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THE CONFIGURATION AND EFFECTS OF SPACE IN SHIRLEY JACKSON'S "LIKE MOTHER USED TO MAKE"

JOÃO PESSOA

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Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso apresentado ao curso de Licenciatura Plena em Letras pela Universidade Federal da Paraíba, como requisito para obtenção do Título de Licenciado em Letras – habilitação Língua Inglesa.

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“No live organism can continue for long to exist sanely under conditions of absolute reality.”

(Shirley Jackson – *The Haunting of the Hill House*)

ABSTRACT

The present piece of research aims to analyse the construction and relevance of space in the short story “Like mother used to make” (1949) written by Shirley Jackson. The study of space was for a long time regarded as being somehow irrelevant to literary analysis. This research raises awareness to this fact as well as draws a timeline of the changes in the spatial perception as an academic element of research. Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space* (1958) has an important role in that Spatial Turn. Besides, it provides an important theoretical support to the hypothesis that the setting of twin apartments, in the short story, is an intimate representation of the characters. Furthermore, the setting also acts as an element that enables changes in Marcia’s character directly affecting David’s character. Finally, this research attempts to throw some light on Shirley Jackson whose literature was neglected for several decades.

KEYWORDS: space; character; Shirley Jackson; Bachelard

RESUMO

O presente trabalho de pesquisa tem por objetivo analisar a construção e relevância do espaço no conto “Like mother used to make” (1949) escrito por Shirley Jackson. O estudo do espaço foi por muito tempo negligenciado, sendo considerado elemento irrelevante para a análise literária. Este trabalho buscou abordar este fato e traçar um perfil das mudanças sofridas na percepção do espaço como um elemento de pesquisa acadêmica. O livro *The Poetics of Space* (1958), de Gaston Bachelard, teve papel importante nesse Virada Espacial. Além disso, Bachelard proporciona suporte teórico para a hipótese de que os apartamentos do conto são representações do íntimo dos personagens. Ademais, o espaço do conto age como facilitador das mudanças sofridas pela personagem de Marcia que afetam diretamente a personagem de David. Finalmente, a presente pesquisa procura trazer o nome de Shirley Jackson para discussão, já que sua literatura foi marginalizada e esquecida por tantas décadas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: espaço; personagem; Shirley Jackson; Bachelard

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1. INTRODUCTION

Shirley Jackson is an American writer, born in 1916. She gained public attention after the success of her "chilling and universally anthologized short story 'The Lottery'" (RUBENSTEIN, 1996, p. 309), published in *The New Yorker* in 1948, her best-known work until this day. Although Jackson had a short career, dying in 1965, it was quite a prolific one. During her lifetime, she managed to publish six novels, one collection of short fiction, two children's books and a play, among the many uncollected non-fiction texts and separate short stories issued in newspapers and magazines.

Regardless the popularity achieved when published, Jackson's literature ended up as marginal for several decades. In 2014, a campaign to empower women writers and change the publishing scene, called *Read Women*, emerged worldwide managed by the writer and illustrator Joanna Walsh. Since then, there has been an emergence of new female authors alongside the rediscovery of writers previously cast into oblivion. Shirley Jackson was one of these names. In 2018, the streaming company *Netflix* brought Jackson's novel *The Haunting of the Hill House* back to the spotlight and the public interest in the author herself, after adapting her novel into one of the most acclaimed series of the year. In Brazil, new editions of her stories have been printed since 2017.

Therefore, this current piece of research represents the opportunity to keep Jackson's short stories as a relevant academic research object. The world is not short of studies about her novels, however, with the exception of the outstanding "The Lottery", her short fiction is often overlooked. We agree with Darryl Hattenhauer (2003, p. 2), who claims that "she should be included with many of the other canonical writers of her time for many of the same reasons they are: she excels in a number of forms and themes".

The *corpus* chosen to be analysed in the current work consists in the short story called "Like mother used to make", published in Shirley Jackson's collection of short stories *The Lottery and Other Stories* (1949) previously carrying the subtitle: *The Adventures of James Harris*[1]. In spite of being short, "Like mother used to make" embodies every aspect of a Jackson narrative, including the house as setting, which

[1] "This piece of information provides the attentive reader with a hint James Harris's appearance is to be expected; even if anywhere in the tales that comprise the collection. Due to marketing reasons the illuminating subtitle has been completely omitted in the following editions leaving the readers with one less token of intelligence to rely upon for interpretive purposes" (COHEN, 2012, p. 57).

depending on the reading, might be its focal point. In this particular story, the house both influences and reflects the characters. The text provides the reader with two mirrored apartments that will represent the contrasting personalities and subjectivities of their occupants. Despite the fact that most of the action takes place only in David's apartment, the reader is left with the ghost of Marcia's place, always outside, lurking in the shadows.

The setting is a crucial element of Jackson's stories: "[s]ome of her characters merge with sites of their interpellation (the process through which ideology imposes identity on a subject)" (HATTENHAUER, 2003, p. 4). Thus, as a result of the intricate connection between setting, the development of characters and the narrative, the analysis of "Like mother used to make" ought to be done considering the house as a space beyond its utilitarian function so as to encompass metaphorical implications.

The house features as setting in her last three novels and in countless of her short stories. In Jackson, it becomes an important symbol, since it is there that human beings begin to bloom as individuals. Gaston Bachelard's (1994, p. 7) theory corroborates this idea, stating that "[l]ife begins well, it begins enclosed, protected, all warm in the bosom of the house". It also accommodates a number of feelings, memories and relationships strong enough to shape these individuals. For that reason, the house in Jackson's literature "serves not just as the focus of action or as atmosphere, but as a force or influence upon character or a reflection of character" (PARKS, 1984, p. 21-22).

Thus, the principal aim of the present work is to analyse the construction and relevance of space in "Like mother used to make". To discuss the interesting spatial aspects of the short story, this piece of research draws on three main scholars: Gaston Bachelard, D.S. Bland and Oziris Borges Filho. Bachelard's book *The Poetics of Space*, published in 1958, provides the theory of space as a representation of the character's intimate self. Bachelard's main discussion revolves around the house as a place that inspires happiness and protection. Oziris Borges Filho, through his book *Literatura & Espaço: Introdução à Topoanálise* (2007), dialogues with Bachelard's ideas; however, he feels the need to broaden the latter's concepts. To Borges Filho, the house is a space that holds happiness as well as negative feelings of fear, discomfort, and distress. Moreover, he points out the most common uses of space in literary narratives, a topic that is shared by D. S. Bland. The author's essay *Endangering the reader's neck: Background description in the novel* (1967) provided

some of the arguments for explaining the change in the spatial studies throughout the decades, for it paints a very well detailed picture of the issue of space.

The present research was divided into two main chapters. One dedicated to the spatial theories and the other focused on the short story analysis. The first chapter is subdivided in three smaller sections. The first section focuses on the spatial turn and it aims to provide a historical record of changes in the relevance given to the study of space in literature. The following section discusses the phenomenological implications of space as a representation of the character's intimacy. Finally, the last section is dedicated to discussing the possible uses of space in literary narratives.

The second chapter holds the analysis content. It is also subdivided, this time in four parts. The first part aims to analyse how space is used to build a representation of the characters' personalities. The second part aims to discuss the implications and the functions of space in the short story. The third section deals with the influence of David's mother in his behaviour towards both apartments and towards Marcia. Finally, we discuss David's image of the house as being a sacred place to be adored and protected.

2. THEORETICAL AND CRITICAL DISCUSSION

2.1. The Spatial Turn

The novel, as a literary form, has established itself as dominant, since the nineteenth century (BLAND, 1967). Thereafter, plenty of theories to analyse its elements have been elaborated. One particular element became prominent in literary studies – the issue of time in narratives. In contrast, the element of space was often neglected. Bland (1967) speculates that the disregard towards spatial studies might have come from the fact that descriptions of space were regarded as "easy to do, and so frequently done for its own sake, without relevance to the totality of the novel […] being no more than examples of 'fine' writing" (BLAND, 1967, p. 314). Since spatial descriptions were perceived as performing a role without any relevance other than localising the character or even displaying the artistry of the writer, they were far from being considered fit as research objects.

