

T.C.
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES



FAMILY AS THE SOURCE OF TERROR IN PATRICK MCGRATH'S
NEW GOTHIC NOVELS

Ph.D. Thesis

Onur IŞIK

Department of English Language and Literature
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all information in this thesis document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results, which are not original to this thesis.

Onur IŞIK

In memory of my grandfather Hüseyin IŞIK,

FOREWORD

When I was just an enthusiastic student in Gothic Literature in 2010, I decided to study on Patrick McGrath. At that time, I was taking Dr. David KERLER's "Unreliable Narration" course in which I met Patrick McGrath's haunting novels. I am very thankful to Dr. David KERLER for making this possible. Since 2010, I had been thinking of writing my dissertation on Patrick McGrath. Finally, I could start my thesis on McGrath in 2015.

At Istanbul Aydın University I met Assist. Prof. Gamze SABANCI UZUN, who kindly accepted to be my supervisor although she had not known me until my PhD qualifying exam. She is the one who makes this dissertation possible to come to an end. Without her encouragement and feedbacks, I could not be at that point. Now, this adventure is completed, and I hope that we can work together in further studies.

Prof. Mehmet Ali ÇELIKEL has a special place for my family. He has always been a perfect advisor and a teacher for me and my wife. His meaning in our life is inexpressible. I want to thank Prof. Hatice GÖNÜL UÇELE for her kind and helpful criticism. With the help of her bitter but beneficial suggestions I could overcome my deficiencies. Assist. Prof. Melis MÜLAZIMOĞLU ERKAL has been in my academic career since 2007 and always answered my help requests kindly. Assoc. Prof. Ferma LEKESİZALIN has supported me very much with her endless patience and I am grateful for that.

My parents, Ömer Attila IŞIK and Gönül IŞIK have always been encouraging for my academic career. I am here today, with the help of their support. My sister, Işıl IŞIK ERTAN, who is very fond of literature, has always been supportive in the hard times. My precious wife Serap and lovely son Ege are the ones who made the biggest sacrifice, especially in the last two years. I love them. I am glad that I have such a beautiful family.

I also want to present my gratitude to my friends Giuseppe RUTIGLIANI, Deniz KARACA, Dr. Mustafa BÜYÜKGEBİZ, Buğra KAŞ, Turan Burak İMRE, Üzeyir ÖLMEZ, Assist Prof. Fehim KURULOĞLU, and Ahmet Serhat ANAÇ for their solidarity and friendship.

Prof. Tony MAGISTRALE is one of the key persons who intensified my passion for Gothic. Although we have thousands of kilometers between us, he helped me. I thank Prof. Sue ZLOSNIK for her e-mails and guidance. I got so much help from the works of her on Patrick McGrath. Lastly, I want to thank Mr. MCGRATH for the support and patience he showed me throughout the writing process of this work. I hope one day we can have a chance to meet in person.

October 2020

Onur IŞIK

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FAMILY AS THE SOURCE OF TERROR IN PATRICK MCGRATH'S NEW GOTHIC NOVELS

ABSTRACT

This thesis will attempt to explain how the modern age subverted the conventions of gothic literature and Patrick McGrath's contribution to the gothic genre by taking his New Gothic works as the focal point to discuss. Patrick McGrath not only contributed to literature by writing novels and short stories but also with the term "New Gothic" that he coined in the preface of *The New Gothic: A Collection*. By adding a modern setting and showing the unreliability of the most trusted institutions such as family, hospitals, and characters such as father and doctor, McGrath brings a different way to create terror.

Gothic literature, compared to other genres, has always been underestimated. Although its supernatural themes, characters, or creatures got attention from readers, it would be naïve to claim that academically it has been seen noteworthy. It can be suggested that from Horace Walpole to Edgar Allan Poe, the Gothic was a mixture of romanticism and horror. With Poe's arrival, the destiny of the Gothic changed to a darker and more brutal direction. Poe introduced terror in a different way from his predecessors by focusing on the inner world of the characters. It might be claimed that until him, the Gothic had been occupied by the supernatural. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Poe did not leave the supernatural behind but added psychology to it. Hence, Edgar Allan Poe's works can be taken as a crucial point in Gothic Literature.

Poe's impact upon the following writers is undeniable. Even today, his voice can be heard from contemporary authors such as Patrick McGrath. McGrath is known for his dark, pessimistic, grotesque, and transgressive works, which make him a modern Edgar Allan Poe. The symbols of terror have had a metamorphosis from outside to within in recent times. There is no more need to present terror as a wild beast. In the 20th and 21st centuries, and gothic literature took advantage of such improvements in order to narrate its particular theme of terror adequately.

This thesis will analyze four Patrick McGrath novels *Asylum*, *Spider*, *Port Mungo*, and *Trauma*, which take family as the source of the terror from the lenses of the psychoanalytic approach.

Keywords: *Gothic, New Gothic, Family, Terror, Freud*

PATRICK MCGRATH'IN YENİ GOTİK ROMANLARINDA DEHŞETİN KAYNAĞI OLARAK AİLE

ÖZET

Bu tez modern çağın gotik edebiyat geleneklerini nasıl alt üst ettiğini ve Patrick McGrath'ın Yeni Gotik eserlerini tartışmanın odak noktasına alarak onun gotik türe katkısını açıklamaya çalışacaktır. Patrick McGrath sadece roman ve kısa öyküler yazarak değil, aynı zamanda *The New Gothic: A Collection* adlı eserinin önsözünde kullandığı “Yeni Gotik” terimiyle de edebiyata büyük katkıda bulunmuştur. Oluşturduğu modern ortam içerisinde aile, hastane gibi en güvenilir kurumların ve baba, doktor gibi karakterlerin güvenilmezliğini göstererek, McGrath dehşet yaratmanın farklı bir yolunu sergilemiştir.

Gotik edebiyat, diğer türlere kıyasla her zaman küçümsenmiştir. Gotik Edebiyattaki eserlerin doğaüstü temaları, karakterleri ya da yaratıkları okuyucuların dikkatini çekmesine rağmen, bunların akademik olarak kayda değer görüldüğünü iddia etmek çok iyimser bir yaklaşım olur. Horace Walpole'dan Edgar Allan Poe'ya kadar Gotik'in romantizm ve korkunun bir sentezi olduğu ifade edilebilir. Poe'nun dâhil olmasıyla Gotik'in kaderi çok daha karanlık ve acımasız bir hal almıştır. Karakterlerin iç dünyasına odaklanarak, Poe kendinden öncekilerden farklı bir şekilde dehşeti ortaya koymuştur. Poe'ya kadar, Gotik'in doğaüstü söylemler tarafından etki altında tutulduğu iddia edilebilirdi. Ancak, Poe'nun doğaüstü güçleri saf dışı bırakmadan üzerine psikolojiyi eklediği de unutulmamalıdır. Dolayısıyla, Edgar Allan Poe'nun çalışmaları Gotik Edebiyatta çok önemli bir dönüm noktası olarak görülebilir.

Poe'nun, kendisinden sonra gelen yazarlar üzerindeki etkisi elbette inkâr edilemez. Onun sesi, Patrick McGrath gibi çağdaş dönem yazarlarından bugün bile duyulabilmektedir. McGrath, kendisini modern bir Edgar Allan Poe yapan karanlık, kötümser, grotesk ve aşırıya kaçan çalışmaları ile bilinir. Son zamanlarda, dehşet sembolleri dışarıdan içe doğru bir değişim yaşamıştır. Artık, dehşeti vahşi bir canavar formunda betimlemeye gerek kalmamıştır. 20. ve 21. yüzyıllarda, gotik edebiyat kendine özgü dehşet temasını etkin bir şekilde anlatmak için bu tür gelişmelerden yararlanmıştı.

Bu tez, psikanalitik yaklaşımın gözünden, aileyi dehşetin kaynağı olarak ele alan dört Patrick McGrath romanını, yani *Asylum*, *Spider*, *Port Mungo* ve *Trauma*'yı inceleyecektir.

Asylum romanında, aile içerisindeki dehşet, kendini bir akıl hastanesinde göreve başlayan Doktor Max Raphael'in eşi merkezinde kendini gösterir. Stella Raphael, eşinin yanında, oldukça saygın ve steril bir çevresi olmasına rağmen, tutkusunun peşinde gitmekten kendini alamaz ve bir hastayla ilişki yaşamaya başlar. Adı Edgar olan bu hasta ve Stella roman boyunca hem fiziksel hem de simgesel birçok sınırı aşarlar. Bu da onların uyumsuzluklarının bir göstergesi olur.

Spider, Dennis adındaki bir çocuğun şizofreniye benzer bir zihinsel hastalık sebebiyle oluşan "Örümcek" ismindeki alt benliğinin onu sürüklediği travmatik olaylar silsilesini anlatır. Bu roman Dennis'in annesini öldürmesiyle Anti-Oedipal bir örnek teşkil etmektedir.

Port Mungo, ünlü olmak isteyen ressam Jack ve onun sınırı aşan aile içi cinsel istismarına yoğunlaşan bir romandır. Jack'in, özellikle Peg'e uyguladığı sistematik cinsel istismar, Jack'in derinlerde yatmakta olan düşsel kırıklıklarının ve başarısızlıklarının bir sonucudur aslında. Jack'in diğer kızı, Anna'nın Jack'e meydan okumasıyla roman sona erer ancak Jack'in peşinden koştuğu kişinin aslında kendisi olduğu son yaptığı resimle açıklanabilir. Jack'in resminde androjen bir insan figürü vardır: bu hem kendisi hem Peg, hem de Anna'dır aslında.

Trauma, kendisini iyileştirebileceğine inanan Freudyen psikiyatrist Charlie'nin sonu başından belli umutsuz bir serüvene çıkmasını konu alır. Charlie, hiçbir zaman annesinin gözünde bir değer kazanamamıştır. Bu durum Charlie'yi psikolojik açıdan yıpratmış ve yetişkinliğinde onulmaz yaralara yol açmıştır. Eşiyle olan ilişkisi halihazırda bozuk olan Charlie, kayınbiraderinin ölümüne istemeden de olsa dolaylı bir şekilde katkıda bulunur ve annesinin ona silah çekmesinden sonra ikinci bir travma yaşar. Charlie'nin travmaları ve onun bunlarla baş etmeye çalıştığı yöntemler hayli ilginçtir; çünkü yazar okuyucunun yorum yapmasına çok az olanak sağlar. Okuyucu yorum yapmadan Charlie kendi teşhisini koyar.

Yukarıda bahsedilen tüm romanların ortak özelliği hepsinin güvenilmez anlatıcı tarafından anlatılması ve hepsinin bir şekilde aile ile ilişkili olmasıdır. Bu tezin tartışmak istediği asıl nokta, McGrath'ın bu seçilmiş eserlerinde aileyi hangi yoldan

alt üst edip gotikleştirerek korkunun merkezine koyduğudur. Yazarın tersyüz etmiş olduğu aile, sadece bir toplum parçası olarak değil, güvenilir kurumların tümünün bir temsili olarak görülmelidir. Bu yıkıcı tutum, Gotik Edebiyat'ın sadece doğüstü güçlerin yardımıyla ayakta durmadığını kanıtladığı gibi, korkunun ve dehşetin kaynaklarının da ne denli çeşitli olabileceğini göstermektedir. McGrath, öncüllerinden kopmadan, ama üstüne de koyarak, ortaya benzeri az bulunan bir tarz çıkarmıştır. Bu tezin konusunu oluşturan eserler, en az dört yüz yıllık bir “tür”ün geçirdiği evrimin son hâlini yansıtmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Gotik, Yeni Gotik, Aile, Dehşet, Freud*

1.INTRODUCTION

So I developed a thesis, and my thesis was that at the heart of the Old Gothic are these archaisms in the forefront. They are the strongest themes to the Old Gothic: transgression and decay. And here they are, in many writers who are working today, although their work doesn't look like the Old Gothic, without the creaky castles and stormy nights. And I said: "This is the New Gothic." I made the argument in the introduction to the collection. The idea became associated with me, but it also seemed to become a term ... that meant something. I hit on an idea that I think resonated with others. (as quoted in Falco, 2001, p. 17)

Patrick McGrath's style is novel to the Gothic Tradition because he employs what is already there at hand—the existential of the modern world—without delving into the supernatural. McGrath explains this in the following manner: "... we can be in the most modern place, with the most up-to-date technology, and suddenly, something unnerving happens and we're assaulted by ancient fears" (Welsh, 2006, p. 5). Avoiding the supernatural side of the Gothic opens new avenues for McGrath. He chooses to stress on issues such as criminality, madness, malignancy, and deconstruction of values. All these themes can be described as fears that belong to the past. These themes can be grouped under three main elements as transgression, decay, and madness, which seem essential for the New Gothic by McGrath. Although the classical Gothic has the same traits, the new thing in McGrath's style is that he achieves to use them in a different setting. Moreover, the terror is in the heart of ordinary life. No longer lonely people or outsiders are taken as the main subject, but the representatives of most trusted institutions are the source of terror. Gamze Sabancı Uzun, in her article, *Presentation of anti-Semitism in McGrath's Gothic Novel The Wardrobe Mistress (2019)*, suggests a distinct approach to Patrick McGrath's New Gothic by describing it as an act of parodying the Gothic genre (2019, p.303). It is a clear fact that McGrath presents a fragmented Gothic atmosphere that is shaped by parody. Not only does he parody the traditional Gothic, but also the reading habits of the reader by presenting ordinary topics in modern setting in an unexpected narration.

It cannot be claimed that McGrath does not benefit from the traditional Gothic. Nevertheless, it might be favorable to say that McGrath does not use traditional Gothic essence directly but borrows from it and subverts the features of traditional Gothic. The ghosts of the earlier version Gothic become the nightmares of his characters. The horrible uncanny chateaus of traditional Gothic might show themselves as the World Trade Center this time. Anna Battista claims a similar explanation on McGrath's style: "If the hell of the gothic novels was tangibly manifest in prisons, castles and deformed monsters, the hell of Patrick McGrath has moved into his characters' psyches and is represented by the cracks into their minds" (Battista, 2004 para. 4). Moreover, that is possible to say that the terror's transformation from outside to human psychology was inevitable, maybe a critical need as the Gothic was near to consume all its sources.

The Gothic has always been associated with horror, savagery, and everything related to terror. However, the history and developmental stages of this movement should be looked over to understand this bizarre nature of it. Gothic First Emerged as a feature of architecture. It, then affected painting and literature. This influence upon literature continues to be alive today. In this thesis, it will be argued that Patrick McGrath's works transgress the borders in the human mind by physical irregularities and psychological deviances in a contemporary way under the name of New Gothic. Undeniably recent changes have affected New Gothic. So to say, New Gothic tells extraordinary stories of lives that seem ordinary. What makes these stories terrific is the fact that borders that seem impassable can quickly be passed over; McGrath's novels show this fact quite clearly. The novels of him include strange and extraordinary actions that might not take place in ordinary people's lives. That situation makes these works different from others. A short informative historical background of the genre can help the reader see its progress and transformation through the ages.

The beginning of gothic literature dates back to Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). Although "gothic" as a term started to be used in literature with that novel in 1764, the history of the term "gothic" is much longer. The origin of the word Gothic goes back to the "Goths," the ancient Germanic tribes, which meant German and eventually represented the Middle Ages (Heather, 2018). "Goth" refers to the brutal tribes who gave distress to the settled communities, including the Roman Empire. At that time, goths were known as vandals who had the possibility of destroying the order of settlements and people, which, later on, became a fundamental

narrative element in the gothic genre. Firstly, the term was used in architecture. In the medieval era, churches, cathedrals, and castles began to be built in the gothic style. The design of gothic architecture was famous for its giant, majestic indoors and spear-headed arches (Zelazko, 2020, Gothic Architecture section, para. 2). Gothic architecture's first and most important target was to be notable and impressive. The Gothic works of architecture were so tall that they could get as much sunlight as possible. Hence, one can assume that although Gothic architecture reminds dark, gloom, and fear; its primary objective was to bring light to the darkness. However, as a result of its gigantic and finely sculpted style, gothic architecture became a fear symbol. Because of its rebellious nature, Gothic architecture refers to dark ages. The appearance of these buildings would give the impression of power, gloom, and fear, which also affected literature. The notoriety of goths continued even after their extinction as the term was associated with anything against order, goodness, and kindness. Dark, gloomy, dreadful attitudes and incidents were therefore evolved into the word of "gothic" in general. The genre, which peaked in 1790, was the product of political anxiety, literary experience, and personal obsession, although one reason could not be the cause of its fame (Birkhead, 2007, p. 167). Some argue that Gothic, in a broad sense, is a reaction to the Enlightenment and the ideals of neoclassicism that reduced life to a very important and defined reality. The emergence of Gothic represents a political resistance. So, it might be said that politically, Gothic has a rebellious nature. Before starting to discuss McGrath's works and influences, it might be helpful to take a look at the development of Gothic Literature from the beginning until today. Written in the first half of the 20th century, *The Tale of Terror* gives some account of the transition of Gothic Literature from the 18th century to the 20th century. Although it focuses on the literature of the 19th and 20th-centuries, it is notable in terms of understanding the period before the New Gothic, from the eyes of a 20th-century scholar:

Ghosts, and rumours of ghosts, touched nearly the eighteenth-century reader, who had often listened, with bated breath, to winter's tales of spirits seen on Halloween in the churchyard, or white-robed spectres encountered in dark lanes and lonely ruins.
(Birkhead, 2007, p. 147)

The literary world exhibited the first outcomes of gothic architecture in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*. In this novel, Walpole puts Gothic traits into practice through surrealistic happenings. As the very first example of gothic, it sets the

characteristics of the genre such as gloomy atmosphere, haunted places, and supernatural incidents; other works followed its steps in the same tendency. The gothic genre is described as a narrative that is exclusively comprised of old castles, nightmares, ghosts, vampires, and creepy sounds, crazed waves of laughter, abducted women, and screams. Fred Botting describes Horace Walpole's novel as the first 'Gothic story' (2012, p.14). The features that Botting puts forward draw attention to the writer's purpose of using architectural elements symbolically. In *The Castle of Otranto*, Walpole describes the buildings, especially walls, in accordance with the architectural aspect of gothic form to transmit the effect of fear.

Undoubtedly, the gothic genre's entrance into literature was not all of a sudden. Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757) introduced the features and aims of the gothic genre even before the genre's introduction. According to Burke, one should come across with the pleasure of beauty and pain concurrently. Pleasure is caused by beauty, whereas, he argues, sublimity is caused by pain. Therefore, the concept sublime remains fundamental in gothic narratives, as the purpose of this genre is to cause terror and pain. Burke defines the sublime as an object which makes the subject feel powerless. In that sense, the subject becomes vulnerable to threats.

Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling... When danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and [yet] with certain modifications, they may be, and they are delightful, as we everyday experience. (2001, para. 1)

Contrary to common belief, Burke puts forward the idea that the presentation of terror is not something to be degraded, but worthwhile. He does not forget to underline the specific condition that when danger or pain loses its mysticism by failing to keep the distance, it is not supposed to give any pleasure to the reader.

It can be helpful to see the function and necessity of supernatural elements in the first stage of the genre to follow the changes from the beginning until Patrick McGrath. The most prominent supernatural example of *The Castle of Otranto* is undoubtedly the falling of helmet. Although a helmet falls from the sky, nobody questions where it came from, as it is the purpose of gothic to create inexplicable terror. *Vathek* (1786)

stands as an interesting example in the tradition of Gothic Literature with its totally non-western story. William Beckford uses all the supernatural elements which can be found in Islam, such as spirits, genies, and damnation, to strengthen the oriental but terrorizing story.

Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) is also narrated in a similar way. The supernatural background of the story does not hesitate to show itself. The difference is Radcliffe's intention to explain the supernatural incidents by trying to come up with earthly reasons. For instance, servant Ludovicio gives a reason for naming the place "haunted":

'I soon found out, madam,' resumed Ludovico, 'that they were pirates To prevent detection they had tried to have it believed, that the chateau was haunted, and, having discovered the private way to the north apartments, which had been shut up ever since the death of the lady marchioness, they easily succeeded. The housekeeper and her husband, who were the only persons, that had inhabited the castle, for some years, were so terrified by the strange noises they heard in the nights, that they would live there no longer; a report soon went abroad, that it was haunted ... (1794, p.322)

The reader, who once believed in the supernatural events, now comes across with descriptions of those events. The reader is left with questions such as "What if it is just another trick of the narrator?" That is why the suspicion of the reader abolishes entirely reliable narrative. According to Reisman (2017), the Gothic novel "creates an invisible atmosphere of physical and mental fear." All elements, from design to time and space, are used to create a terrifying atmosphere. In this way, the shadow of fear and terror dominates his inner world and the reality that the contemporary Gothic text seeks to show.

Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* (1796) combines extreme feelings with a conservative personality. The protagonist, Ambrosio, is tempted by the devil and becomes an entirely different man. Lewis focuses on the nasty side of humankind without leaving the supernatural atmosphere behind. The difference of *The Monk* from its antecedents is its concentration on the individual who carries the mission of God on earth. Two years after *The Monk*, the first American gothic novel presents itself: Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland: or, The Transformation: An American Tale* (1798). In the novel, gothic traits bring a new challenge for readers. The narration wanders on the line between supernatural and natural. This in-betweenness becomes possible with the help of Biloquism, imitating other people's voices.

In addition to such a transition from the supernatural to the natural, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein (1818)* furthers the characteristics of the gothic genre to another level as Heiland argues, "Frankenstein's central antagonism between Victor and his creation suspends us in an uncanny whose force derives from the multiple uncertainties with which it confronts us" (2004, p. 98). In short, the feeling of in-betweenness that the previous examples highlight becomes the central feature of the 19th-century gothic fiction, which corresponds to the 20th-century concept of uncanny, one of the concepts that this thesis will focus on. Through *Frankenstein*, as well as Bram Stoker's *Dracula (1897)*, supernatural characters made the terror visible in the genre. With the entrance of supernatural into fiction, the transgressive side of these characters or happenings became a necessity. As a result of this transgression, decay came out of one of the essential themes of the genre. Like *Frankenstein*, the leading characters of gothic novels started to transgress the border between life and death. Moreover, these characters stand against the cycle of nature by keeping their flesh away from the process of decay. Before *Frankenstein*, this transgression was not visible in gothic works as the strict doctrines of life and death since religious beliefs were obeyed by authors faithfully. In that sense, it is profoundly evident that Mary Shelley transgresses not only the border of life and death but also possibility and impossibility in imagination.

Melmoth the Wanderer (1820) tells a reproduced Faustian story, which includes a bargain with Satan. Charles Maturin revisits the story of Faustus in the heyday of Gothic Literature. In terms of the supernatural, he faithfully follows the tradition and uses these elements. *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow (1821)* is a story inspired by an old German tale. Washington Irving tells a legendary knight who loses his head in the independence war, and his headless body and horse distress the villagers, especially Ichabod, the protagonist of the story. The terror in this work is created with the help of unknown history and legends. As it is based on heroism and fight, the nature of the headless knight is uncanny. A dead man searching for his head despite being supernatural at its most is horrific for the readers of the time. Although it does not contain clear supernatural horrific elements, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner (1824)*, by most scholars, James Hogg's masterpiece is classified under Gothic literature. However, as it contains murder, the novel is sometimes taken as a crime story instead of Gothic. *Young Goodman Brown (1835)* has religious

references, which can be seen as bridges from reality to imagination. Of course, it is useful to create suspense and terror for the reader. That is why Nathaniel Hawthorne presents a Gothic work furnished with Christianity.

Even though Edgar Allan Poe has always been one of the first authors who come to mind when Gothic Literature is the subject matter until now, he was recognized, and his works were found to be worthy of studying in Europe many years after his death. Until Edgar Allan Poe, gothic literature continued to be a narrative of ghosts, vampires, werewolves, gigantic chateaus, and other gothic elements. Poe changed the direction of Gothic literature with his new kind of narrative technique, through which he started to use the setting as a part of body and mind. Therefore, one can easily claim that, with Poe, the focus of the gothic fiction altered, as he was a romantic writer focusing on the individual's inner self. If the writers before Poe are taken as the first period of the Gothic Literature, Poe and his followers can be taken as the second wave of Gothic writers. Poe was not interested only in the literature, which bounds to places and supernatural powers. He foresaw that the human soul also could contribute to Gothic. In his stories such as *The Cask of Amontillado*, *The Black Cat*, and *The Tell-Tale Heart*, Poe refers to the dark mood of man, and he transfers the mysterious part of the human soul utilizing untrustworthy narrators. These stories, which begin *in medias res*, comprise a wave of mystery beyond the terror of murder; in other words, they make the reader afraid of fear. It was no longer the outer elements to be focused on. The outer world was symbolically used to reflect the inner world of the individual. In that way, Edgar Allan Poe becomes a bridge between the gothic tradition and the new gothic. Brewster exhibits the change, as indicated below:

Ghosts and monsters are now treated as effects of mental aberration, delusion, delirium. Yet precisely at the moment reason casts ghosts out of the material world and relocates them in the recesses of the mind, the rational subject becomes prey to the uncanny, unseen, and often unfathomable machinations of the psyche. (2012, p. 483)

Poe wandered around the soils of in-betweenness in his short stories. He used the instruments of both metaphysics and psychology. With Poe, although the images do not show much change, the emphasis shifts from physical to psychological. The individual's psychological situation starts to constitute the general atmosphere of the story. Francesca Gavin in *Hell Bound: New Gothic Art* (2008) says that the image of evil has been modified, and it can be seen from all aspects of modern life. That is why

she underlines that the concept of hell is no longer an imaginative place where people will go afterlife, but a place within our own physical existence and mind (2008, p.6).

Moreover, there are some examples, such as the horror fiction of Stephen King, who might be counted as a Master of Modern Gothic. With his style, King has a different position than McGrath. Mostly Stephen King follows two narrative styles: First of them is Ann Radcliffe's supernatural explained. The other one is horror with supernatural happenings. According to Magistrale, Stephen King "typically draws upon a nature that is hostile and savage, an environment where malefic energies—both real and supernatural—reside in secret in those deep dark woods" (2010, p. 34). When Magistrale was asked whether or not King can be classified as such, he answered that Stephen King uses supernatural elements. Yet, he thinks that it is disputable if Radcliffian supernatural explained is one of the ways that King chooses to narrate (T. Magistrale, personal communication, September 6, 2020)¹. Despite their differences King and McGrath pivot around some similar points such as the focus on urban life in their works. The decay in urban is represented in King's works as evil characters or supernatural happenings (Magistrale, 2010, p.63), and McGrath exhibits the decay with psychological problems or savagery.

In the places of the Gothic novel, pointed castles, domes, corridors, crypts, ruins, and cemeteries have a contribution, which intensifies fear. In the contemporary Gothic novel, the place is important, but it has no specific definition and is fluid. Accordingly, the main and prominent elements of the contemporary Gothic novel are fantasy, transcendent horror, symbolic death, changing place, imaginary and disjointed subject seeking meaning and existence, the rule of fear and apprehension, and the blurring of the border of reality and imagination. The terror caused by psychological disorders is the most fundamental characteristic of New Gothic Literature, which can be categorized as The Third Wave. The Third Wave ignored what is left from the fantasies of Gothic Literature and carried old chateaus and gloomy atmosphere into the mind of the character. Vampires and zombies do not exist in New Gothic. Such cases containing terror are transferred to the new setting of New Gothic. On the other hand, New Gothic prefers telling these happenings by way of illnesses which are medically proven and not contradictory to the earthly realities, even though they may be quite

¹ See Appendix A

rare. When it comes to discussing the differences between Poe and McGrath, it can be suggested that McGrath's New Gothic relies on the old gothic but rewrites and decorates it with modern features. This is the decoration, which makes it new. However, it can also be said that McGrath never uses the supernatural, which can be found in the works of Poe and focuses more on the psychology of the characters. In an interview, McGrath tells the story of the term's birth and yet fails to give a substantial answer to up and coming questions. It is evidently understood that by naming this style 'new,' McGrath stresses on the new ground of terror; what is fearful does not depend only on the place and time but also the human mind. Presumably, that is why psychological disorders and complex, unreasonable, extraordinary events which these disorders cause have a leading role in many works of today's New Gothic:

For him, the term "new" simply signifies what is not old... It is seen that by referring to his style as "new," McGrath underlines the new ground of terror; no longer is it bound to the physical borders of space and time, but the human mind. By looking at violence or horror we become complicit in its creation, part of the cause – hence part of the discomfort in looking. We know that humans are often the cause of terror, not some imaginary outside evil force. We are creating our own nightmares. (Gavin, 2008, p.7)

Most of the time, in his narrative, McGrath chooses psychiatrists or psychologically disturbed people as protagonists. Nevertheless, in addition to psychological illnesses, some unusual situations can also pass through the mysterious gate of New Gothic. In this study, it will be argued by using the psychoanalytical perspective that although he is deprived of metaphysical instruments, McGrath's New Gothic style's success in creating suspense and terror is similar to the "Old" Gothic fiction. As a literary movement, New Gothic refers to the realities of the world more; besides, it uses a contemporary setting as an auxiliary element; it searches new borderlines in the world to go beyond them. As were in the Old Gothic themes, heroes and events which are not earthly have been put an end by the writers of New Gothic. This movement wants to differentiate from the previous ones as it uses different means to express itself, such as new narration techniques. Together with the modern period, after Metaphysics receded out of the limitations of Gothic, the importance of the physical world has increased still more. Then New Gothic transferred corruption from chateaus and palaces into the human body. In the world of wild deaths, there are always disabilities and never-healing wounds. If necessary, such deficiencies can be used even for the

sake of advantage of the narration. Most notably, exaggerated novelty and disgustingness of physical abnormalities of people come on the scene in unexpected places and at unexpected times, which signifies the concept of grotesque. It should also be noted that Grotesque is a functional element for Gothic Literature. The oddity and extraordinariness created by the grotesque, take away the reader's sense of belonging, and replace it with fear and terror. Using reversing techniques, which is the basic style of Gothic, is also used by New Gothic. However, in this new movement, the means, and fields of using them have changed. Although it was written in 1920, in *Tale of Terror*, Edith Birkhead could foreshadow this possible change of the Gothic Literature:

The future of the tale of terror it is impossible to predict; but the experiments of living authors, who continually find new outlets with the advance of science and of psychological enquiry, suffice to prove that its powers are not yet exhausted. Those who make the 'moving accident' their trade will no doubt continue to assail us with the shock of startling and sensational events. Others with more insidious are, will set themselves to devise stories which evoke subtler refinements of fear. The interest has already been transferred from 'bogle-wark' to the effect of the inexplicable, the mysterious and the uncanny on human thought and emotion. It may well be that this track will lead us into unexplored labyrinths of terror. (Birkhead, 2007, p. 150)

Edith Birkhead could see that Gothic Literature presents countless ways of telling a tale of terror. That is why it might be suggested that the Gothic's transformation was not an unexpected thing to discuss. So to say, McGrath's works are eligible to be seen as a confirmation to Birkhead's prediction. The tales of McGrath can be taken as "unexplored labyrinths of terror" of that time, in other words, the Gothic's new face. As a literary movement which is yet in its infancy period, it has been going on its way on a capillary vessel. Briefly, this could be said that New Gothic represents an inner world in which human beings are imprisoned, and they are not aware of this fact; New Gothic achieves this mission utilizing its idiosyncratic discourse. Thanks to this, it presents a new ground of terror and illustrates the latent fears and ambitions in the mind of modern man. The New Gothic, with its focus on terror and death, offers a new definition for these two elements. Gothic principles based on fear are exacerbated in the contemporary novel, and the horror is taken out of the traditional usage. The result of experiencing such fears and anxieties are proof of individuality and a search for justification of self-existence. Olga Lebedushkina defines New Gothic as noted below:

We will, of course, be discussing the new Gothic in the broad sense that the culture presently proposes, not in the strict scholarly understanding of the Gothic tradition as a defined range of genre hallmarks shaped in the Romantic and pre-Romantic eras. To the contemporary mind, the word "Gothic" implies Lovecraft and Kafka (about whom more later) and Stephen King and Neil Gaiman and generally everything that is painted in disturbingly dark hues. The present-day Gothic is primarily atmosphere. (2010, pp. 83-84)

In the past, gothic was something more visible and concrete, but now it is just hinted through senses. Death and fear of death are the most important themes which are used in this darkest field of literature. Death has maintained its popularity and topicality since the birth of Gothic Literature up till now. What has changed is only the crusts of the way going to death, and its coming true. The instability of the characters' psychology gives a creepy atmosphere to fiction. Poe and Poe-esque writers know well how to make use of this situation. It can be claimed that Gothic changes shell with this approach. To detect the change, McGrath's focus on psychological deviances requires Freudian reading. The Freudian path is crucial for Gothic studies. Without mentioning the Freudian approach, it would be impossible to discuss the critical elements in Gothic works. One of the most important contributions of Freud is inevitably the Oedipus complex. In this complex, Freud describes a covered father-son battle over the possession of mother. Of course, the other way around is also common. Electra complex is another Freud's contribution which helps critics analyze the texts. Bruhm discusses Freud centered way of thinking from the point of Gothic's elasticity, which is open to varied readings. According to him, monstrosity is not limited with the father but mother (2002, p. 265). Moreover, as Gothic's themes are not stable, over the years, the focal point moved from father to other members of the family, as can be seen in the novels of Patrick McGrath mentioned here. That is why Freud has a significant place to decipher McGrath's narrative, as McGrath asserts:

Before Freud, the Gothic had exclusive access to the workings of the disturbed psyche, and a monopoly on the depiction of strange and violent behavior. Freud expanded and systematized this body of knowledge, gave it the name of psychoanalysis and thus lent it a dignity and prestige it could never have achieved under the rubric of sensational horror fiction. (1997, p. 156)

Psychoanalysis is one of the ways of analyzing the elements which take New Gothic away from its "old" one. Freud contributed to the area of psychology with psychoanalysis, which helped scholars in the analysis of Gothic. Freud's "The

"Uncanny" is, therefore, one of the central themes in Gothic Studies. It is undeniable that uncanny has a relation with duality. This duality leads to the character's in-betweenness. On in-betweenness, Freud asserts as follows:

... after considering the manifest motivation behind the figure of the double, we have to own that none of this helps us understand the extraordinary degree of uncanniness that attaches to it, and we may add, drawing upon our knowledge of pathological mental processes, that none of this content could explain the defensive urge that ejects it from the ego as something alien. Its uncanny quality can surely derive only from the fact that the double is a creation that belongs to a primitive phase in our mental development, a phase that we have surmounted, in which it admittedly had a more benign significance. The double has become an object of terror, just as the gods become demons after the collapse of their cult. (2003, p. 143)

Freud starts the discussions on "uncanny" by moving from the German meaning of the term: "unheimlich." "Unheimlich" means "unhomely," which can be inferred as an unhomely or alienated thing. The discussion starts at this point. "Uncanny" is a sub-element of "canny." According to this idea, it can be said that the familiar thing once becomes unfamiliar and thus threatening. This threat is compelling because of its connotations. In his article, Freud gives examples of "Severed limbs, a severed head, a hand detached from the arm, feet that dance by themselves" (2003, p. 150), reminding death. The individual has no escape point and attempts to evade evocative things of "uncanny." That attempt might be futile, according to Royle, as it is inseparable: "[uncanny] is like a foreign body within ourselves" (2003, p. 41). One can claim that "Uncanny" is a great source of terror. Hence, it becomes a channel to transfer the feeling of terror to the reader.

