a cold shower, they went back to Tony's room and dressed (168).

In this scene Natalie and Tony were sharing a mutual understanding, and for the first time Natalie began to feel a sense of safety and lack of alienation. In addition, when she is with

Tony she communicates naturally without fear as mentioned in the scene:" the feeling of being together without fear. They did not speak much, but moved as though speech were not necessary"(168), this passage reflects the emotional comfort and the peace of being understood without the need of speech. And this is exactly what Natalie was seeking for.

The weird thing about Tony is that she was exactly what Natalie wanted in a companion; Natalie became deeply attached to her because she found in Tony a source of emotional stability that she lacked in her familial relationships and this reduced her sense of alienation and loneliness.

According to the Freudian psychoanalytic perspective about repression (1915), Natalie's sense of comfort when she is with Tony reflects her need to escape the emotional repression, because Natalie grows in a neglectful environment that lacks comfort. Therefore when she met Tony she experienced care for the first time that makes her escape from her emotional repression.

3.4.2. The reality of Tony and Natalie's psychological collapse

Tony appears as the comforting friend for Natalie at the beginning, however, the novel didn't reveal if Tony is a real character or it is just a part of Natalie's hallucination. As the character Tony appears exactly when Natalie feels a deep sense of loneliness in addition she was the only person who has a deep relationship with Tony in the contrast of the other surroundings.

Tony seems as the ideal person for Natalie that she was waiting for everyday and she reflects on the person who leads Natalie out of her alienation, in the contrast of the other characters that Natalie met in the college. Furthermore, this can be interpreted through the Freud concept of

unconscious (1900), Freud explains that the unresolved trauma and painful emotions are repressed by the individual's unconscious.

As a result, The character Tony can be a reflection of Natalie's need for emotional compensation, as Freud explains that when the individual fails to find emotional support in reality his unconscious can create a psychological refuge that protects the individual from anxiety. In Natalie's case Tony appears as an emotional supporter and as a character that contains all the things that Natalie was searching for. Natalie reached a certain point of realization that the character Tony is taking her to a harmful place although she was a good friend for her as it is shown in this scene the disappearance of the line between the reality and Natalie's imagination:

Natalie came down quickly from the wall, feeling to make sure that her skirt was down properly, turning to see who had spoken to her at this irrecoverable moment; it was no more than a figure disappearing into the rain, and turning a wet grinning face back at her over its shoulder; for a second she thought that it might easily be the one-armed man from the restaurant. More people were nearby on the bridge, but she was not embarrassed to turn away from the parapet and walk quietly toward the college; it occurred to her that unless she actually jumped over the parapet into the river she was of small interest to them. As she passed, she looked into their faces, and they were laughing or talking or walking quietly along, and none of them did more than slide a look past Natalie who was walking quietly along without interest. The reassuring bulk of the college buildings showed ahead of her, and she looked fondly up at them and smiled. As she had never been before, she was now alone, and grown-up, and powerful, and not at all afraid (202)

This scene reflect Natalie's desire to live an independent life and a normal one and her psychological struggle ,as she was about committing to suicide however a unknown figure interrupted her process .At the end , Natalie controlled her self and came back to the college and did not give up on her inner thought.

At the beginning Tony was what Natalie was searching for in a companion, however later on, this companionship contributed even more in Natalie's psychological collapse. As a result, she started to become confused between reality and illusion in addition to experiencing emotional instability. Tony was merely a reflection of how Natalie truly wanted to live, however, in the end Natalie's attempts to escape her reality failed because she was internally suffering, even though she was living in different spaces and surrounded by different people.

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the failure of Natalie's attempts to escape her reality and search for belonging. Although she searched for peace in different spaces and tried to maintain a stable sense of self, the true alienation existed within her inner self because she grew up in a neglectful household that did not provide her with emotional support and security. Furthermore, Natalie's psychological instability illustrates her inability to understand her identity, as the unresolved emotional wounds made her continue searching for a way to fill the inner gap that her family caused .

General Conclusion

The child's identity can be shaped because of external circumstances such as his familial environment, since it is his first space that he will face. What parents will provide for their children either will enhance their confidence to face the public world or it will destroy their sense of identity. As psychological trauma and emotional neglect play a crucial role in shaping the individual's identity and the lack of self-stability will cause a difficulty to feel the belonging within the society. Literature often reflects the role of family dysfunction and emotional neglect in shaping the individual's identity and sense of alienation. Through these narratives, literary works highlight the role of unresolved trauma in causing isolation and the desire to escape oppressive environments.

This dissertation examines the impact of a familiar oppressive environment that leads Natalie to a psychological collapse and emotional alienation through three main analytical perspectives. The first chapter established the theoretical foundation by exploring concepts related to unresolved trauma, repetition, repression and psychological instability. It also focuses on the impact of the unresolved trauma on shaping the individual's identity. These elements provide the basis for analyzing Natalie's fragmented personality and her continuous inner struggle between reality and hallucination.

The second chapter provides the analysis of Waite's household to explain the impact of paternal authority and emotional neglect on Natalie's repression and psychological fragmentation, as the home is the first site of oppression, judgment and criticism that leads Natalie toward a sense of alienation, isolation and loss of belonging. Finally, the third chapter analyzes Natalie's journey through public space with different relationships, particularly her family environment, the college space as a new space where Natalie continues to experience the

inner struggle and lack of engagement with her surroundings, in addition to the constant searches for escape and emotional support. At the college Natalie experienced a new relationships such as her friendship with the character Tony yet this relationship contributes further to Natalie's confusion between reality and illusion leading her to a psychological collapse.

The analysis demonstrates Natalie's madness as a result of growing up in an oppressive environment as her psychological instability are not sudden conditions , but rather a result of repressed emotions, unresolved trauma and emotional neglect. Themes of alienation, hallucination, unstable identity and inability to feel the belonging are consistently reflected throughout her behavior and her journey. Natalie attempts to escape her sense of alienation and psychological instability fail because her suffering is originates internally rather than externally. This is reflected on her journey when she changes spaces and relationships; she failed to resolve her fear and emotional alienation.

This research argues that familial trauma and emotional neglect shape the child's identity and his ability to interact with the public world, perception of reality. Through Natalie's character, the dissertation proves that family dysfunction and emotional repression can lead to long term psychological consequences that keep haunting the individual life even after escaping his oppressive environment. Ultimately, Natalie's story reflects the impact of the parents' behavior and neglect, highlighting the inner struggle and repression to maintain a stable life by engaging within society.

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