The prevalence of time over space in literary analysis traces back to Aristotle who pointed out the higher relevance of events in time, in detriment to the setting (LOTHE, 2008). In 1766, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, poet and critic, in his study *Laokoon*, sided with Aristotle and drew a division between spatial and temporal arts. García (2015, p.5) comments that from Lessing's perspective, "the literary text is conceived of as a succession of words, sounds and events while, for example, sculpture or painting instead offers objects juxtaposed in space and simultaneously apprehended". For a long time, this approach somehow ruled the literary studies, leading scholars to consider space as a secondary element, merely providing background to the action. Despite being cast to the background of academic interest, setting was always a relevant part of narratives:

> Setting is a key feature of almost all stories, as events take place in a given place, after all […] Whole genres may be defined by such spatial or geographical characteristics, such as the pastoral poem, the travel narrative, utopia, or the urban exposé […] we find literature to be thoroughly bound up in a network of relations with space (TALLY, 2017, p. 1).

Therefore, alongside the changes in narratives through the decades, the approach to spatial descriptions and the descriptive use of background also faced modifications. During the period of Romanticism, the most common technique used to describe the spatial background was based on landscape painting. As Bland (1967, p.

318) points out, “the appreciation of *natural* nature is to be a characteristic of the Romantic Movement”. In that scenario, the background description should be thorough and bucolic to stimulate the reader into a cathartic feeling due to nature contemplation. However, this technique suffered criticisms because the emotional response was not unanimous and some readers considered these descriptive passages to be superfluous (BLAND, 1967).

Critiques regarding this use of space came through because the nineteenth century was marked as the age of scientific development. Therefore, the Romantic literary representation of the world could no longer fit the demands of society. The greatest scientific name of the period was Isaac Newton, whose theory consisted in the fact that “reality is observable and verifiable by sense-perception” (FERNANDEZ-ARMESTO, 1995, p. 464 *apud* GOMEL, 2014, p. 12). Society was becoming empirical, less focused on idealism, which affected the aesthetics. According to Gomel (2014, p. 10), “it was Newton’s absolute space and time that became foundational in the development of the realistic novel”.

As a consequence, Realism came as an alternative to Romanticism. According to Bland, the ideal literary space became one of “mimesis”, therefore, the more authentic the better. It is important to remark that in Realism “the novelist’s characters are contemporary figures, moving in a solid world of everyday life” (BLAND, 1967, p. 316). This “mimetic space” of everyday life in realistic novels aimed to make easier for the reader to ascribe a real place and social status to each character. The purpose of using space was clearly different in both movements; however, in their majority, they fit the same category in Bland’s theory: the utilitarian description of space.

By observing such patterns in novels, Bland (1967) categorized the different facets of spatial descriptions in three distinct types. The most common in earlier novels is the *utilitarian description.* This kind of description is “required by the novel to localise its characters and their actions” (BLAND, 1967, p. 326). The descriptive passages only set the scene; they add no deeper meaning to the text. In case the reader decides to skip them, there is no alteration in the experience of reading or in the understanding of the story.

Nevertheless, Realism was far from being homogeneous, according to Gomel:

> If the nineteenth century was the age of realism, it was also the age of revolutions, both conceptual and social. These revolutions were first articulated through realism’s rebellious sibling— the Gothic. In the Gothic, space is not Newtonian: it is twisted into claustrophobic mazes, inescapable

> dungeons, and haunted castles where the past collides with the present. The brooding landscapes of the Gothic express the fears, foreboding, and insights that have no voice in realism (GOMEL, 2014, p. 11).

Alongside the Gothic and the effervescence of horror stories, in the nineteenth century setting gained another relevance and use. The *atmospheric description*, or mood landscape, aimed to "place the character in his social setting, as well as within a geographical one, and then followed the manipulation of landscape in the novel of terror to suit the emotions and situations of the characters" (BLAND, 1967, p. 326). This kind of description was used to bring the reader closer to the characters. Once the mood is set, the reader feels as a part of the story, which caters perfectly to the Horror/Gothic genre. But the functional or metaphorical use of setting is not restricted to the Gothic. In Jane Austen's novels, the setting allows the reader not only to feel the confinement of women but also to understand the *status quo* of that specific society. Whenever the reader tries to skip these spatial descriptions, some information gets missed or they cannot connect properly with the characters.

Spatial descriptions can still be *symbolic* "and so stand for more than the writer expresses directly, or else express in succinct form what otherwise might have been more laborious" (BLAND, 1967, p. 331). The meaning is implied in the text and the reader's interaction with the passages reaches another level. In a way, the author is inviting the reader to be co-author and draw his own conclusions from the text. Bland's (1967, p. 331) argument states the relevance of spatial descriptions: "the descriptive passages take their place in the texture of the novel, and cannot be detached and enjoyed for their own sake, nor wished away from the novel without damaging its fabric". Although space was a literary element that constantly presented changes, the value of space only took a turn academically in the twentieth century.

Geography in the narratives was not strange to the English modernism. There is no denial of the importance of space in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and James Joyce's *Ulysses;* nevertheless, space was not an element recognized by earlier critics. As Andrew Thacker (2017, p. 28) states, "earlier literary critics often read these texts by subjugating their spatiality to that of an aesthetic theme or trope"; therefore, critics acknowledged the influence of space in specific works, only as a metaphor or as "incidental details" (ibid., p. 28).

However, over a recent period, space turned from a neglected issue to one of academic interest. This process is known as *The Spatial Turn*, and it happened in all

areas of the humanities. As a process, it lacks a precise date of origin, but according to García and Tally it was set in motion by the Second World War.

> The Second World War triggered large volumes of immigration across geopolitical borders, while the Cold War was to see the rapid emergence of a succession of states as well as further geopolitical restructuring, boosted by the fall of the Iron Curtain and the enlargement of the European Union (GARCÍA , 2015, p. 4).

The volumes of immigration fostered changes in geopolitics as well as in geography:

> Certainly the massive movements of populations—exiles, émigrés, refugees, soldiers, administrators, entrepreneurs, and explorers—disclosed a hitherto unthinkable level of mobility in the world, and such movement emphasized geographical difference; that is, one's place could not simply be taken for granted any longer (TALLY, 2013, p. 13).

The high rate of immigration and the constant reconfiguration of territories, both during and after the war, arose a new focus for the Humanity Sciences. Territoriality, identity, culture were in the centre of all academic discussions. The course of action through time did not respond to the complexities of narratives; therefore, it was highly relevant to consider **where**, in which spatial contexts, the actions took place. As a consequence, attention was turned to the concept of space and "the importance of spatiality in understanding the history of the human being and of its artistic products" (GARCÍA, 2015, p. 5). The study of space by Social and Humanity Sciences aimed to understand the new relations favoured by the imminent globalization, as well as contribute to unveil different cultural identities and traditions worldwide. The emphasis on the spatial element was such that Michel Foucault named this period the 'epoch of space':

> The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein (FOUCAULT, 1986, p. *apud* TALLY, 2013, p. 11).

This search for an understanding of human identities and new relations ended up promoting a change in literary studies. Tally (2013) mentions an increase in the use of spatial and geographical vocabulary in both critical texts and narratives. Together with this, he notices the escalating number of conferences specialized in spatial studies. According to Lothe (2008, p. 3), it was impossible for critics to overlook the

issue of space due to the “crucially important function which space has for the formation of human identity – including the representation of human identity in and through narrative”. Moreover, this change in the narrative perspective was also important for readers. Tally (2013, p. 6) states that “[it] becomes a way for readers to understand and think their own social spaces”. Once the readers could visualize through literary models the context they were inserted, they could start building their identities in ways that were more concrete.