The disappearance of the border between life and death gives way to "uncanny" inevitably. While this border was between the real and unreal before New Gothic, it has turned into the borderline between the ethics, which overlaps with the collective memory and taboo. The borderline means the rules written or unwritten, which are produced and intended to be preserved by every kind of people groups, big or small. The illegitimate sexual act is a good example of this border rule. These borders cause different reactions in different communities, and they are *sine qua non*-starting points for New Gothic. While these rules are taboo in some communities, some others are ignored and have changed into insignificant incidents. Despite everything, there are some universal taboos such as cannibalism or incest, which have always maintained

its existence. It is very well known that the human body has always had a high degree of being used as a domain for Gothic. Most of the taboos are inevitably related to the human body. This also underlines the importance of body from the point of Gothic.

Both the readers and characters of gothic fiction experience in-betweenness. Maria Tatar calls this in-betweenness *dread* and sees it as a result of the unity of strangeness and familiarity. (1981, p.169). The threat of death evokes the fragile drives in the psyche. According to Freud, the uncanny is a result of doubling. One can quickly see how such duality brings forth the idea of in-betweenness, neither here nor there. In the thesis, Freud's concept of "uncanny" will be helpful in explaining psychological defects and irrepressible drives in Patrick McGrath's works:

The uncanny has to do with a sense of strangeness, mystery or eeriness. More particularly it concerns a sense of unfamiliarity which appears at the very heart of the familiar, or else a sense of familiarity which appears at the very heart of the unfamiliar. (Bennett & Royle, 2014, p. 34)

The gloomy atmosphere of McGrath's novels and short stories take their power, not from metaphysical happenings and elements, but psychological weaknesses such as fear, jealousy, and dilemma. Besides, McGrath does not hesitate to use his memoirs from childhood. Since his father was in the ruling position of the institution, Patrick McGrath grew up in Broadmoor Asylum where later becomes an inspirational source for his writing. In the preface of his novel *Asylum*, he asserts how he got inspiration from Broadmoor Asylum as follows:

... The secret was this. An illicit relationship had been discovered between a doctor's wife and a patient. This fragile and certainly flawed scrap of the narrative was all I had, but it gave me the germ of *Asylum*. I would set it in 1959, when it happened. ... I knew the look of Broadmoor as it then was, the feel of the place and its people, and I was confident I could bring it to life on the page. (McGrath, 2015, p. xi)

The mastery of McGrath underlies the talent of transforming such a compelling case in human relations into a Gothicized story. For a child, growing up in such a place is, for sure, an unforgettable gloomy experience. McGrath never leaves this gloomy atmosphere behind. Michiko Kakutani sees McGrath as the leading figure of the new kind of Gothic:

Mr. McGrath is a master of the postmodern Gothic. His stories and novels reverberate with echoes of previous masters of horror, from Poe to Hitchcock to Brian De Palma, and his narratives are cluttered with weird, unnerving details, seemingly harvested

from two centuries of Gothic novels and films. Haunted houses, insane asylums and decaying swamps are the sets for Mr. McGrath's stories; and amputated limbs, dead animals and disease-carrying insects surface again and again in his plots like bizarre footnotes, meant to remind the reader of the human capacity for evil and perversion. (1993, para. 3)

Kakutani refers to New Gothic as postmodern Gothic. However, she underlines the main difference between the "old" gothic tradition and McGrath's style as the transference of horror from mansions to minds. On the other hand, Tromble discusses what is "new" in New Gothic in her 2012 article and shows a link between the old and the new Gothic. According to her, "family, as the prime purveyor of patriarchal values, potentially represents the child's first experience of the effects of tyranny on history" (2012, p.32). Her assumption can be taken as another justification of the Gothic's hybrid nature, which allows cohabitation of different approaches. Nevertheless, if the Gothic is seen as a resistive kind of literature, Tromble's suggestion is not unacceptable. One can claim that the autocratic power is shifted from governmental bodies of the past to the head of the household.

In addition to Freud's "Uncanny," Julia Kristeva's "Abjection Theory" and Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytical approaches will be used in this thesis. Julia Kristeva says that the abject is the one who is unwanted and accepted as an outsider of the self. The abject shows itself as pain in front of the subject. According to Kristeva, abject stays as a border: "If dung signifies the other side of the border, the place where I am not and which permits me to be, the corpse, the most sickening of wastes, is a border that has encroached upon everything" (1982, p.3). At that point, she shows resemblance to Freud. Both of them specifically mention a transparent border. Their difference lies in the specific descriptions. In the explanation of "uncanny," Freud draws a discrete picture of the situation while Kristeva chooses to specify the situation of "abjection." She acknowledges the things that can be sorted as "abject" and puts them away from the individual. She underlines the importance of being in-between of "abject" and the individual. Only in that circumstance, an individual can experience "abjection." One more critical difference is that when Freud defines "uncanny", he says that the thing which makes a person uneasy is something already known but forgotten. Kristeva does not focus on memory. Instead, she underlines the power of alienation. Inevitably, being on the verge of the border (the side is not essential) somehow makes the self as a part of the abject, and the abject a part of the self. Shortly, what makes gothic is the terror

of being in-between. It is not resolved, so it does not leave the reader with satisfaction. That situation causes abject. The link between gothic and abject is explained as follows:

The Gothic often shows its readers that the anomalous foundations they seek to abject have become culturally associated with the otherness of femininity, a maternal multiplicity necessary to us all. Social gender divisions have been designed to deny, even as they make us desire, this boundary-blurring source of ourselves that initially stems, the Gothic reveals, from the body of a woman. Here is the reason, a critical factor in the history of the Gothic, why Kristeva can link horrifying abjection with our throwing off of the memory that we have archaically been both inside and outside the mother whom we now fear and desire at the same time. The Gothic is quite consistently about the connection of abject monster figures to the primal and engulfing morass of the maternal; Victor Frankenstein not only seeks his mother's dissolving body through the construction of his male monster but shows his greatest fear and commits his strongest act of repression by feverishly destroying the female creature that his first creation has asked him to make. (Hogle, 2002, p. 10)

Gothic becomes the ground for the sanctification of abjection. The joy of having the pleasure and the bitter taste of fear construct a unique blend of the one. The impossibility of reaching desire directs the one to this mixture of feelings — fear and desire to grow into subsidiary elements of each other.

Because of their mental alienation, illnesses, and dysfunctions, the protagonists of McGrath give a different shape to the narrative technique. Handicaps of the characters become an essential instrument for McGrath with bringing some limitations to the details and blanks in the linear stream of the narrative.

The body stands as an integral element in Patrick McGrath's narrative. By limiting the abilities of the body, McGrath opens a new aspect of telling his stories. The limitations on characters do not reveal a deficiency. On the contrary, this challenge contributes to the text. The in-betweenness of the characters is presented through bodily dysfunctions. Although his unreliable narration seems lacking, there is always a gap to be filled by the reader. That situation creates multiple possible ways to read the story. Hence, this thesis will also examine the use of the body as a narrative strategy that can be considered as one of the characteristics of "new" gothic. Alienation is also fundamental regarding McGrath's narrative style. In *Asylum*, Stella exhibits herself as an ordinary woman who is the wife of a doctor, but as time passes, it is seen that she is a monomaniac. Her passion for a criminally insane man does not stop at anything.

She withdraws from household and daily routine. One day on a school trip of her son, instead of helping, she watches her child's drowning to get rid of another obstacle on the way of uniting with her lover again. That, of course, is related to her estrangement towards reality.

The psychological tendencies and deviance shown in characters give a significant opportunity to start a discussion on the function of the narrative technique. How does McGrath make use of the uncanny to create a "new" Gothic? What is his contribution to Gothic Studies? Furthermore, madness as a theme is also densely used by McGrath. Like dysfunctional bodies, he takes advantage of madness and conviction while constituting his narrative. What is the importance of disintegrated people's position in the novels? Most importantly, from the perspective of New Gothic, are insane people new ghosts of contemporary Gothic? The effect of troubled families and incestuous relationships will be analyzed in terms of transgression and decay. Last but not least, the themes of borders and in-betweenness will be discussed from the concepts of "uncanny" and "abjection." These will be the topics of discussion in the thesis.

Patrick McGrath himself was asked the differences between The Gothic and the New Gothic. His answer² is informative in terms of identifying the features; however, that should be noticed that the main distinction seems to be the setting, family as the main theme, and psychological focus of the New Gothic (P. McGrath, personal communication, January 28, 2020). Sue Zlosnik, who has written a book on Patrick McGrath, also sent an answer³ regarding the differences in the Gothic and the New Gothic literature. In that response, she stresses on the risk of drawing a bold line between these terms. However, she thinks that the Gothic has been under an endless transformation since the date of its birth until now (S. Zlosnik, personal communication, January 24, 2020).

This thesis will attempt to explain the development in gothic fiction in order to create a space to present the drastic differences in the genre with the emergence of the new setting. With the new setting, the symbols of terror have had a metamorphosis from outside to within. The problems of the psyche such as paranoia, hallucinations, and hypochondria; bizarre situations and actions have developed more in the post-Poe era,

² See Appendix B

³ See Appendix C

and gothic literature took advantage of such labels in order to narrate its particular theme of terror adequately. This thesis will take Patrick McGrath's gothic writing to discuss how contemporary Gothic subverted the conventions of gothic literature. Patrick McGrath contributed to the literature not only by writing novels and short stories but also with the term "New Gothic" coined by him in the preface of *The New Gothic: A Collection*. However, this thesis will acknowledge the problematic condition of the word "new," as the essential qualities of such a new approach can be mixed with the understanding of "postmodern fiction." It is better to have a clear mind before presenting the distinct position of Patrick McGrath's New Gothic, especially in comparison with the term "contemporary gothic." Although it is still possible to discuss the legitimacy of McGrath's argument on his own style and his counterparts' works, McGrath asserts that he sees the new gothicist as a determined one who has "congenital gothic sensibility" and one of the utmost important parts of being a new gothicist is to know that parody is an inseparable part of this movement (2012, p.145).

It should not be disregarded that the Gothic itself is large-scaled and adaptive to the changing circumstances and politics. EcoGothic is one of the latest examples of Gothic's sub-branches. This approach claims that ecocriticism and Gothic can be melted in the same pot. Actually, that kind of tandem experiments, including Gothic, is not new. Gothic Fiction has so many branches such as Ann Radcliffe's explained supernatural or William Faulkner's Southern Gothic. However, that branching might be a good departure point for the New Gothic asserted by the main subject of this thesis. As time goes by, change becomes inevitable, and the Gothic, as an acclaimed genre, is not an exception. Perception of the reader changes in accordance with time and space. The author is obliged to get used to this never-ending cycle. Patrick McGrath succeeds in transferring the main fears of humankind since the first day of life on earth in a neoterically furnished setting in his works. Maybe that is why his style is open to be defined as alluring. He composes two different world's stories in one piece of literature. As mentioned before, the main focal point of the thesis is family. It is seen in the novels of McGrath that family as an institution is always under a big threat. However, most of the time, this threat does not come from an outer element, but inner. In *Asylum*, the wife of the prospective superintendent of the asylum lets down not only her husband but also the people working there. Moreover, she becomes filicide. *Spider*'s Dennis murders his mother. *Port Mungo*'s protagonist,

Jack, harasses his daughters systematically, and lastly, in *Trauma*, Charlie is depressed just because of his mother's ignorance and violent behaviors. Additionally, his girlfriend cheats on him with his brother. As it can be seen clearly from the examples given, these novels tell different stories in the same manner by focusing on the dysfunctions of families. Although the pattern does not change, these four stories have the potential to invite timeless terror elements such as a murderer mother, murderer child, harasser father, and a mother pointing a gun to her own child. All these characters are parts of a circle. The combination of the circle is possible to be inferred as the significant symbol of Freud's *Unheimlich* because the biggest threat to the family and its functionality does not belong to outer space. The members of the family show up as the most dangerous element for the family's safety.

The gothic shows its versatility with its geographical diversity, too. Of course, Europe is the hometown of Gothic. Culturally, it belongs to especially northern Europe (Cornwell, 2012, p.64). Nevertheless, drawing a line to Gothic would be a useless effort. Thus, it is probable to claim that Gothic justifies its adaptation ability from the east to the west. Japanese Gothic Literature is one of those examples. As a rapidly developing literature, it is possible to assume that Japanese Gothic takes its inspiration from its own culture. However, Japanese authors do not hesitate to use the supernatural in fiction. Again, as an Eastern epitome, Turkish Gothic might give some insight about how it blends culture with Gothic. In Turkish Literature, there are some examples such as *Gece Gelini* (2006) by Erkut Deral and *Muska* (2007) by Sadık Yemni. It can be said that Turkish writers mostly tend to use their cultural motifs in their works. Turkish literature has its own dynamics, and the dominant motif of Turkish culture is religion. Islam and Islamic practices are the elements that differentiate Turkish Literature from its similars. Especially in Gothic, Islam shows its power. Together with Islam, scary Turkish tales have a big effect on gothic fiction tradition in Turkey. One thing is clear that these novels exemplify that even non-American, non-western countries and cultures can have their own gothic mixed with their own culture.

The thesis will be comprised of an introduction, four chapters on four novels of McGrath, and a conclusion. The introduction includes the theoretical and historical background of the genre and gives the argument of the thesis. In chapter I, *Asylum* will be discussed from the point of the decay of the family as the center of the main terror. The themes of madness and conviction will be studied according to Freud's

"Uncanny." In *Asylum*, the narrator tells a story that melts madness, cruelty, passion, and murder in the same pot. The protagonist of the novel is a mother who becomes the one who causes her son's drowning. The gloomy atmosphere, unreliable narrative, a Victorian asylum, and 50s Britain meets in *Asylum*. The main aim of the chapter is to explain how Patrick McGrath uses classical and modern traits in the same narrative and shows the aspects of the darker sides of trusted institutions and characters. In the second chapter, similar to *Asylum*, *Spider* contains murder, madness, and captivity. In chapter II, the protagonist of *Spider*, Dennis, stands as an opposite example of the Oedipus Complex as he does not fit into the exact definition of the term. That is why, *Spider* in general, can be taken as an Anti-Oedipal novel. Dennis carries a doppelganger in his mind and kills his mother with gas. The chapter aims to discuss McGrath's handling of psychological diseases in the frame of the Freudian approach. In the third and fourth chapters, *Port Mungo* and *Trauma* will be studied concerning troubled family relations. *Port Mungo* is a story of artistic quest and complicated family relations. Chapter III's main discussion will be how the taboo of incestuous relationship is seen and presented in a modern family and environment and its outputs in *Port Mungo*. Freudian and Lacanian approaches will be helpful in the analysis of the topic. *Trauma* in Chapter IV includes a protagonist, who is a psychiatrist, trying to overcome a trauma related to early childhood. The novel presents an interesting plot as the protagonist follows the Freudian path to cure himself. However, while treating himself, he uses his own patients as facilitative apparatuses. On the other hand, the Vietnam War and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder will be other subjects to be discussed. In the conclusion, the thesis aims to reach the decision that McGrath borrows from classic gothic traits and put them in the modern setting by focusing on the modern source of the terror: family. One can claim that family as an institution is the most trusted part of life. McGrath subverts this belief by making it the terror's main emerging point. Most of the thesis relies on the Freudian approach; however, Jacques Lacan, Julia Kristeva, and critics such as Michel Foucault's influence on the work can apparently be seen. These novels have been selected because of their common theme: family as the source of terror. All of them contain dysfunctional family relations, which make the transformation of Gothic visible as exterior terror shifts to the interior. The family stands as one of the most trusted institutions of society; nevertheless, in the gothic of McGrath, this institution is deconstructed with the help of his parodical narrative. These novels contain the terror Freud mentions in his famous article *The*

Uncanny. Other works of the author, *Blood, and Water and Other Stories*, *Ghost Town: Tales of Manhattan Then and Now* and *Constance*, are not included in the thesis. Although the works which are left out of the thesis also have a gothic theme to a certain extent, after *Martha Peake: A Novel of the Revolution*, it can be said that McGrath started to move away from the Gothic style. The Conclusion presents the results of the analysis.

2.CHAPTER I: TRANSGRESSION IN ASYLUM

At a first glance, Patrick McGrath's *Asylum* appears to tell the tragedy of Stella, who cheats on her husband with a lunatic criminal and finds herself in the endless corridors of a delirium. The novel is placed in a gothic background setting through and told from an unreliable narrative point of view. Although the novel does not offer a classical gothic surrounding, the reader is acknowledged that the layers of uncanny elements of the novel are gradually revealed out to make the novel deserve a suitable place in the genre.

Mara Reisman's *Destabilizing Institutional and Social Power in Patrick McGrath's Asylum* focuses on the power relations in *Asylum*. Reisman makes a similarity between the organization of the asylum and a family. Accordingly, she attributes the role of a father to deputy superintendent Peter. The dysfunctionality in the family, indispensably, affects the whole organization, and decay becomes inevitable. Reisman stresses on the theme of the border. Shortly, to her, being on the premises of the asylum and being out of its gates designates a meaningful line between accepted ones and misfits.

Chiara Battisti's *Mental Illness and Human Rights in Patrick McGrath's Asylum* focuses on the case of lunacy and its representation in *Asylum*. She tells the regulations on asylums in Britain and their outcomes chronologically. Moreover, she argues the character's positions as the reflections of authority, victim, and institutions. In short, it can be assumed that Battisti sees *Asylum* as a panoramic portrait of asylums and the elements regarding these institutions from past to present.

Laura R. Kremmel, in the article *The Asylum (2020)*, discusses the novel from a feminist perspective by comparing it with Mary Wollstonecraft's unfinished novel *Maria; Or, the Wrongs of Woman (1798)*. Kremmel states the historical background of asylum and its change through time. Although Kremmel stresses on a different theme than this chapter, it can be asserted that the author attempts to investigate and prove a common point in these two totally different eras' works. She takes the

Gothicized images of the asylums as the emerging point and reviews them through the social status of the female characters in these novels.

Asylum starts with the Raphael family's move to the asylum premises. Stella Raphael is the wife of Max Raphael, who is a psychiatrist. The couple begins living near an asylum where Max works. Stella eventually gets bored with the routine life of the hospital. Moreover, she has difficulty adapting to living alongside criminal and insane people. Although her husband and the hospital's superintendent Peter Cleave try to comfort her, she becomes increasingly disturbed by the impact that the place had on her. However, things take a turn when a parole patient named Edgar approaches her one day. Soon, they start a clandestine relationship. In time, Stella becomes obsessed with Edgar and helps him escape from the asylum. Afterward, she follows him, leaving her husband and child behind. This situation wreaks havoc on Max and Stella's marriage. When the police catch her after she helps her lover's escape from the Asylum, Max's position at the hospital is questioned, and he has to move to Wales to escape further shame. However, even in Wales, nothing changes; their relationship does not get back on the rails. Their only child's death ends the essential unity of the family. Stella is diagnosed as a lunatic, and she has to go back to the same asylum again—this time as a patient. At the end of the novel, she commits suicide.

With the help of his memoirs from his childhood in Broadmoor Lunatic Asylum, McGrath gives a realistic shape to the hospital in *Asylum*, which is surrounded by gothic tropes such as a fragile heroine, an asylum like a labyrinth, and uncanny anti-heroes. The setting and characters are reflections of the places and people from McGrath's childhood. His talent is evident from how he Gothicized the place, characters, and the relationship between these characters. McGrath transforms ordinary people into sinister psychopaths. The novel mainly problematizes the dualities of the human mind. These contrasts simultaneously feed off each other and exist in a kind of harmony. As an example, it can be suggested that the highest and the lowest parts of the community live in the same sphere. The organization of the asylum, although it fails, attempts to make this association seem smooth as much as possible. Although the novel encourages the reader to focus on the relationship between Edgar and Stella, various settings that reflect their relationship with each other and themselves can be read symbolically. In the center of the campus, there is the leading asylum building, which is surrounded by a big recreation area, a conservatory, and the

residences of the doctors working there. The dominant setting in the novel is the asylum. However, the conservatory is the place where the novel's main action begins. Max, who is portrayed as a weak character, wants to reanimate the dead soil of the conservatory by working hard on it. From this, a comparison can be drawn between the garden and Stella. Both are neglected but then, later, are cared for by a newcomer. Max aims to end the chaos and bring order to the garden, but this results in another chaos. The efforts that are taken to transform the garden into "a garden of Eden" that is symbolic of innocence, happiness, and purity become futile, because "the first sin" is committed there. The adultery of Stella and Edgar takes place in the garden. Thus, Max becomes the victim of his own project. As Sue Zlosnik suggests, the garden image underlines the violation of the norms: "... the garden of Raphaels' house is the scene of Stella's 'fall'; an echo of the biblical Fall in which the primal female transgression ..." (2011, pp. 79–80). Presumably, McGrath parodies the "Garden of Eden" myth by using the conservatory as the place of the first sin in the novel.

This novel presents many dualities, such as justice and reality, crime, and rewards. It can be suggested that the novel offers a meaningful challenge to the reader without a certain answer. In fact, the blurry border is the common denominator of Gothic, which is very much in this novel, and along with different views on reality, increases the possibility of transgressing the borders. For instance, the conservatory (garden) stands in contrast to the image of the asylum, as at the beginning, the former looks more nightmarish than the latter. The campus of the institution includes both structures. The garden might be a purgatory since it promises a new future with its rehabilitated flowers. On the other hand, the asylum fails to give any hope to its inmates or staff with its gloomy nature. This doubling does not end with places. It shows itself in characters as well. Max, as a weak character, underlines the masculinity and dreadful strength of Edgar. Max gets distressed when he feels that Edgar is a threat to the place he holds in Stella's life. When Max quits from the scene, his role is taken on by Peter. It should not be forgotten that a pairing is what inevitably brings harmony. However, all those doublings come from a disharmony: Stella and asylum.

Looking at Stella's reaction to asylum, one can deduce that the asylum first threatens her as she always feels the disciplinary gaze of the institution on her, and second, the asylum seems like a mirror holding on their marriage. Their marriage appears like a metaphorical asylum, and she is locked inside. She, therefore, sees herself

metaphorically insane, as her marriage is the asylum, and she is in it. Mara E. Reisman discusses the relationship between the structures of the asylum and those of a family:

McGrath reveals that the institutional family structure, with the superintendent in the position of patriarch, does not erase but rather depends on power inequalities; childlike patients are entirely dependent on father figure doctors and motherly nurses for their privileges and everyday needs. (2017, p.160)

The place where the Raphael family lived must be handled from two different angles. Firstly, living beside an asylum could disturb anyone considered a "sane" person. Secondly, Stella finds this place more than disturbing as the asylum draws Max's attention from her and leaves her alone most of the time. She experiences not only loneliness but also alienation because she has no connection with either the asylum staff or the inmates. Hence, for her, the home loses its meaning as a place to live, as it is so close to the asylum that for Stella, it turned into a source of catastrophe.

What disturbs Stella in that place should be handled: is it what that place is for in reality, or does she find it as a threat to her sanity? This question allows the reader to focus on the boundary between sanity and insanity since it is this lack of a clear-cut border that threatens Stella more than the place itself. Marriage becomes a problem for Stella. That is followed by the tragic death of her only child, Charlie. The novel's protagonist's life ends as a result of suicide in the asylum where everything started. This Act can also be considered in light of how the word "asylum" means "seeking for asylum" to Stella. Her loneliness and depression caused her to search for a way out of this pit, and, eventually, asylum becomes the way out for her. It might be helpful to look at the organizational structure of the asylums.

An asylum is like a small family, with the superintendent as the head of the family. The difference in *Asylum* is that Peter, as the head of the family, does not have pure and protective intentions, which will be explained further in the following pages. With the help of the transference of the moral values in the community to the asylum, the structure of the asylum family is run smoothly. The unproblematic operating of the system is bound to the strict norms and "the father"s obedience to these rules. When Max is seen as the father figure inside the house, Peter has the same role inside the asylum, and it might also be assumed that Peter plays the role of God behind the gates of the asylum and as Reisman claims, he "is representative of the paternalistic, hegemonic order" (2017, p.157).

In addition to having impure intentions, Peter also takes advantage of his position. That is where panopticism, another critical aspect in the novel, comes into play. Panopticism in this novel can also be discussed from the point of omnipotence, or omnipresence of the author. From time to time, McGrath makes the reader feel that there might be an exchange of roles between McGrath and Peter. As Peter is the most powerful man in the Asylum, he has control over almost everything within the asylum. For example, Peter already knows what is happening between Stella and Edgar because eyewitnesses tell him the details such as the gardener. In other respects, it is evident that he contravenes business ethics by using the secrets of his patients. Furthermore, he uses these details to gain power over others. Besides, Peter can also intrude into the privacy of patients whenever he wants. Taking advantage of his position is seen in how he even attempts to torment them. Peter gives the news about his prospective marriage to Stella to Edgar and asks him, "What do you feel about that?" (McGrath, 1998, p. 240). On receiving no direct answer to his question, Peter lets the reader know that it is a pleasure for him to torment Edgar—"I concealed my satisfaction" (McGrath, 1998, p. 241). So, his panoptical gaze is everywhere. The panoptical gaze of Peter is felt mostly through his narrative. All the details about other characters are firstly filtered by Peter, and then the reader can get a limited essence of the things uttered by these characters. As the novel's narrative is limited with Peter's perception and wishes, the reader becomes obliged to the only source of the knowledge. This situation gives way to the domination of the hospital's superintendent. Keeping the power in hand, figuratively, in the asylum premises, Peter creates an atmosphere that leaves no dead spot. He relies on his intelligence web, which is consisted of a gardener, nurses, doctors, and some of the patients. The organization of the asylum is not planned according to the needs of the patients, but the authority. According to Foucault, in the prisons:

There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints—just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorization to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself. A superb formula: power exercised continuously and for what turns out to be minimal cost. (2005, p. 55)

What is significant about panopticon is that the inmates are aware of the gaze, and they internalize its power. As the head of the institution, Peter has full authority over the inmates and also the staff at the asylum. However, everyone there is aware that they

are being observed by the figure with supreme power at the institution without getting even a chance to take a look at him. Their fate is in the hands of the master of the institution, who is unknown, as the reader cannot get more details about Peter. That situation results in the portrayal of a controlling system whose mechanism is complicated to decipher. The observation at the institution is so perfect that there is almost no chance for anyone to get out of this fully controlled system except for parole patients. They are allowed to have some freedom, but this privilege is also under strict control. These patients are free to work in the gardens of the campus and help to the personnel of the asylum.

Although Peter knows that Edgar is dangerous for society, he allows him out that can be read as a way of threatening society as Edgar is not ready at all. In this way, the weak ones would be punished and sent to the asylum. Whoever is in the asylum is ultimately under the control of Peter. Throughout the novel, Peter Cleave is shown to be anxious about the wellbeing of Stella. He always defends himself under the guise of his concern for her safety, and under the same guise, he creates a barrier to keep Edgar from Stella. However, this is not the correct version of the case as Powell explains, "Cleave fears the same fate for Stella as Stark's new model, though ironically it is the superintendent himself who causes her death" (2012, p. 267). Hence, Stella is portrayed as a victim of Peter. It is possible to say that two separate invisible wars take place between Stella and Peter, and Edgar and Peter. These wars are never explicitly revealed by any of them. Nevertheless, both Stella and Peter seem like the two manipulative characters of the novel. Battisti says that Stella's rejection of Peter emerges from inequality, in other words, social power relations:

Stella's provocative accusation directed towards Peter Cleave and Max, her husband, is that it is the creators of the dominant discourses of "mental illness" who accentuate and perpetuate those fragments and that difference through their construction of users of madhouses as Other. (2015, p. 150)

Stella believes that the mads are othered by Max and Peter. That is why she sees them as the creator of madness. On the other hand, Reisman asserts that Stella is blamed for her manipulations by Peter. That can be a result of her discreet disregard of the patriarchal system that makes her feel like an outsider in the realm of psychology. However, unbeknownst to her, she is at the very center of the entanglement whether she is voluntarily involved or not—Peter positions himself as a victim to Stella's

manipulations by thrusting himself forward all the time. On the contrary, he neither questions his own actions nor takes any responsibility (Reisman, 2017, p. 170). However, in reality, Peter wants Stella to himself no matter what. Furthermore, this is why he goes on to keep the miniature sculpture of Stella sculpted by Edgar in his drawer and take care of it even after Stella's suicide. Moreover, his obsession for her is clear from the following: "I do have my Stella after all. And I still, of course, have him [Edgar] (McGrath, 1998, p. 254). One of Peter's "objects" is in his hands in the form of a statuette. On the other hand, his other "object" is still under his control behind bars at the asylum. In other words, one can infer from here that Peter successfully dominates mads and madness.

By presenting Edgar, who is more a criminal than a mad person, who deserves to be in prison, not in an asylum. McGrath wants to draw attention to the problem that when an individual cannot get recognition or admittance by society s/he is led to "madness." In other words, it is possible to claim that if there would be an incongruity between the individual and society, the individual is no longer accepted as mentally healthy. Hence, it is a border designated based on the reasoning of a society that has the supreme power over others' fate. In other respects, it can also be assumed that the authority over these "patients" might be the result of an attempt of resistance against the detection of their own illnesses. The group facing abjection is labeled as misfits, and these people, who have difficulty adapting to social norms, are cut off from society and labeled as mad. Battisti explains that as such:

In McGrath's attempt to represent the unstable boundary between the sound mind and madness, in his constructing the madman as both alien and familiar, in his invitation to an empathetic identification which results in an uncanny perception of madness, in his attempt, therefore, to present to a public audience a different image of psychiatric disorders/illnesses and to contribute, therefore, to shaping a different attitude of the public itself, we can identify the writer's struggle against the hidden burden of stigma and discrimination of people with mental disorders. (2015, p. 153)

Battisti perceives this lack of boundary as McGrath's attempt to avoid discrimination of mentally challenged individuals, as he points out that this boundary serves as an apparatus to divide society based on mental states, as seen in Stella's reaction in living so close to the asylum. Stella's repulsion towards the surrounding emerges from this institutionalized perception.

Lunatics were accepted as savagely dangerous by the community. Hence, separating the lunatic criminals from society is meant to keep the terror out of daily life. It is also possible to claim that McGrath examines his readers by challenging them with madness. The visible and invisible borders between society and madness are questioned to the readers as Noad suggests: "McGrath's novel also invites its readers to critically reevaluate the relationship between madness and society" (2020, p. 77). From this point of view, it is possible to assert that McGrath brings this relationship up for discussion.

In *Asylum*, to be successful quickly and observe the patients in a quiet, safe place, the asylum authorities throw different kinds of parties that enable them to take notes about the patients' process of recovery. During these meetings, the asylum staff and patients come together and have fun as if it was a party in a "normal world" under "normal circumstances." One can claim that this party is a replica of the outside world. The employees try their best to make the inmates feel comfortable enough to show their capability to cause a problem. This staging is a part of the discipline. Michel Foucault explains this as follows:

There were social occasions in the English manner, where everyone was obliged to imitate all the formal requirements of social existence; nothing else circulated except the observation that would spy out any incongruity, any disorder, any awkwardness where madness might betray itself. The directors and staff of the Retreat thus regularly invited several patients to "tea-parties"; the guests "dress in their best clothes, and vie with each other in politeness and propriety. The best fare is provided, and the visitors are treated with all the attention of strangers. The evening generally passes with the greatest harmony and enjoyment. (2005, p. 236)

As Foucault explains, the reason of the tea-parties is not to create a social occasion, but to detect who reveals their madness unexpectedly, in other words, to understand who is still not fit in society. That is the reason why Edgar is let out as a parole patient as a part of his treatment. Peter introduces Edgar to the reader as: "I didn't feel we should let him out yet, nor did anyone else. He'd been with us for five years, and it looked to me as though he'd be with us another five at least" (McGrath, 1998, p.10). However, the twist of the novel occurs when Stella is detected as unfit, rather than Edgar. Through a Foucauldian perspective, it becomes apparent that Stella becomes the one to be detected as a weak one. Edgar is used as an apparatus to detect ones like Stella.