As a result, a new aesthetics, called Postmodernism, emerged to deal with the new issues and needs of the globalized world. Robert Tally (2017) observed that a critical and theoretical adaptation was in order since the previous theories were not able to provide a proper analysis. Consequently, “critics and theorists had to develop novel interpretive and critical models to address that new spatiality implicit in the postmodern” (TALLY, 2017, p. 2).

In conclusion, “[t]he spatial turn in modern and postmodern literary theory and criticism is an acknowledgement of the degree to which matters of space, place, and mapping had been under-represented in the critical literature of the past” (TALLY, 2013, p. 16). It was also responsible for broadening the understanding of space in human sciences and literary studies. Therefore, depending on the area, space could be approached in its different dimensions: economic, social and political. García (2015, p. 5) corroborates this by stating that space “is no longer a neutral concept and cannot be considered independent from that which it contains”.

According to Michel Foucault (1967, p. 2), we owe to the phenomenologists such as Gaston Bachelard this awareness that “we do not live in a homogeneous and empty space”. Relations pervade every space inhabited or occupied by a human being; the specific set of relations define a site (FOUCAULT, 1967). Lothe (2008) agrees that the phenomenological studies were one of the first forces responsible for charging the wave of the Spatial Turn, and Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space*, published in 1958, is certainly amongst them. Lothe (2008) highlights the concept of *lived space* as a crucial element to understanding the Spatial Turn. “Lived space is deictically oriented space as perceived and talked about in everyday life” (BUCHHOLZ; JAHN, 2005 *apud* LOTHE, 2008, p. 3). Lothe (2008, p. 3) states that for Bachelard, “our experience of space is associated with identity and identity formation”. Thus, this *lived space* provides the room where individuals have experiences determined by their own living conditions, which will end up shaping their identities.

2.2. For a poetics of space

One of the most famous names related to the area of humanities called *phenomenology* was Gaston Bachelard. His theory consisted of the analysis of people's interactions with places and objects as a way of shaping, but also as a reflection of, their inner selves. According to his theory, experiences build analogous meanings to images and archetypes. Bachelard (1994) believed these images to be the precursors of our expressions as human beings and that every part of our production (social, cultural, artistic, political and even linguistic) comes from that source. It is as if "the root of our conscious being is an image-making activity which is displayed in science and poetry" (KOROSEC-SERFATY, 1984, p. 305-306).

In this regard, Bachelard (1994) chose to use poetry as a research object. When choosing poetry, Bachelard tried to find the basis of such image-making activity. According to him,

> Poetry is a commitment of the soul. A consciousness associated with the soul is more relaxed, less intentionalized than a consciousness associated with the phenomena of the mind. Forces are manifested in poems that do not pass through the circuits of knowledge […] To compose a finished, well-constructed poem, the mind is obliged to make projects that prefigure it. But for a simple poetic image, there is no project; a flicker of the soul is all that is needed (BACHELARD, 1994, p. xxi - xxii).

To Bachelard's phenomenology, the making of an image cannot be something conscious. Although the making of the poem is laborious and takes an active mind to project it perfectly, the image it contains comes from the poet's poetic revery. Which consists in an overflow of the poet's unconscious being forever stamped on the verses of his poem (BACHELARD, 1994).

Although Bachelard talks about consciousness, he emphasizes that the phenomenologist's relation with the poem is completely different from the approach of a psychoanalyst. Whereas the latter would analyse the poem through the poet's life, the former understands that the images provided by the poem are independent and should be analysed as such:

> The psychoanalyst will abandon ontological investigation of the image, to dig into the past of the man […] the phenomenologist does not go that far. For him, the image is there, the word speaks, the word of the poet speaks to him. There is no need to have lived through the poet's sufferings in order to seize the felicity of speech offered by the poet (BACHELARD, 1994, p. xxx).

Nevertheless, Bachelard stresses that *phenomenology* is a science and "because of methodological obligations, it must go beyond the sentimental resonances with which we receive […] a work of art" (BACHELARD, 1994, p. xxii). Thus, he is interested in the analysis of the resonance of these poetic images as creators of identities rather than in the emotional responses to poetry. According to him, "[t]he image offered us by reading the poem now becomes really our own […] It becomes a new being in our language expressing us by making us what it expresses" (ibid. p. xxiii). These images are represented through symbols that hold different meanings for different people; these meanings are built according to our own experiences and memories.

In *The Poetics of Space*, published in 1958, the focus lies on the image of the house. According to Bachelard (1994, p. xxxvi), "on whatever theoretical horizon we examine it, the house image would appear to have become the topography of our intimate being". To him, this image provides us with a complex relation, for "they [houses] are in us as much as we are in them" (BACHELARD, 1994, p. xxxvii). Moreover, the house is the place that holds our first memories of human experiences, in all physical, emotional and psychological levels. Actually, the development of our understanding as human beings is so entangled with the memory of the house that it turns into a physical representation of who we intimately are. It is safe to say that "the house is one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind" (ibid., p. 6). Hence, its importance as a prime image, allowing characters to be analysed through what Bachelard calls *topoanalysis*.

This very mix of memory and experience related to space becomes the root of the Bachelardian *topoanalysis*. Even though this theory works in connection with memory, a concept often related to time, Bachelard reassures the importance given to space over time:

> Here space is everything, for time ceases to quicken memory. Memory – what a strange thing it is! - does not record concrete duration, in the Bergsonian sense of the word. We are unable to relive duration that has been destroyed. […] The unconscious abides. Memories are motionless, and the more securely they are fixed in space, the sounder they are. [...] For a knowledge of intimacy, localization in the spaces of our intimacy is more urgent than determination of dates (BACHELARD, 1994, p. 9).

For Bachelard, the inner self can be represented as a place, most of all as a house, since it shelters the whole of our memories, experiences and emotions. Thus, the concept of topography of intimacy deals with inner issues as a spatial phenomenon.

Furthermore, this Bachelardian “topography of space” has two dimensions: the space is a representation of the characters’ personalities at the same time that it provides room for their actions. In conclusion, the *topoanalysis* for Bachelard stands in terms of “the systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives" (BACHELARD, 1994, p. 8).

Although this theory remained untouched for decades, in 2007, Borges Filho felt the need to broaden the concept. To Borges Filho, *topoanalysis* was

> […] more than a “psychological study”, for topoanalysis covered all the other spatial approaches. For instance, social, philosophical, structural inferences among others are also part of a spatial interpretation of literary works. It is not only an analysis of the intimate being, but also of the social aspects and every interaction between space and character, either culturally or naturally[2] [and 3] (BORGES FILHO, 2007, p. 33).

Borges Filho corroborates Foucault’s (1967, p. 3) idea that “we do not live in a kind of void, inside of which we could place individuals and things […] we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another”. Therefore, all the relations that emerge from space must be taken into account. Setting not only interferes in the intimate development of the characters but also in their social representation, social relations and social status (BORGES FILHO, 2007).

Another aspect discussed by Borges Filho is Bachelard’s concept of *topophilic space*. The focus of Bachelard’s investigation is to “determine the human value of the sorts of space that may be grasped, that may be defended against adverse forces, the space we love” (BACHELARD, 1994. p. xxxvi). For him, the image of the house is always a representation of positive feelings, such as warmth, shelter and protection. This house is fluid, since it does not represent a specific building; any “inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home" (ibid., p 5). Wherever the character feels at home, s/he is able to activate the emotional memories of dwelling and childhood happiness. The fact is that Bachelard sees the image of the house as one of *felicitous space*, which the character turns to whenever needed.

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[2] Translations to English by the author.

[3] "Por topoanálise, entendemos mais do que o "estudo psicológico", pois a topoanálise abarca também todas as outras abordagens sobre espaço. Assim, inferências sociológicas, filosóficas, estruturais, etc., fazem parte de uma interpretação do espaço na obra literária. Ela também não se restringe à análise da vida íntima, mas abrange também a vida social e todas as relações do espaço com a personagem, seja no âmbito cultural ou natural".