Benjamin E. Noad states as follows: "Specifically, McGrath's dealings with madness highlight issues of otherness in society. McGrath's writing, which deals with madness and mental breakdown, is alluring, frightening, and compelling; yet his novels such as ... *Asylum* is hardly positive about the prospects of those living with extreme mental illness" (2020, p. 73). Similarly, the asylum in Patrick McGrath's novel is an example of the institutions that existed in the 1950s:

Both the compassionate philosophy about mental illness and the institutional hierarchies and power inequalities embedded in the legislation are reflected in McGrath's portrayal of the hospital in *Asylum*. (Reisman, 2017, p. 158)

As Reisman asserts, McGrath's story is not merely a tale about affairs but is a story that is supported by a Victorian Gothic building in contemporary 1950s and including uncanny characters with an unreliable narrator. Borrowing a setting from the Victorian Era does not give an old-fashioned style to the novel, which already tells a story from the 1950s. On the contrary, melting the past and the era before the past brings a different challenge to modern-day readers because *Asylum* is also an informative book about the painful reformation process of these mental institutions.

Some necessary information about asylums can help the reader to understand Stella's reaction to living close to an asylum. In the chapter "The Birth of Asylum" in *Madness and Civilizations*, which talks about the birth of medical prisons for mentally ill people, Michel Foucault explains the first steps to the establishment of asylums, at the same time, as standardized institutions:

... the madman, as a human being originally endowed with reason, is no longer guilty of being mad; but the madman, as a madman, and in the interior of that disease of which he is no longer guilty, must feel morally responsible for everything within him that may disturb morality and society, and must hold no one but himself responsible for the punishment he receives. (2005, p.234)

They are seen as dangerous cases, so rehabilitation is pushed into the background. According to Foucault, the governors and society want an almost impossible thing—to make the criminal lunatics understand the reason for being held captive in an asylum. In other respects, Battisti claim that the inmates were not seen as ordinary human beings and their categorization differed from criminal captives:

Throughout the centuries, animal categorization and the use of derogatory animal metaphors have been used to justify exploitation, objectification, slaughter and enslavement. Madness, in particular, was commonly compared with animality, for

which reason those deemed to be mad were commonly and intentionally treated as animals. (2015, p. 148)

It should be noted that the ones who are kept behind the bars of asylum have proven criminal records. Nevertheless, laws such as the Criminal Lunatics Act 1800 protect these inmates from being labeled as murderers because of their mental instability. Suppression is not the first choice of apparatus used in asylums for these people. On the contrary, the primary aim of these institutions is to keep these people's terror isolated within walls and bars. Hence, there is no urgent need to pressure criminal lunatics.

Asylums have been used as a border between mentally unstable and stable people. These borders' connotations are, expectedly, negative for the society. By incarcerating people with mental illnesses, governments have wanted to protect from these "misfits" and satisfy the community as much as possible. Although the underlying reason for this isolation seems innocent enough, the treatment meted out to these inmates has been inhumane. A letter a patient at the Bexley Asylum in south-east London wrote to a friend reads as follows:

[I]n this so-called asylum... you are ... treated like the worst form of cattle ... without one kind word no matter how hard you work, it would bring tears to the strongest hearts ... We work all the hours God sends without proper nourishment or a proper bed, it is too hard for words ... our hours of work are from 8 in the morn until 20 or 30 minutes past 7 in the evening ... and you never see the color of a copper coin or an ordinary thank you for your hard labor ... it is really cruel. I have never in all my life experienced such torture, you are far better off in cold clay graves ... I am positively sure ... (Hide, 2014, p. 1)

As can be seen from the quotation, the asylum is described just like a prison. The conditions of asylum at the time were no better or different than those in prison. British Parliament passed a law named the Mental Health Act in 1959 to enhance the effectuality of treatments in asylums. The aim of the Mental Health Act was innocent and humane. Asylums were prepared to cure illnesses as much as possible and not to punish mentally disordered people. The management organization was shaped according to these standards. However, the practice did not reflect the approach taken by the Act as "it also gave psychiatrists much more power" (Reisman, 2017, p.158).

In this novel, the author uses all the elements to create this space. Instead of focusing on horror characters, he creates inner horror by highlighting the constant presence of

horror and insecurity in human beings, place, time, the decoration of a house, and even a secluded street. The asylum becomes a criterion for a perfect society. Michel Foucault says, "The asylum reduces differences, represses vice, eliminates irregularities. It denounces everything that opposes the essential virtues of society" (2005, p. 245). If a citizen presents with a disturbing behavior, s/he is sent to an asylum to get rehabilitated so that s/he may become a part of the crowd. The anomalies in the community are cleansed with the help of these institutions. Michel Foucault also talks about the dedifferentiation policy of asylums:

The asylum is a religious domain without religion, a domain of pure morality, of ethical uniformity. Everything that might retain the signs of the old differences was eliminated. The last vestiges of rite were extinguished. Formerly the house of confinement had inherited, in the social sphere, the almost absolute limits of the lazar house; it was a foreign country. Now the asylum must represent the great continuity of social morality. The values of family and work, all the acknowledged virtues, now reign in the asylum. But their reign is a double one. First, they prevail in fact, at the heart of madness itself; beneath the violence and disorder of insanity, the solid nature of the essential virtues is not disrupted. There is a primitive morality which is ordinarily not affected even by the worst dementia; it is this morality which both appears and functions in the cure. (2005, pp. 244–5)

The historical development of asylums creates a blurred boundary that is threatening the civilians outside. Therefore, it becomes a disciplinary institution for the inmates as well as for the rest, as it poses a threat to society.

The hidden purpose of these kinds of asylums is to make criminals understand the results of their imbalanced mind and take advantage of the guilt they feel. As authorities cannot punish the madman for his crimes, they choose another way to preserve the comfort of society. According to McGrath, institutions are the causes of such cases. In short, McGrath puts forward the idea that the ones who should be accused of, are not the inmates, but responsible people running these institutions: "Gothic writing—especially McGrath's use of gothic imagery—tends to pathologize political and social institutions far more than it attempts to diagnose the madness of individuals produced by such institutions" (Noad, 2020, p. 75). However, preserving the comfort of society is not an easy task to execute. That is why asylums are promoted as the reformatory institutions that claim to cure madness.

Here fear is addressed to the invalid directly, not by instruments but in speech; there is no question of limiting a liberty that rages beyond its bounds, but of marking out

and glorifying a region of simple responsibility where any manifestation of madness will be linked to punishment. The obscure guilt that once linked transgression and unreason is thus shifted; the madman, as a human being originally endowed with reason, is no longer guilty of being mad; but the madman, as a madman, and in the interior of that disease of which he is no longer guilty, must feel morally responsible for everything within him that may disturb morality and society, and must hold no one but himself responsible for the punishment he receives. (Foucault, 2005, p. 234)

The disturbance to the society pushes the authorities to get quick and satisfying results through the conservation of these mad people who are then stigmatized as possible threats to society.

Another important fact about the era is that the control of the asylums was in the hands of people from a political background without any medical knowledge, although it is not mentioned in the novel. Hence, at that time, the madness was not considered as a real illness but, instead, as strangeness. However, the English community believed that the Victorian asylums were a suitable place to rehabilitate the misfits. In "A Boy's own Broadmoor," Patrick McGrath says, "It [Broadmoor Lunatic Asylum] had opened its doors in 1863, during the great progressive era of Victorian social engineering, when the asylum was regarded by many as 'the most blessed manifestation of true civilization that the world can present'"(2018, p. 400). These places were seen as useful for the benefit of the public because their utmost duty was to keep "mentally healthy citizens" unharmed. The transgressors of public norms were punished either with prison or lunatic asylums. If a criminal could prove his/her madness, the only option would be these Victorian asylums.

Although the practice of convicting criminal lunatics into a separate place or charging them with no crime and sending them back to their freedom was in operation even before the 1800s, The Criminal Lunatics Act (1800) cleared some grey parts. Shepherd says that this act "gave the Sovereign powers to order the safe custody of criminal lunatics ..." (n.d., p. 9). In this way, the head of these institutions, medical superintendents, became very powerful in the management. After this, criminal lunatics began to be in prison or an asylum. There was a significant problem in convicting these criminals to the same place as ordinary lunatics. The heterogeneous mix of the asylums caused some problems, such as irritation of criminal lunatics because of stricter confinement conditions (Shepherd, n. d., p.10). Therefore, to protect

the inmates with no criminal records, the authorities wanted to change the rehabilitation system of lunatics:

In 1856, both the Bethlem and Fisherton House criminal wards were declared full, and the following year the Government announced its plans to build a criminal lunatic asylum. The Criminal Lunatics Bill (the 'Broadmoor Act') was passed in 1860 to make 'better provision for the custody and care of criminal lunatics.' It made the provision for Broadmoor and for its annual inspection by the Lunacy Commissioners. (Shepherd, n. d., p. 13)

After the "Broadmoor Act," criminal lunatics were no longer kept together with harmless lunatics. The Broadmoor Asylum became one of the first institutions established to be a place reserved for criminal lunatics. The narrator of *Asylum*, Peter, is the head of such an institution, and he pretends to be the guardian of the boundaries in the novel, but he is also the one who blurs this boundary by letting Edgar who, he thinks is still mentally disturbed, out.

The boundaries of the system are designated by the physical boundaries of the asylum—"The boundaries of the asylum are paralleled by the ideological boundaries that contain her as a middle-class married woman and which she breaches, just as surely as Edgar breaches the physical boundaries of the asylum" (Zlosnik, p. 80). Talking about the boundary, it should be noted that if there is such a boundary, it is situated between Edgar and Stella. As Sue Zlosnik asserts, each of them transgresses a line that could be taken as obstacles in their relationship. Firstly, as a couple, they constitute a highly unimaginable affair: a mad man with a psychiatrist's wife. Secondly, Edgar's escape from the premises of the asylum symbolically underlines the extreme nature of this relationship. Edgar's violation of the rule mirrors itself in Stella's escapade. The physical border is crossed by Edgar, as the location of the house specifies, and the moral is crossed by Stella.

Their relationship is anomalous for the 50s and 60s Britain, and Stella is aware of the strangeness of her affair as "she told herself it had been a moment of madness, no more than that; never of course; to be repeated (McGrath, 1997, p. 28). Although she knows the reality, it is possible to claim that she challenges these unwritten rules of society, such as the crime of having a relationship with a criminal lunatic. To some extent, these rules can be seen as a part of the defense mechanism of the societies. Without these bold lines, as there will be no contrariness, the more significant portion of the

society will be lacking the elements in defining itself. Mara Reisman explains as the following:

One way to differentiate themselves from the "bad" elements is to define the world in binary terms us/them, inside/outside, good/bad and to make sure that the borders between these ideological and physical spaces are policed. In asylum, these borders are physical (community and hospital) and moral (right and wrong). (2017, p.160)

The society takes these rules as precautions: the misfits should not get involved in the lives of "sane" people. It is possible to claim that Stella has three different identities. She uses these identities to show that she belongs to the "sane" society. Nevertheless, McGrath blurs the borders by making a chaste wife known as mad, imbalanced, and untrustworthy woman. The reader sees her in the garbs of a wife, a lover, and a mother. She has difficulty handling all of them solely with a sound mind. Of course, the transformation she experiences has a role to play in this insolubility. When she meets the lunatic criminal named Edgar, her whole life begins to crumble. This transformative experience shakes the foundations of her family. When Stella leaves her home and family behind, she is removed from the group of "normal" s. Earlier, as the wife of a doctor, she was a symbol of chastity and prestige. Her affair can be seen as "a way for her to escape the confines of her marriage and the related social expectations. (2017, p. 162). Stella's affair is striking in many aspects. Firstly, by committing adultery, she reveals the identity she had kept hidden beneath her silent silhouette. She is slowly alienated from her mother/wife consciousness and becomes a woman aware of her passion. Further, she transgresses another border when she has sex with a lunatic criminal whom her husband trusted and offered parole for his decent behavior.

With her affairs, one can see that she challenges the credibility of her husband as a psychiatrist who is responsible for the welfare of his patients and also as a husband who is responsible for his wife's contentment. Therefore, the action Stella takes, goes against not only the regulations of a formal institution but also the mutual trust and sanctity she promised to maintain in her marriage to her husband. McGrath plays a trick on his readers by introducing Stella as the naive wife of a doctor and changing that to make her undergo a behavioral transformation gradually. It should also be noted that Stella is disturbed by the asylum's atmosphere. In a sense, she sees the premises as a weird place because there are no borders inside. All the people in there, including

the insane ones, live in a controversial harmony. To adapt to this mechanism, she needs to transform her identity. She acknowledges the grotesque people and incidents. However, she tries to hide the change she experiences from her husband and child. In other words, Stella makes a great effort to continue with the ordinary lifestyle she had before she met Edgar.

This situation forces her to have not only a double identity but also double rhetoric. On the surface, as the doctor's wife, she covers her lustful identity. On the other side, she follows her desires. The difference between her identities shows itself in her attitudes towards Max and Edgar. After having sex with Edgar, Stella "embraced him [Max] with a warmth unusual for her, and as she did so, an ironic thought sprang into her mind, that it's the guilt of the adulterous woman that drives her into her husband's arms" (McGrath, 1998, p. 26). To handle the relationships with these men, she is supposed to cover her other identity when she is with one of them. Although it is not something easy for her to achieve, she succeeds it to some extent with the help of multiplying her identities.

On the one hand, she strives for being the ideal chaste woman; on the other hand, she wants to go with her instincts without thinking of the possible outcomes. However, she cannot escape from a deadlock as she finds it tempting and amusing: "Usually they want you to keep your mouth shut, but sometimes they want you to shout, and they expect you to know the difference. This was what amused her" (McGrath, 1998, p. 201). One can claim that she becomes stuck between the contradictory oppressive wishes of men. After Edgar escapes from the asylum, Stella visits him outside for the first time. This moment can be considered the critical action she takes towards a drastic change. Stella rebels against her wife of the doctor identity and challenges the norms of society. She takes the change for granted to construct a new identity for herself. Double rhetoric feeds the need to constitute an uncanny situation that demands a dichotomy. Moreover, this dichotomy should create a blurred sphere. The reader is supposed to be lost in-between. The reader has difficulty in establishing a bond with any character in the novel, and the lack of sympathy puts the reader in uncertainty. Although there is not a high need for identification, the distance between the reader and the characters is the result of McGrath's talented narration technique.

Stella discovers subjectivity and space as she gets away from Max. Before Edgar, she had neither of these. Although it seems like Stella does not imbibe the transgressive

attitudes around her, she is not aware that there is no border anymore. Before her transgressive affair, Max was the only and the most significant promise for that border, which includes Stella's undiscovered lust and impassivity. However, she reserves her body and lustful words for Edgar instead of Max. Even so, Edgar has difficulty understanding the particular nature of their relationship as follows: "You don't have to worry about Max; it's dead between us. It has been for a long time." "Do you have to sleep in the same bed as him?" She realized that he had no real understanding of her marriage, or of the difficulties of her situation generally (McGrath, 1998, p. 94). Edgar still naively assumes that Stella's sleeping in the same bed with her husband shows desire and lust. Nevertheless, Stella risks her life and career as being a doctor's wife by helping Edgar's escape.

Edgar's escape from the asylum and the help he gets from Stella underline a critical shift in the story. When Edgar breaches the gates, he takes the risk of becoming an unwanted object on the outside community's soil. The borderline is drawn to make sure the sickness is away and far from the social life of ordinary citizens. However, with him in society, the sickness, and also the sickness of others become more visible. In other words, Edgar functions as a mirror to the hidden sicknesses in society. The line crossed by him should be taken as Edgar's border.

Stella, too, crosses several borders of society. The wife of the prospective superintendent of the hospital becomes a lunatic criminal's toy. She obeys each command from Edgar Stark without any hesitation. Moreover, she underestimates the possible outcomes of her acts. McGrath asserts that Stella puts herself beyond the bounds of the marriage, community, and law (McGrath, 2015b, p. 15). That shows that she stands with Edgar instead of her established order. Her transgression becomes visible when she ensures Edgar's escape. At that moment, Stella also crosses the border with Edgar, even though their borders have different characteristics. Stella's border is composed of her identities. Stella leaves not only her doctor's wife identity behind but also the mother role in the house. According to McGrath, for Stella, this physical boundary has at least three specific connotations—marriage, community, and law. Stella's attitude towards patriarchy puts her in an awkward position. She resists against the pressure, and that results in her being labeled as psychologically imbalanced. In *Asylum*, Peter is the one very eager and willing to assume the role of physicians of the earlier centuries. As an oppressed and insanity-labeled woman, Stella faces the same

lack of understanding and ignorance. To get away from the destructiveness of patriarchy, she leaves Max and her son to start living with Edgar. Soon after that, Edgar's obsession with women on whom he has authority manifests itself in his relationship with Stella as well. He attempts to own her without thinking about the possible outcomes of the situation. His jealousy gives him the role of an oppressor; metaphorically, he becomes a version of Max.

Furthermore, because of his mental imbalance, he becomes suspicious of Stella's reactions. That situation can be seen as a repetition of things in Edgar's first marriage, which ended with Edgar killing his ex-wife. Edgar restages the catastrophe in his previous relationship. It is a known feature of Edgar that he has unhealthy jealousy. He repeats the same thing for Stella. This case recalls one of the short stories of Edgar Allan Poe: *Ligeia*. Poe tells the story of a man who has lost his beloved wife, trying to reanimate the past. The protagonist sees his beloved dead wife's face on his current wife. Similarly, Edgar in the *Asylum* might have the same tendency. Hence, one can claim that Edgar shows a great similarity with Poe's protagonist by having two lovers: Ligeia and Rowena in *Ligeia*; Ruth and Stella in *Asylum*. The urge to repeat the past, in other words restaging his relationship with Ruth, his dead wife, drags to him to a high confusion. This paranoid behavior leads him to think that Stella wants to poison and kill him as once he believes Ruth wanted. Moreover, this is why he refuses to eat an orange offered by Stella, and with that refusal, Stella "was alarmed. Now she knew that for his sake she must get away from him" (McGrath, 1998, pp. 134–5).

Despite knowing the criminal record of Edgar, Stella chose to ignore it and have a relationship with him. When the real/mad side of Edgar is revealed, she understands that maybe her decision to escape with him was not adequately right for her. She realized that it is "madness that was in him" guides him with actions such as being suspicious about her all the time and never believes what she says to him.

After getting caught by the police and she is separated from Edgar, Stella falls into depression because of returning to Max and *Asylum*. She becomes alienated to everything around her, even her son Charlie. At a school trip, Charlie drowns. Charlie's death is a violent crash that shakes all the structures of the novel. It is narrated as follows:

She pulled out her cigarettes and lit one, cupping her hand around the lighter's flame.

Charlie was trying to catch something in the shallows, but it evaded him. She watched

him mutely and passively and smoked her cigarette as he grabbed it, whatever it was, and lost his balance. ... Charlie was in deeper water now ... Then she turned her head to the side and brought the cigarette to her lips. (McGrath, 1998, p. 200)

The unresponsiveness Stella exhibits before such an incident is shocking to society as well as the readers. Moreover, there might be two possibilities for her passiveness: The first probable reason for her indifference is the joy of getting rid of another problem [Charlie] before she could meet her lover again. Another reason for her numbness maybe her deepened depressive mood that prevents her from reacting to practical issues anymore. Under all these circumstances, there is just one truth—that Stella watched impassively as her son died. This situation may appear brutal as a mother doing nothing when her son is drowning. The power of this scene does not come from any words or actions, but the quietness of the mother.

Stella watches her son drowning. Moreover, a cigarette accompanies her joy. The cigarette is put there by McGrath to underline the disinterest of the character. While witnessing her son's struggle for life, she is lost in thoughts. The uncanniness lies beyond the unresponsiveness of Stella. She says that the one in the water was Edgar (McGrath, 1998, p. 205). As Freud suggests, that is a sign of the return of the repressed. The face of Edgar is dangerous and inviting at the same time for her. Although she tries hard to get used to the circumstances of standardized family life, she cannot keep herself away from her suppressed love affair. It can be inferred that dreamlike and blurred ideas and visions are the outcomes of the uncanny for Stella. She does not rush into the water to rescue her son and prevent him from drowning, as the community expects. Instead, she stares vacantly as the horrible event transpires before her. The event on its own can be considered an unwanted incident that can give way to a resolution of a mother's negligence. However, Stella's unresponsiveness finds meaning in an earlier scene. Once, when Stella returns home from an escapade with Edgar, Charlie tells his father that his mother is drunk. She is disturbed with that secret's coming out. The reason for Stella's restlessness is not specified, but it can be that she does not want Max to know what she is doing. That situation makes Charlie an obstacle between Stella and Edgar. A Gothic theme is used here—that of the murderer mother. She sacrifices her child for the sake of love.

Stella's silence and inaction are the key factors that contribute to the narrative. In other words, it can be assumed that Stella's unresponsiveness is more expressive than the

words. This dark part of the novel, the peak of the *Asylum*'s narrative, finds its meaning in Freud's *Uncanny*:

There is no doubt that this [uncanny] belongs to the realm of the frightening, of what evokes fear and dread. It is equally beyond doubt that the Word is not always used in a clearly definable sense, and so it commonly merges with what arouses fear in general. Yet one may presume that there exists a specific affective nucleus, which justifies the use of a special conceptual term. One would like to know the nature of this common nucleus, which allows us to distinguish the 'uncanny' within the field of the frightening. (2003, p. 123)

According to Freud, *Uncanny* is something familiar that has been repressed, which then reappears, and everything uncanny satisfies this condition (2003, p. 152). Nicholas Royle explains the term as follows:

... it is a peculiar commingling of the familiar and unfamiliar. It can take the form of something familiar unexpectedly arising in a strange and unfamiliar context, or of something familiar unexpectedly arising in a familiar context. (2003, p. 1)

As asserted above, the uncanny signifies something familiar but dangerous at the same time. Royle stresses on the unexpectedness of the action or the things which Freud already mentioned in the definition of uncanny. That is one of the vital elements of the term. Also, this element can be found in *Asylum*. For example, Stella's unexpectedly letting her son die can be counted as uncanny. Stella's controversial passivity by the swamp puts the reader in a dilemma—Is Stella an innocent victim of a bohemian love affair or just a relentless Medea⁴? The horrifying nature of this event is the possibility of the latter. McGrath never clarifies this. However, it should not be disregarded that the New Gothic draws its strength from the probabilities and questions surrounding it. Stella once again transgresses a non-written rule of the community. According to the commonly agreed cultural code, children are a matter of prime importance for mothers in any circumstance. The shock she makes people experience is beneficial in terms of the uncanny— "The uncanny is not something simply present as an object in a painting. It is, rather, an effect. ... the uncanny is not so much in the text we are reading: rather, it is like a foreign body within ourselves" (Bennett & Royle, 2014, p.

⁴ **Medea:** When her husband Jason decided to abandon Medea to marry Glauce, daughter of Creon, Medea sent the princess a poisoned robe that brought about the death of Glauce and her father. Medea also slew the children that she had borne Jason and escaped to Athens under the protection of King Aegeus. Today, Medea is most often associated with vengefulness, jealousy, and sorcery.

41). Stella confirms the uncanniness here by creating such an atmosphere. Stella's involvement in the death of her son might cause another discussion. It is probable to discuss that Stella's foreign body might be labeled as a murderer character. She hides her murderer part.

By crossing the line, she not only reinstates her ambivalent character, which is constituted after her transformation, to the reader but also puts herself in a guilty position in the eyes of the community because, as Reisman states, she is known by the public as "a mother ... willfully fail to protect her child" (Reisman, 2017, p. 165). Stella is almost accused of murdering her own child. However, instead of a direct accusation, people choose to label her as a madwoman who should be cured. People abstain from calling her guilty because they do not want to accept that Stella did this intentionally. "It was unnatural, they said... she had no feelings, they said, she isn't human, she's a monster. Or perhaps she's mad" (McGrath, 1998, p.202). Hence, her "crime" is considered a result of mental instability. After that, she returns to the asylum; however, this time, as a patient.

People have difficulty understanding Stella because of the cultural codes defining motherhood. It should not be ignored that Stella stands as a woman who experienced the margins of womanhood according to the spirit of the era. At that period in Britain, the 1950s, women used to be seen as domestic, chaste, and hardworking housewives. In addition to rejecting her role as Max's wife by leaving him, she rejects her motherhood as well by letting Charlie drown. One by one, Stella strips off her identities. Stella has incomplete passions, and she is not afraid of letting them come out. She is so focused on her lover that she cannot even realize it when her son is drowning. Peter, on the other hand, chooses to diagnose Stella's case under the banner of the Medea complex rather than considering it unintentional ignorance: "...though in Stella's case complicated by the projection onto the child of the intense hostility she felt toward its father; a classic Medea complex" (McGrath, 1998, p. 211). One can assume that Peter's aim is to cover her desperation with medical reasons.

Peter embraces Stella despite her monstrous nature. The only joyful thing for Stella on the soil of the hospital environment is the conversations she has with the deputy superintendent of the hospital. She is relaxed when she gets an opportunity for enunciation. Although their relationship seems like an unusual encounter, Stella finds Peter trustworthy and respectable. One can assume that Stella is forced to become the

deputy superintendent's friend because of her constraints. She is exchanged between two doctors, and she becomes objectified by these men. Patrick McGrath draws a picture of Stella and her relationship with the doctor in the introduction of the 2015 edition of the novel by saying that only Peter, who is a “worldly, cultivated older man, unmarried, and committed to his own private pleasures” “amuses Stella” (McGrath, 2015a, p.14). Peter's approach towards Stella is also shocking when it is seen that he even proposes marriage to her under the name of treatment. Moreover, Peter receives Max’s approval before proposing marriage to Stella, as Reisman asserts below:

Emphasizing women’s expected passivity in marriage, Stella becomes little more than an object in Peter’s fantasy. Her lack of power is further highlighted when Peter talks not to Stella but to Max about his plans and asks Max to grant Stella a divorce so that he can marry her. At this moment, Peter truly crosses moral boundaries, and his blindness, arrogance, and unethical professional behavior become even clearer and more shocking. (2017, p.169)

At that moment, the specter of Peter reveals its real desire—to possess this attractive but dangerous woman. Peter's marriage proposal to Stella can be unsettling for the readers due to its unethical nature—here is a doctor approaching his patient intimately. Due to the destroyed and corrupt nature of Stella, it does not seem that she is a suitable match for a respected senior doctor. Since Stella has had troubles before being proposed by Peter, she is probably quite fragile. It appears that Peter takes advantage of Stella's vulnerability. Stella resists against the antagonistic power of Peter, and she does it behind the scenes by swallowing pills. From the beginning, Stella attempts to stand up to “objectification,” but it continues with Peter. Her suicide can be seen as the only method which she uses as resistance against “objectification.”

Like Stella, Peter also transgresses the borders of society. He welcomes Stella into his office. Furthermore, he offers her alcohol during their meeting. Although Peter questions himself about these breaches to the boundary, the reader begins to feel that he is not bothered by it—“Nothing was said about the wisdom of giving alcohol to a patient, we behaved as though it were the most natural thing in the world, two civilized people having a drink together in the middle of the afternoon” (McGrath, p. 230). The invitation he extends to Stella to come into his office instead of having a meeting in the ward is the first step of Peter's transgression. The second one is his Act of offering alcohol to a patient. His marriage proposal follows this. According to Harold Carmel:

... Cleave escalates his own boundary violations. They meet in his office rather than on the ward. Cleave, the superintendent, offers Stella Raphael, his patient, a gin and tonic. ... But tragedy strikes again, and Cleave is left with only Stark's artistic renditions of Stella. (1998, p. 111)

It is possible to assume that all these steps turned out to be self-deluding to Peter because, to Stella, each acceptance meant extra time for the preparation of her plan. In the end, Peter is taken aback by Stella's suicide as he does not expect such a shattering of his dreams. In his role as the God of the Asylum, he could not control one of his creatures. It is apparent that Peter sees Stella and Edgar as his subjects so that he can manage them easily. In a conversation with Max, Peter expresses this in a short sentence— "They are both in my care" (McGrath, 1998, p. 229).

Nevertheless, Peter's disappointment is also apparent. He feels cheated by his future wife— "... I thought we were in tacit agreement by now that those large emotions by their very nature tend to blaze freely and then die, having destroyed everything that fed them. In any case, it was over now, all that. Or so she led me to believe" (McGrath, 1998, p. 237). It should also be mentioned that there might be a connection with Edgar and Peter in terms of their attitudes in their relationships. Peter's approach to Stella is similar to Edgar's approach to Ruth Stark, his dead wife. In the end, Ruth and Stella become the victims of these obsessive men. Both of them are destructive and dangerous for these women.

The novel ends with Stella's suicide. She does not take the pills she is supposed to take but collects them instead. In the end, she takes all of them and dies. Until her death, she never reveals any detail about her real intentions to commit suicide. That is shocking for Peter. It is possible to assume that with suicide, Stella wants to unite with Edgar. That night, she wears a costume that can be considered ceremonial. She celebrates the upcoming end. Her hidden and silent rejection of being Peter's possession is another potent signifier of her uncanniness.

Throughout the novel, Stella has a silent profile. She is a character that speaks with restraint. Moreover, even her numbness in times of extraordinary incidents could mean something. Shortly, Stella can be described as a fragile person, although she shows no signs of mental illness, which is valid for Edgar, too. She has a problem with obsession, as evident in her relationship with Edgar. The character of Stella should be investigated from two different angles—her relationship with her husband, Max, and her affair with

her lover Edgar. These different relationships bring about a sharp change in her. When she is with Max, she behaves like a submissive but elegant woman. On the other hand, whenever she is with Edgar, she appears as a different woman than with Max. After having an affair with Edgar, Stella represses her submissive part. However, in the case of Charlie's drowning, her repressed mother side becomes apparent, and this might be accepted as uncanny — the return of the once familiar. The disturbance of the familiar (or the family) underlines this change. The institution of marriage is imbalanced by the entrance of a murderer as a friend. Stella begins to fall in love with a person who is a brutal killer. In other words, she falls in love with someone who is already a savage. The change in her can be linked to the people she stands with. This assumption is valid to some extent because she uses two different characteristics as a way of defense mechanism. That is another element showing Stella's duality. She is a familiar person on one side as a wife and mother, but she transforms to become a lover of a murderer. When she is with her husband and child, unexpectedly, she deceives both of them. The threat she brings about to her family ends her marriage. Later, her child becomes the victim of this tension.

There is a silent quarrel between passion and control in *Asylum*. Stella represents passion, while control is in the hands of the three men. These three male figures—her husband, her lover, and Dr. Peter—encircle Stella. Stella's husband loses his power on her when she decides to transgress the binding contract of marriage. This decision is brought about by her meeting with Edgar. However, her illicit affair with Edgar gives way to Peter's interference. After that point, the struggle between Edgar and Peter keeps changing formation; their sole aim becomes possessing Stella in any way possible. Edgar chooses a physical and emotional approach while Peter approaches her with his professional skills. Although Peter does not label Stella as his official patient, he examines her like his other patients. Stella never recognizes this, but she does not abstain from telling him her secrets. This situation continues until the novel's climax.

Stella's and Max's marriage works like any other ordinary marriage until Stella's secret love affair with Edgar comes to light. Max is described by the superintendent as "a reserved, rather melancholy man, a competent administrator but weak; and he lacked imagination" (McGrath, 1998, p.4). Max is a man who dedicates his life to his job. When he is assigned to the asylum as the deputy superintendent, he hopes to become the next superintendent of the hospital in the future. That is why he neglects his wife's

wishes to some degree. Although they do not have more than what is considered classic family matters, Max's ignorance paves the way for their emotional disengagement. Max does not see what is going on around him and his family. He is only interested in the procedural works of the asylum. According to him, to be nominated for the next superintendent, he must work hard and prove himself as an adequate candidate for the position.

The change in the cold war between Stella and Max is apparent when Max goes to see her in the asylum. It seems that Max urges Stella to make things brighter for him, such as the drowning of Charlie. However, as she draws an indifferent profile to him, Max cannot get what he wants. Moreover, as was mentioned before, although the tension between the couple is hidden, it is higher than before. At last, Max asks a question which might be seen as a summary of their relationship:

"Do you still hate me?" he said. She thought of a dream she'd had a few nights before. She was in bed with Max and the bed was full of shit. She told him this. She saw him recoil. (McGrath, 1998, p.205)

In her dream, Stella identifies her intimacy with Max with abject elements such as human excrement. The exclusion is made clear from the part of Stella. The significant thing here is the comfort while explaining her dream to Max. That might be taken as a justification for Stella's relaxation after Charlie's death. As it was mentioned before, Stella sees Charlie as an obstacle to reach Edgar.

Edgar's dangerous nature makes life hard for everyone around him, especially Stella. Firstly, it is highly essential to note that Edgar is sent to the asylum because of a brutal crime he had committed—he kills his wife and works on the severed head of the woman as an object of art by trying to give a different shape to it. Peter does the same thing to Stella, and she becomes a work of art for Peter. How Edgar wanted to sculpt her head gives the readers a hint about his mental condition. Edgar shows his artistic talents through this barbaric Act—"In Edgar, the obsessive passion of the artist transfers itself into obsessive possessiveness towards the women with whom he has relationships" (Zlosnik, 2011, p. 84). In the 1950s, these kinds of inmates were not welcomed by county and borough asylums because of their dangerous nature. Dr. Harvey Gordon asserts, "The county and borough asylums' objections to receiving insane sentenced prisoners was a reflection of such patients not being easy to manage

wherever they were located. Even in Broadmoor, they proved highly troublesome and prone to escape attempts" (2012, p. 21).