Borges Filho agrees that the house can represent this happy place, but he also recognizes that the house can be an environment of discomfort to the character. Thus, he proposes a new term, *topopathy*. This concept embraces the "sentimental, experiential and living relations existing between characters and space"[4] (BORGES FILHO, 2007, p. 157). In other words, it encompasses the whole emotional spectrum developed between character and space. On one hand, the *topophilic* relationship is one of harmony, similar to the Bachelardian: "The character feels good in the space he is in, it is a beneficial space, constructive, euphoric"[5] (ibid., p. 158). On the other hand, the space can be *topophobic*, causing a feeling of loathing in the character: "It is a maleficent, negative, dysphoric space"[6] (ibid., p. 158).

Therefore, the topoanalytical space to Borges Filho is dynamic. Through a setting of seven different functions of space in the literary narrative, the scholar delineates the work of the topoanalyst. According to Borges Filho (2007, p. 33), "[t]he topoanalyst aims to unravel the different meanings built in space by the narrator: psychological or objective, social or intimate, etc"[7].

2.3. Building the narrative space

Borges Filho established that space must be used for different purposes in a narrative. The topoanalyst needs to be prepared to identify to what aim space is used in the narrative. Usually space is set to perform seven main functions. The first function is related to the definition of the characters in accordance with their social-economic and psychological contexts. According to Borges Filho (2007), this is the function Bachelard mentioned in his *The Poetics of Space*. The space is a psychological representation of the character, making his actions predictable. However, Borges Filho (2007, p. 35) highlights that "these spaces are fixed for each character; either they live there or frequently visit"[8]. Osman Lins, another scholar interested in the elements of space in narratives, corroborates this idea. For Lins (1976): "The characterizing space is often restricted – a bedroom, a house – it reflects through the choice of objects, the

[4] "relação sentimental, experiencial, vivencial existente entre personagens e espaço".
[5] "A personagem sente-se bem no espaço em que se encontra, ele é benéfico, construtivo, eufórico".
[6] "É um espaço maléfico, negativo, disfórico".
[7] "O topoanalista busca desvendar os mais diversos efeitos de sentido criados no espaço pelo narrador: psicológicos ou objetivos, sociais ou íntimos, etc".
[8] "esses espaços são fixos da personagem, são espaços em que elas moram ou frequentam com grande assiduidade".

way they are placed and kept, the personality of the character"[9] (*apud* BORGES FILHO, 2007, p. 35). This space can also suffer changes to better fit the development or even the mood of the character it is related to.

In the second function, space is used to compel the character into action. For instance, it is common for "the same character to act differently in his work office and in his kitchen"[10] (ibid., p. 39). The environment provided by space sends the message towards the acceptable behaviour; as a consequence, the character usually feels forced to act in accordance. Borges Filho (2007) points out that the character's action might modify the space. In this case, the space can be both actor and object of action.

Space can also act as an enabler to the character's actions. Differently from the previous function, space does not impose the action; instead, it provides the room that caters for the characters' actions. To make this distinction clearer, Borges Filho uses *O Guarani* as an example. According to him, "Peri, the main character of the novel, lives in an open, wide space, which makes him able to move around, run, jump, shoot arrows, etc"[11] (BORGES FILHO, 2007, p. 39); such a behaviour would be impossible if Peri lived in a big city.

The fourth function discussed by Borges Filho is quite similar to Bland's utilitarian principle, in which the spatial description is only used to localize the character during a specific moment of the narrative. The scholar states that "there is no other function in the narrative other than inform where the action took place. No symbolic, psychologic or social aspect pervades the space"[12] (ibid., p. 40).

The next function is related to the characters' feelings. This differs from the first function because here space is not fixed; the space changes to match the characters' moods. Thus, it is a representation of a specific moment in the narrative. The effect in the narrative is similar to what Bland called mood landscape. As an opposition, the following function presents a contrast between background and character. "For instance, suppose the character has lost his mother […] During the funeral, the setting

[9] "O espaço caracterizador é em geral restrito – um quarto, uma casa – refletindo, nas escolha dos objetos na maneira de os dispor e conservar, o modo de ser da personagem".
[10] "a mesma personagem agirá diferentemente no escritório de trabalho e na cozinha de casa".
[11] "Peri, o protagonista do romance, vive em um espaço aberto, amplo, características que o fazem movimentar-se para todos os lados, correr, saltar, atirar flechas, etc".
[12] "Não há outra função dentro da narrativa a não ser a de informar onde o fato aconteceu. Nenhum aspecto simbólico, psicológico ou social povoa o espaço".

is the following: sunny day, blue sky, a few clouds, light breeze, birds happily singing"[13] (ibid., p. 41). The reader can experience that specific character's sense of detachment at a defined moment in the narrative.

Finally, through the presentation of space, the experienced reader can infer the narrative path. This is considered to be a spatial prolepsis. Whenever the narrator focuses on something very specific, placed around the setting, he drives the reader's attention to a tool that later on will be of great importance to the narrative (BORGES FILHO, 2007). The text feeds the reader with clues on what is about to come.

Another concept discussed by Borges Filho is the territory. In geography, "the concept of territory is intimately associated with the concept of power"[14] (ibid., p. 28); territory is nothing else than "a big area of marked land, a piece of land or land under jurisdiction"[15] (ibid., p. 28). That means that the territory is a space owned or dominated by someone. The territory is also an element to be analysed in literature. Narrative space can also be a disputing one, a space that holds some kind of power relation and inspires the urge for its domination. To analyse the narrative space as a territory, some precautions must be taken: "it is not about analysing the overall power relations between characters, but only the one that includes some space, in other words, a territory"[16] (ibid., p. 30).

Whether holding a stable or a conflicting relation, space ends up shaping the characters' behaviour through the narrative. It is one the most important elements in literature being relevant to great writers. Among them, Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1848) portrayed the boundaries of outside and inside; George Elliot and Thomas Hardy presented the differences between London's countryside and city life; Rudyard Kipling placed the contrast between England and its colonies (GOMEL, 2014). There is also the modernist representation of London by Virginia Wolf, and Ireland by James Joyce.

In America, most of Shirley Jackson's stories deal with the deep relationship between character and space. Therefore, based on the aspects discussed by Borges Filho and Gaston Bachelard we will investigate the significance and effects of space in her short story "Like mother used to make".

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[13] "Por exemplo, suponhamos que o protagonista tenha perdido sua mãe [...] No momento do enterro, temos o seguinte espaço: sol, céu azul, poucas nuvens, vento fresco, passarinhos cantando alegremente".
[14] "o conceito de território está intimamente associado ao conceito de poder".
[15] "grande área ou extensão de terra delimitada, parte da terra ou de uma terra sob jurisdição".
[16] "Não se trata aqui de analisar as relações de poder entre personagens de modo geral, mas somente aquela relação que implica um espaço qualquer, isto é, um território".

3. SPATIAL CONFIGURATIONS IN "LIKE MOTHER USED TO MAKE"

3.1. Building the characters' architecture

"Like mother used to make" is the third short story of the acclaimed short story collection *The Lottery and Other Stories*. That is one of Jackson's many domestic stories; however, it holds a peculiar aspect: the main character is a man called David Turner. Gustavo Cohen also pinpointed this atypical fact in Jackson's writings:

> The protagonist of this story is exceptional for the simple fact that it is a man. This is not an isolated incident in Jackson's literature, though. Other stories, such as *Charles* and *The Witch* (both featured in *The Lottery and Other Stories*), also display male characters in main roles. In the specific case of *Charles*, the story's protagonist is a child, a little boy entering kindergarten called Laurie. In *The Witch*, four-year-old Johnny performs a central function in the plot. It is safe to uphold, however, that the vast majority of Jackson's protagonists are indeed women, and consequently her plots are weaved around female characters and issues traditionally (yet retrogradely) associated with women, such as family and domesticity (COHEN, 2012, p. 53).

The choice of David's gender in a Jackson narrative, usually classified as Gothic, pervades Smith's (1997) assertion that women in Gothic fiction "have sometimes neglected both the figurative nature of the feminine and the presence of feminized and suffering male characters" (*apud* COHEN, 2012, p. 53). Moreover, this specific story also contains some of the most recurrent themes in Jackson's texts. Not only does it encompasses the theme of doubles as a way of introducing disunified subjects, but it also presents the use of architecture as a representation of the characters (HATTENHAUER, 2003).

The short story starts with the third person narrator following the main character, David, who is running errands in the city. The way David moves around town is already the beginning of his description, an indication of his social status. The narrator points out that David "hurried from the bus stop down the avenue toward his street" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 29), meaning that David is not a wealthy person, for he has to use public transport and walk around the streets carrying his own groceries. There are two other evidences at the beginning of the story, which corroborate David's financial situation. First, he frowns when told the price of the butter (ibid., p. 29); later on, he complains about his apartment ceiling but recognizes that "for the money he paid he could not have a foyer and a big room and a kitchenette, anywhere else" (ibid., p. 30).

It is implicit in the text that David's house, "an apartment in an old brownstone" (ibid., p. 30), is located in a less privileged part of town.

Despite the fact that David's place is far from being a luxurious apartment, the description of the setting is nothing but positive. The narrator shows the reader every aspect of the house from David's point of view. Ryan *et al*. (2016) identify this strategy as *focalization*. It can be understood "as the answer to the question "who sees" (or, more generally, "who perceives") as opposed to the question "who speaks" […] suggest[ing] that the scene is inscribed in somebody's consciousness" (RYAN *et al.*, 2016, p. 20). The reader can observe David's perception of his place throughout the narrator's description. The use of adjectives and the focus on certain objects illustrate this strategy in the text:

> David turned to his own door and unlocked it, snapping on the light as he came in the door. Tonight, as every night when he came home, the apartment looked **warm** and **friendly** and **good**; the little foyer, with the **neat** small table and four **careful** chairs, and the bowl of little marigolds against the pale green walls David had painted himself; beyond, the kitchenette, and beyond that the big room where David read and slept and the ceiling of which was a perpetual trouble to him; the plaster was falling in one corner and no power on earth could make it less noticeable (JACKSON, 2009, p. 30, emphasis added).

David is standing at the door and so is the reader; besides, once the lights are on, the length of the apartment becomes visible. The description resembles that of a camera panning slowly across his home. David contemplates the beauty and order of his place appreciating its corners and details. His home is described as "warm and friendly and good", inviting to the reader, but also as an organized and clean place by the use of the adjective "neat". Therefore, we can infer that David is a perfectionist, attentive to details, for everything has been picked out carefully, from the chairs to the shade of the walls. In addition, the flaw in the ceiling is a cause of great disturbance. It is a permanent stain in an otherwise perfect heaven.

Jackson, then, adopts a perspectivist spatial description, which consists in a "highly immersive representation of space that "encourages the reader's illusion of being directly and vividly presented with fictional reality"" (STANZEL, 1984, *apud* RYAN *et al.*, 2016, p. 26). Hence, Jackson aims to reduce the barriers between reader and character, increasing their connection and the impact caused in the narrative denouement. Therefore, the next step is to invite the reader into David's place in order to witness the action about to be developed.

> He put his bag down on the table and put the butter away in the refrigerator and the rolls in the breadbox. He folded the empty bag and put it in a drawer in the kitchenette. Then he hung his coat in the hall closet and went into the big room, which he called his living-room, and lighted the desk light (JACKSON, 2009, p. 30).

By following David, the narrator takes the reader on a tour inside the space. Ryan *et al.* (2016, p. 27) also consider the tour as a narrative strategy in which "the speaker looks at the apartment from the inside", consisting of a dynamic description of space. The character's choices and behaviour are better understood because the reader feels as inserted in the space. Furthermore, the reader has a glimpse of David's organization rituals. Once inside his home, everything has a designated place; he is incapable of leaving things lying around. The butter goes in the refrigerator, the coat goes in the closet and even the empty bag is folded before being put away. Not until everything was set could he relax and enjoy the peace and quiet of his apartment.

Another of David's habits consisted of the contemplation of his home: "tonight, **as always**, he let his eyes move around the room, from couch to drapes to bookcase, imagined the green bowl on the end table, and sighed as he turned to the desk" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 31, emphasis added). He took pleasure in admiring his furniture and the homely environment he was able to build despite his economic status. Bachelard (1994, p. 4) supports David's behaviour saying that "if we look at it intimately, the humblest dwelling has beauty"; thus, David recognizes the beauty of his place and is proud of that. Since understanding David's feelings towards his place demands an intimate relation between the character and the reader, all the mentioned spatial strategies gain an even higher importance.

As discussed previously, Bachelard is a great advocate of the house as being a representation of the inner self. He states that "the house, even more than the landscape, is a "psychic state" […] it bespeaks intimacy" (BACHELARD, 1994, p. 72). David's house is a perfect representation of a tidy person who values comfort and beauty, even if he cannot afford those things. This might explain why he values each individual item of his. For instance, David has gradually put together a set of silverware which is one of his most adored objects.

> Gradually, tenderly, David was buying himself a complete set of silverware; starting out modestly with a service for two, he had added to it until now he had well over a service for four, although not quite a service for six, lacking salad forks and soup spoons […] The silverware lay in a tarnish-proof box on a high shelf all to itself (JACKSON, 2009, p. 32).

As every other object in David's house, the silverware was handpicked and extensively taken care of. His feelings towards it are similar to a collector who finally acquires a rare item and is proud to show it off. When Marcia, his neighbour, arrived to dinner, he immediately drove her attention to the silverware: "I don't believe you've been here since I got my silverware" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 33) which is a subtle way of asking her for a complimentary comment. The silverware also exemplifies David's care with his objects. After dinner, Marcia suggests leaving the dirty dishes in the sink to be washed on the next day; however, the mere thought of that was painful to David. He decided to act "because he could not endure the thought of their sitting there any longer, with the dirt gradually hardening on them, he tied an apron on and began to wash them carefully" (ibid., p. 37).

Bachelard (1994, p. 67) affirms that "when a poet rubs a piece of furniture […] he increases the object's human dignity; he registers this object officially as a member of the human household". David is a poet in this sense: "he had painted the desk and the bookcases and the end tables himself, had even painted the walls, and had hunted around the city for the exact tweedish tan drapes he had in mind" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 30). The house is not only a representation of his taste in design, but also a part of him, since his actual labour is materialized everywhere.

Therefore, David's lived space, according to Bachelard (1994, p. xxxvi), represents a topophilic space to him, his "*felicitous space"*. The topophilic space is described by Bachelard as a place to be "defended against adverse forces, the space we love" (1994, p. xxxvi). In the first part of the short story, David feels represented by his house and just the fact of being there comforts him. He defines the living-room as "charming" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 30) and his house as "the most comfortable home he had ever had" (ibid., p. 31), corroborating the idea of a happy place. His home is not only a place of relaxation, but also worthy of admiration and contemplation. The fact that David enjoys the power of deciding who gets to enter his abode shows he is protective of it. "It pleased him to have only one key to his home, and that safely in his own pocket; it had a pleasant feeling to him, solid and small, the only way into his warm fine home" (ibid., p. 31).

Despite the fact that David holds the only key to his apartment proudly and securely with him, he gloats over having the key to his neighbour's place. Marcia's apartment was "the only other apartment on the floor" (ibid., p. 29) and it is also "exactly the same as his: foyer, kitchenette, living-room" (ibid., p. 31). It is as if there was a

mirror in the corridor reflecting David's place. However, mirrors only reflect a reversed image. Therefore, the reader can infer that Marcia, opposite gendered to David, will be presented as David's antithesis. The fact that David keeps a key to Marcia's home makes him feel not only powerful, but also trustworthy, reliable and dependable; also, it provides the reader with the first glance at Marcia's personality.