Edgar is also an uncanny figure in *Asylum*. Even his name is a reference to the father of Gothic Literature, Edgar Allan Poe. By naming him after Poe, McGrath loads the reader with expectations. The characterization of Edgar meets the expectations of horror and terror of the reader as much as possible as far as the Gothic is concerned. All the men in the novel are the same to some extent. As there is not a border between mad and sane, there is not a border between doctor and patient, which is another characteristic of New Gothic.

Although Edgar is a merciless murderer, in his mind, he kills his wife to create a masterpiece. Edgar's approach to the dead body of his wife shows not only his transgression but also delirium. Though the readers identify with his artistic talent, his execution of art stuns them. A familiar and pleasant event becomes a horrible practice in Edgar's hands. He is a complicated character who is labeled as a criminal lunatic. The complicated relationship between Peter, the superintendent of the asylum, and Edgar is an excellent source to dig for further details about Peter or/and Edgar. The contrast between Peter and Edgar is very apparent in the novel. Patrick McGrath stresses that in an interview— "The doctor and the artist represent a rich set of dichotomies loosely rooted in the opposition of science and art, reason and intuition, mind and heart and so on" (McRobert, 2011, p.3). This point might be broadened through their actions. First of all, the artist, Edgar, kills a woman who was his wife without any hesitation just so that he could create a piece of art. In that way, maybe, he presents his love for this woman in a "different" way.

Moreover, it is also possible to claim that although Peter narrates the novel, the reader is able to get the details about other characters, too. One of them is Edgar. His killing style represents his savagery and ignorance: "He decapitated her. Then he enucleated her. He cut her head off, and then he took her eyes out" (McGrath, 1998, p.72). He does not bother himself with the estimation of the potential outcomes of his acts. His method of immortalization of loved one differed from that of the man of science. Peter, on the other hand, does not choose a direct method like Edgar. Instead, he executes his plans step by step. He probably enjoys that kind of adventure. The death of Stella and its result show that all the way to the end, everything was going in accordance with the doctor's plans. Peter gets what he wants—Stella as a captive in his hands. Regardless

of whether she is dead or alive, Peter sees himself as victorious because he could indirectly achieve what he had been aiming for. Hence, it is evident that the difference between Peter and Edgar lay in the method they used to capture the victim. However, there is one thing that makes a comparison between them also possible—their strong instinct of possession.

Due to his popularity as a wild murderer, Edgar has always been approached cautiously by the asylum workers and patients until Stella comes along. One of the reasons for this is because Peter can intuitively sense Edgar's dangerous side. Although Edgar is granted parole, this does not mean that he is as free as people living outside the asylum. It just gives him the freedom to do some garden work and enjoy the fresh air in the garden. With the power he has over the patients, Peter likes playing with the inmates as though they were his puppets. Undoubtedly, Edgar is the most entertaining of them. By keeping a low profile, Edgar persuades Peter to grant him parole. Within the boundaries of the Asylum, Edgar never disobeys the rules of the institution. That makes it easy for Edgar to execute his plans. So to say, Edgar behaves as if he was in a masquerade. The exciting part here is that although Peter knows about Edgar's and Stella's hidden affair, he lets Edgar do whatever he wants. Peter's guidance administers the relationship between Peter and Edgar. As a puppeteer, he duly performs his duty. At that point, the reader wonders Peter's motivation for doing such a thing.

Undoubtedly, Peter, like Edgar, has an obsession with control. He aims to control the things around him all the time since he is known as a strict and successful superintendent. In his relationships, he does not change this tendency. Before both Stella and Edgar, Peter wears the mask of a "friendly person." In reality, however, he can get the details he wants more quickly this way. One of the possibilities of mutual trust between Edgar and Peter might be their similarity. They have a shared obsession—"His [Peter Cleave] desire for possession is ultimately parallel to that of Edgar, although in the case of the latter it is manifested in murderous jealousy" (Zlosnik, 2011, p. 76). It is worth noticing that both oppressors try to dominate a meeker personality—while Peter possesses Edgar, Edgar possesses Stella. It creates a chain of possession. So, Peter possesses Stella; however, this situation is not limited to the characters, but also the reader.

Almost all the narration revolves around Stella. However, although multiple attention-grabbing elements unite in her character, this illusion is the creation of the narrator,

Peter. So to say, Peter succeeds in building an illusionary picture of Stella. When this topic comes to the question, it should be noted that Stella's roles as a wife, lover, and mother are investigated through the eyes of Peter.

Throughout the novel, the actions are told from Peter's point of view. That is why the reader is imprisoned in the limits of his perception. At the beginning of the novel, the narration gives the reader a sense of objectivity due to his professional ethic. However, page by page, the narrator's tone shows a tendency of change:

... the novel's dominant theme is that of possession, the desire to transgress the boundaries of another person. Stella's story is told by a psychiatrist at the hospital who, it becomes apparent, is far from disinterested; as his narrative unfolds, he demonstrates that he is a stranger to passion but intimates a sinister desire for control. (Zlosnik, 2011, p. 75)

According to Zlosnik, Peter Cleave runs after a dominating position. After killing their loved ones (Ruth and Charlie), Edgar and Stella lose control of their lives and become the lab mice of Peter. They share the same destiny. To have and hold on to that position, he owns the required official status as a superintendent. Nevertheless, he needs to persuade his subjects. Once he gains their trust, Peter can govern his puppets in whichever way he wants. Moreover, Mara Reisman asserts:

McGrath's unreliable narrators who seem trustworthy are an integral part of his work. What differentiates the narrator in *Asylum* from those in McGrath's earlier fiction is the length of time it takes readers to recognize the narrator's unreliability and the extent and breadth of his power. (2017, p. 157)

In parallel with the quote above, Peter's transformation from a doctor into a vampire is one of the key points that makes this novel a member of the New Gothic because of Peter's fallacious nature. Peter's obsession with possession leads him to play the role of a vampire. Figuratively, he sucks Stella's and Edgar's blood to continue living. Despite he is known as a trustworthy doctor, he comes into view as a person taking advantage of people's illnesses and needs. Stella's circumstances do not offer him much, and Peter is aware of the situation. That is why Peter's companionship satisfies Stella to some extent. Patrick McGrath prepares not only Stella but also the reader to trust this experienced man. In this way, the surprise at the end can be used to confuse the reader. The possible confusion of the reader stems from the unreliability of the narrator. McGrath says that at first, he intended to give the voice of the narrator to Stella, but he changed his mind after realizing the limits of Stella's tentative narrative

(McGrath, 1998, p. 16). In the end, McGrath thought that the most suitable voice for the narration would be Peter, whose bleak and fallacious character would support the plot:

Readers' willingness to accept Peter's version of events makes him all the more dangerous. Peter has full social and narrative authority, and he abuses both. [...] when Peter ostensibly gives Stella's or Edgar's perspectives by reporting what they (supposedly) said or felt, he controls their voices – at least the voices readers hear (Reisman, 2017, p. 157)

McGrath's prediction is not wrong since Peter's unreliable narrative gives a gloomy and uncertain texture to the novel. Peter's narration of Stella's psychological tendencies and the illicit love affair shows that the doctor knows more than enough. The unreliability of the protagonist, who is a medical doctor, makes the reader cast doubt upon the credibility of the medical practices. That is the main point McGrath wants to direct the reader. The uneasiness of the reader, who is an implied one, contributes to the narrative with no special effort for McGrath. Matt Foley and Rebecca Duncan see McGrath's unreliable narrators as elements of deconstruction: "When McGrath's unreliable narrators are themselves, medical professionals, . . . Asylum's Peter Cleave, the effect is a destabilization of the curative medical endeavour, whether this is oriented toward physical ailment or mental illness" (Foley & Duncan, 2020, pp. 3-4). According to Foley and Duncan, first-person narration helps to construct an ambiguous structure. This in-betweenness created with the help of an unreliable first-person narrator is a signifier for the reader. The transgression is underlined with the narrative structure: "The neo-gothic effect of asylum, . . . draws at least some of its underpinning technique from impressionistic, early modernism, particularly in its carefully crafted first-person narration and its numerous narrative ambiguities (Foley & Duncan, 2020, p. 114).

As an unreliable narrator, Peter holds the power of manipulation in his hands. Furthermore, the details related to Stella and her secrets he gets can be seen as proof of his exploitation of his profession and friendship. Mara Reisman points to the exploitation's source— "Peter's professional authority and in-depth psychiatric knowledge further makes his narrative trustworthy and, ultimately, much more sinister" (2017, p. 167). In other words, Peter is so determined to get into Stella's life that he might even become a "devilish" doctor who gets pleasure from playing with his patients. Here, it must be underlined that before the outcome that awaits Stella's

life, the doctor's intervention was very limited to her life. After she flees from the hospital and her child's death, she is stigmatized. That moment is the beginning of all the stream of data about her because she shows evidence for "sickness" in the eyes of the medical authorities. From now on, she is under Peter's control. Stella becomes a fulfillment for the play he employs because she would end Edgar's loneliness, according to the doctor. The protagonist of Peter's play should not be left alone:

He [Peter] had access to her account of the affair, and a psychiatric understanding of the man Edgar Stark. His view of what Stella regarded as a love for which the world was worth losing was more prosaic than hers. He saw not love but something else, a kind of madness. (McGrath, 1998, p.17)

The faith of the victims is decided by a vampire-like authority, who, in reality, is the superintendent of an asylum. Moreover, the relationship between the couple raises the novel's gothic tone since it becomes a game for the playmaker Peter. The density of Peter's manipulation in the process of transferring the data from his dialogues with other people or the incidents he heard is undetectable to the reader. Peter's intentions are also not known by the reader. So, the reader is not able to resolve the terror because she does not know the hidden intentions of Peter. The twisted mind of the unreliable narrator is one of the factors that makes this novel gothic. It is certain that, to some degree, Peter uses manipulation to bring the reader to his side. That results in the insolubility of the terror. According to Reisman, it is McGrath's talent that makes readers get stuck:

People tend to base their moral position about transgression on conventional gender role expectations and to make judgments based on a person's social and professional standing. McGrath challenges these ideological "truths" by allying the reader with the narrator and his personal, professional, and narrative power and then destabilizing the narrative position. Readers' realization about the narrator's unreliability unsettles their firmly held moral beliefs and encourages them to consider how they came to hold these beliefs. (2017, p. 156)

By turning Stella's and Edgar's voices down, McGrath manages to let Peter's specter dominate the whole story. Helene Machinal focuses on the issue by drawing attention to Peter's diction, as follows:

The interplay between vision and dominance undermines the novel to such an extent that the reader will eventually also be entrapped by the rhetoric of control exerted by the psychiatrist. The latter first appears as extremely possessive: he refers to Edgar using "my" as if the patient were an object belonging to him and which Stella, in

particular, threatened to deprive him of. ... Gradually, he also focuses his attention on Stella, and the reader soon realizes that even though most of the plot is narrated through Stella's focalization, Peter's presence is obsessively hovering over the character-focaliser. (2012, p. 74)

Peter's dominance over the narrative is unidentifiable until the very end of the story. His presence can be claimed as specter. However, uncanniness is not limited to Stella in the *Asylum*. Peter's manners can also be analyzed from this context. From the beginning until the end of the novel, Peter hides his actual identity from both the reader and other characters. Although Peter is very fond of investigating the secrets of others, he is a closed book himself. As a bachelor and older man, Peter knows that he is suspected of being a homosexual but disregards these gossips about him. However, unwillingly, he leaves a mark of his sexual orientation to the reader— "I know she had always assumed I was homosexual. Now she must have thought, perhaps he is, and what he's proposing is more a domestic arrangement with therapeutic implications than a marriage as such" (McGrath, 1998, p. 236). Peter supports the possibility of his homosexuality by saying, "... she [Stella] knew I was in no sense a shabby man. No, she could live with me. She was less sure about sleeping with me. In that department one was invariably surprised, and rarely —" (p. 237). Moving from here, one can suggest that through pretending to be homosexual he can reach his aim of possessing Stella more easily.

The homosexuality of the narrator does not make sense in the first stage, but, strangely, he keeps this secret to himself while trying to intrude into the privacy of others. That underlines the transgression of the unreliable narrator. Moreover, despite the efforts he makes for concealment, even the inmates know his hidden nature— ... at one point, Stark [Edgar] calls him "an old queen" (Carmel, 1998, p.111). Peter cannot resist the urge to analyze himself—"He [Peter] is also the psychiatrist who runs the asylum, but he unconsciously analyses himself and his own symptoms of madness: he represses his homosexuality ..." (Falco, 2004, p. 100). He haunts the narrative by becoming a channel between the characters and the reader. Thus, his possible manipulations and changes in the process of the transfer cannot be identified. It might be assumed that he uses the narration to his own advantage. To cover his goals, he never mentions his attraction to Stella until the scene of the proposal. This silence of his, like Stella's silence during her son's drowning, signifies his uncanny nature. As a hidden master of the puppets, he succeeds in staging an intricate and spooky play.

Since the story in the novel is set in the era of 1950-1960, the Victorian-style hospital provides an uncanny atmosphere. Throughout the novel, the tone is gloomy as much as possible. McGrath succeeds in the modernization of the Gothic setting. Nevertheless, that should not mean that he avoids borrowing the features of traditional Gothic. On the contrary, McGrath's style can be defined as a Gothic which uses the contemporary setting. The change in the setting is one of the differences that have been made. It is no longer in the middle of nowhere. The setting in the novels of McGrath is not far from the realities of today's world. Hence, it can be said that McGrath carries the feeling - fear and terror - and the reaction of the reader to a place where it is not contrary to facts. Furthermore, the setting is not sided by supernatural happenings. Instead, the modern setting is in harmony with characters that belong to the era mentioned in the novel. The asylum as an institution that keeps the imbalanced people far from the civilization serves not only as a prison but also as a hospital. Moreover, false judgments may cause suffering to an innocent person. On the other hand, releasing a maniac serial killer to social circles can also be a big mistake. This mission of these institutions causes some handicaps to the authorized people. A superintendent in an asylum is a doctor who both controls the health of inmates and ensures the safety of society. Since the inmates are seen as dangerous criminals, in the eyes of authority, the correlation between guilt and madness is stabilized. The authoritarian doctors involuntarily become prison officers. Of course, this is not valid in the case of Peter since he does not abstain from being a guardian to Edgar and Stella. For superintendents, keeping the balance is very important. However, in *Asylum*, Peter attempts to keep that balance while he runs after his own obsessions. There is no doubt that *Asylum* is a very vivid example of the New Gothic because of its regenerated gothic characteristics. The gothic is portrayed not only through the setting or atmosphere but also the attitudes. The Old Gothic's characteristics undergo a transformation in the New Gothic; for example, the image of a "haunted mansion" in the Old Gothic becomes the asylum in the novel. The suspense is created via silence; the specters are shown in narration, and horror is hinted at secretly. In the novel, cultural and universal values are reversed by the author very delicately. The respectful condition of marriage is torn down, the notions of motherhood are questioned harshly, and the hunger for power is handled uniquely. Trusted institutions are targeted in Patrick McGrath's novels. That is what makes *Asylum* new in terms of the Gothic.

Hospitals, especially the asylums such as the one in the novel, form the New Gothic setting.

There are three stages in *Asylum*, which might be seen as the process of making the novel a member of New Gothic. These three stages are three borders that are transgressed by the characters. First, the garden image constitutes a border. Then, the protagonist Stella's quest for identity stays as a border which cannot sharply divide her wife and mother identities. Moreover, her relationship with another character makes this quest harder than before. And lastly, the character named Edgar, who has a blurry border between sanity and insanity, manifests itself as another step of making the Gothic new. By taking into consideration these stages, it can be asserted that crossing the border is one of the inseparable parts of McGrath's narrative. It is this traditional mode of gothic that is revisited and revised in the novel.

3. CHAPTER II: DECONSTRUCTION OF OEDIPUS IN *SPIDER*

One of the most interesting novels by Patrick McGrath, *Spider*, tells the story of a man named Dennis Cleg.⁵ Patrick McGrath brings together themes such as mental illness, the supernatural, and horror, the amalgamation of which lends a unique essence to the book. The indifferent tone of the novel, coupled with Dennis's mysterious mind, presents a horrifying story. The novel starts as a classical oedipal story, which forms the basis of traditional gothic texts. However, McGrath parodies this aspect by subverting the tale of Oedipus, thereby adding a new approach to his gothic tale. This novel pushes the reader to focus on Dennis's motives for killing his mother and destroying the oedipal structure at an unexpected moment.

The father figure is as indifferent as possible for Dennis. His hatred against his father gives way to his strange phantasies. As a result of his delirium, he thinks that his father cheats on his mother with a prostitute and kills the prostitute. There is not a prostitute replacing a mother; the truth is that Dennis kills his mother. Dennis's allegations are the delusions that come from the hatred towards his father. Dennis takes his revenge on his father by killing the prostitute, who is, in reality, his mother. After that point, he is sent to an asylum where he calls "Canada." Dennis thinks that he was sent to an exile after he lost the care of the mother. From his point of view, the mother was the only protector of him in the house, and he became deprived of it because of his father's brutal acts. Throughout the novel, he describes his two different personalities: the first one is Dennis, and the other one is Spider. He stays in an asylum for twenty years. Afterward, he starts to live in a state-sponsored dormitory for people like him. This place's objective is to make mentally ill people ready for life outside.

In *Fictional Narrative and Psychiatry* by Femi Oyeboode claims that amplifying the characteristics of a character is done to underline the madness (2004, p.141). In *Spider*,

⁵ To avoid ambiguity while mentioning the character, the protagonist will be referred to only as Dennis instead of Dennis/Spider or Spider throughout this thesis. Some scholars quoted in the thesis use the word 'Spider' to underline Dennis's insane persona. To make this clear, the name Dennis is added to these quotations in square brackets.

it is done with the physical features. However, that should not be missed out that Dennis's psychological features are also emphasized by McGrath to make sure the reader is confused. For the mental health of Dennis, there is not a certain answer. Nevertheless, Oyebode discusses that Dennis might have Capgras syndrome, which causes the patient's confusion on identifying the people near her. As McGrath is well-informed about the illnesses, especially psychological ones, Oyebode's assertion has the possibility of being true to some extent. Nevertheless, as this argument is not in the context of literature, but medicine, Oyebode's claims on the mental state of Dennis are not included in the chapter.

Lucie Armitt's *The Magical Realism of the Contemporary Gothic* discusses the reasons behind the naming of the protagonist as Spider. According to Armitt, to get deeper inside the mind of Spider persona, firstly, the case of Spider should be determined as a cryptonym. Moreover, she claims that the Spider persona's imbalanced mind is a consequence of his mother's controversial approach to him. Hence, she argues that the main problem of the plot emerges from the mother instead of Dennis. That thesis of her is based on supporting arguments, and these will be mentioned in the following pages of this chapter.

On the other hand, Anna Powell's *Unskewered: The anti-Oedipal gothic of Patrick McGrath* is an important work to go deeper in *Spider*. Powell sees the acts of Dennis/Spider as an outcome of Anti-Oedipal tendencies (2012, p. 270). In short, she argues McGrath's parodic way of rereading Freud's Oedipus Complex. In the next pages, this topic will be discussed more detailed.

Spider is the story of a disturbed man named Dennis Cleg, who recently returned to London from Canada. London is the city where Dennis lived 20 years ago. He resides near the East End, where he lived as a child, and spends his days wandering the streets he was once familiar with. Dennis was trying to adjust to a new life, which he pursued after being released from a psychiatric hospital:

I went down to the river, to a pebbly strand where as a boy I used to watch the barges and steamers; in those days they ran on coal, and constantly coughed cloudy spumes of black smoke into the sky. You reached the strand at low tide by a set of tarry wooden steps beside an old pub called the Crispin. Down I'd go to sniff around the boats moored there, old battered working boats with smelly tarpaulins spread across their decks, all puddled with rainwater and green with fungus. Often I'd climb onto the deck and creep under a tarpaulin, in among the iron chains and the damp timbers,

and settle myself in a tick oily coil of rotting rope — I loved to be alone in that damp gloom with the muted screaming of the gulls outside as the wheeled and flapped over the water. (McGrath, 1991, p. 28)

Childhood nostalgia evokes Dennis's childhood memories, memories he secretly wrote in his journal. In these memoirs, he remembers his father being a plumber who betrayed his mother with a local prostitute named Hilda. Dennis thinks that his mother had disappeared, and this confuses his mind. As the story progresses, Dennis recalls the traumatic events of his childhood, and the narrator's tone gradually becomes more confused along with Dennis's behavior. Dennis's confusion is revealed in his behavior, the way he dresses, and even the sounds he hears in his mind. It can be said that this confusion of Dennis's mind is not unrelated to his childhood memories; for example, Dennis's disturbed mind repeatedly smelled gas, a smell that can be guessed from the memories of his mother's death by gas. The story of Dennis starts around the 1930s. He lives with his parents in a modest house. His father works as a plumber, and his mother is busy with housework all the time. The relationship of Dennis with his parents can be labeled as Oedipal. Dennis is so fond of his mother, and he hates his father. His ill-imaginative world brings him to the point where he considers his mother as the prostitute is brought to the house by his father. In reality, Dennis's mother is not killed by his father; it is just a delusion of Dennis. His mind manipulates Dennis.

The narrative of the novel belongs to Dennis, and he narrates the story from his perspective, not allowing the reader to obtain details from any other source. The reader is isolated as much as possible, with complete dependence on the narrator. Through this technique, McGrath constructs his narrative based on its officially insane protagonist's unreliable narration. Dennis Cleg's unreliability as a narrator stems from his imbalanced psychology. Throughout the novel, the reader is pushed to carve out the meaning from the details presented, whereby the only key in the reader's hands is Dennis's inconsistent explanations. As the central figure of the novel, Dennis attempts to persuade the reader about his own present and past; and thus his innocence. In this manner, he knows he can establish his rightfulness and take revenge for the wrong things he experienced. Hence, it is possible to say that it reminds of Edgar Allan Poe's *Tell-Tale Heart*.

Nevertheless, as Dennis is not ready for that stage, he fails in the adaptation process. In the end, he visits his old house, which is burnt down, and faces the things he had

done. In the following, the Gothic theme of the novel, as well as the atmosphere created by McGrath, will be reviewed.

In *Spider*, Patrick McGrath tells the story of the main character skillfully, which is marked by layers of truth and horror illusion as the story progresses. The novel is a mixture of terror, madness, and skepticism. *Spider* is no exception that the story is told from an unreliable narrator like some other McGrath novels. Page by page, the narrator arouses the curiosity of the reader by blurring the border between reality and illusion. Allegory, misguidance, and fantasy play a central role in the narrator's narrative, and the reader realizes in many parts of the story that not all events were what they had in mind from the beginning.

Undoubtedly, McGrath has a particular skill in writing based on madness, and in *Spider*, the author describes Dennis's madness in detail with his fears, doubts, and delusions. An example of this description is when Dennis thought there were noises in the attic:

“Dear God I wish silence would descend on this house! They've started up again, and they seem to be stamping up there now, they keep it up for minutes on end and then collapse, helpless, apparently, with laughter. I've been standing on my chair and banging on the ceiling with my shoe, but it does no good at all, in fact it only seems to make things worse. Mrs Wilkinson has much to answer for, and the disturbance of my sleep by these creatures is not the least of it. And my insides still hurt!” (McGrath, 1991, p. 74)

He blames the noises for his madness but over time, the defensive guard in Dennis's mind that denied all negative thoughts gradually disappears. He is no longer able to deny his insane thoughts. For example, Dennis realizes that perhaps the memories he has in mind do not come from his mind, but from his writings:

All is quiet in the attic now and my terror has abated, to some extent. My relationship to this book is changing: when I began to write I intended to record the conclusions I'd arrived at about the events of the autumn and winter of my thirteenth year; and in the process I thought I'd buttress and support myself, shore up my shaky identity, for since being discharged I have not been strong. But all this has changed; I write now to control the terror that comes when the voices start up in the attic each night. They have grown worse, you see, much worse and it is only with the flow of my own words that I am able to block out the clamor of theirs. I dare not think of the consequences were I to stop writing and listen to them. (McGrath, 1991, p. 150)

The storyline of the novel is twofold: one in the present tense, while Dennis writes about daily routines and his living, and his doubts, and the other in the past tense. As the storyline progresses, the boundary between the two tenses blurs to the point where both are used in the same paragraph. This use of two timelines makes the reader feel close to the narrator's madness, and McGrath promisingly incorporates this sense of confusion into his narrative:

Queer thoughts, no? I sighed. I bent down to pull my book out from under the linoleum. Nothing there! I groped. Momentary lurch of horror as I assimilated the possibility of the book's absence. Theft? Of course – by Mrs. bloody Wilkinson, who else? Then there it was, pushed just a bit deeper than I'd expected; no little relief. My father was stumbling blindly through a fog, barely conscious of his whereabouts, the chaos within him further befuddled with the beer he'd just drunk. Great relief, in fact; what on earth would I do if she got her hands on it? Is the best place for it really under the linoleum? Isn't there a hole somewhere I can tuck it into? (McGrath, 1991, p. 68)

McGrath is good at playing tricks with the supporting elements of the Gothic tradition, such as the killing scene of the mother. Actually, Dennis aims to kill his father, but ironically the mother is killed. Furthermore, Dennis's outfit is supposed to be terrorizing or scary, at least, considering the genre of the novel. However, Dennis's outlook might be classified as the best kind of grotesque. McGrath manages to get the reader in the mind of Dennis and makes her feel what he actually feels. While misleading the reader with his unreliable narrative, he never forgets to bring a surprise to her. That is the part constituting the backbone of his plot: parodying the sources related to the Gothic. Oedipus Complex is one of these sources, feeding Gothic Literature. The relationship between mother and son is one of the oldest reasons for struggle. It is possible to move from the naming of the term: *Oedipus Rex* is the play written by Sophocles circa 429 BC. The play's plot focuses on the omen saying that Oedipus is destined to kill his father, the last king, and marry his mother. The crisis emerges from this omen. However, maybe it is better to draw attention to the place beside the mother figure. When looking at the plot, it is seen that the ultimate aim of the character is to be with his mother. Even the throne is degraded in comparison with being the partner of the mother. On the other hand, the throne signifies the importance of winning the favor in the mother's eyes.

According to Melanie Klein, Oedipus Complex simply is "With the boy, a good deal of hate is deflected on to the father who is envied for the possession of the mother ..."

(1988, p.198). The novelty Patrick McGrath brings to the Gothic is the subversion of the familiar features of the genre. One of the most significant changes seen in the novel is the dismantlement of the Oedipus complex. Hutcheon argues that parody is used as a liberating apparatus from the previous examples claiming the originality of the text (1986, p. 53). McGrath subverts the Oedipal complex and uses it in a different sense. The complex results in the murder of the mother unexpectedly. The very source of love becomes the victim of it.

Parodic works that manage to free themselves from the backgrounded text enough to create a new and autonomous form suggest that the dialectic synthesis that is parody might be a prototype of the pivotal stage in that gradual process of development of literary forms. (Hutcheon, 1986, p. 35)

By ridiculing the schemes created in the past, McGrath subverts the expected images in the minds. That results in the new form of Gothic, which has more aspects of creating suspense, terror, and decay. The aim of McGrath in using parody in his works is to underline the specific images and functions by bringing them new meanings. Hutcheon claims that “parody is both a personal act of supersession and an inscription of literary-historical continuity” (1986, p.35). In this sense, McGrath not only follows the path of his predecessors like Poe but also finds new veins to feed the body of the Gothic.

With all the details from his childhood, it is possible to say that the scenes of Dennis's early ages show a dark and depressing picture. McGrath makes the surrounding sound like a part of a Victorian Gothic novel. The environment is described in a gloomy way by Dennis:

The sky is gray and overcast; there is perhaps a spot or two of rain. An air of desolation pervades the scene; no one is about. Directly in front of me, a scrubby strip of weeds and grass. Then the canal, narrow and murky, green slime creeping up the stones. On the far side, another patch of weeds, another brick wall, beyond the wall the blotchy brickwork of an abandoned factory with shattered windows, and beyond that the great rust-red domes of the gasworks hulking against the gloomy sky, three of the things, each one a dozen towering uprights arranged in a circle and girdled at the top with a hoop of steel. (McGrath, 1991, p. 12)

Garden image is also one of the characteristics of Patrick McGrath's works. As in *Asylum*, McGrath uses this image to underline the connotations of the actions in *Spider*. There are two gardens that have importance for Dennis. One of them is

Ganderhill's (asylum) vegetable garden, where he spent most of his time as a lunatic patient. He works in this garden to perform the only profession he has and get some refreshments. That is why the place, the garden, is a symbol of sin and cleansing. The other garden is the one beside their home in East End: "For him (Horace Cleg) that narrow strip of soil was not merely a source of fresh vegetables, it was, I believe, a sort of sanctuary, a sort of spiritual haven" (McGrath, 1991, p. 18). The Garden stands as an escape point for the father.

The so-called murder takes place there according to the false memory of Dennis Cleg. At the same time, it is the place where Dennis's father tries to bring up some vegetables. Contrary to expectations of Dennis's Father, the garden gets infested:

The day I remembered he was turning the heap, letting it air so as to ensure uniform decomposition and prevent overheating; but barely had he lifted the first forkful than to his astonishment he saw that the heap was moving, that the exposed interior was alive. He took out his spectacles and he found that his compost was infested with black maggots. (McGrath, 1991, p. 144)

For Dennis, it is a wrong place because his mother is beneath it. She is covered with soil and replaced by someone else. There is no need to try to cultivate there. Maybe, gardening is atonement for the sins. Although Dennis offers the maggots as the proof of his mother's dead body to the reader, the facts are against his assumptions. Black maggots, or supposedly Black Soldier Fly in a different name, can breed in some other places than a human corpse. Dennis wants to support his assertion of the mother's murder by saying that the garden is full of maggots now because she is buried there. Dennis calls the insects in the compost as black maggots. This name does not explicitly refer to a species, but most probably, this insect is in the family of flies called black soldier, which can be found in compost. Entomologist Joseph W. Diclaro defines the habitat of black soldier fly as follows:

In natural breeding sites (i.e., carrion) black soldier flies lay their eggs in moist organic material. Black soldier flies frequent agricultural settings because the large amounts of organic waste left by livestock offer abundant sites that meet their reproductive needs. In areas where natural habitats are removed (urbanized areas) the black soldier fly will lay eggs in dumpsters or compost, which provide similar odors and nutritional needs to naturally occurring organic matter. This is especially true for areas with poor sanitation. (2018)

It can be understood that the human corpse is not the only place for this kind of insects to lay their eggs, so finding black maggots in compost, which is a very suitable place for them, is not something to be surprised.

In this book, McGrath describes Dennis's living conditions, as well as social taboos, about his identity and the age in which he lives. Social sanctions and taboos are also part of social pressure around the one who utters the things constituting her/his identity (Butler, 1988, p. 520). Starting from this, it is possible to assume that, according to Butler, the individual attempts to adapt her/himself into the environment, laws, traditions, and culture. This way, the speech act, in other words, the utterance of the one, constitutes her/his identity. Herewith Dennis's appearance finds its meaning. On the surface, Dennis does what the outer world expects from him. However, his mind constructs an identity which cannot be recognized by external subjects. Keeping a diary underlines his effort of constructing and keeping an alternative identity. However, as he is scared of losing this mysterious world, he hides it in an unreachable part of his room.

Dennis's mind is full of memories, and he keeps that diary to make them reliable. Nevertheless, the secret behind the need for keeping such a diary should be examined. Annina Ylä-Kapee discusses the need to keep a diary from a different angle: "I believe that Spider needs the confirmation from a real 'you' who is separate from himself. What Spider wants from his 'you' is belief and the endorsement of the version of events he confides" (2014, p.362). Agreeing with Ylä-Kapee, it can also be said that besides confirmation, Dennis requires protection of his other identity, which can also be taken as protection from disappearing. Lucie Armitt questions this need by stressing upon the specific location of the notebook: "In the case of Spider [*Dennis*], however, it is also the notebook's secret location that is of interest, hidden up the chimney in an alcove behind the gas fire" (Armitt, 2012, p.518). Alcove in the chimney becomes the cradle of the hidden persona of Spider. The place where Dennis hides his diary is the place where he hides his other self as the diary reflects his alternative identity. Like in *Dr. Jekyll & Mr Hyde*, Dennis tries to cover his other identity by taking notes in his diary.

The Spider identity was constructed by his mother, and Dennis adopts it. This internalization shows that he attempts to create a unity with his mother, which cannot

be bothered by any external factors. Dennis's effort to keep this bond possibly signifies for the intention of returning to the pre-oedipal stage.

Dennis's life has not a significant difference from the neighbors' lives. East End of London is described in *Spider* as a quarter where working-class people live. As a son of a plumber, his routine is to be at home, waiting for his father's coming home. The only time he feels happy is when he spends time with his mother. The atmosphere of his childhood is depicted highly depressing with London's weather and gasworks at the time. McGrath stresses upon the dark images as much as possible to create an intriguing narrative for the following pages of the novel. However, Dennis's life in the East End is composed of life at home. The author does not give any detail about Dennis's playtime with his friends. The novel does not mention any friends of Dennis. He does not have a person to play or chat. That is a signifier of his bizarre nature. A little kid who has no friend is already an interesting aspect of the character. This lack is vital in terms of psychology. As a lonely boy, he is fond of imagination. It might be assumed that being alone triggers his imaginative side. The sources of his imaginative mood are, probably, his mother and his lack of parental care. His mother is portrayed as a successful person in tale-telling. The tales she told him, of course, fed his imaginative personality. However, the mother's tales can also be taken as a sign left by McGrath to underline the made-up stories by Dennis. Hence, the credibility of the tales his mother tells reflects the credibility of the stories Dennis tells the reader.

To maintain the bond with the mother, it is possible to argue that Dennis imitates his mother's storytelling in his diary. However, as he labels his mother, ideally perfect mother, he cannot accept some attitudes of her. This perception drags him to the denial. For instance, the intimacy between father and mother is intolerable for Dennis. Hence, the mother symbolizes not only the ultimate love and care but also danger and threat:

... overwhelming mother induces excessive dependency and the need to be a good child. The child is literally afraid to move away from the mother lest he or she be trapped, crushed, engulfed, and devoured. The child must, therefore, avoid at all cost eliciting the disfavor of the mother. (Lane&Chazan, 1989, p.333)

Dennis's mother projects her identity onto him, and this forces Dennis to be entirely dependent on his mother. As it was mentioned before, this dependence is not a smooth bond to be left by Dennis. The possibility of losing the alliance with the mother results in high anxiety. Anxious child experiences difficulty in adapting himself to the

upcoming new conditions. As he grows older, he cannot evade sexual awareness. When he is faced with the mother's sexuality, the image of mother-son unity in his mind is shattered. The body of the mother does not represent the child's body anymore, and that leaves Dennis defenseless, especially to the father.

According to Lane and Goeltz, annihilation anxiety contains the fear of death, dissociation, and depersonalization (1998, p. 265). All the symptoms mentioned here can easily be seen in the case of Dennis. Moreover, he exhibits a big identity problem, which might be a reason for his unusual nature:

The annihilation anxiety, which is characteristic of these masochistic patients, always contains the fear of death, and episodes of dissociation, depersonalization, and/or altered states of consciousness are often manifested. The lack of emotional connectedness with the earliest objects produces a kind of anhedonia, a denial of pleasure or an inability to feel, and a lack of integrative, synthetic, and symbolic thinking. Those patients who manifest Dissociative Identity Disorder defend themselves against the fear of annihilation by dissociation. (Lane & Goeltz, 1998, p. 265)

It is apparent that Dennis suffers from a dissociative identity disorder. It is likely to say that he is prone to misunderstand the messages he receives. Like it was said above, Dennis is afraid of death. He refers to death by saying Canada here: "It was the fear I had of my father sending me to join my mother in *Canada*, it was the fear of being attacked with a gardening tool at the moment I least expected it" (McGrath, 1991, p.195). For instance, maybe he misjudges the problem between his mother and father; or as an unreliable narrator and further to that as a sufferer of the oedipal tendency, he might play the role of an innocent victim. To strengthen his state, he points out to his father as malefactor:

When did it all start to go sour? When did it start to die? There was a time when we were happy; I suppose the decay was gradual, a function of poverty and monotony and the sheer grim dinginess of those narrow streets and alleys. Drink, too, played its part, and so too did my father's character, his innately squalid nature, the deadness that was inside him and that came in time to infect my mother and me like some sort of contagious disease. (McGrath, 1991, pp. 38-9)

In addition to the quote above, it might be said that Dennis possibly makes up a story of domestic violence. According to his possible made-up story, his father beats his mother, and one time she comes to Dennis with tears and says, "sometimes your father upsets me" (McGrath, 1991, p.44). This exclamation provokes his hatred: "Oh, I hate

him then! Then I would have killed him, were it in my power – he had a squalid nature, that man, he was dead inside, stinking and rotten and dead” (McGrath, 1991, p.44). His father’s ill effect upon his mother irritates Dennis. One can claim that Dennis’s delusion is a result of his deep anxiety that his mother is no more in his possession, but his father’s. He becomes a witness to his mother having sex with his father. This primal scene is one of the triggering points for Dennis’s discomfort. From the point of the Freudian approach, Oedipal tone is apparent. That makes him discouraged because, until that time, he always thought of her as a part of himself. The critical point is that Dennis cannot face reality. Of course, this emerges from the close interest of his mother. The intimate time he spends with his mother creates a sense of unity, and his anxiety about the possibility of losing this interest leaves him hopeless. The destruction of his unity with his mother becomes visible with that scene. Dennis chooses to decline this threat and directs his way to bury the part of her. The symbolic burial of the mother coincides with the delusion of Dennis that his father kills his mother and buries her. That choice refers to his rejection to digest the truth: the beloved mother cannot be under the authority of the bad man.

The relationship between Dennis and his mother is a unique one, which will be covered in more detail below. The uniqueness of the relationship between Dennis and his mother is apparent in many aspects. She takes care of Dennis all the time, and Dennis sees his mother as a place to hide from his father. Probably his hostility to his father makes the figure of the mother a permanent part of the self. That is a sign of the father world, according to Lacan. Dennis has difficulty in identifying himself according to the rules of the father. He expects a confirmation from his mother to justify the things he has done. Even that effort cannot satisfy him fully since he does not see himself as a separated part of the mother. Sue Zlosnik asserts that "...the novel demands that the reader engages in the act of psychoanalysis. Some of the stock images from Freudian psychoanalysis are there, most prominently a loathing of the father and a vexed Oedipal relationship with the mother (2011, p. 53). While Dennis is very fond of his mother, he hates his father. Moreover, Lucie Armitt stresses an important clue on Oedipal Temptation of the protagonist: Dennis, who confesses to having violent fantasies involving harming his father with "ghosts and chains and torture," is also clearly in love with his mother (2012, p. 516).

Although Dennis never criticizes his mother, it seems that the hatred towards his father might emerge from the hatred towards his mother. Unlike Oedipus complex, he kills his mother instead of his father. His detestation for the mother is so high that he cannot stand to see her in the role of the mother. He manipulates his own vision and sees her as a prostitute because she did "bad" things to him. Klein explains this situation as follows:

The infant who, owing to the strength of paranoid and schizoid mechanisms and the impetus of envy, cannot divide and keep apart successfully love and hate, and therefore the good and bad object, is liable to feel confused between what is good and bad in other connections. (1988, p.184)

As Klein mentions above, it is hardly possible to expect from a child to correctly label what is good and bad. That is why it is common for children to have both love and hate for the same person, especially their mothers. After Dennis's vision changes, and she is named as a whore after he cuts the bond between them. The disengagement underlines Dennis's big disappointment. Dennis evades from accusing his mother, but ironically, as a result of this decision, his mother becomes the victim of his plans.

It is the mother to look for the reasons behind the brutal act of Dennis. She draws a picture of a tender mother. This figure stands for a misleading atmosphere. The reader analyzes the mother as a kind-hearted, loving woman. However, the reality is different. The mother follows a restrictive path in bringing up Dennis. Moreover, grotesquely, she names her own son as Spider.

In psychoanalysis the spider is a symbol of the bad, masculine, angry mother who, according to Karl Abraham, possesses a male organ, and whose embraces can engulf and kill. In male patients' fantasies, the spider 'represents the penis embedded in the female genitals, which is attributed to the mother' and the mother is formed in the shape of a man, of whose male organ and masculine pleasure in attack the boy is afraid . . . The patient's feeling towards spiders can be best described by the word 'uncanny.'
(Finucci, 2003, p. 102)

As Finucci suggests, the connotations of spider vary. However, as can be seen, all of these connotations are far from being positive. Moreover, the spider symbol is attributed to the mother in the imagination of males. When it is considered together with the Oedipus complex, one can suggest that Dennis suffers from the destiny his mother prepared for him.

The Canal is one of the distinctive images of Dennis's childhood. The long walk tours by the canal relax him, and this is one of the other reasons justifying his desire to be alone. Hence, it is possible to say that loneliness is not an outcome of a situation but a choice for Dennis. He is not willing to be in contact with anyone else than his mother. It can be suggested that Dennis is characterized by the eyes of his mother. This situation starts with naming him as "Spider." After having the name given by the mother of such an animal, Dennis identifies himself with the nature of the spider. He prefers to hide himself from people. His personality shows excellent suitability to the requirements of being a mother's little spider. He develops a cobweb in his mind, which leads him to delirium. The web symbolizes the labyrinths in which he is lost. Lucie Armitt presents a different reading on the web of Dennis:

For Dennis/Spider, his mother's world is a manifestation of the magical real, experienced as a series of narrative fabrications. ... Sitting, knitting in the kitchen while she spins Dennis a yarn, this mother is, quite simply, the spider in question ... (2012, p.517)

According to Armitt, the actual spider is the mother, and she shifts her identity to Dennis. He is not conscious of the outcomes of his own web. This web becomes a trap for him. While trying to find a way out, he goes more in-depth in his memories. The narrative of the novel reflects the web-like mind of Dennis. This situation leaves the reader and Dennis without a solution. The childhood of Dennis ends with the death of his mother. A chapter is closed in his life with that tragic end. Dennis thinks that his mother is killed by his father, and a prostitute takes her place.

Another element that McGrath introduced in the novel is the doppelgänger of Dennis called Spider. One of the first steps of Dennis's awkwardness is his mother's naming him as "spider." His mother is a very caring person, yet she calls him "Spider" instead of Dennis. This naming might be related to the background of their mother-son relationship:

The devouring parent-child relationship is synonymous with a variety of autoerotic manifestations. If there is no one else to turn to, the child has only its own body to go to for contact and warmth. The inability to find motor release and the damming up of the drives and impulses lead to internalization mechanisms as attempts to cope with demands for adaptation. ...These children appear extremely anxious, with affect bordering on terror and panic. Primitive fears of being eaten, merging with the object, and loss of identity are all manifested. (Lane & Chazan, 1989, p. 333)

She chooses to call his son with an animal mostly disliked by humankind. According to Lane and Chazan: "Spiders are ambivalent creatures that have some good qualities but have the potential to enmesh and kill" (Lane & Chazan, 1989, p. 327). Spiders are animals living in places without human intervention. The nature of these animals can be attributed to Dennis, too. His solitude and desire to be away from interruption might be the basic qualities of his "spider" side. Although Dennis is named as "Spider," it is crucial to notice that the one who gives this name to him is his mother.

Moreover, it seems that, indeed, she bears the features of "spiders." It is possible to discuss the mother's intention in naming her son as "spider." Most probably, her purpose is to transfer her unwanted side, which contains all the foul connotations of spiders, to the child.

The child's omnipotence, intimately connected with the mother's pain and suffering, evolves developmentally as a result of traumatic cumulative experiences of helplessness. The more the mother exerts her omnipotence, the more the child, through lack of boundary differentiation, employs his own omnipotence to blame himself and use it as a defense against his helplessness. The more masochistic the child, the more responsible he feels because of his omnipotence, power, and magical thinking, taking on the full responsibility for mother's painful experiences. The absence of mother-child boundary differentiation also leads the child to believe that the mother owns both his body and mind that he and mother are one, and any self-destructive, masochistic behavior is an unconscious attack on mother as well as self. Outwardly, the mother is idealized, all-loving, and perfect with hostility denied, and any negative perception of the mother disavowed, with these feelings being internalized and displaced. The child must retain any available feeling of being special or chosen. (Lane & Goeltz, 1998, p.270)

The characterization of Dennis is perfectly compatible with the description by Lane and Goeltz. As it was mentioned above, Lane and Goeltz focus on the image of the mother in the mind of the child. Along the same line, the unity with the mother is so important for the child. The idealized place of the mother is fragile. If it gets damaged, the child is supposed to deconstruct and reconceptualize her position. Likewise, Dennis does not see his mother as another person, but a part of his body and soul.

The double of Spider is a breakpoint of Dennis. Whenever he comes across a difficult problem to overcome, he hides behind the character of Spider. Although the novel's narrative does not let the reader understand the details behind the things told by Dennis entirely, there are some parts that present a parallel narrative from a different

perspective. Through these opportunities, the reader can speculate on the issues freely. Otherwise, it would not be possible to learn that the murderer is not the father but Dennis (or Spider) himself.

Another part of the novel is dedicated to the asylum environment, where Dennis spent his treatment. Dennis also uses a different kind of diction, which makes the narrative a text to be deciphered. For example, "Canada" is a nickname for the place Dennis goes after his childhood. In reality, "Canada" stands for the asylum where Dennis has to stay for almost twenty years. By giving the asylum another name, he attempts to cover his time under the roof of a mental institution. Otherwise, it would be a justification of his case, in other words, his mental state.

He remembers the time he spent there as beautiful: "During the later years in Ganderhill I worked in the vegetable gardens; ... I remember in the summer the smell of fresh-mown grass, a smell that comes back to me so strongly now that I stop writing ..." (McGrath, 1991, p. 164). It is understood by the depictions of the places and the things he did in the institution. This secluded place comforts Dennis, and he longs for it after his release.

Dennis's perception of "Canada" is like an exile. McGrath parodies the institution of asylum by ridiculing the non-functionality of it. A patient like Dennis is released because of the overpopulation in the asylum. On the other hand, that might be said that as a part of the mental health system, the halfway house shows similar patterns of the asylums. Dennis describes the released patients as follows:

I attempt a spoonful of porridge; it is poisonously bad. The dead souls pay me no attention. In stupefied, wordless abstraction they hungrily devour the porridge and slurp their tea, various small body sounds escaping from them as they do so, little farts and burps and so on. (McGrath, 1991, p. 15)

They do not show any clue that they are mentally healthy. Dennis's description includes a criticism of the mental health institutions and these patients as the outcomes of the asylums. The novel underhandedly criticizes these institutions.

However, the twenty-year break also shows the failure of medical treatment at the asylum. The process in the mental health institution figuratively freezes Dennis's life. Although his intention of evoking the incidents in his childhood and solving the problems lie beneath these incidents, Dennis's treatment at the asylum prevents this

effort. After his stay in the asylum for a long time, the institution forces Dennis to leave the place as his bed is needed for another patient.

After a forced pause in life, Dennis is urged to bear the naked truth of the life outside again. Nothing has changed for Dennis. He evades from the crowd and wants to be alone as much as possible. Taking asylum as a symbol of rebirth, it can be said that Dennis returns to his childhood, which signifies his rebirth. Furthermore, the fog over London distresses him so much. Patrick McGrath gives a considerable portion of the gloomy atmosphere of 1950s England to remind the uncanny environment of the first examples of Gothic Literature. This way, McGrath could echo the fear and terror in the Gothic works of earlier times.

Dennis cannot adapt to life outside. He is sent to a halfway house for his orientation to social life as a part of his treatment. However, his imagination leads him to think that the landlady Mrs. Wilkinson is the person who occupied the place of his mother. Doubling shows up here to underline the imbalanced mind of Dennis. He says that “the woman who runs the boarding house I’m [he is] living in (just temporarily) has the same last name as the woman responsible for the tragedy that befell my[his] family twenty years ago. Beyond the name there is no resemblance” (McGrath, 1991, p. 9). Although Dennis denies the resemblance, both personas are dreadful for Dennis. Firstly, Wilkinson, the prostitute, takes his mother’s place and causes her death. Mrs. Wilkinson, on the other hand, runs the halfway house and becomes a guardian of the inmates. She forces Dennis to obey annoying rules, which make him feel like in his childhood. Sue Zlosnik focuses on the coincidence of the names of the prostitute and the landlady:

He projects the Hilda persona on to his landlady in the contemporary narrative and wonders at the coincidence of their sharing the same surname, whereas it becomes apparent to the reader that he has appropriated her surname for the persona he has projected on to his mother. (Zlosnik, 2011, p.58)

That is very important in terms of the uncanny. The resemblance creates uncertainty for the readers, not Dennis. The uncertainty gives a way to fear. Terror comes out of this fear. This situation confronts him densely. His decision to return to the East End does not bring answers, but more questions. This quest shows that there is a battle going over in his mind.

Dennis is released from the asylum because of the needs of the hospital. The superintendent explains the need as "another bed for another patient." That is why the doctor wants to persuade Dennis that he is healthy now, and he is ready for departure: "Ganderhill is overcrowded, and I find you are well enough to leave us" (McGrath, 1991, p. 187). The name of the doctor is Jebb McNaughton, who releases Dennis from the asylum. His name has a reference to the regulations of the time.

McNaughton Rules: It is perhaps no accident that the doctor who supervises Spider in the community is called McNaughten, in an echo of the McNaughton Rules which define the terms under which someone cannot be held criminally responsible by virtue of insanity. (Zlosnik, 2011, p. 63)

McGrath criticizes mental institutions with their persistence in running these hospitals without a quality policy. Besides this, the struggle to lower the capacity of the institution gives a way to release the patients whose treatments are left unfinished. He is still mentally imbalanced, but he has the freedom of strolling in the streets of London. He is officially labeled as a mentally healthy person, yet in reality, he has a confused mind. That is one of the signals of the uncanniness of Dennis.

The last conversation between the doctor and Dennis gives some hints about the condition of his way of thinking. In this conversation, Dennis associates the doctor with his father:

The first shock: he told me to sit down, frowned at my file, lifted his head, took off his spectacles – and I was staring straight into eyes the same cold shade of blue as my father's! I shrank back in my chair (a hard wooden one). He had the same hair as my father, black, lank, and oily ... (McGrath, 1991, p. 185)

Besides reminding his father to Dennis, the doctor becomes the reason for an echo of the father. Dennis is irritated not only by the physical resemblance but also by the menacing tone of the man because the doctor wants to send him outside world: "I was in no condition to hold off this cold-eyed creature, this copy of my father – this Cleg-Jebb! – or whatever he was." (McGrath, 1991, p. 191). The doctor becomes a kind of double of Horace Cleg. Dennis cannot differentiate the reality from his delusions.

Moreover, not to give out his mental situation, he behaves as if he did not think as such until he faces with the actual narrative of the story: "Escape responsibility for the accident," he hissed, "you killed your mother," he boomed, and I rose wildly to my feet and pointed a trembling finger at him. "You did!" I shouted. "Not me, you!"

(McGrath, 1991, p. 191) The confusion of Dennis leads him to name the doctor as a mix of reality and delusion. Hence Dr. Jebb's identity is intermingled with the identity of Horace Cleg. However, this is the first time that Dennis and the reader come across the alternative narrative of a doctor. The insistence of Dennis continues to reject the alternative history of the incidents:

CLEG-JEBB had reconstructed my history, but he had reconstructed it wrong wrong wrong, it was bad history. If he knew anything of my father's plan to send me to Canada he did not indicate it; if he understood my terror at the prospect, if in other words he'd learned the truth about what really happened to my mother – he didn't indicate this either. (McGrath, 1991, p. 192)

To Dennis, the persona in front of him neither the doctor nor his father; this persona becomes a symbol of all people who have had authority on him till that time. Because of this, Dennis approaches the offer with suspicion and reluctance. He does not resist, as he does not have any trust in anybody. Cleg-Jebb combination constitutes an uncanny cohabitation for Dennis. The persona is a well-known character whose actions can be foreseeable. However, he has a remoteness of authority, which underlines a bold threat.

With interesting references to the Oedipus complex proposed by Freud, McGrath refers to the stages of Dennis's psychological development. The stages of the psychosexual development in childhood explained by firstly Sigmund Freud and later, Jacques Lacan place emphasis on the mother. Freud asserts that a boy sees his father as an enemy in the battle over his mother. To this theory, the boy feels that he is under the threat of his father. This fear is explained via the castration complex. Castration stands for a barrier for the boy to express his enthusiasm towards his mother and becomes a regulative machine for the institution of the family. The child learns or is forced to learn the ways of reaching the mother that are blocked. At this point, Lacan's theory steps in and supports Freud's theory with the concept of the name of the father.

The name of the father constitutes a world of misery and confusion for the boy since he is in the first steps of identifying himself and the others. The one who starts to learn the ways of expressing the self realizes that his so-called freedom since his birth is no more in his hands. That is why another conflict begins to have parents approve his autonomy. Dennis in *Spider* follows a similar route. The confusion in his mind becomes a cobweb, and this cobweb provides a cozy place for him to have some

freedom. That should be noticed that even the rules of his own imaginary world have already been established by his mother.

Dennis speculates that they have something else in their minds with desperation because of the relationship of his parents. Dennis resists to the steady situation of his parents' relationship. Their normality does not fit to his delusions. That is why it can be said that the quotation above gives two parallel but totally different narratives to the reader. The first one presents the reality which Dennis does not want to acquire; the latter one displays Dennis's way of thinking, his unreliable mind. These two narratives represent two characteristics of the same person, too. Hence, the decay of the ideal mother figure for Dennis makes a wound in his mind. His subconscious starts to blame his mother on the responsibility of his suffering.

According to Freud, a boy who has the Oedipus complex is supposed to dream about having sex with his mother (2010, para. 5). The reader expects that from the attitudes of Dennis. When the brutal act of killing the mother takes place, McGrath succeeds in surprising. This unexpected murderer contributes to the uncanny atmosphere of the novel.

In the first place, the killer does not come from outside, but inside. The only child of the family kills the mother by setting up a trap with a well-designed plan. The trusted one turns into a savage killer. Nobody in the family expects from Dennis committing such a crime. However, the murderer is not Dennis, but Spider. Spider captures the mind of Dennis with that act.

As Dennis is no more capable of getting back the autonomy over his mind because of Spider, the narrative does not reflect the horrific nature of the incident. The terror is hidden behind the depiction after the murder:

He [Spider] stared at the open door of number twenty-seven and saw his father lurching out backwards dragging Hilda [Prostitute] behind him, and this made him laugh more, though it puzzled him in a vague sort of way. ... He [Spider] remembered Hilda being loaded onto a stretcher and covered with a sheet, and this started him laughing all over again, but even so he was puzzled, and dimly sensed that some sort of mistake had occurred. (McGrath, 1991, p. 219)

The novel situates itself on the quarrel between two personalities of the protagonist: Dennis and Spider. Their battle is vivid in the quotation above. The action takes place after the murder is told through the eyes of Dennis. That is why the pronoun "he" is

used for Spider. Dennis does not want to take responsibility for what happened to his mother. However, it is said that the murderer is very joyful of the killing of the woman named Hilda. Nevertheless, it is also stated that there is something wrong with the scene. It is possible to claim that the dilemma before the act of killing continues afterward in the mind of Dennis. That is the result of Spider's pressure on Dennis, which drags him to the killing of his mother, which is very contradictory in terms of his oedipal tendency.

Dennis's relationship with her father, in turn, is a unique one, influenced by his feelings for his mother. It can be claimed that unlimited and unconditioned love for his mother and Dennis's feelings to his father confirm Freud's theory. The memoirs from his childhood haunt the mind of adult Dennis. To get rid of the deadlock of the memories, he takes notes on the incidents. In these notes, it is seen that Dennis was a victim of his father's beating. The cellar is the center of the torment for Dennis. That is another supplementary part of his Spider side. Dennis's father, Horace, never shows his affection to Dennis. On the contrary, Dennis is tested all through the tasks given to him, and if he fails, he must face the beating of his father. The cellar is the place where Horace belts Dennis harshly when Dennis does not obey the rules of his father or cannot fulfill the things he was ordered to do:

... though the pain of belting was never as bad as the minutes that preceded it: my father's rage, the way he ground his teeth together and pulled his lips apart and hissed at me to get down the cellar – the anticipation, I mean, was worse than the event itself.
(McGrath, 1991, p. 52)

The connotation of the cellar is the place for suffering for adult Dennis. Although cellars are places to keep the foods fresh and safe from the bugs, Dennis is locked in there, and his father shows his anger with his belt. This form of punishment might have left a mark in the mind of Dennis in his childhood. Because of this, little Dennis starts to feel anger towards his punisher. Of course, that does not give a full picture explaining the reasons for Dennis's imbalanced psychology and acts. Nonetheless, it provides some information on Horace's approach to fatherhood. From the aspect of Dennis, Horace is depicted as a pure evil that torments his mother and Dennis.

Moreover, Dennis puts forward the idea that Horace is so weak that he only shows his anger towards them: "Not that he'd let anyone else ever see his anger, he was much too careful for that – but my mother and myself, we saw it, he had no other outlet for it,

we were the only people in the world weaker than he was" (21). Dennis sees himself and his mother members of a small group who are organized against the threat of Horace Cleg. This perception acknowledges the idea that his mother will be with him no matter what happens to his father. So to say, Dennis demonizes his father as the biggest enemy of his union with his mother:

No one would know, only I, only I, how intense, how venomous, was the hatred he felt toward me at that moment, and I'd hurry away as quick as I could. I was never able to tell my mother how much I disliked going into the Dog and delivering her message, for my father disguised his feelings so effectively she would have laughed to hear me explain what was really going on. (McGrath, 1991, p. 22)

Dennis not only hates his father but also, he grows this feeling by projecting the feelings of his father towards himself. That can be taken as another way of justifying his hostility mixed with fear and hatred. According to him, nothing about his father is as it seems. His father covers his identity so successfully that it drags Dennis to despair. Dennis thinks that he is not capable of convincing his mother. So, he does not make an effort to tell what he feels.

It is highly essential to look at the reasons behind the illness of Dennis. The relationship between Dennis and his father is not a result of a classical Oedipus complex. The relationship gets harm from both sides. The father figure cannot satisfy Dennis's needs because of his work and drinking habit. This causes estrangement. Dennis spends his time only with his mother. The mother tries to take care of her son as much as possible. The father is a terrorizing figure for Dennis.

According to Dennis, his father never shows the tender side of a father to him. This situation paves the way for Dennis's imagination beyond possibilities. He hates his father because he is afraid of him. Not only evilness in the father feeds Dennis's hatred, but also Dennis thinks that this feeling is mutual.

Inevitably, Dennis Gothicizes his father. As a demonic character, his father torments his mother. That is why, in the descriptions of the father, the narrator always underlines how selfish and unbearable character he is. In this case, Dennis changes his mother's role from one of the parents to the only parent. The conflict between father and son causes Dennis to exclude his father from the list of family members. As they get closer to his mother, Dennis chooses to see his father as a man who is ready to do anything that may harm his mother or him.

According to the imagination of Dennis, the Gothicized and the evil father becomes a murderer. He thinks that his father brings a prostitute to house, and they kill his mother together. This situation is important to understand the result of the father-son conflict. It can be assumed that as Dennis can no longer endure the marriage of his parents, his mind makes up an emergency exit. The non-existence of mother would be more helpful than seeing her with an evil. Hence, Dennis figuratively kills his mother to make things more bearable.

Moreover, to fulfill the figure who is hand in hand with his father, Dennis fabricates a prostitute named Hilda Wilkinson. Not only he gives her a name but also, he supports his narration with stories about her. This name comes from his mother's real name. This data is given by Ernie Ratcliff, the owner of the bar: "Gassed in her own kitchen. Nice woman, too. Hilda, her name was, Hilda Cleg, her boy turned the gas on" (McGrath, 1991, p. 216).

Undeniably, it is an illness that has some standard features with schizophrenia because the syndrome constructs itself upon this illness. On the mental case of Dennis, Zlosnik says: "Dennis, it is suggested, displays the behavior of someone suffering from a syndrome that involves failing to recognize close family members, believing them to be imposters" (Zlosnik, 2011, p.61).

It is said that the patient thinks that the person they know is replaced by somebody else. Of course, Dennis never says that because he profoundly believes that somebody else entered the house in the role of his mother: "She [Hilda Wilkinson] hung her skirt and blouse in the wardrobe, among my mother's clothes ..." (McGrath, 1991, p. 80). Even though Dennis sees his mother, he starts to label her in his mind as someone else and resists against the truth:

I opened the door. My father was sitting at the table with a woman. I had never seen before. [...] "Where's my mum?" I cried. "I don't want to go back to bed, I had a dream!" "That's enough," he said, pushing me down the passage. "I want my mum!" "Don't make me angry, Dennis! Your mum's in the kitchen." "No, she's not!" "Upstairs!" he hissed. (McGrath, 1991, p. 79)

The resistance of Dennis always comes up with a disagreement. That causes him to change his attitudes according to the circumstances. As Dennis believes that people around him tell lies about the fate of his mother, he chooses not to express his thoughts, but to hide. Dennis is aware that his beloved mother is someone else's wife, and he

aggressively denies this situation. Hence, he attributes this feature of her to prostitute Hilda Wilkinson. His hatred towards his father becomes visible with the entrance of the prostitute in their life so that her mother's loving, affectionate side dies in the hallucinatory world of Dennis.

It is possible to assume that Dennis is aware of the abnormality because he witnesses that nothing changes in their healthy lives except the way of Dennis's perception on the things happening: "She had painted her mouth with my mother's lipstick and fixed her hair with my mother's comb; the scent, however, was all Hilda" (McGrath, 1991, p. 84). He never gives up trying to persuade himself and the reader that the person is not his mother.

Dennis, or his doppelgänger Spider, associates his landlady in the halfway house with the prostitute Wilkinson. Nevertheless, it can be discussed that maybe the surname Wilkinson comes from the landlady, not from the non-existent prostitute. He attempts to get revenge from her in vain. Demonizing the landlady can provide the result that Dennis has lost the war against Spider. Still, Spider governs the body and mind.

A shocking point in the story is when Dennis kills his mother with a trap. One night he turns on the gas and waits his parents coming home. The murder is planned and executed professionally without a doubt. Dennis experiences a feeling which has never occurred to him before: "... and I had to stuff a blanket in my mouth to stifle the wave of laughter the spectacle provoked in me" (McGrath, 1991, p. 207). Dennis uses the body of his mother (thinking that she is an imposter) as a battlefield of the war between him and his father. He witnesses his mother's death and gets carried away with the joy of his victory.

The motivation lying behind the act of murder is to destroy the loved one. This hostile attitude stems from the envy Dennis feels towards his mother. In the following quotation, Melanie Klein defines the division of the mother into good and evil:

We might, therefore, consider the universal longing for the pre-natal state also partly as an expression of the urge for idealization. If we investigate this longing in the light of idealization, we find that one of its sources is the strong persecutory anxiety stirred up by birth. We might speculate that this first form of anxiety possibly extends to the unborn infant's unpleasant experiences which, together with the feeling of security in the womb, foreshadow the double relation to the mother: the good and the bad breast. (1988, p.179)

The end of the coziness connotes the negative as it is no more there to make the infant feel comfortable and safe. This insecurity causes the very first trouble for the infant: unidentified anxiety. Afterward, this anxiety leads to an impossible quest. The more he attempts to find coziness of the womb, the more he fails. Similarly, Dennis develops his envy towards his mother while the breast becomes bad. However, he cannot succeed in overcoming it. Idealization ends at that point. Klein explains the process as follows:

Defense against envy often takes the form of *devaluation of the object*. I have suggested that spoiling and devaluing are inherent in envy. The object which has been devalued need not be envied any more. This soon applies to the idealized object, which is devalued and therefore no longer idealized. How quickly this idealization breaks down depends on the strength of envy. (1988, p.217)

Envy ends as the mother, or the breast is devalued by the subject. Hence, the mother as an object becomes no more an idealized the other half of the individual. For Dennis, the transformation of the mother into a prostitute takes place at that point. Dennis no longer sees his mother as an idealized figure. On the contrary, it is seen that she becomes a member of the lowest layer of society. That also indicates that the mother becomes an enjoyment supplier for the father instead of the caretaker of her son. Hence, the impossibility of reaching the previously experienced place drags him to this incident. He finds this solution feasible as he is not willing to share his mother with his father.

The death of his mother leaves some traces in Dennis's life. Although Dennis never accepts his responsibility for the murder, he knows that there is an unknown part of his mother's absence. Dennis's subconscious tells him the truth by a signal. After twenty years of captivation, he starts to smell gas in his temporary room in the residential home. Gas never works as a direct reminder. Nevertheless, the trauma of the childhood disturbs Dennis:

... the smell was coming from me, from my own body. This was a shock. I straightened up and tried to smell myself. Nothing. I staggered upright, clutching the end of the bed, and opened my shirt and trousers, fumbling clumsily at the buttons in my haste. Was it there? Again that awful uncertainty – I would seem to have it, then it was gone. I sat hunched on the bed, clutching myself round the shins, my forehead on my knees. Did I have it? Was there gas? Was it seeping from my groin? I lifted my head and turned it helplessly from side to side. Gas from my groin? (McGrath, 1991, p. 30)

Noticing the smell of gas, inevitably, Dennis wants to take some precautions. The first step is to wear as much as possible. Probably, he becomes uneasy and does not want people to understand his past as gas is directly linked to his brutal act. As Sue Zlosnik suggests: "For Spider, the smell of gas is associated with an as yet unidentified horror" (2011, p.55). One can claim that the gas refers to the burnt house in which Dennis's mother died. However, Zlosnik's assertion is acceptable in terms of Dennis's approach to the gas. When he feels the gas, he is scared and wants to become invisible. Yet, he fails at identifying and expressing the source of his fear. Even this reaction can be taken as an example of the relation between the gas with which he killed his mother and the gas following and terrorizing him. That is why the one can claim that the connotations of the smoke, or gas, represent abjection. While defining abject, Kristeva asserts that "One does not know it, one does not desire it, one joys in it. Violently and painfully. A passion" (1982, p. 9). It is a part of a passion that creates joy and pain in the meantime. The smoke is an abject signifier for the incident which takes his mother away from him; so, it constitutes a blurred border between life and death just as sanity and insanity.