> He had a key to Marcia's apartment because she was never home when her laundryman came, or when the man came to fix the refrigerator or the telephone or the windows, and someone had to let them in because the landlord was reluctant to climb three flights of stairs with the pass key (JACKSON, 2009, p. 31).

This first introduction to Marcia's character already points out the enormous difference between them. Not only is Marcia never home, but her home also needs constant fixing, showing a lack of care for the house, which is inconceivable to David. Hattenhauer (2003, p. 29) states that "[t]he setting of twin apartments tropes the doubles who occupy them […] In the case of these doubles, the similarities of the apartments contrast with the differences between the two characters". The reader is presented to Marcia through her housekeeping skills, or lack of them, even before she appears in the text. Nevertheless, one should keep in mind her introduction is done through David's eyes. As a consequence, Marcia's profile is biased, taking only into consideration features appreciated by David.

Marcia's apartment is located "down the **dark** hall" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 31, emphasis added), whereas David's first action consisted of lighting up his place, "snapping on the light as he came in the door" (ibid., p. 29). Borges Filho (2007, p. 73) points out that "it is easy to deduce that a space poorly accessible to the sight is a space usually understood as fearful or suspicious"[17]. It is not a surprise that David felt troubled entering Marcia's apartment since "[t]his apartment was not agreeable for him to come into" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 31); that is why his first action was turning on the lights. However, the sight of the apartment is far from being soothing to David but it provides the reader with a deeper insight about Marcia:

> Marcia's home was **bare** and **at random**; an upright **piano** a friend had given her recently **stood crookedly**, half in the foyer, because the little room was too narrow and **the big room was too cluttered** for it to sit comfortably anywhere; Marcia's **bed was unmade** and a **pile of dirty laundry lay on the floor**. The **window had been open all day** and **papers had blown wildly around the floor** (JACKSON, 2009, p. 31-32, emphasis added).

[17] "é fácil deduzirmos que um espaço que se mostra pouco acessível à visão é um espaço que aparece geralmente sob o signo do medo, da desconfiança".

Marcia's place is the exact mirrored opposite of David's. He even compares it to "his first day in his own apartment, when the thought of the careful home-making to be done had left him very close to despair" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 31). David's dinner invitation aimed to have "at least a short talk with Marcia about the state of her home" (ibid., p. 36); thus, the reader can infer that not only is her disorganization recurrent but it is also troublesome for him. The sight of Marcia's place is also an indication that her priorities are quite different from David's. She is not in the least careful with her furniture, her room looks dirty, everything is out of place and she does not seem to care about comfort or beauty. She herself admits it during dinner after complimenting David for his place:

> "Everything's beautiful," she said once. […]
> "I like things this way," David said.
> "I know you do." Marcia's voice was mournful. "Someone should teach me, I guess."
> "You *ought* to keep your home neater," David said. "You ought to get curtains at least, and keep your windows shut."
> "I never remember," she said (JACKSON, 2009, p. 34).

The fact that Marcia mentions that someone should teach her housekeeping skills shows that this activity is not natural or inherent to women, as usually expected; rather, it is a cultural teaching, thus, a social construction. Therefore, never remembering about simple things such as closing the windows shows her disregard to homemaking, which David understands as negligence. As it happens with David, Marcia's personality matches the image of her apartment. From the moment she arrives at David's, the narrator stresses features of her personality:

> The potatoes were done before Marcia came, and then suddenly the door **burst open** and Marcia arrived with a **shout** and **fresh air** and **disorder**. She was a **tall handsome girl** with a **loud** voice, wearing a **dirty** raincoat (JACKSON, 2009, p. 33, emphasis added).

The description of Marcia's arrival completely matches the state of her apartment. She is careless while opening the door, she enters a house that is not hers noisily and she does not seem to care about her personal appearance, walking around in a dirty raincoat. Nothing in her countenance indicates that she could keep a neat house. Moreover, Marcia is far from fitting the stereotype of the feminine character full of housekeeping skills and calm demeanour. According to Hattenhauer (2003, p. 29), they are doubles even in the aspect of social expectations: "[t]he woman, Marcia, is masculine, and the man, David Turner, is feminine".

Another opposition between them has to do with the importance given to small details. During dinner, Marcia “put meat and potatoes and salad on her plate without admiring the serving silver” (JACKSON, 2009, p. 34), whereas David “liked the feel of the fork in his hand, even the sight of the fork moving up to Marcia’s mouth” (ibid., p. 34). The two characters are mirrored in every aspect and the setting they are inserted acts not only as a representation of them but also as a guide to their actions and behaviour.

3.2. David’s (un)homely home

This specific story, as the majority of Jackson’s stories, fits perfectly the Freudian concept of the uncanny. This concept first came out in his essay “The ‘Uncanny’” (1919), according to which “the uncanny is that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar” (FREUD, 1919, p. 220 *apud* NORJORDET, 2005, p. 96). In this essay, Freud explains that the *uncanny* begins as something known or familiar to both the reader and character and throughout the narrative it turns into something uncomfortable, in other words, unfamiliar. Norjordet (2005, p. 97) states that this is relevant because “most of Jackson’s stories are concerned with domestic, everyday events that are made ambiguous and frightening”, which is exactly the case in “Like mother used to make”. The fact that the twin apartments represent the characters is familiar to the reader, but the sequence of events that unfolds with the arrival of a third person affects the reader’s and most of all David’s sense of reality.

The first indication of the presence of the *uncanny* is the characterization of Marcia and David. Not only are they opposites, but their gender roles are also swapped. Accordingly, “defamiliarising often means enforcing the domestic, the homely, the everyday experience, to an excess […] but it always questions the easy acceptance of what we consider to be real – gender roles included” (BECKER, 1999, p. 24 *apud* NORJORDET, 2005, p. 97). The characterization of Marcia as sloppy and David as domestic is, at first, unfamiliar to the reader; however, once these features are established, the reader expects each of them to act correspondingly.

The apartments as setting have many functions other than acting as the Bachelardian space of psychological representation. Borges Filho points out that space can work as a promoter for the action. He affirms that space “has no influence over action. The character is driven to act in a certain way by other factors, not space.

However, s/he acts as such because the space indulges this specific action" (BORGES FILHO, 2007, p. 39)[18]. For instance, it is what happens to Marcia's character in the short story.

We observe that Marcia's behaviour changes once Mr. Harris, her co-worker, arrives unexpectedly, at least for David. She welcomes him into David's place: "'Sit down, sit down,' Marcia was saying **pushing a chair forward**" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 36, emphasis added); that is a clear mirror of David's behaviour as a host towards herself: "**He pulled her a chair** out for her and waited for her to sit down" (ibid., p. 34, emphasis added). When put into perspective, Marcia's place, where everything was out of order and "the big room was too cluttered" (ibid., p. 31), is uninviting as the house of a host. The big room, which David referred to as the living-room, is usually considered the place to entertain guests, therefore, it needs to be decluttered. Since Mr. Harris dropped by to see Marcia, she now finds herself in the position of a hostess; besides, the environment (David's apartment) enables her to entertain her guest at David's expenses.

The environment provided by David in his apartment did not force the change in Marcia's behaviour. Actually, the change occurred as a consequence of her perception of herself as being Mr. Harris' hostess and no longer David's guest. As a consequence, she usurps David's place and takes credit for all of his hard work, from the organization of the place to the pie he baked. However, she acts as if David knew they were playing a game in which she reproduced his hosting skills. After serving David's pie to Mr. Harris, "[s]he looked up to David and smiled at him over Mr. Harris' head. 'I haven't made but two, three pies before" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 36) which is the exact same thing David told her when she complimented the pie: "'I've made two before,' David admitted, 'but this one turned out better than the others'" (ibid., p.35). Therefore, we can observe that Marcia's hosting skills are directly linked to the conducive environment of David's apartment.