It might be helpful to take a look at the novel's narrator and McGrath's particular style. Unreliable narration works like an apparatus to create suspense, and that situation leads to an uncanny atmosphere. Dennis Cleg unintentionally breaks the chain of reliable memories of him. At the end of the novel, it is revealed that he is the least trustworthy character in the novel. Wayne C. Booth explains the term as below:

... I have called a narrator reliable when he speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say, the implied author's norms), unreliable when he does not. It is true that most of the great reliable narrators indulge in large amounts of incidental irony, and they are thus "unreliable" in the sense of being potentially deceptive. But difficult irony is not sufficient to make a narrator unreliable. Nor is unreliability ordinarily a matter of lying, although deliberately deceptive narrators have been a major resource of some modern novelists. It is most often a matter of what James calls inconstancy; the narrator is mistaken, or he believes himself to have qualities which the author denies him. (1961, pp. 158-9)

As Booth discusses, deceptiveness is a major factor in unreliable narrators. However, the protagonist in *Spider* does not attempt to deceive the reader. Differently, his narrative shows that he is a victim of his mind.

Moreover, the novel is structured upon not one linear narrative only. *Spider* is narrated through two layers. These two layers tell different things about the same incidents. Dennis, or Spider persona, tells the main narrative. On the other hand, the other narrative is so subtle that the reader cannot recognize where the actual/subtle narrative starts and ends. As the narrator, Dennis, an officially mad person, the things he tells, create a complexity that stands as a challenge for the reader. Limitation on the reader's perception keeps the reality in the dark. Annina Ylä-Kapee describes the two different narratives in the novel as follows:

... it [*narrative*] tells the story the protagonist, Spider, constructs and tells about his own life, which he firmly believes; this story is the one the reader is tempted to follow and accept, but must abandon if searching for the fictional truth. The reader, in realising that Spider's story is not the one that contains and builds the Textual Actual World, seals Spider's fate as a narrator who cannot keep the force of narrative power in his own hands. Instead, Spider's narrative builds an F-universe, a whole universe of fantasy and hallucination, another World inside the Textual Actual World, which becomes for him the centre of his consciousness and thus replaces the Textual Actual World for him as the true World. (2014, p.357)

As readers do not have an objective narrator in *Spider*, it is impossible to be undoubtedly sure about which illness Dennis has. Even so, starting from the symptoms and its counterparts in the novel, it can be discussed whether Dennis suffers from a psychological defect. Probably, the things the narrator remembers are unreliable also to him that to overcome this situation and remember the events in accordance, and he keeps a diary:

... producing a sort of identity, a sort of running together of past and present such that I am confused, and I forget, so rich and immediate are the memories, that I am confused, and I forget, so rich and immediate are the memories, that I am what I am, a shuffling, spidery figure in a worn-out suit, and not a dreamy boy of twelve or so. It is for this reason that I have decided to keep a journal. (McGrath, 1991, p.10)

Judith Butler improves the idea by adding social circumstances. According to her, one's body and mind cannot be separate from the circumstances in which s/he was born and raised: "The act that one does, the act that one performs, is, in a sense, an act that has been going on before one arrived on the scene" (1988, p. 526). Although she discusses the issue from the point of view of sex and gender, this idea might be attributed to the topic, too.

Transgressing and blurring the borders is another feature of McGrath's works. Before discussing the true nature of blurring the borders, it is useful to look up the meaning of some terms. Firstly, border; secondly, limit; and lastly, transgression. The border is simply defined as "The edge or boundary of something, or the part near it" ("Border," n.d.). The limit is "A point or level beyond which something does not or may not extend or pass" ("Limit," n.d.). Lastly, the transgression is "An act that goes against a law, rule, or code of conduct; an offence" ("Transgression," n.d.). The act is various. That can be physical, or it can be just an inner force like an instinct. Most of the time, in the novels of McGrath, the source of the force is an instinct that compels the character to cross the border to reach the point which seems unreachable.

The border is a vital instrument for a significant portion of the Gothic tradition. The difference in McGrath is that he never clearly states the limits so that the reader has to accommodate her/himself to each possible threat. Hence, the main problem is to detect the source of terror. Nevertheless, it is highly relevant to mention the non-existence of a real border which will be analyzed in this section.

The fiction of Patrick McGrath can be described through his tricks that play with the borders. The central crisis in his fiction finds itself just after a transgressive act or mood. This transgressive act underlines the borders, in other words, the limits. The limitations give McGrath the supreme power to create the story. A border always requires a desire, and a desire is undeniably the departure point of a story. Shortly, McGrath takes advantage of talking about the limits and the results of these limits, the difficulties or deprivation. The deprivation of a character leads the story to the aimed point: transgression.

McGrath pays great attention to transgression. He intentionally shows a tendency to follow the route of Edgar Allan Poe. According to McGrath, Poe was a pioneer in introducing the horror in the minds of the characters instead of showing the terror just as a physical dimension like his predecessors. However, McGrath differentiates himself from Poe by opening the discussion from a different perspective. He makes the reader question the self by blurring the borders.

Patrick McGrath constitutes his novel upon the theme of madness. It can be said about his style that McGrath follows the Gothic genre in a new way. Madness is not a theme that stayed untouched by writers of Gothic. However, the new shape of the evaluation

of madness in terms of Gothic offers different perspectives to the reader. This time madness is presented as an inseparable part of the [New] Gothic:

These [Gothic] themes I identified as transgression and decay. I suggested that if transgression and decay were foregrounded in the work, it counted as New Gothic. Later I came to realize that a third term had to be introduced into this black trinity, and this was madness. (2015b, p. 3)

It is possible to assume that McGrath sees New Gothic as a challenging approach to Gothic. This new way of telling tales on terror has three specific dimensions similar to Gothic, and these are listed as transgression, decay, and madness. Until modern ages, the border between sanity and insanity was drawn with defined lines. However, McGrath succeeds in leaving the reader in a dilemma. This dilemma is made up of the reader's suspense on whether there is a border or not.

The terror which the novel offers is hidden behind the words and assumptions of Dennis. He intentionally chooses to cover his true nature. Thus, he aims to conceal the deeds and crimes he committed. Dennis's narrative gives some clues but not the full picture of his memory. He exclaims that sometimes even he has difficulty in reaching the truth from all aspects. However, the past stands as a mystery for the readers.

Given these realities of the disturbance of Dennis, it is highly possible to say that he suffers from Schizophrenia. Because of his illness, he enters in a delusional world and attempts to accommodate himself according to this new situation. He does not give a clear indication of his thoughts to his parents by distancing himself from them as much as possible. Dennis succeeds in staying in two different worlds at the same time: the one is his delusions, the other is the reality. Nevertheless, the world in his mind never lets him be free again. The Spider image, which was once a nickname for him, used by his mother, becomes a shattered personality. As a doppelgänger, Spider always urges Dennis to do something on behalf of him. On the relation between Gothic, doppelgänger, and manipulation Funda Civelekoglu asserts as follows: “The Doppelgänger performs as a device to convey the most essential themes of gothic literature such as the harmonisation of body and soul, narcissism, sin and redemption and the possible consequences of personal manipulation” (2008, p. 56). As Civelekoglu asserts, the negative side of the character is attributed to Spider. Moreover, Spider’s dominance over Dennis manifests that Spider’s existence creates

a sense of ownership of the things ordered by Spider. The murder of his mother is just one of the examples of a sequence of events.

Furthermore, Dennis is not only disturbed by the smell of gas, but also his own limbs. He begins to feel alienated from his body. He has a problem with making his body and mind work in accordance. Sometimes he feels as if the limbs do not belong to him. The difficulty in the management of the body might be a sign of his shattered personality that body and mind have no coordination at all. Dennis's other identity, Spider, who was assigned by his mother, seems willing to get the power on Dennis's actions. From time to time, it can be assumed that this interference helps Dennis to evade responsibility for his actions. Whenever a problem occurs, Dennis shows the tendency of blaming Spider instead of himself:

... there's the familiar withdrawal into the more inaccessible compartments in my head: it was not only Spider the boy who shifted into the back room after his mother died, and let Dennis face the world. No, over the years Spider has learned that it is often necessary to allow Dennis to face the world, or "Mr Cleg" for that matter; not only this, but intermediate compartments have become necessary – with Dr McNaughten, for instance, who knows my history. The front of my head does not satisfy the doctor so he is permitted contact with what used to be the back of my head but is now a sort of chamber occupied by a Dennis Cleg with "my history" – but Spider's never there! Spider's elsewhere, though the doctor suspects nothing. Similarly with the dead souls: all is well provided Spider is elsewhere – but let me for a single moment show myself on the outer wheel of the web in which my fragile and beleaguered being lives – and this is the moment I am destroyed. This is how it is with me. (McGrath, 1991, p. 135)

Uncanny shows itself in the doubling of the protagonist. From the very beginning of the novel, the reader becomes the eavesdropper of Dennis. He directly tells his life story. Nevertheless, through the end, the reader becomes aware of the fact that the narrator is not Dennis, but Spider, or both. It is almost impossible to distinguish the doppelgänger Spider from the protagonist Dennis. As the reader is unsure of who is talking to her, she cannot judge the reliability of the things narrated. However, it is very evident that the director of the body is the Spider persona. To go deeper into this, it might be helpful to look at what Freud says on doubling in *The Uncanny*: ... the conclusion of the tale [The Sand Man] makes it clear that the optician Coppola really is the lawyer Coppelius and so also the Sand-Man. (2003, p.139)

Sigmund Freud gives a short account of *the Sandman* by Hoffman to give an example of the uncanny. Freud claims that these two characters Coppola and Coppelius, are stages thereof constituting an entity that is a scary figure of the Sand Man. Nicholas Royle discusses the substitutive narrator as follows:

From its very beginning "The Sandman" is a text concerned with the supplementary and substitutive roles of the author-narrators of the letters, the telepathic narrator of the text as a supplement to or substitute for the author-figure, the figure of Nathaniel himself as a writer and thus a supplement or substitute for the writer of "The Sandman," the figure of the sandman as the spectral figure of the author of what happens in the text, the text itself as the sandman. We might illustrate this, most succinctly, in terms of the word 'uncanny.' (2003, p. 45)

Spider meets with the requirements of Royle's spectral figure that is not seen but present everywhere. To create the double, Dennis divides his identities. He says that he uses a "two-head system," which explains his way of acting in the moments of crisis:

I developed in time my two-head system. The front of my head was what I used with other people in the house, the back of my head was for when I was alone. [...] The back of my head was the real part of my life, but in order to keep everything there fresh and healthy then I had to have a front head to protect it, like tomatoes in a greenhouse. [...] I was in the back, that was where Spider lived, up the front was Dennis. [...] it was Dennis who went with him and leaned his head on the beam and curled his little finger round the rusty nail – while all the time Spider was upstairs in his bedroom! (McGrath, 1991, p. 98)

According to this system, Dennis calls Spider for duty and leaves his place to Spider. Thus, Dennis escapes from the burden of responsibility. He uses Spider for his unacceptable thoughts and deeds.

McGrath chooses to call a shattered personality instead of split personality while defining schizophrenia. The shattered personality in Dennis puts forward his dangerous side. The dangerous side in Dennis shows itself in the most unexpected moment. As a boy who has an Oedipal love for his mother, he is the last one to kill that woman, but he does. He sets a trap to kill his mother. The function of killing the mother shows itself in the preceding steps. The hatred towards his father provokes Dennis, to punish his father. Dennis relaxes himself by covering the figure of the mother with a prostitute. The image of the prostitute serves the aim of Dennis.

Moreover, it can be assumed that he not only wanted to punish his father but mother; because she is the one who helps his father's wellbeing. She lets the father be like a man who is now. Another option for the outlet of the trap is that the plan did not work as it was desired.

There is just one part of the narrative which the reader can count on. Ernie Ratcliff tells the sad story of Hilda Wilkinson to an old man:

The old man shook his head. "Beyond caring," he said. "I never seen a man lose his interest in life like Horace Cleg did. Destroyed him, what happened." "Destroy anyone," remarked Ernie Ratcliff, "lose your missus like that." "Gassed, she was," said the old man (McGrath, 1991, p. 216)

Although Dennis learns the full account of the story, he does not show a change. However, he attempts to find ways of manipulating the reader with his limited perception. Moreover, the unreliability of the narrator is confirmed. According to Ylä-Kapee, this limitedness makes us have suspicions on each event, character, and these characters' utterances:

We cannot know for sure what happened. For example, we do not know what kind of a person Spider's father truly was, as the pub landlord states that he loved his wife dearly, and Spider's account of him is completely different. Even the existence of the pub landlord can be doubted (like everything in the story) since, like everything else in the novel, he is presented to us only through Spider's sick mind. (2014, p.364)

Melanie Klein's theory, Splitting, can be helpful to go deeper into the mind of Dennis. There are two terms used in the Splitting Theory of Klein: Projection and Introjection. Projection stands for the mechanism which works like a protective shield. With the help of projection, the child can keep the dangerous objects away from her sphere. Meanwhile, introjection is a way of confirmation. With introjection, the child is able to label the objects as good and acceptable. This duality helps the ego to guard itself against possible threats. Hence, these concepts act as the regulative mechanism of the mind.

The mother is divided into two parts in Dennis's mind as a kind, loving mother and the prostitute. The prostitute persona serves the aim of projecting the unwanted side of the mother. Dennis never wants to admit that his object of desire is under the authority of someone else's. That is why he internalizes the excellent part of the mother as an image in his mind, like a sacred place to be visited from time to time. It should be noted that

before the actual murder takes place, Dennis figuratively kills his mother. Otherwise, by no means, he could be successful in introjection. Judith Butler asserts the possible negative outcome of the process as follows:

The object psychically remaindered is said to be taken inside 'owing to an excess of cannibalistic impulses in the ego, [and] this introjection miscarries.' In effect, the ego, in its cannibalism, consumes the introjected object, and so the object is lost anew, lost as the introjected object. At this point the ego has no one to blame for the loss but itself, and this reflexive turn of accountability becomes the condition of heightened guilt. In the place of grief for another emerges the inverted figure of rage, one that is equivocally the cause and result of the loss at issue. (1998, p.176)

The loss of the caring image of the mother concludes in an outrage. Dennis attributes this loss to the imaginary murder of his mother. That is why he always attempts to persuade the reader to the killing of his mother by Horace Cleg and the prostitute. Moreover, he supplies details to strengthen this accusation. The loss comes from the image's internalization, and it leaves a great space to the projected object, which is the prostitute, his mother's unwanted double. Klein says: "We see then that the child's earliest reality is wholly phantastic ... As the ego develops, a true relation to reality is gradually established out of this unreal reality" (1988, p.221). Contrary to the idea of Klein, Dennis never shows a tendency to come near to the *real* reality. As he sees that there is no possibility of overcoming this new enemy/image, he chooses to get rid of it.

4. CHAPTER III: SEARCHING FOR THE LOST: INCEST IN *PORT MUNGO*

Port Mungo is a novel in which Patrick McGrath parodies Freudian Oedipal Stage. Similar to *Trauma* that will be discussed in the following chapter, he shows the possible outcomes of the unresolved oedipal complex. The 2004 novel is about family incest and structured around the protagonist, Jack's quest for his double to satisfy his narcissistic desire to be unique and recognized by others. However, this search results in his tragic death. At first glance, the novel seems to pivot around Jack's relationship with the women around him, especially his wife and his daughters. That seems to create the main terror in the novel. Throughout the novel, Jack attempts to manipulate characters around him to function as a reflection of his image to enhance his uniqueness; thus, he creates his double by painting. Like Edgar Allan Poe's narrator in "Ligeia" remembers his dead wife, Jack paints his dead daughter just as he would paint himself. Therefore, doubling serves as a pivotal strategy in McGrath's novel, which is also one of the conventional props of the gothic genre. However, the function of doubling is slightly different from what the traditional gothic is familiar with. In a traditional Poesque of the double, as it is famously inspired by Hoffman's story of *The Sandman* (1816), the protagonist comes across with double, which is really uncanny. McGrath applies this doubling in the novel in a different way.

Magali Falco's 2007 dated article *The Painting of the Urban Dreamscape in Patrick McGrath's Port Mungo* investigates the art motif in the novel. She argues the painting of Jack is a manifestation of his erotic impulses. The narcissism of the protagonist constitutes the main argumentation of the article.

The novel starts with a description of Jack Rathbone's life from the perspective of his sister, Gin Rathbone. He is a young artist who desires to be an unforgettable painter in the future. When he meets Vera Savage, an older artist with a prestigious career, they fall in love. They decide to move to a place named Port Mungo in Honduras. They think that by becoming isolated from the competitive circumstances of contemporary art in New York, they might achieve their dreams of becoming original and successful painters. In Port Mungo, they form a more prominent family by having two daughters.

Peg, the elder one, is found drowned in the mangrove swamp—reminiscent of the painting of Ophelia by John Everett Millais. Following Peg’s death, Vera decides to send Anna, Peg’s younger sister, to the care of Jack’s brother Gerald who lives in England, and Jack has little to say about this decision. After that, Jack returns to New York and starts living in a studio at Gin’s house. Fifteen years later, Anna returns, and Jack witnesses Anna’s uncanny resemblance to her dead sister, Peg. Just as he was sexually obsessed with Peg, Jack develops a similar obsession with Anna. Nevertheless, Anna is not as silent as Peg about Jack’s incestuous approach. When Anna announces his sexual advances toward her, Jack commits suicide.

Sue Zlosnik claims that this novel “works with clichés, but never succumbs to them. In using the already written, *Port Mungo* hovers self-consciously on the edge of parody in new and disturbing ways” (2011, p. 102). As she exemplifies, the locations of the novel, Port Mungo and New York, Peg and Anna’s uncanny resemblance, and the family secrets are all stereotypically gothic. Marc Amfreville also examines these “clichés” through the novel’s intertextual signs, as it borrows various details from American gothic writers such as Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville, and it is this intertextuality that allows McGrath to move away from the clichés to make it new. Beside the novel’s intertextual strategy as a method of enhancing McGrath’s aim in parodying the gothic genre, the father-daughter incest relationship appears to dominate the critical circle. According to Amfreville, the family curse that echoes one of the characteristics of gothic is an outcome of Jack’s personality as a narcissistic pervert, which can be explained through his desire to be unique and his need for recognition. This narcissistic desire leads him to have “relationships that are [thus] marked by seduction, domination, the rating of the transgression of all kinds of banal and a corresponding lack of empathy” (p. 110). In the novel, this relationship is not limited to friends but extended to the family as well. Jenny DiPlacidi asserts, as noted below:

...representations of incest are revealed as synonymous with the gothic as a whole: complex, multifaceted and consciously resistant to the dominant social and sexual hegemonies in their models of alternative agencies, sexualities, forms of desire and family structures.” (2018, p. 3)

Although most of the criticism rests on Jack’s obsession with his daughters, an example of father-daughter incest, Gin’s obsession with Jack—sibling incest—should not be overlooked because it is this hidden or overlooked detail that parodies the

gothic's dealing with incest relationships. DiPlacidi puts forward the idea of genetic-similarity theory as a reason for incestuous relationships and adds, "Like Narcissus, who fell in love with his own reflection, so too do many people fall in love with the familiar or recognizable" (88). According to DiPlacidi's argument, people who have incestuous tendencies are in search of a person similar to them. However, Vera stands as an exception.

Vera Savage is the woman who helps Jack to get away from his hometown. Vera stands as an unreachable object for Jack since he never achieves to dominate her. That is why Jack stubbornly attempts to hold her no matter what she does. Vera, who is thirteen years older than Jack, is attracted to him because "he would solve the problem of her existence" (McGrath, 2005, p. 35), which mainly revolves around her creativity. The problem with her is that she "was certainly looking at art, and talking about art, but she was not making any art" (McGrath, 2005, p. 41), and Jack would resolve this problem as she sees his art as "a dim echo of her own style, albeit immature and unformed" (McGrath, 2005, p. 25). And he was more or less attracted to her because "she painted as he wanted to paint" (McGrath, 2005, p. 25).

"Lack" is an important term in the analysis of *Port Mungo*. According to Lacan (Homer, 2005, p. 24), the child attempts to satisfy the image in front of him or her, believing that by the satisfaction of "the other," she can find peace. Firstly, the child wants to attract the attention of the mother, so she chases after the phallus. The pursuit of the phallus is vulnerable to a transformation. Thus, after a time, it may be used for satisfying the self. This situation explains the birth of the term "lack." The subject knows the lack because there is an unidentifiable loss. The child's awareness of the lack begins with the verbal ability of self-expression. Verbal ability indicates the language. The language symbolizes the universal laws or limitations on the individual. The new order puzzles the subject. To overcome this situation, the subject searches for salvation. At that point, the lack shows itself as an insurmountable problem.

The task of real-world objects is to become receptacles that enable the one to dream of possible enjoyment. The desire is not directed to the real-world object, but the thing that the real-world object can bring. The real-world objects seem to possess the lost thing. So, desire is created because of the possibility of so-called saturation or satisfaction. The subject's search for the substitute never ends because of the impossibility of fulfilling it. So, the subject may try to compensate for this problem

via objects or people. However, the impossibility of reaching full satisfaction lies behind this. As the child, or the subject, does not know totally what she lost, she cannot enjoy the substitute.

Mostly, the substitute material, concept, or person can give temporary satisfaction, which can make the subject a disappointed addict to these moments. However, the problem of the lack never ends, as satisfaction cannot reach a permanent level. The never-ending journey of reaching permanent satisfaction gives birth to desire, which offers no possibility of saturation. Lacan's concept of desire is to make the other a part of itself make up the part that has been lost by entering into the symbolic order. Lacan's lack is designed via language. Jack is aware of this lack, and he attempts to fill it with his art. Portraits feed the need of momentary satisfaction. So, his painting serves as his language. Jack desires to be the desire of the other so that he can be recognized by the others. However, Jack escapes by committing suicide from the burden of his daughters he harassed.

Gin's addiction to Jack makes Vera the biggest rival of her. Vera does not take a measure toward the hostility of Gin because she does not see it as necessary. Vera's characteristic can be found in her surname: Savage. She is a total savage who can survive in any circumstances. Unfaithfulness is just one of the traits she is made of. However, she is not ready for the same thing happening to her:

But, it was not his lucky day. She smelt cheap perfume even before he reached the bed. She had not expected this from him, and she had no idea how to deal with it. She simply told him, with the first kindling of angry disbelief, that he'd been with a woman. (McGrath, 2005, p. 65)

Jack does the same thing that Vera has done before, and this alerts Vera about the outcome of her dream: She loses her object. Vera is so shocked by Jack's infidelity that "she'd felt as though she'd lost her virginity" (McGrath, 2005, p. 65). Gin uses the same sexually related word this time for Vera. That statement can be seen as a justification for Vera's self-centeredness. The tension between the couple leads to their dramatic downfall. After moving to Port Mungo, Vera gives up working on her painting. She just thinks about getting drunk and flirting with strangers. Vera and Jack cannot find satisfaction in their relationship. Hence, they divert their routes to new objects. The unfaithfulness of the couple shows them their momentary satisfaction cannot be helpful enough to have an ordinary relationship.

Although Jack never stops painting as he hopelessly desires to reach a possible perfect portrait of himself, he understands that there is nothing he can get from Vera anymore regarding art. Hence, their love affair does not bring the things they expected. Jack attempts to replace his disappointment by focusing more on his work. At that time, their first baby, Peg, is born. Peg's birth does not make a difference between Jack and Vera. They continue their routine: drinking, getting laid with strangers and fighting all the time. Therefore, the parents do not give Peg the care she needs. She becomes a self-made teenager. As Peg grows up, she develops a different kind of relationship with her father. When Vera deserts Jack, she chooses to leave her daughter with him. In this way, Vera plans to have her freedom. Irigaray argues that women are the products of exchange for culture (1985, p.170). That works for Peg differently; she is exchanged between her mother and father. The mother leaves Peg with her father as if she was a commodity in exchange for Vera's independence. In other words, Vera buys her freedom by sacrificing Peg.

The terror in the novel shows itself with Peg. Until that moment, the reader is not aware of the true nature of Jack. The story is narrated by two channels, of which the first one is traditional Gothic, and the other one is McGrath's contribution to the genre: a new way of telling the story. The oddness of the relationship between Peg and Jack becomes visible when Peg visits her aunt in New York and asks Gin if she can watch her undress, as her father "doesn't mind": "She [Peg] melted into the darkness. Jack doesn't mind what? It was another world down here, and I had no idea how they lived. I decided to jump to no conclusions about any of it" (McGrath, 2005, p. 78). This shocking scene gives a glimpse of what has happened in Port Mungo to Gin. Nevertheless, she chooses to disregard the possible result of her reasoning.

Jack starts to grow an appetite for the ones near to him, but the outcome becomes visible with the aging of his daughter. Gin becomes surprised at her niece's demand to watch Gin undressing. It should be noticed that Gin abstains from speculating. She is probably afraid of completing the pieces from her childhood with the ones she comes across. Gin knows that using her memoir as confirmation of the abuse Peg was exposed to might change the image of Jack in her mind. However, another incident makes her almost sure about what is going on in that family. When Peg hurt her foot, Jack stepped in and "sucked lustily at the dirty foot, sucked and spat, and every few seconds he lifted his eyes and grinned at her [Peg]" (McGrath, 2005, p. 81). The word "lustily" is

used by Gin on purpose to underline the sexual appetite of Jack while treating Peg's wound. Gin's obsession with Jack can be seen from her interpretation of the events. Her perspective might be distorted through her repressed desire for her brother.

Although this can be true to some extent, it should not be ignored that Gin uses manipulative language to exaggerate the reality. Maybe she is the one who wants to see it as a sexual act. It is important to notice that Jack's transformation from a father into an abuser signals a transgression. He becomes a monstrous pervert in the eyes of the reader as he is the one who inspired Peg's suicide. A father can be both an abuser and a killer. Jack does not hesitate to transgress any norm by hiding behind imbalanced psychology, and the decay follows his footsteps.

Jack's dark side comes to light when he becomes isolated with Peg. As a vulnerable and defenseless immature girl, Peg becomes the source of satisfaction for Jack. Jack and Gin's brother Gerald tells Gin as follows:

In Vera's absence, [he] said, in his loneliness and frustration, Jack had indulged a primitive physical reflex. A primitive physical reflex, Gin! And that was when at last I saw what he was driving at. With utter disbelief I then listened to him saying that Jack had recognized under his own roof a girl just coming to sexual maturity. And had gone to her room at night. ... The pattern was invariable in such cases. What cases? Paternal incest. (McGrath, 2005, p. 173)

Jack approaches every woman around him in an abusive way. At first, he has an incestuous affair with his sister. She falls in love with her brother. Then he finds the love of his life: Vera. Although they have a legal affair that has no connection to blood ties, their relationship can be described as imbalanced. Afterward, Jack thinks that he has found "true" double in the form of his elder daughter. So, the first father-daughter intimacy happens for Jack. Willner makes clear the reasons for the prevalence of the father-daughter incest, as indicated below:

It would be easy to explain the apparent predominance of father-daughter incest over other kinds on the principle of dominance. Fathers dominate their daughters by virtue of relative age and generation, by virtue of male dominance over females and by virtue of household authority. (1983, p. 139)

Jack approaches, peculiarly, to Peg in a similar manner. Peg cannot resist the dominance of her father and becomes a victim of him. In other respects, Bagley categorizes the relationship type like Jack's with Peg as Psychopathic Incest:

This residual category [Psychopathic Incest] includes those cases where the dominant partner is of apparently normal personality and intelligence, has a married partner who would provide normal sexual outlet, and yet still seduces his child, knowing this behavior to be wrong. (Bagley, 1969, pp. 513-4)

The common point of Willner's and Bagley's statements is that the dominant male abuses his child with the help of his authority in that household, and this person is aware of the nature of his acts. Parallel to Bagley's assertion, Jack has an intelligent mind, which can also be defined as creative, yet he cannot stop harassing his daughter, although he knows that this means transgression. Furthermore, it can also be said that the leaving of Vera triggered such a hunger for Jack. Bagley argues that some people might have a tendency of thinking about the functionality of the incest as follows:

There is evidence that individuals of normal intelligence and without mental pathology can contemplate and initiate incest when it seems to be a functional necessity for family survival. The individuals who achieve this successfully appear to be dominant fathers whose life experience has been such that they are left with a relative detachment from the remaining social institutions of society ... the initiation of "functional incest" seems to depend on a hierarchy of events—a dominant father, in whom some life event (e.g., economic misfortune) has created detachment from society, whose wife is unable or unwilling to fulfill her role, and who finds no alternative partners outside the family because of its geographical or social isolation. (Bagley, 1969, p.514)

Jack is far from seeing himself as an abuser because he belongs to a group of men who “prefer not to see themselves as abusers” but “enjoining secrecy on their daughters” (Willner, 1983, p. 135). He does not take any responsibility for Peg's death. Moreover, it is revealed that he is the one who encouraged Peg to commit suicide. Apart from that, Jack positioning Peg as functional incest might be a result of both his geographical and social distance to people. Jack has no one to have interaction in Port Mungo other than Peg at the time, and this lack of communication is one of the few elements which become helpful for Jack. In accordance with the argument of Bagley, this is likely to claim that the setting is very suitable for Jack to apply his incest desires on Peg as they are in an isolated place. Bagley expands his idea on the functionality of the incest by saying: “in certain cases where it is functional for a family to disregard the incest taboo, the family itself becomes a society, giving internal moral approval to these actions” (1969, p.507).

Moreover, Bagley defines a setting which seems very similar to Jack and Peg's isolation as follows:

A variation of the functional type appears in some families in disorganized urban areas, where sexual delinquency is rife. In this type the family seems to withdraw from the general community, and initiates its own "deviant" norms of sexual behavior, which are contained within the family circle. (1969, p.510)

Self-isolation is one of the facilitative elements of Jack's harassment on Peg. He abuses Peg and creates a micro-culture that allows him to do whatever he wants in this two-person community. This small group stands as a perfect environment for Jack. It is a clear fact that when Vera abandons Jack and Peg, a lack emerges from here. After Vera's absence, Jack fills the lack for himself. His daughter's total vulnerability gives Jack enormous dominance over her while practicing his transgressive acts. After Vera leaves, Jack abuses Peg regularly until her death because he thinks that "Peg belonged to him" (McGrath, 2005, p.228).

Although the familial border is not directly drawn for family members, it is an accepted norm for many cultures that the sexual intimacy between the members of a family is immoral. In *Totem and Taboo*, Freud mentions the cultures who exercise this intimacy. Yet, in modern western culture, that is still a taboo, and Jack goes beyond that border many times. The oedipal structure is destroyed as the father desires his children in contrast to the primitive desire of the children. It is possible to assume that this transgressive act is a result of a chain of breakups. In the first place, Jack leaves Gin because of Vera, and then Vera leaves Jack with Peg. Just as Vera substitutes Gin, Vera is substituted by Peg.

It is highly possible that Jack replaces Vera with Peg when he is abandoned. That situation leads to a relationship of a couple rather than a father and daughter. As Peg is not an adult yet, she takes it as standard behavior. So, her resentment at that point is not an expected reaction. However, Jack knows what he is in, and he wants to get away from his burden of his daughter's death by "agree[ing] with her that she would be better off dead" (McGrath, 2005, p.231).

The involvement of Jack in Peg's suicide is evident. He wanted to clear the things he was ashamed of. He was conscious of being a trespasser of the limits. Having sexual intercourse with his daughter was a great sin he had committed. As Marc Amfreville suggests: "The implacable necessity to satisfy his sexual drive (the family curse?) led

him to incestuous relations with Peg, then to the denial of her suffering, and finally to her metonymical murder” (2012, p. 110). It can be assumed that Jack’s sexual drive emerges from his need to find the lost part. Like his sister Gin, he attempts to find a substitute in a relationship with his daughter or wife or mother but fails. Nestor Braunstein explains the complex structure of satisfaction as follows:

Demand is a demand for satisfaction. However, the agent of the demand goes beyond necessity, it is the desire for absolute and unshared signifiers of the desire of the Other, in other words, for his/her love. Thus “satisfaction” (of the need and of the demand) always leaves a trace of disappointment: there is something missing in the object that the other offers. It is never enough (satis). (2003, p.110)

As Braunstein explains above, there is a deadlock of satisfaction. While Jack runs after the ultimate satisfying point, he never achieves to face with a reassuring condition. However, Jack continues his quest. After Peg’s suicide, Jack welcomes his long-time separated daughter Anna. Peg and Anna are uncannily similar. Jack is surprised to see a copy of his lost desire in front of him again. This situation can be defined by the terms of Sigmund Freud: “return of the repressed.” That can be inferred from Gin’s comment on the death of Peg: “I assumed Jack’s silence about Peg’s death indicated some malignancy, or some guilt, rather, though whether his own or another’s, I didn’t know” (McGrath, 2005, p. 106). The image of Peg is repressed in Jack’s mind because he knows that he is the reason for Peg’s suicide.

Jack’s unusual approach to women in his family does not end with Peg. He shows his unstoppable drive against his little daughter, Anna, too. The difference with Anna is in her resistance against Jack. She rejects becoming an apparatus of his desire. For this reason, Jack’s masculine power cannot govern her. Anna breaks a chain, and that causes frustration. She upsets the balances since she does not become a source of sadness and melancholy, which are crucial for Jack.

Like Peg, Anna becomes Jack’s lab rat to satisfy his narcissistic desire. He forces her to pose naked in front of him for a portrait. Day by day, the portrait takes shape, but it does not reflect the image of Anna nor Peg, but Jack himself: “It’s not her, she [Vera] said, it’s not even Peg. It’s you, Jack” (McGrath, 2005, p. 203). Hence, it becomes clear that the existence of Gin, Peg, or Anna does not make any sense for Jack. The important thing is his reflection on these people. Amfreville asserts: “Anna does not exist; she becomes the duplication of a lost image that in fact fuses into the artist’s

self-portrait” (McGrath, 2005, p. 111). Although in the beginning, it appears that Jack substitutes Vera with Peg, presenting incest, actually, it reflects Jack’s narcissistic character. Jack’s ultimate aim is to reach an abstract image of himself through his victims.

Jack follows the directions of his primordial drive. He gets into incestuous contact with his two daughters and sister. Hence, it is possible to argue that he transfers his pre-Oedipal drive to his other relatives. According to Lacan, “The fundamental desire is the incestuous desire for the mother, the primordial Other” (1992, p.67). The main problem of Jack begins with the lack of the mother. He cannot make his wholeness with his mother real because he cannot satisfy himself by being the loved one of “the other.” This crisis leads him to search for the counterpart of him. The resemblance of Gin and Jack is the first pair of a sequence. They both have artistic talent and aims, and they seem mutually complementary. After that, Vera comes, and she has habits similar to Jack’s. They passionately, violently experience a bizarre affair. Peg and Anna have a different place. The resemblance of Peg and Anna fascinates Jack. He sees this as an opportunity to revive the image of Peg as Gin points out below:

[GIN] finally I understood why he so fervently insisted on the girl’s resemblance to Peg. It was because Anna had replaced Peg. She had brought her back to life, and a deep pain in Jack had at last begun to ease, and in his soul he had felt a sort of peace, relief, calm. (McGrath, 2005, p. 210)

The narrative takes Jack’s object of desire as the departure point. The protagonist’s quest for filling the lack he brought from childhood becomes the reason for a fixation that includes incestuous desire. While trying to saturate his desire, Jack creates an uncanny atmosphere for his victims. The uncanniness of his actions lies behind Jack’s untrustworthy moods. He approaches his victims by gaining their trust. That is why he can be described as a relentless hunter. Through the end of the novel, Anna moves to Jack’s flat and becomes a nude model for his work. Jack does not do the same things to Anna, but he continues to feed his urges. Anna is surprised when she sees that Jack is sexually satisfying himself while looking at her.

Jack sees himself in the reflection of his daughters. In other words, it is possible to assume that he thinks that to be fulfilled, he needs his own replicas. While painting Anna’s portrait, Jack involuntarily pictures a figure similar to both Peg and himself: “She was right; it was Jack as a boy. I had seen that thin white body often enough. It

was Jack at seventeen, as he was when he first met Vera. He paints himself over and over again...” (McGrath, 2005, p. 203). This androgynous and uncanny figure designates the primary purpose of Jack: finding the double.

Jack trespasses all the borders of ethics on family relations. It starts with his extraordinary relationship with his sister. It continues with his elder daughter, Peg, and ends with Anna. Although Gin and Jack do not have an explicit affair, the narrative tells the reader that there is much evidence that their relationship is beyond the accepted norms of society. The transgression continues with Jack’s attempts to harass his own daughters. Jack’s imbalanced mood is a good hint about his psychology. However, more important thing is his tendency to harass his daughters sexually. His madness shows itself through his uncontrollable sexual desire.

The decay of the family relations shows its effect on the characters, too. Jack and Vera cannot go further in their careers as they regress in their talents. McGrath takes the artist as his protagonist and draws a profile of an artist who becomes creative with the help of despair, just like Edgar in *Asylum*. McGrath criticizes this problematic creative process of the artists. Moreover, their focal point becomes a momentary pleasure instead of improvement in their artistic way. In other words, it can be said that the decay gains a meaning of downfall for each character, mostly Jack. So, Peg chooses to kill herself and dies. Vera leaves Jack, and Jack’s brother Gerald adopts Anna. Gerald wants to save Anna from this decaying process, but when he dies, Anna goes back to her roots. Hence, as the family continues to decay morally, it spreads to its members, too.

The uncanny situation occurs in Port Mungo repetitively and in different circumstances. First, Jack’s attitude toward his children can be counted as a source of the uncanny, because as he is a familiar figure for his children, his daughters do not see any threat from him. That is why Jack’s approach to them does not make them hesitant. As a father, Jack uses his father role while trying to have an incestuous relationship with them. Of course, Peg’s suicide is an outcome of this situation. Terrorized by her father’s abuses, which cannot take place in a healthy father-daughter relationship, Peg decides to end her life. The horrific end of Peg reveals the nature of the uncanny. Resistance is futile if the loving father becomes a harasser for Peg. Second, it does not finish with Peg, but the little daughter, Anna. Jack tries the same with Anna, but she notices the dramatic changes so that she can protect herself. This

time Jack chooses to commit suicide. Anna's resemblance is the uncanny element of the novel.

The terrifying part here is that in each attempt by Jack, there must be a victim. Jack becomes his own victim. His uncanny transformation results in death. At the end of the novel, Anna does not seem bothered by the death of his father. That can be seen as her satisfaction brought her by the end of a series of unbearable harassment of Jack. On the other hand, she might see it from a different angle, which signifies the revenge of her sister. Harkins discusses the impossibility of justice in incest cases:

Incest poses a peculiar problem in the conceptualization of justice. If incest is an offense, it is difficult to discern precisely what has been offended by acts of incest. If the offense is to be discerned from the infliction of harm, it is equally unclear how that harm should be defined and measured. (2009, p. 228)

The ignorance of Anna to Jack underlines a basic need of Jack: recognition. Anna does not feed this need; moreover, she rejects the transgressive acts of Jack, unlike her older sister. That is why probably Anna thinks that she could get her sister's revenge. However, moving from the quote above, it might be said that Anna's concept of justice is a belated one. Unlike Peg, Anna does not get physical nor mental harm that she is not able to measure the damage taken by the acts of Jack. Even so, she sees "death" as a deserved penalty for her father.

As mentioned before, there are three incidents of incestuous relationships in the novel; the first and the most hidden one is Gin's relationship with Jack as it is narrated by Gin. The reader follows the incidents from Gin's personal point of view. She has the power to control the details to be articulated, including her own affair with her brother:

Curiously I felt a kind of sadness, as well as relief. I understood well enough my own resistance to Jack's departure, I wanted him in London with me, and I passionately resented this painted creature from Glasgow [Vera] who was taking him away from me. (McGrath, 2005, p. 35)

It can be said that she uses her narrative position to hide the real secret of their intimacy. In the structure of the novel, the case of Gin and Jack is covered on purpose by McGrath. Gin hides intimacy so that she could manage to control the reader. What makes McGrath Gothic is that he always withholds the vital elements in the story so that the reader is supposed to make an effort to have the meaning, supposedly, the main transgression. The structure of the narrative used in *Port Mungo* can be defined as

“Chinese box,” “Russian doll,” or “embedded narrative” (Nelles, 2002, p. 339) or, according to Chris Baldick, as frame narrative (2008, p. 135). This structural choice of the author might have emerged from the effort of making it more complicated, a layered text which is not easy to access by the reader. Additionally, as the story is mainly told by only one person, who is Gin, the reader is right to have suspicion on the narrative’s reliability. Gin’s narrative is the framing story, which includes other characters’ stories. The reader can get access to the story only through the limits Gin’s narrative allows. That is why it is highly possible to claim that the narrator of *Port Mungo* is an unreliable one. In other respects, throughout the text, the reader always comes across with the gaps in the stories told by Gin, especially the ones involving her. Most probably, these gaps are left there by her to make sure the secrecy of the intimacy between her and Jack. However, as she is the narrator of the novel, and possibly she is an unreliable narrator, she is able to hide the details concerning her desires. It may be helpful to take into consideration what Judith Butler asserts on this:

Those who want to underscore the prevalence of incest as an abusive family practice tend to insist that it is an event and that, insofar as it is a memory, it is a memory of an event. And sometimes this takes the form of a dogmatic premise: for incest to be traumatic and real, it must be understood as an event. (Butler, 2000, p. 40)

The event Butler mentions is disputable in terms of identifying a case as incest. She focuses on that in the eyes of the people she mentions the event requires memory so that it can be acknowledged and accepted as a reality. In that way, most of the cases would be counted as invalid, and this may cause it to be ignored. Furthermore, she discusses the situation of non-narratable events, as noted below:

One might be tempted to conclude that the event is always psychically registered and that as a result the event is not, strictly speaking, separable from the psychic staging of the event: what is narrated, if it can be narrated, is precisely the mix of the two. But this solution does not address the non-narratable, that for which there is no story, no report, no linguistic representation. (Butler, 2000, pp. 42-3)

If the case cannot be articulated, then there is not a way to access the very reality of the event so that the event will be deprived of the representation, which may result in the rejection of the happening. That is applicable to the novel in terms of Gin’s narrative. She leaves some marks which can be counted as little signifiers of the event/s took place. With the help of these signifiers, the reader is able to find a way to grasp the shadowy story. However, as the “event” has not been uttered before, other

characters are remained uninformed about the relationship between Gin and Jack. Their relationship can be described as emotional incest; that is why there is always an unseen cover on the issues related to their brother-sister relationship. The incest relationship for Jack starts with her and continues with Peg and Anna. However, Gin has very little to say about the issue:

She [Vera] had taken the man I loved. Absurd and irrational, of course—I was Jack’s sister. What we had was not a romance, though it was a relationship of a profound and intensely intimate nature, and I did not recover quickly. (McGrath, 2005, p. 73)

The genre’s emphasis hides the unexpected incest desire. Although Gin explicitly implies that she loves him, she is aware of the cultural codes that restrain her from crossing the line. On incest, especially the relationship between father and daughter, Francisco Wilson Nogueira Holanda Júnior notes below:

Incest raises ethical and legal questions when practiced in such a way as it harms or threatens people’s integrity, especially when there are abusive forms of coercion and without consent. The incest between an adult and a person below the age of consent is considered a form of sexual child abuse, what is identified as one of the most extreme forms of this kind of abuse and that generally results in serious and lasting psychological traumas (especially if it is a case of incest between parents and children). (2017, p.293)

As noted earlier, though it was not physical, Jack and Gin had a very intimate relationship in their childhood. That situation demonstrates Jack’s tendency toward incestuous relationships. Since they are deprived of parental care in their childhood, the siblings find coziness in their relationship. Inevitably this situation causes a brother-sister intimacy.

To go further in the reasons for that kind of relationship, it is vital to look at Jenny DiPlacidi’s argument. DiPlacidi says, “Desire, attraction, love, here, stem from the premise of sameness and are equally sought by the brother or the sister” (2018, p.89). Gin is also looking for someone similar. It is possible to claim that Jack is another sufferer of this disorder. On the other hand, it is also important to notice that Jack seems to search for his double. These siblings mirror each other in the way, trying to fill the other’s gaps.

On the one hand, Jack presents a fatherly but overtly sexual image to Gin. On the other hand, Gin feels more-than-a-sister intimacy to him, which also signifies the transgression. However, the main point is that both desire the other to recognize

themselves since their ultimate goal is to be recognized. They benefit from each other that way. Yet, Jack and Vera's move to Port Mungo provokes the failure of their desire for recognition. In other respects, it should also be noted that Gin is an exception for Jack in terms of sexual harassment. She experiences this emotional incest with her free will. Although Jack seems passive in this relationship, he does not draw himself back from intimacy. While discussing the reasons for prohibition on incest, Butler points out that:

To the extent that certain forms of love are prohibited or at least derealized by the norms established by the incest taboo, both homosexuality and incest qualify as such forms. ... in the case of incest, it leads to a lack of recognition for what might have been a traumatic set of encounters, although it is important to note that not all forms of incest are necessarily traumatic (brother-sister incest in eighteenth-century literature, for instance, sometimes appears as idyllic). (Butler, 2000, p. 45)

Butler argues that in the past, incest was somehow legitimate, and it found a place in literature. However, she puts forward a challenging argument; there might not be traumatic incest experiences. Here, Gin and Jack's subtle but emotional incest can be shown as a justification for Butler's assertion. Probably, Gin is the only person without being traumatized by sexual assault by Jack in the group of women who have had a relationship with him.

The place of the double is reserved for Gin. Nevertheless, the other way around is also meaningful. Gin does not think that this relationship is impossible: "that is how I lost my virginity, weeping in my brother's bed, overcome with grief because *he had left me*" (McGrath, 2005, p. 126). She uses virginity, which is a sexually related word, to explain her passionate love for her brother. She favors the idea of being with her brother. What differentiates *Port Mungo* from other stories of incest is that the male figure is not a threat. However, that changes when they fall apart. He loses not only his lover but also his female counterpart/reflection, which is essential for his narcissistic appetite. As Jack cannot feed his greed, he starts to become a dangerous person for the ones around him.

The relationship between Jack and Gin can be described as unconventional. Gin's feelings about Jack are extraordinary. While talking about her brother, Gin does not avoid using the word love: "I had recognized that he was a far better artist than I would ever be, but I didn't want to be left behind. I suppose in a way I was in love with him"

(McGrath, 2005, p. 21). As it was mentioned before, since the siblings lacked parental care, they had to care for each other. As Jack is an irresponsible person, Gin is the caretaker most of the time. She takes the place of the mother role. From the point of Gin, Jack is a person to be cared for because Jack means a substitute child to Gin.

Instead of being a brother, Jack always seems to be Gin's son. Her love for Jack is far from being labeled as love for a brother. She admires him, yet Jack does not respond with the same truthfulness. It is also possible to discuss that not only Jack but also Gin suffers from the "lost object." Therefore, Gin's life revolves around Jack and Jack-related issues. Gin's identifying herself with Jack is supported by her idealization of him in her mind, and that results in the emptiness of a place that once was filled with a loved one's existence. This intimate relationship of the siblings gives way to discovering sexuality at an early age.

The close relationship between Gin and Jack gets nowhere by Vera's interference. Jack's sister, Gin, is always precautious about Vera: "I disliked Vera, and I disapproved of her, but I couldn't risk alienating Jack by saying so" (McGrath, 2005, p. 32). Jack is so important for her that Gin cannot take the risk of making him angry. By becoming Vera's partner, Jack risks his intimate relationship with his sister:

Curiously I felt a kind of sadness, as well as relief. I understood well enough my own resistance to Jack's departure, I wanted him in London with me, and I passionately resented this painted creature from Glasgow who was taking him away from me.
(McGrath, 2005, p. 35)

Gin never accepts this relationship wholeheartedly. However, she does not give up following the steps of her brother. Envyng Vera cannot stop her. According to Gin, the fault is not Jack's, but Vera's: "My brother was indeed cursed, I remember thinking, but not by a family malediction, but by the woman with whom he'd thrown in his lot" (McGrath, 2005, p. 62). She shows her hatred toward Vera by using the words "curse" and "malediction." It is easy to suggest that Gin behaves like an ex-partner of her brother. She becomes jealous and does not see any obstacle to admit it. Gin's unusual approach to her brother comes from the lack of paternal care. She idealizes her brother instead of her father. The other way around is also open to discussion. Although the intimate relationship between Gin and Jack may suggest a pre-oedipal relationship (like a mother-son relationship), it is also possible to see it getting intense and problematic if it is approached through an object of desire. Their

relationship exhibits an unanswered question: “Who is the other, my partner, the person who is loved?” (Nasio, 1998, p.78). J. D. Nasio gives an answer:

The subject *is* the common feature of the objects loved and lost in one’s life. This is precisely what Lacan calls the unary trait [*le trait unaire*]. If we consider the three possible responses to the question “Who is the other?” we would say: the loved other is the image that I love of myself. The loved other is a body that is an extension of mine. The loved other is a repetitive feature with which I identify (1998, p. 78).

According to Nasio, in each answer, there is an “I.” The person who yearns for the lost one attempts to get him or her back while searching for the other. Gin is an example of that situation. She misses her lost brother, who was taken to somewhere else. When the object of desire vanishes, the lack shows itself. That is a vicious circle that Gin attempts to fill the lack with other men.

Moreover, she has a repressed grudge that shows itself only in thoughts. As Vera and Jack go to New York and Port Mungo, respectively, Gin slowly understands that uniting with her brother becomes ever more difficult with each step. She knows the impossibility of reaching him again as in the old times. So, she finds a way of solving the problem temporarily by objectifying her desire. Hence, to overcome that situation, she begins by moving to New York from England as they did. After that, she finds herself trying to replace Jack: “There were a number of desultory love affairs, but through it all Jack was never far from my thoughts, nor absent from my innermost heart” (McGrath, 2005, p. 58). The emptiness created by losing Jack triggers Gin’s desire to get him back.

It should be noted that in the novel, Jack as the protagonist is characterized as a monster, which slaves and abuses his own daughter. This assumption can be accepted to an extent. However, the real monster may be hidden somewhere else. Gin, the narrator of the whole story, is actually the real monster who is exhibited as the only source of the reader to the reality. Furthermore, the monstrous nature of Jack is disputable because of Gin’s unreliable narrative as she is the one who presents him as a monster to the reader.

To conclude, the way *Port Mungo* follows has a definite difference from its antecedents in the gothic tradition. Suspense is created with shocking images of culturally unacceptable relationships instead of bloodshed or fantastic creations and happenings. It can also be said that in *Port Mungo*, the protagonist’s fixation

transgresses every barrier he encounters. Jack's incestuous tendencies and psychological deviances constitute the novel's uncanny atmosphere. Like an epidemic, each person who participates in a relationship with Jack gets her (Gin, Vera, Peg, Anna) share from his deviance. In every attempt of a transgression of social borders, he devastates another woman. Gin becomes imprisoned in an impossible love, Vera cannot live without alcohol, Peg kills herself, and Anna finds herself as an object of her father's enjoyment.

5. CHAPTER IV: HEALING THE SELF: *TRAUMA*

The trouble in the family is one of the topics Patrick McGrath stresses on. In most cases, he focuses on the relationships between members of the family rather than individuals. Thus the complicated family issues constitute the main emerging point for his novels. Although these family issues are variable, the principal subjects appear to be incestuous and parent-child relationships. *Trauma* is an example of the case, as the parent-child relationship appears to be the main focus of the novel. Although the subject can be akin to his other novels, the way he treats this same subject creates the difference. In his other novels, where his main focus is the traumatic parent-child relationship, he allows his characters to be terrorized, and act as an investigator of the present, which is a direct outcome of the past. However, in *Trauma*, the protagonist answers most of the questions which might be asked by the readers, as he is a psychoanalyst. His way of treating his patients can be seen as his attempt to resolve his own trauma. Gothic narrative, especially the traditional one, sees the reader as an analyst. However, this is not valid for *Trauma*. In the novel, McGrath breaks this acknowledged habit. That might be seen as a parody of reading habits, and he establishes this parody by giving four different but related roles to Charlie: husband, adult, psychiatrist, and reader. The first role he plays is the role of a husband who struggles in his marriage because of his past traumas as a child, second as a psychiatrist, who does not only try to resolve his patients' traumas but also sees these outside traumas as a reflection of his own, thus by resolving them he aims at working through his own trauma. This aim assigns a new role to Charlie: the role of a reader, and it is this role that gives this novel a "new" twist. He takes on a task of deducing from the events, although it is expected from the reader. Michela Vanon Alliata in *Memory and Healing in Patrick McGrath's Trauma* (2016) discusses the covered memories of Charlie and their effects upon him. Moreover, she focuses on the subject of a psychiatrist's effort of healing himself, which is clearly a striking point of the novel. Although she mentions the Gothicized elements of the work such as abusive mother, ignored child, and depressed soldier with PTSD, she does not directly see the

novel as a member of the New Gothic tradition; rather, she takes it as an example of Gothic in the postmodern era.

As the novel takes Charlie to his childhood through specific triggers, this chapter will primarily focus on the hidden truths of the families that are used as the uncanny elements. In *Trauma*, the reader has prior knowledge of what is behind the problematic events: the protagonist's relationship with his mother. McGrath usually takes psychology as the central theme in his novels. Searching for the depths of the human mind makes him a modern Edgar Allan Poe. Indisputably, he presents the zeitgeist of the postmodern age. So to say, McGrath's novels wander on the soils of gothic and thriller. In *Trauma*, Patrick McGrath deals with the trauma that can be accepted as one of the most considerable problems of humankind after modernism. This section will analyze the nature of trauma, as the title suggests, and the protagonist's only point of exit from the trauma, the mother's womb and effort of reaching it through the lens of the psychoanalytical approach.

Freud describes the trauma as follows:

I have an impression that these last considerations have brought us to a better understanding of the dominance of the pleasure principle; but no light has yet been thrown on the cases that contradict that dominance. Let us therefore go a step further. We describe as 'traumatic' any excitations from outside which are powerful enough to break through the protective shield. It seems to me that the concept of trauma necessarily implies a connection of this kind with a breach in an otherwise efficacious barrier against stimuli. Such an event as an external trauma is bound to provoke a disturbance on a large scale in the functioning of the organism's energy and to set in motion every possible defensive measure. At the same time, the pleasure principle is for the moment put out of action. There is no longer any possibility of preventing the mental apparatus from being flooded with large amounts of stimulus, and another problem arises instead the problem of mastering the amounts of stimulus which have broken in and of binding them, in the psychical sense, so that they can then be disposed of. (1989, pp. 23-24)

According to Freud, the trauma should not only be related to outer cause, but pleasure. He asserts that a frustrating breach might also be discouraging for the pleasure mechanism of the individual and this is supposed to end with a trauma. Cathy Caruth brings another definition to trauma: “an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, the uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena”

(2016, p.11). In addition to that, Patrick McGrath comes up with an explanation of the nature of trauma and its relation to gothic in an interview as follows:

What I've been reading about lately is a branch of psychoanalysis that looks at the trauma that can occur when there's a child from whom secrets are kept, vital information that has traumatized the parent—when that information is withheld. ... The theory suggests that a dead space forms in the child's mind where that suppressed information ought to go. Within this strain of psychoanalytic thinking the terminology is very interesting. The dead space is referred to as the crypt. The phenomenon is referred to as haunting—trans-generational haunting—and that which is being withheld, the secret, the family secret—is called the phantom. So it's an entirely gothic terminology that attaches to this phenomenon. (Matthews, 2013, n.p.)

As can be seen from the definitions of trauma from different people above, it is clear that trauma occurs after a persistent, and unforgettable event and has an enormous effect upon the individual which makes the life harder for her. In parallel with the scientific explanation of the occurrence and appearance of trauma, in the novel, it is seen that Charlie is disturbed by his childhood memories later on when he is an adult, which means that the effects of his sufferings as a child haunt him when he faces a reflection of his trauma on another person. Hence it is possible to assume that trauma is more disastrous when it is awakened.

The narrator and protagonist of the novel, Charlie gets through a hard time after the death of his mother. He must deal with his past, specifically his problematic relationship with his mother. His mother never treats him as she treated her elder son Walter. She favors her other son Walter. Being the ignored one affects the whole social life of Charlie. His marriage and his other relationships do not work because of his traumatized character. With the death of his brother-in-law, he begins to search for the reasons of his deep-seated trauma.

Starting from McGrath's point of view, it is highly possible to speculate on the parents of Charlie Weir. He is not only the victim of his adult problems/suffering but also the victim of his childhood traumas, which come to surface as a consequence of his adult sufferings. The quote below gives some clues about the parents from the eyes of Charlie:

...there is a strong correlation between depression and anger and at some level she stayed angry. It was largely directed at my father, of course. I have a clear memory of the day I first became aware of my parents' dynamic of abandonment and rage. Fred

[father] had taken Walter and me to lunch, a thing he did occasionally when he was in town and remembered that he had two sons living on West Eighty-seventh Street. For me these were stressful events, starting with the cab ride to an East Side steakhouse, though in fact any time spent with my father was stressful. (McGrath, 2009, p. 5)

It is a clear fact that the marriage of Charlie's parents is a kind of unhappy one, and Charlie suffers from the effects of this unhappiness densely. Dana Alex states that the situation in the novel always pushes the reader to follow the things from a Freudian path, which Alex most probably points to Oedipal reading: "It cannot be ignored that Charlie's hatred for his father and idealization of the [m]Other invokes Freudian thought. Yet the novel demands much more than an entirely Oedipal reading" (2020, p. 137). Vanon Alliata sees Charlie's problem as a result of the unsound relationships in the family: "He is the son of a depressive and irascible novelist mother and a shiftless, largely absent father, whom he only calls by his name, Fred. Charlie's precocious caring disposition, self-blame, and decreased self-worth, typically brought about by parental conflict ..." (2020, p. 120). Chodorow discusses the protective role of the parental figures in the family as follows:

In a nuclear family, a father plays a central role in differentiation for the child. Because he is so involved with the child's mother, his role in the child's later defensive identifications—identification with his power or closeness to the child's mother, for instance—is also crucial. The ego develops partly as a system of defenses against such early experiences. (1984, p. 71)

Chodorow discusses the roles of parents and suggests that the bond between father and mother must be invulnerable so that the child can improve his ego accordingly. However, Charlie's family life was not in "proper" circumstances, and he has not been treated equally to his brother. While imagining a phantasy of having a "family," he says: "... God knows I needed a family – my own had been a disaster" (McGrath, 2009, p. 52). Charlie had no one to trust in that sense. McGrath shows the fragmented family concepts of the 20th century.

More than that, it is highly important to take a look at the source or the sources of Charlie's trauma. The most hurtful event he remembers from his childhood is the scene in which an unloaded gun is pointed at him. One night, Charlie hears noises from his parents' bedroom. He rushes into room and witnesses the fight of his parents. According to Charlie's memory, his father becomes furious and points a gun at his

son's head. Whenever Charlie remembers this moment, he is disturbed. The gun scene becomes a signifier of all the bad things that happened in the family.

It should also be noted that the mother figure in this novel is very destructive since, other than playing the protection role to Charlie; she is his hidden primary source of trauma. As a child, Charlie feels responsibility: "My mother's first depressive illness occurred when I was seven years old, and I felt it was my fault. I felt I should have prevented it. This was about a year before my father left us" (McGrath, 2009, p. 3). It is highly probable to argue that the situation of Charlie in the middle of a familial crisis, leaves a big mark on the future of him.

Throughout his adult life, Charlie suffers psychological distress, as he feels sidelined by his own family, which can be seen as a reflection of his own marriage. Charlie Weir's childhood and marriage with Agnes have some common points. Charlie becomes the one who is neglected in both. He always has a competitor who is Walter in his childhood and Danny in his marriage. Walter is the favorite child of the mother, and she never avoids praising Walter to Charlie:

She [mother] seemed to think the fact that he so rarely visited her proved he was much too busy, certainly far busier than me, but of course he was so much more successful than me. She said once to Agnes. "But Charlie's a brilliant psychiatrist," said Agnes. Mom's reply was a classic of maternal spite. "Oh, anyone can be a psychiatrist," she said. "It takes talent to be an artist." (McGrath, 2009, p. 12)

Similarly, Charlie experiences a comparison in his marriage, too:

"I can't just stand by and let him [Danny] go on like this," I said. "He does nothing useful." "Why should he do anything useful? Didn't he serve?" She looked up at me as she licked a rolling paper. It was as though she had torn a curtain from a screen. Suddenly revealed before me was a picture I hadn't seen before. Danny went to Vietnam; I did not. Danny *served*. (McGrath, 2009, p. 129)

Agnes praises her brother, and this situation shows that she has a suspicion about the treatment, and more importantly, she, possibly, unintentionally degrades her husband in comparison with Danny. Thus, there is strong evidence to assume that the competitors change, but the competition never ends for Charlie. It is also noteworthy to mention the similarity between his mother and Agnes. Both female characters exhibit a decision-maker status that Charlie has to obey. Possibly, after the death of his mother, Charlie substitutes his dead mother with Agnes, which would lead the reader to witness a repetitive experience in Charlie's life. This substitution is not

limited to Agnes, but Nora, who dates with Charlie after the divorce. Although Charlie rejects a comparison between Nora and his mother, he confesses the similarity to the reader as follows: “[Nora]: ‘You think I’m like your mother?’ ‘Babe,’ I said, ‘nobody’s like my mother and you least of all.’ I was not being entirely candid here. Nora reminded me strongly of my mother...” (McGrath, 2009, p. 76). The reader clearly sees the repetitive circle in Charlie’s life and wonders at what it is that he is revealing with such compulsion to repeat. According to Freud, the function of repetition compulsion is to remember the things. As a matter of fact, this compulsion might be seen as an endless effort to rehearse the falsified memories and scraps of pictures from the mind. The individual strives to overcome the reason for her distress by repeating the action. Freud explains this attitude with his grandson’s fort/da game. The child feels distressed when his mother is away so that the child repeats an act of throwing his toys away. Like his mother’s return, he goes and gets his toy from the corner of the room. Freud finds a similarity between the material object of the toy and the boy’s mother. The child, for Freud, attempts to overcome his distress by projecting it on the game. According to Freud, this is the result of an impulse which forces the individual to master on the feeling of loneliness, or somewhat deficiency (1989, p.9). In other words, the child repeats the traumatic event not to be traumatized one more time, but to feel the mastery over the incident that traumatizes him. Charlie’s effort shows similarity with Freud’s grandson’s throwing the toys. Both of them try their chances to cope with the absence of parental care by repetitive actions.

The reason why Charlie obsessively keeps his mother in his mind is clear that his mind shows great resistance to admit the reality. The reality is that not his father, but his mother points an unloaded gun to Charlie. This is a recurring theme of McGrath. This distorted reality is also seen in *Spider*. Nevertheless, Charlie did not know that reality had been different at first. To some extent, it is an affirmation of the imbalance of the family to the child since his parent threatens to take away his life. Forgetting things in memory is one of the ways to overcome stress. Freud says that scenes from infancy are not always accurate. His memory is shaped by his present understanding of the mother-son relationship, as learned through his Freudian learning.

The memories are so vivid in his mind, and he is not able to clear them off his head. In other words, the memories in his mind turn themselves into monsters. In the traditional Gothic, it was visible monsters, but now, in the works of McGrath, they

show themselves as thoughts, dreams, nightmares, and other non-imaginary aspects of life. As Halberstam suggests:

The postmodern monster is no longer the hideous other storming the gates of the human citadel, he has already disrupted the careful geography of human self and demon other and he makes the peripheral and the marginal part of the center. Monsters within postmodernism are already inside - the house, the body, the head, the skin, the nation - and they work their way out. Accordingly, it is the human, the facade of the normal, that tends to become the place of terror within postmodern Gothic. (Halberstam, 2000, p. 162)

It is pointed here that with the postmodern age, everything has changed, and Gothic tradition is not an exception. It can be claimed that moving from the quote above, the gothic has also had some change, and this transformation happened in the sources for the terror and their outcomes. The family secret is a common point for traditional gothic and new gothic. In the novel, it is the destructiveness of the mother. The reason for having a traditional gothic element in *Trauma* is to show that although the setting changes the atmosphere and the reasons for terror have no difference at all. McGrath takes the family issues as his focal point and puts a traditional terror-resulting element. Charlie has lived in a catastrophe throughout his entire life; his level of socialization has also been negatively affected. In addition to that, Charlie is not able to forget the sad encounters of his past, especially now that the gun was pointed at him by his mother, who, in the real sense, is supposed to be protective and caring. However, Charlie's mind cannot blame his mother for his misfortunes because of the idealized space he reserved for her. Because of his paradox, his mind chooses to shift the blame to his father.

The war between Charlie and his mind never ends. It can be claimed that Charlie's actions play along with Freud's term *nachträglichkeit*. On the relation between two terms, Stibbs asserts as below:

Freud's idea of "deferral" is closely related to repetition compulsion, but here the memory of the earlier event is triggered by a later experience. The term *Nachträglichkeit* is used to refer to this phenomena, which also means "afterwardness" or "belatedness" and is linked to the idea of repetition compulsion by the same notion of latent or repressed memory... (2013, p.142)

Nachträglichkeit means that the traumatized person reacts to the traumatic moment after the event takes place. In other words, it is a belated reaction to a traumatic event.

According to Freud, a traumatic event's memories which left behind always wait a triggering moment to become apparent again. *Nachträglichkeit* or the *deferred action* or *belated defense mechanism* is defined by Vanon Alliata as follows: The victim gets away from the scene of the accident “apparently uninjured” since the event is not experienced as it occurs, but is fully evident only later, in connection with another place and in another time (2020, p. 123). In the case of Charlie, it is seen that he knows that he has experienced something difficult to overcome but ignores the consequences of that catastrophe. To avoid further damage, Charlie's mind plays a trick, falsifying the memory: “Charlie’s reaction to this unfortunate, if wholly predictable, death, provides further evidence of the ways in which trauma affects memory” (Vanon Alliata, 2020, p. 130). Each time, Charlie replays the event that his parent pointing a gun to him in his mind, attempts to analyze and find a way to make this moment memory less harmful to himself. However, he fails at each attempt. Daniel Southward explains Charlie’s helplessness as below:

In *Trauma*, though, the assumption becomes particularly prescient considering the novel’s final revelations, when Charlie comes to recognize the narrative that he has constructed surrounding the traumatic incident in which his mother pushed a gun to the back of his head and pulled the trigger. Having displaced the action onto his father, it being “unthinkable” to Charlie that his mother could act this way— “The unconscious wouldn’t sanction it for a moment”— Charlie becomes fundamentally unable to resolve the trauma. Having no access to the story of the trauma, the recognition and assimilation of which “into the conscious memory—into the self” he describes as fundamental to recovery, he is without the necessary tools to achieve resolution. (2020, p. 96)

The nature of their lack of diverges in two ways as temporariness and permanence. Whereas Freud’s grandson attempts to overcome a temporal absence, Charlie struggles with never-existed parental care. Charlie cannot realize that the main problem lies in the basic structure of his memoir. Although the one who had threatened Charlie's life with a gun was his mother, his mind played with him and changed the truth by switching mother to father. The theory of Freud suggests that the father is an enemy for the child in the transition period. Until a discussion with his brother, Charlie had always blamed his father, Fred, for his childhood trauma, which shows a similarity with Freud’s Theory.:

I told him [Walter] that the next thing I remembered was Fred coming toward me, and the effect was of a giant about to devour me. He had a gun in his hand.