In fact, it looks as if Marcia was doing a sort of role-play. She constantly repeats David's actions, looking at him while doing them, just as a pupil often acts towards the master. One must not forget David had intended for Marcia to improve her housekeeping skills and she made it clear that she needed a teacher: "Someone

[18] "não há nenhuma influência sobre a ação. A personagem é pressionada por outros fatores a agir de tal maneira, não pelo espaço. Entretanto, ela age de determinada maneira, pois o espaço é favorável a essa ação".

should teach me, I guess" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 34). It is possible to read Mr. Harris' arrival as Marcia's motivation to practice David's hosting skills. However, David fails to get the message behind Marcia's looks and smiles, he only sees her action as utterly invasive and threatening to his power.

David recognized the change in Marcia's behaviour, which was not previously agreed, and it did not please him at all. He took pride in "hav[ing] only one key to his home" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 31) but not only Marcia invited an unknown person into his house; she was also acting as the owner of the place. To David, "his clean house, his nice silver, were not meant as vehicles for the kind of fatuous banter Marcia and Mr. Harris were playing at together" (ibid., p. 37). According to Bachelard (1994), the cherished space needs to be protected against external forces, and David feels very protective towards his place: "David's desire to be rid of Mr. Harris had slid imperceptibly into an urgency to be rid of them both" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 37).

However, he found himself in an awkward position, he recognized Marcia as the hostess, Harris as the guest, and he was neither of them. He felt unwelcome as Marcia addressed him and "David recognized her tone; it was the one **hostesses** used when they didn't know what else to say to you, or when you had come too early or **stayed too late.** It was the tone he had expected to use on Mr. Harris" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 38). He could never act as host towards Mr. Harris because Harris was not his own guest; at the same time, David was overstaying Marcia's welcome.

David's apartment became, since then, a territory. According to Borges Filho (2007, p. 30), "when there is the desire of ruling a space, this space receives the name of territory"[19]. David intends to take back his house as well as his protagonism as host; however, the intimidating presence of Mr. Harris and the fact that David is presently an unwelcome outsider, prevents him from even trying. One of the moments that exemplifies David's attempts is when Marcia takes credit for the cherry pie: "David raised a hand to protest, but Mr. Harris turned to him and demanded, 'Did you ever eat any better pie in your life?'" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 36); Harris hindered David's action, silencing him. The longer Mr. Harris stayed in the apartment, the more he felt comfortable and empowered over David. He started to openly make David feel unwelcome by "looking at him impatiently" (ibid., p. 38) and "watching David" (ibid., p.

[19] "quando há o desejo de domínio sobre um espaço, este passa a ser chamado de território".

39). David's last attempt consisted in trying to ask Harris, politely, to leave; however, he ended up doing exactly the opposite:

> David stood up. For a minute he thought he was going to say something that might start, "Mr. Harris, I'll thank you to…", but what he actually said, finally, with both Marcia and Mr. Harris looking at him, was, "Guess I better be getting along, Marcia." Mr. Harris stood up and said heartily, "Certainly have enjoyed meeting you." **He held out his hand and David shook hands limply** (JACKSON, 2009, p. 39, emphasis added).

David's apartment was no longer his, it was officially Marcia's and he was not welcome there any further. Marcia and Harris won the battle over the territory and David surrendered, sadly accepting the defeat. Marcia officialised the defeat handing him the key to his "new" place, her apartment. Borges Filho (2007) had referred to the use of objects as a way of predicting narrative events. David keeps Marcia's key and this fact receives a lot of emphasis in the text. When David is bidding farewell, Marcia reminds him of the key: "Don't forget **your** key" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 39, emphasis added). The key is the object that symbolises the ownership of a place and David had two keys, one to his own apartment and one to Marcia's place. The pronoun "your" is justified, for Marcia hands David his own key to her apartment; moreover, by using the pronoun, the narrator proposes a new meaning, David now owns Marcia's place. David's keys also act as mirrors, representing two opposing feelings. The key to his apartment is held "safely in his pocket" (ibid., p. 31) as a symbol of power and pride to David whereas the key to Marcia's apartment (once a symbol of power) becomes the symbol of his defeat.

Unlocking Marcia's place, David enters his topophobic space. Borges Filho (2007, p. 159) describes the topophobia as the "negative relation between character and space"[20]. The narrator has already pointed out before that Marcia's apartment "was not agreeable for him to come into" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 31) because the clutter and mess disturbed him; now, Marcia's place is also a representation of David's powerlessness and inability to preserve his home. However, this time David is forced to stay in Marcia's apartment, increasing his sentiment of loathing towards the place. As usual in his ritual, "David sat down on the bed and looked around" (ibid., p. 40); however, this time "It was **cold**, it was **dirty**" (ibid., p. 40). The place did not deserve to be admired and contemplated, since it was completely uninviting; he misses his "warm home" (ibid., p. 40).

[20] "uma relação negativa entre personagem e espaço".

We cannot help but observe the connection between the previous passage and the fifth function of space discussed by Borges Filho (2007, p. 40), which indicates that "there is an analogy between the space where the character is inserted and his feelings"[21], David's feelings match the coldness of the place. He is also confused and his confusion finds resonance in the chaos of the rooms. He is "close to despair" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 31) and as in his first days in his apartment, the only thing left for him to do is to tidy up the place. "David leaned over and picked up a paper from the floor, and then he began to gather them up one by one" (ibid., p. 40), he started to do what he knows best: turning an unhomely space into a homely home[22].

3.3. The mother house…housemother[23]

Another relevant element to Jackson's stories is the relationship between character and mother. She takes it from her Gothic influence. According to Rubenstein (1996, p. 320) "[i]n Female Gothic narratives, houses and mansions function as maternal spaces". These maternal spaces usually house conflicting relationships between daughters and mothers. Rubenstein (1996, p. 325) also states that "[i]n several of Jackson's stories and virtually in all of her novels, a woman's troubled relation to her mother (whether alive or dead) and/or to a house or to "home" produces anxieties". In "Like mother used to make" the main character is a man that presents the social features expected in a woman, such as homemaking skills. The mother's relevance is such that the reference to "mother" already appears in the title of the story.

David's mother is neither dead nor physically present in the text. However, "There was a letter from his mother in the mailbox" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 29). In this case, "the mother's absence becomes a haunting presence that bears directly on the daughter's [or son's] difficult struggle to achieve selfhood as well as to express her unacknowledged rage or her sense of precariousness in the world" (RUBENSTEIN, 1996, p. 311). This lurking presence, as already observed, is explicit in the title "Like

[21] "existe uma analogia entre o espaço que a personagem ocupa e o seu sentimento".
[22] "Originally, in its early drafts, the story had another ending. David was then named Jamie Turner, Marcia was called Billie and Harris was simply and innocently called Harold Lang. The most radical change involves Jamie Turner's attitude when he leaves his apartment at the end of the story. This Turner is amused that he and Billie had made a fool out of the *big guy*. He whistles while he picks up Billie's papers from the floor, confident he can get everything organized in little over an hour while the couple (Billie and Harold) is chattering away in his apartment." (COHEN, 2012, p. 64).
[23] Quote from *The Haunting of the Hill House* (JACKSON, 1984, p. 211 *apud* RUBENSTEIN, 1996, p. 326).

mother used to make" and has direct implications on David's actions, since he has some standards to live up to.

The way David prepares dinner and sets the table is described as if he were following a manual:

> In his own apartment he settled down happily to making dinner. He had made a little pot roast for dinner the night before; most of it was still in the refrigerator and he sliced it in fine thin slices and arranged it on a plate with parsley. […] it was pleasant to him to arrange a salad, with the lettuce on the orange plate and the thin slices of cucumber. He put coffee on to cook, and sliced potatoes to fry, and then, with his dinner cooking agreeably and the window open to lose the odor of the frying potatoes, he set lovingly to arranging his table. First, the tablecloth, pale green, of course. And the two fresh green napkins. The orange plates and the precise cup and saucer at each place. The plate of rolls in the center, and the odd salt and pepper shakers, like two pale green frogs. Two glasses – they came from the five-and-ten, but they had thin green bands around them – and finally, with great care, the silverware (JACKSON, 2009, p. 32).

There is a right way to cut the slices of meat and cucumber, the house needs airing not to smell like frying and the table has to be set to perfection. David goes through every detail as if not to forget anything. He actually arranges the table and cuts the vegetable and meat as if he were performing an artistic task. It looks as if David is trying to run the house like his mother used to make or as she once taught him. Even the kind of food he is preparing mimics the one of a mother, such as pot roast and fried potatoes, both heavy food, balanced with some salad. The greatest evidence of this motherly influence on David's cooking is the cherry pie. The fact that the homemade pie is so related to family meals, rare in adulthood, is brought up in Mr. Harris' comment: "I've forgotten what homemade pie *looks* like" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 36).

David also impersonates a mother figure in his relationship with Marcia. David presents himself as dependable for the most trivial things such as letting people in and out of her apartment whenever it needs fixing. Also, David's disagreeable feeling over Marcia's mess is similar to the one a mother feels when entering a teenager's room and thinks about the overwhelming "careful home-making to be done" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 31). However, this does not mean that Marcia recognizes David as a motherly figure. The dinner scene is the ultimate instance of Marcia's disregard for David as a mother:

> When he acts like a mother at dinner, Marcia quickly changes the subject: "'You *ought* to keep your home neater,' David said. 'You ought to get curtains at least, and keep your windows shut.' 'I never remember,' she said. 'Davie, you are the most *wonderful* cook.'" (34). His motherly advice is not appreciated, probably because it comes from what most people would say is the wrong person, since his personality and gender do not match; in a sense,

> then, David is already playing a part, pretending to be something he is not: a mother (NORJORDET,2005, p. 100).

David tries to lecture Marcia as if she were his teenage daughter. Marcia's immediate change of subject proves, as Norjordet mentioned, that David failed to live up to a mother figure. Even after the unexpected outcome, David "remain[s] merged with the mother (who becomes emotionally identified with "home")" (RUBENSTEIN, 1996, p. 309). Intense, borderline obsessive housekeeping represents David's connection to his motherly figure. Perhaps David aims for his mother to acknowledge his efforts or else the neat lived space is the only way for him to feel really at home.

3.4. The sacred dream house

The story's twin apartments can also represent David's image of a house. Bachelard (1994, p. 59) states that the image of the house "is created through cooperation between real and unreal, [...] if a house is a living value, it must integrate an element of unreality". Dara Downey (2005, p. 148, emphasis added) corroborates Bachelard's theory and affirms that "[t]his "element of unreality" is created by the daydreams and **memories** of a house's occupants". Therefore, David's image of the house might be associated with his past, experiences and memories. The fact that he considers his apartment "the most comfortable home he had ever had" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 31) supports the existence of past homes, and that these past homes were not as comfortable as his current place.

Bachelard (1994, p.61) proposes that:

> the image of *the dream house* is opposed to that of the childhood home [and that] this dream house may be merely a dream of ownership, the embodiment of everything that is considered convenient, comfortable, healthy, sound, desirable, by other people.

David's apartment fits the description of a dream house. It is different from the dwellings of his past, at the same time that it is comfortable and beautiful to him and others. Marcia herself acknowledges that fact: "'Everything is beautiful,' she said once. […] 'furniture, and nice place you have here, and dinner, and everything'" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 34). In opposition, Marcia's apartment represents the connection to some of his past memory of housing. David's childhood home is not explicitly mentioned; however, the sight of Marcia's apartment brings the recollection of his first day in his apartment "when the thought of the home-making to be done had left him very close to despair" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 31).

Therefore, David's intense housekeeping shows not only his connection to his mother, as previously seen, but also his intention of building something he dreamed of. According to Bachelard (1994, p. 68), "[a] house that shines from the care it receives appears to have been rebuilt from the inside; it is as though it were new inside". David's house has been through a makeover, from the paint on the walls to the furniture. Marcia's apartment, on the other hand, looks frozen in time representing the old building and the least privileged part of town.

According to Mircea Eliade (1957), the space of the house is considered to be sacred (*apud* DOWNEY, 2005). And David's rituals of contemplation and admiration supports the interpretation that he considers his apartment to be sacred. Eliade also states that "the creation of sacred space involves 'detaching a territory from the surrounding milieu and making it qualitatively different'" (ELIADE, 1957, p. 26 *apud* DOWNEY, 2005, p. 151). Thus, David's place stands out from the building it is located, "an old brownstone" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 30), and from Marcia's apartment that is "bare and at random" (ibid., p.31).

David's obsession with housework is also an indication that he considers the house a sacred space, a place to be revered. Dara Downey (2005, p. 149) states that "sacredness, ritual purity […] is automatically created by the assiduous care of the housewife, who removes all impure and taboo elements from the home". In addition, she points out that "all elements not native to the house, whether dirt, dust or noisy neighbours, must be rigorously excluded" (DOWNEY, 2005, p 151). David fits the role of this "housewife". For instance, he mentions that he was able to wash the dishes used by Marcia and Mr. Harris so well that "Mr Harris' cup was unrecognizable; you could not tell, from the clean rows of cups, which one he had used or which one had been **stained** with Marcia's lipstick" (JACKSON, 2009, p. 38). Here, the word "stained" is important because it carries a double meaning, the pigment of the lipstick or even the lack of honour from the couple. David is using water, soap, and his careful work to purify those supposedly sacred objects. It means that David sees them both as representation of evil that might stain and defile his house, or even worse, take ownership of it in an irreversible way.

However, despite his best efforts, David was incapable of turning his house into a safe sacred haven, strong enough to resist the invasion of external forces. The falling plaster of the ceiling, resistant to all his attempts to fix and the impossibility, or rather, incapacity to send Marcia and Mr. Harris away resulted in David's ultimate failure.

Having failed to follow his mother's footsteps as well as to honour and protect the sacred space of his home, David kept his mission going: he restarted building his dream house, his sacred space, this time in Marcia's apartment.

4. CONCLUSION

This current piece of research aimed to analyse the uses and the relevance of space in the making of the characters' personalities, as well as the spatial influence on their actions and behaviour in the short story "Like mother used to make".

We could observe that space is a vital element to be taken into account in this specific short story. It works as a form of materialization of the characters' personalities. David's house is immaculate, having objects perfectly put together, thoroughly organized, which indicates that not only does he value his house, but that he is also methodical and perfectionist. On the other hand, Marcia's place is messy and dirty. Marcia, then, is portrayed as someone sloppy and careless, lacking housekeeping skills.

We have also observed that the domestic space has other functions, such as acting as an enabler so that Marcia is able to act as a perfect hostess to Mr. Harris. The space did not compel her into action, but provided the conditions for her behaviour, which would not be possible in her own house. Besides, space also features as a landscape for the character's mood. While David stays in his place, he feels happy and content, once he is cast to Marcia's apartment the mood of the place, dark and messy, fits perfectly his gloom and confusion.

Moreover, the story also contains aspects related to the relationship between character and mother, as suggested by the title. David keeps the house, cooks and takes care of Marcia as a mother would conventionally behave. His mother's presence unveils in his every action. Having the connection between mother and house being so deep, David perceives his house as sacred, which justifies his obsession with tidiness and cleaning.

"Like mother used to make" is a perfect example of a Jackson story; as a matter of fact, Hattenhauer (2003, p. 4) states that, in Jackson's narratives, "[s]ometimes there is no epiphany. What is more unsettling is that often there is a revelation but it offers no salvation, or even delivers the character into perdition". David failed in protecting his house from external forces and ended up where he began, picking up papers in the hope of turning Marcia's apartment into a home. He learned nothing from that fact, nor did he have an epiphany. Marcia took his place and he accepted that without any consequences. The everyday, the ordinary, is the raw matter that embodies Jackson's uncanny.

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