[CHARLIE]: “Walter, I was six years old, and I didn’t run away.”

[WALTER]: “It wasn’t Fred. He was sitting on a chair on the other side of the room. It was Mom.”

[CHARLIE]: “How can you know that? You weren’t there!”

[WALTER]: “I came back. I watched the whole thing through a crack in the door”.
(McGrath, 2009, p. 205)

Charlie wants to take control of everything, and specifically the narrative. In a way, he manifests his supremacy over the things he tells. However, Charlie’s effort to have dominance fails at the first stage. He cannot go further as he is stuck in a dead space. The event takes place like Charlie’s brother’s statements. Charlie resists against the idea of his mother’s pointing a gun and pulling the trigger to him and the sound of the “click.” He is not able to put his mother into this position. As can be seen from the argument between the brothers, Charlie does everything to evade blaming his mother for even the most disturbing memory of his childhood. The event leaves a mark on the soul of Charlie indelibly:

Charlie’s understanding of trauma is very much Freudian. It is therefore surprising that he never considers that, while it left him physically unharmed, the click must have affected his psyche. The click of the traumatic event is, in terms of temporality, part of Charlie’s past, yet it very much remains in the present through its unnerving repetition. (Alex, 2020, p. 138)

His effort of positioning the mother figure at the top never ends. On the contrary, Charlie chooses to pull to shreds the minds of Fred: "He brought in a little cash now and then, but it was never clear where he got it. Gambling, I guess, the horses. I think he fenced stolen property, but very small-time. You remember that time, and the bedroom was full of cardboard boxes?" (McGrath, 2009, p. 53). He tries to be different from Fred in parallel with Oedipal tendencies. One can argue that when Charlie understands that resistance is futile, it is late for everything. Although his target is to become the exact contrary profile of his father, he “resembled Fred Weir, and the older [he] got the clearer it became” (McGrath, 2009, p. 13).

As known, Freud wrote densely on the mother-son relationship. According to him, the son always seeks to take the father's place to be with his mother. Charlie Weir carries that drive within. After his mother's death, he sleeps in her bed.

I slept in my mother's bed that night and was badly disturbed. I grappled through the hours of darkness with intensely frustrating problems of logic, or so it felt, but had a waking memory only of repetitive circular movements of the mind that allowed no resolution or escape, like being trapped inside the mechanism of a clock. Of the specific content of these dreams I had no recall, but I woke in a state of dread. I knew what that meant. Dread signals not the imminence of a catastrophic event, but the presence of repressed memory - -the memory of a catastrophic event, one that has already happened. But where? In that bedroom? In that bed? (McGrath, 2009, pp. 181-2)

By sleeping there, Charlie attempts to solve two different problems: First, he wants to make real a non-applicable event of sleeping with his mother, which he always strived for inwardly. Secondly, Charlie remembers the event, which became the reason of his trauma and studies each detail out to get over what disturbs him. So, he says: "Was it about my mother? All the attention I'd given her, had it stemmed from guilt, then? Had it been not her love but her forgiveness, I was seeking all those years? Guilt for what?" (McGrath, 2009, p. 183). The guilt of him is finding himself in the quarrel of their parents. The gun event is its bitter result. Nevertheless, Charlie never seems to volunteer to acknowledge his mistakes. On the contrary, he prefers to cover and alternate his memories.

After several attempts of reanimating the past, the protagonist finally finds himself in the middle of his personal history unintentionally. He finds a job at a clinic in Catskills: "This was the town where the photo had been taken of Mom with Walt and me in front of that old hotel. The coincidence was uncanny, and I felt that somehow I'd been intended for Old Main" (McGrath, 2009, p. 192). This photo of Charlie signifies an important point in his life: "The time frozen in the photograph does not only convey feelings of loss and unrecoverable times, but uncannily reminds Charlie of the proximity to death he had experienced in his youth, and of his survival" (Vanon Alliata, 2020, p. 132). As a twist of fate, life drags him to the place where the remnants of his "happy" moments with his family stay.

Through the end of the novel, Charlie and the reader starts to find the missing parts of Charlie's childhood and what really disturbs him. Contrary to his hopes, these findings do not help him to get better. He learns the bitter truth that the one who traumatizes him was his mother. Despite all the lack of affection from her, Charlie has always protected the image of the mother in his mind. Even the usage of the names signals

that: Except his mother, Charlie calls everybody with their names. Throughout the work, McGrath never uses the name of Charlie's mother. Step by step, Charlie fills the blanks in his mind. That does not help him to get over his depressive mood. It can be said that Charlie is far from giving up his old habit; like his patients or relatives, he interrupts his own mind's business.

Patrick McGrath in *Trauma* provides the reader with a limited and unreliable narrative to create suspense. The decayed side of the novel rises with the maltreatment Charlie gets throughout his life and the outcome of this situation. Indeed, the distress of Charlie is derived from the burden his mother left him. From the beginning of his childhood until the mother's death, Charlie could not get his share of his love and affection from her. That situation causes Charlie's frustration. To compensate for his dissatisfaction, he puts himself forward in various ways, such as intruding on the lives of others and manipulating the individual history. However, no matter how hard he tries, he cannot achieve to satisfy the needs of his traumatized psychology. It is made clear in the novel that revealing the truth makes him go deeper into the holes of the mind.

In the meantime, Charlie decides to use Agnes's brother Danny who is a Vietnam veteran, as an experimental object, and according to Alliaia, Charlie's "emotional involvement with Danny's memory intensifies to the point that he entirely identifies with him [Danny]" (2020, p. 131). As it was mentioned before, Danny is a rival of Charlie to some extent. Nevertheless, this is just one of the two dimensions of him. The other one is that Danny reflects Charlie, as Alliaia suggests. Hence, it is highly possible to argue that Charlie treats Danny as a lost piece of a puzzle. Danny stands for a helpful but dangerous person for Charlie. Even though Charlie is willing to have him nearby, he does not wish to be superseded by Danny in the eyes of Agnes. In that sense, Charlie tries to keep a balance between Danny and himself. Charlie chooses not to mention his identification with Danny to anybody but himself and the reader.

Although there is a big difference in the reasons for traumas, Charlie unyieldingly sees Danny as a co-partner in his trauma. As a psychiatrist of PTSD sufferers, Charlie is supposed to heal his patients' traumas. Even so, Charlie treats Danny as if he was treating himself. He attempts to use Danny's situation to solve his trauma. Danny is an essential character in this novel since his presence not only emphasizes the theme of trauma but also shows how delicate it is to deal with psychological torture. One of

the most visible signs of it is the unreachable tormenting memoirs from the past. The deadlock lies beneath this inaccessibility:

The greater the resistance, the more thoroughly remembering will be replaced by acting out (repetition).... he repeats everything deriving from the repressed element within himself that has already established itself in his manifest personality. (Freud, n.d., p. 151)

In the quotation above, Freud stresses on the issue that one, who is traumatized, cannot fully apprehend the impossibility of going backward in the time. It is impossible as there is no way to justify the details for the one who attempts to repeat the actions that took place. That is a great problem for the traumatized person because she is stuck at the moment. According to this person, the only solution lies beneath the replaying of the occurrence. Yet, the impossibility of it shows itself as a new problem. Remembering the event, no matter if the traumatized person correctly recalls the details or not, causes uneasiness.

Similarly, Danny resists the insistence of Charlie on reminding him of the memories of war. Nevertheless, the psychiatrist never gives up asking questions about the incidents in Vietnam. The reason for Charlie's insistence can be twofold. On the one hand, when he is viewed as a psychiatrist, it can be seen as his attempt to invoke the forgotten memories of his patient so that the treatment can be fulfilled. On the other hand, when Danny is seen as the reflection of Charlie's personal traumas, the reader can see that by delving into Danny's repressed memories, Charlie can bring his own unconscious past into the surface. By allowing the reader to form such a view, McGrath points at earlier gothic tales, such as *Frankenstein* or *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, in which the scientist creates an image as a reflection of his own repressed side.

Danny's trauma means a lot for Charlie in terms of overcoming his own trauma. Charlie prefers to succeed in Freudian mastery over his trauma by using Danny's. The subject of interfering with the business of others comes into play at that moment. Although his job requests such a quality, Charlie uses it for the sake of his trauma's healing because he exactly knows what Freud suggests and wants to apply it to himself. Restaging / repeating his trauma through the others' does not bring him satisfying results other than making him more perplexed. Because of getting involved in others' traumas, he finds himself in a deadlock. Danny's suicide is just one of the outcomes of this congestion. Although Charlie seems to be willing to heal him, he is not

successful at treatment, so that Danny unavoidably sees a very low chance of surviving from his burden. That is why, being not aware of the debris left by the war in the mind of Danny, Charlie unintentionally provokes him to suicide. After Danny dies, Agnes does not speak to Charlie for two years. She explicitly thinks that Charlie's involvement in the case worsened Danny's situation:

I remember telling her [Agnes] that she'd be better off without me, better able to get on with her life. The inadequacy of this as justification for leaving her was made very clear to me. I tried to explain how corrosive it would be, her conviction of my responsibility for Danny's death. "Then change my conviction," she said. (McGrath, 2009, p. 141)

However, Danny's other sister Maureen does not blame Charlie about the suicide, and that surprises Charlie: "I was curious that she didn't hold me responsible for her brother's death, as Agnes did. Her reply surprised me. She said it was obvious Danny would die young" (McGrath, 2009, p. 145). Charlie's astonishment underlines an important fact that Charlie tends to blame himself on every occasion he is involved. This tendency, most probably, emerges from his ill-fated mother-son relationship.

Charlie's flat is situated near to the World Trade Center, and from his windows, the building can be seen clearly. Mentioning the World Trade Center, a couple of times stresses on the underlying aim of Patrick McGrath. That is the collective consciousness that becomes a playground for McGrath. The author aims to summon the memories of the reader on the September 11 attacks. It is a known fact that 9/11 is a historic moment in terms of trauma. The traumatic results of these attacks are shared by Americans even after almost twenty years. David Kerler underlines this untold narrative behind the main story:

McGrath is playing with the reader's historical horizon of experience: by the time of the novel's publication in 2008, the World Trade Center's collapsed twin towers already constituted an important memorial site with regard to the collective trauma of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. By means of this reference McGrath is creating the uncanny atmosphere of an approaching catastrophe, if not triggering the reader's own traumatic memory of the incident. (2013, p. 95)

McGrath uses the World Trade Center as an apparatus of foreshadowing in the novel. The reader, as Kerler states, is supposed to associate her memoirs on the day of the attacks with the story narrated in the book. It might be said that McGrath unites historical catastrophes and creates a blend in *Trauma*.

Danny's suicide underlines a breaking point for Charlie. With Danny's death, Charlie enters into a kind of dead space, which drags him to a hopeless situation. So, Danny's treatment stands for treatment for Charlie, too. Nevertheless, Danny's acceptance of defeat lets Charlie down because of seeing their similarity, Danny's death seems like Charlie's moment of abjection, where he faces with his own death. He makes that moment real by staging it:

I was sitting under the window on the kitchen floor. I was thinking about Danny, how he'd been sitting on a floor under a window when I kicked his door down that Sunday morning in the summer of 1972. There'd been spilt whiskey in that room too. Our situations were identical, the booze, the awakened trauma, the gun. I still had the gun. I shifted around until I was in the exact position Danny had been when I found him. I put it between my teeth, then pushed it hard against the roof of my mouth so it hurt, because I wanted to do it right, like Danny. (McGrath, 2009, p. 209)

Moving from here, it can be possible to assume that Charlie's downfall, which comes after the death of Danny, is a sign of his undergoing traumatic background. Charlie devotes himself to cure Danny's trauma as to overcome his own. Nevertheless, with the suicide of Danny, he is traumatized again. A colleague of Charlie points to this issue as follows: "This shouldn't be as destructive as it seems to be. It's very possible," she said slowly, "that the real trauma lies elsewhere. It might be very deep. And I think Danny's just a screen" (McGrath, 2009, p. 197). Charlie's identification with Danny is so powerful that Charlie is unable to see his own Vietnam / main trauma related to his mother.

It should be noted that the reason for Danny's personal trauma, the Vietnam war, traumatized not only the individuals but the whole nation. Americans, during the last years of the war, started asking the aim of joining such a war overseas. As time passes, the news of the casualties made people protest the war in Vietnam. However, the main problem here is that the ones who returned from Vietnam could never come over their traumatic events there. Moreover, the Americans felt the bitter taste of fighting in vain. This situation shows itself as a societal problem.

Apart from individual traumas of the soldiers coming back from the war zone or the ones who try to cope with individual traumatic experiences, a bigger trauma occurs, and it affects a whole society. That kind of trauma is named as Social Trauma, and Jeffrey C. Alexander defines it as "Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible

marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways” (2013, p. 6). It is clearly stated that collective consciousness is hurt when a big, damaging, and extraordinary event occurs like the Vietnam War. In short, such a war affects not only the individuals joining but also the ones who have a common future. Vietnam War was harmful to the collective consciousness because it was “after all the first war that America lost” (Alliata, 2020, p. 127).

Danny’s war experiences are highly important to understand the nature of his trauma. Regarding the wild side of the war, it is expected to witness incidents that are thought to be barbaric in normal circumstances as follows:

[DANNY]: It all went to hell for me after that. I didn’t care about any of it anymore. All I knew, the more of them I wasted the better I felt.

[CHARLIE]: Killing made you feel good.

[DANNY]: Less bad. Every time it got easier. And there was other stuff. (McGrath, 2009, p. 134)

To a certain extent, even taking part in these acts might be accepted by some, because the most basic rule of war is to kill the other. Otherwise, your life will be at risk. As Danny does not give so much detail, Charlie attempts to make speculations on the issue. The only fact he and the reader acknowledge is that Danny participated in a brutal incident. Indeed, Danny's remorse emerges from culturally unacceptable acts he took part in the war.

Four months, Charlie, until they shipped me out of there. I was an animal, I just wanted to kill. And I messed with their bodies if I could get at them. That’s not an animal, that’s worse than an animal. Animals don’t kill because they like it. ... They kill to eat. (McGrath, 2009, p. 134)

As a result of Charlie’s investigation to find out the core answer to Danny's syndrome reveals that he ate human flesh at the time of the war. This situation signifies the ultimate difficult situation of the soldiers who fought there. As extreme things happen, unimaginative becomes a reality. Tal confirms the position as follows: "The unfortunate truth is that the Vietnam war was the work of no one’s imagination. It was, rather, a devastating reality" (2004, p. 76). After the war, since his mind is always busy with the events that took place there, Danny cannot fully rehabilitate.

Cannibalism is strictly associated with gothic tradition because of its transgressive characteristics. One of the biggest taboos of humanity, cannibalism, stays as a bold line between civilization and savagery; that is why it is one of the abject actions for humanity. "... cannibalism shows to what an extent the brutalization and dehumanization of the war were internalized by its victims. A revolting practice and, along with incest, one of the central taboos of Western culture since the dawn of humanity ..." (Vanon Alliata, 2020, p. 129). Danny's cannibalistic past stays as a shadow over his life. Danny feels a kind of alienation to the peaceful world. He cannot fully adapt himself to normalcy. Although his savage mood in Vietnam emerges from a basic need, he fails to comprehend the issue in this way. Moreover, his response to stress, committing suicide, shows how much the memoirs affect his mood, which Charlie could not realize. Monstrosity in the human mind hides till the moment the body has no other choice but to ravage:

Cannibalism in animals is also widely seen as a natural response to stresses like overcrowding and food shortages. The unfortunates involved in shipwrecks, strandings and sieges who have resorted to cannibalism were exhibiting biologically and behaviourally predictable responses to specific and unusual forms of stress. Extreme conditions provoke extreme responses. (Schutt, 2018b, p. 172)

In the time of survival, humankind must trust its instincts. These are the necessary actions to be taken to stay alive. Firstly, the one who is far from the source of food should find a nutritious plant or insect to get energy. If that does not exist, the survivor faces with maybe the most brutal and culturally unacceptable option: eating someone. The social order leaves its place to a fight for survival: Bill Schutt asserts in *The Natural and Unnatural History of Cannibalism*: "In cannibalism-related tragedies such as that which befell the Donner Party, survivors have been given something like a free pass for committing acts that would otherwise be considered unforgivable (Schutt, 2018a, Sieges, Strandings and Starvation: Survival Cannibalism section). "

Transgressing the border makes it impossible to return to the usual life routine for him. It is well worth noting that by defining himself as an animal, Danny stresses upon the line he crossed. Not only does the war bring him a significant experience, but it also takes his civilized characteristic. So, in short, human flesh designates the border. Danny was in an authoritative position when he came across the bodies whose lives (probably) ended by him. While he was "messing with" (McGrath, 2009, p. 134) them, he was crossing the border that he would realize later. After learning that there is "no

way back" to the civilized community, he ended his life "messaging with" his own body with shooting in the head.

Concerning Danny's war experience, the destructive side of human nature is emphasized in the novel. Considering that Danny, as a character, is used to reflect Charlie's hidden trauma, it can be argued that Charlie is also destructing others to survive, as Danny did on the battlefield. While Danny consumes human flesh, Charlie does it figuratively: He eats up the women in his life. McGrath achieves to unite the historical catastrophe with Charlie's personal trauma. The aim of doing such a thing might be showing that on the basis of results, there is not a clear difference. Both of them succeed in creating terror.

The sudden death of Danny disappoints Charlie as he hopes to overcome the distress through Danny's treatment. Danny's instinctual renunciation means there is not a possible way out of this kind of trouble. Danny's surrendered mind can be seen as a ruthless message for Charlie. The dead body of Danny signifies a turning point for Charlie because he loses his mastery. There stands no possibility of working through anymore. Hence, Charlie's real trauma starts here, just after Danny's suicide.

After Danny's suicide, Agnes and Charlie become distant to each other. While investigating his responsibility on Danny's death, Charlie says: "About Danny's suicide, and Agnes's gradual change of heart in this regard – her acceptance of the idea that I couldn't have prevented it, that it would have happened anyway. Probably" (McGrath, 2009, p. 50). One thing is clear that Charlie ignores his recurring mistake of interfering with the business of others, which gave away to be pointed by a gun when he was a child: intruding the lives of people. Following his brother-in-law's suicide, Charlie's mother says: "Ah, Charlie...always trying to help people who don't want it ... You like getting into other people's private business (McGrath, 2009, p. 142)." She points out that Charlie likes to intervene in the privacy of the people around him. Seemingly, Charlie's personality since childhood is that he is an interloper and would always want to interlope the business of people, as his mother asserts. The facts suggest that his involvement in peoples' problems has unfortunately been very tragic, given that at times, it caused even death. For instance, Danny is assumed to have committed suicide because of him. In the case of Danny, Charlie was warned by Agnes not to distress him. That is why he carries the burden of Danny's death.

Another solution Charlie finds to overcome the distress given by past experiences is casting mother role to his ex-wife Agnes and girlfriend Nora. Two women, Agnes and Nora, are used as substitution elements by Charlie. Charlie shifts the motherly features from his mother and loads them onto his spouses. After his mother's death, he searches comfort in their arms. To him, restaging the event can be seen as his method of working through his past. This is what Freud calls "restaging the trauma" so as to get control over it. With the death of his mother, he loses the chance of getting over his fixation through his mother. So, firstly, he places the role of mother to Agnes and then Nora. That way, his problem becomes transferred from one level to another. David Kerler states:

Through his (sexual) relationships with Agnes and Nora, he tries to re-create the former intact mother-son relationship and thus to regain his lost object of desire. This even leads to the point that he has sex with Nora in his mother's bed, which constitutes a multiply deferred acting out of his compulsion to return to the most possible pre-traumatic state, i.e., <<to return to the womb>>. (2013, p. 93)

Charlie never ends his pursuit of returning to the so-called cozy place –mother's womb– which kept him away from the distress of the outer world. On the one hand, Charlie knows that there is not a specific solution for his deep-rooted problems. It is because Charlie lives in so much pain of his past that he feels like going back to his mother's womb. The primary source of his psychological problems is because he continuously lives in uneasiness. The author sticks to the common gothic regulations of literature given by the way he brings out the aspect of anxiety and gloominess in Charlie's life. The only place where Charlie feels safe is metaphorically his mother's womb. However, this is also a dark past that he has always struggled to overcome. The distress is so overwhelming that Charlie continues to live in fear and terror, even at the point when he is already married. On the other hand, his obsession does not leave him in peace. For this reason, he takes refuge in the arms of his ex-wife and girlfriend. Charlie explains his situation from the eyes of a psychiatrist this time as follows:

It had become clear to me that this obsession I had with the idea of the home–the pursuit of Agnes, a woman who didn't want me, and this bizarre compulsion to re-create my mother's bedroom, as though trying to return to the womb–was nothing more than an urge to repeat the past. (McGrath, 2009, p. 189)

Although the individual craves for a peaceful and simple life in the womb, the unknown side of death is terrifying. Obscurity and inescapability construct the nature

of “uncanny.” In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud describes Eros and Thanatos as entangled elements that cannot be separated. According to him, there is a battle between instincts. Eros includes the aim of self-preservation and sexual impulses while Thanatos includes sadism, destruction, violence, and death:

It would be in contradiction to the conservative nature of the instincts if the goal of life were a state of things which had never yet been attained. On the contrary, it must be an old state of things, an initial state from which the living entity has at one time or other departed and to which it is striving to return by the circuitous paths along which its development leads. If we are to take it as a truth that knows no exception that everything living dies for internal reasons - becomes inorganic once again - then we shall be compelled to say that 'the aim of all life is death' and, looking backwards, that 'inanimate things existed before living ones.' (1961, p. 32)

Freud approaches the subject of trauma from the aspect of his own terms, life instinct (Eros), and the death instinct (Thanatos). Especially death instinct underlines the strength of the desire to return to the period before the separation from mother. The first trauma of all human beings starts with dissociation with the mother. As the time passes, the individual searches for the ways of going back to the place where s/he was happier than ever; in other words, as Caruth asserts, “the necessity of various kinds of return – on the return to origins in memory and on the “return of the repressed” shows itself (2016, p. 13). Probably the most disturbing side of trauma is that it cannot be fully remembered yet cannot also be forgotten entirely. McGrath portrays this conflicting side of the trauma through Charlie. "What does that mean?" "A shock to the mind so intense you can't get rid of it. You can force it out of your consciousness, but you never forget it. And it comes back." "How?" "Nightmares. Flashbacks" (McGrath, 2009, p. 23). However, not only Charlie but also Danny is a good example of the relationship between Freudian drives and repetition compulsion, according to Christina Pividori. She argues that “flashbacks and other hallucinatory phenomena” takes the traumatized veterans to “the moment of fright in which they originally witnessed death” (2010, p. 93).

Without a doubt, “the urge to repeat the past” is used by Charlie to allude to the concept of Sigmund Freud. As a psychiatrist, Charlie exactly knows in which direction his mind steers him. In the quotation, he mentions Agnes, his ex-wife, who rejects him like his mother. Again, Charlie faces the rejection, yet his impulse does not absent him

from trying to overcome the trauma by repeating past events. Charlie attempts to repeat the past for himself. However, he also applies this to his patients.

At the end of the novel, it is understood that Charlie fails to heal himself. As a result of this situation, he cannot get rid of the hatred against his father and wants to shoot him. However, accidentally he shoots Walter:

The childhood nightmare came back to me then, my mother in a dark room at the mercy of this man. The force indomitable, begging him to stop, and me the witness to the sordid travesty their marriage had become. At that moment I hated him more than I'd ever done before. I don't recall picking the gun up out of the snow, but Walter must have guessed my intention because he threw himself on me. As we went down it fired, and it was Walter that got shot, not my father. (McGrath, 2009, p. 208)

The quotation above is important in terms of understanding Charlie's never-ending hatred towards his father. Although he learns that his mother pointed a gun to him, he insistently says that his mother is a sufferer of the father. This is a sign of Charlie's failure in the process of healing his trauma.

Consequently, *Trauma* differentiates itself from earlier novels of Patrick McGrath by its environment. That is the first novel in which the modern United States is set as the location. In this novel, McGrath takes advantage of fear in the modern age as an outcome of a modern environment. That is visible in the scene in which he mentions the World Trade Center. In there, McGrath invites current fears. This situation is supported by familial issues that are densely mentioned by McGrath. He chooses a psychiatrist as a protagonist. However, it is seen that the protagonist is so willing to restage itself as the reader by making Freudian inferences from his own statements. These troubles continue to haunt him and cause distress in his social and professional life. The novel appeals to the gothic canon by bringing out the aspect of fear and terror in Charlie's life by his psychological breakdown and re-awakening the memoirs of his brother-in-law. Undeniably, McGrath has a distinguished talent in playing with the traditional gothic features. Hardly the reader faces a direct brutal scene that is very suitable for a traditional Gothic novel. When the reader expects to see direct savagery such as a scene from Danny's memoir, McGrath never lets the reader witness it.

6.CONCLUSION

Through the thesis, Patrick McGrath's four novels have been analyzed through the lenses of the psychoanalytic approach, which provides a perspective to regard the works in detail. The major problem of the thesis since the beginning has been its classification. McGrath defines his style as New Gothic and claims that this new technique has something new to say. This new thing, according to him, is the modern setting and the dissociation from the supernatural such as fairies, ghosts, and vampires. Undeniably, the terror is the main common point of Gothic and New Gothic. Another point that can be defined as a characteristic of Gothic and New Gothic is their use of transgression, decay, and madness. McGrath embraces transgression as integral parts of New Gothic, but it should be admitted that these are the elements inherited from Gothic. Transgression, decay, and madness are central to Gothic Literature. Yet, McGrath manifests them as the things which can be witnessed in daily life. For that reason, it can be suggested that McGrath differentiates himself from his predecessors and contemporaries. His works stand out as the Gothic's new outlook. However, that situation must not be considered as McGrath's showcase of a totally different genre to literature. Gothic literature is a mixture of horror, darkness, and mystery. Combining good and bad and meeting the unnatural need for fear is one of the common features of this genre. In the age of the media and interpretation, it is impossible to represent this sublime horror, so fantasy and imagination as a principle play a major role. In this regard, the repressed desires of the subject with the power of imagination create an object that turns objective horror into inner horror. In the face of this object, man doubts his identity and replaces reality with allegory and symbol.

To be clear, it is true that McGrath uses new techniques on traditional Gothic themes. Nevertheless, several other writers are undeniably executing similar techniques on their works like McGrath; yet these works are not classified under a new genre. Mostly, these works are seen as the Gothic's postmodern rereading instead of New Gothic. Moreover, the New Gothic is sometimes mistaken up for Gothic Postmodernism and

Postmodern Gothic. Instead of this, his novels present a parodical focus on earlier gothic.

The main argument of the thesis was supposed to confirm the position of McGrath's New Gothic beside the Classical Gothic. However, in the writing and research process of the thesis, it has been seen that it is hard to classify New Gothic as a genre itself. That is why, instead of placing New Gothic as a drastic change in literature, it is suggested to position it under Gothic just like EcoGothic. Of course, there might be some opposing views of this suggestion claiming that there is not a certain difference between Modern Gothic and New Gothic. First of all, Gothic in recent years has developed a lot; however, it has not cut its bonds with the supernatural. However, McGrath never uses the supernatural in his fiction. That is one of the biggest differences between the 21st century Gothic and McGrath's New Gothic. Furthermore, as it has been discussed in the thesis, the family is at the core of his fiction. McGrath rereads the trusted family organization of the modern world in a Gothicized way and adds natural but rare actions to furnish it with more terror. Family disintegration as the topic of literary works began in the first half of the 20th century. Hence, it can be clearly seen that Patrick McGrath is not the one to be claimed as a pioneer of this theme. However, one can claim that, McGrath uses the family as the center of terror, which makes him different from his contemporaries. This way of narration is an example of rereading of dysfunctionality of this institution, which was once the keystone of community.

Undeniably Gothic and McGrath's New Gothic have common points such as the usage of uncanny. Freud proposes that if something familiar becomes unfamiliar and then familiar again, that causes the uncanny. What was familiar becomes unfamiliar as it is repressed. It is the return of the repressed (the moment) that creates the uncanny. The appearance of the thing which must be kept hidden is the core part of uncanniness. McGrath's four novels mentioned in the thesis have uncanny elements. Charlie's drowning scene can be taken as an example for uncanny in *Asylum*. McGrath creates terror without an action. Moreover, this terror is intensified with the numbed character of Stella. Secondly, in *Spider*, Dennis kills his mother, who is the one he loves most, without hesitation. That situation confirms the uncanny atmosphere of the novel. Jack in *Port Mungo* is a ruthless rapist of his daughter. Despite his role in the family, he cannot overcome his instincts and systematically rapes his daughter, Peg. The father

figure is torn down and it becomes a source of the terror. Lastly, in *Trauma* Charlie's mother is another example of these dysfunctional family members. She threatens her son's life with a gun. The trusted one turns into a threat.

It is clear to see the uncanny elements such as the clown in King's *IT*. As a comical figure, the clown is used for the purpose of terror in that novel. In this work, it has been seen that in the course of the history of the Gothic, there have been some changes that helped to improve the genre. With the help of these advances, Gothic could be brought from the past to the present. Hence, without the contributions of writers such as Patrick McGrath, the Gothic would be known as a genre belonging to the past. One of the things transforming the Gothic into New Gothic is, of course, a contemporary rereading of Freud's "The Uncanny." Freud's Uncanny helps the author create such an atmosphere.

On the other side, as mentioned before, McGrath's theme of family is a great source of terror. The cause of terror is, naturally, rereading of a reliable institution, by its transformation into a threat. In the novels, the destructiveness of the family members is common. In all of these works, a member of the family is either ignored or abused. Hence, these characters constitute the focal point of the novels. For instance, Stella in *Asylum* is ignored by her husband, and she becomes the one who destroys her family. *Spider*'s protagonist Dennis is one of those children who are neglected and forgotten by both his family and society. *Port Mungo*'s Jack is a lost man who harasses his daughters and ruins all the cycle surrounding him. Lastly, *Trauma*'s Charlie is portrayed as a neglected child of the family. As it can be seen clearly, the protagonists of these four novels have similar stories that connect them to each other. The starting point of this thesis is structured upon them to see the portrayal of the family in McGrath's New Gothic setting. British born American citizen Patrick McGrath succeeds in reflecting his hybrid personality on his works by melting Victorian-inspired Gothic with modern circumstances in the same pot.

This study on Patrick McGrath's four novels *Asylum*, *Spider*, *Port Mungo*, and *Trauma* attempts to show McGrath's usage of the family as an emerging point to create terror, by applying psychoanalytic theory. Interestingly enough, McGrath mentions psychoanalytic terms and techniques skillfully. McGrath actually keeps track of his own experiences as the son of a superintendent of Broadmoor Asylum. Being brought up beside an asylum and learning the core parts of psychiatry from his well-known

psychiatrist father contribute to McGrath's writing a lot. Confined spaces are utmost a central theme in his novels. In *Asylum*, all the plot revolves around the theme of transgression. This is a result of the confinement of the characters. Similarly, Dennis in *Spider* is confined in two ways: The first are the asylum and later on halfway house, and the other is his mind, or Spider persona, which disallows him to be free. In *Port Mungo*, the place where Jack and Vera live is isolated and confined. That is why confinement forces the characters to transgression. Lastly, *Trauma*, like *Spider*, uses the mind as a prison for the protagonist. Charlie is stuck with his illusioned reality, which causes his never-ending trouble.

As for the subject matter, McGrath considers family as a suitable topic for his narrative. *Asylum* portrays the decay taking the family as the center of main terror source. *Spider* stands as a rejection and a parodical reflection of Oedipus Complex. *Port Mungo* deconstructs trust by revisiting the taboos. And, lastly in *Trauma* a story about a doctor who fails to cure his patients and himself is told stressing on the problems in nuclear family. It is observed that uncanny takes a different shape in the novels of McGrath. He transforms the trust towards the institutions into fear, which can be explained via uncanny. It is worth pointing out, on the other hand, that McGrath misguides not only the characters but also the reader by his narrative technique. Unreliable narration in his works occupies a great portion. All of the novels analyzed in this thesis are narrated through unreliable narrators. This study concludes that McGrath applies a new way of evoking terror by tearing down the idealized image of the institutions in a modern setting.

Patrick McGrath's Gothic can be seen as a marginal work of art from the context of the literary world. The gothic shows itself in a new form in these novels by exhibiting its terrifying elements in the background. Although the narratives do not adequately inform the reader about the terror created by the author, details can be taken from the covered explanations of the victims. His stories do not present a fluid text which is easy to follow. On the contrary, he chooses to narrate his stories in a more complex way. Firstly, all the novels mentioned in this thesis are narrated by a limited point of view. Besides unreliable narration, the partial, or it can be referred to as limited, knowledge given by the narrator forces the reader to fill in the blanks in the story. McGrath leaves so many blanks as challenging as possible. This aim of this kind of

technique can be explained with the urge to create suspense and uncertainty. As a result of this, the suspense is enhanced as the possibilities increase in the story.

It should also be noted that all the novels discussed in the thesis have a political background. The situation of mental institutions in *Asylum*, World War II and its effects in *Spider*, art and artists in *Port Mungo*, and Vietnam War, PTSD, and upcoming September 11 attacks constitute the background of the narrative. This is important in terms of the common points of Gothic and Patrick McGrath's style because McGrath follows the tradition of opposing the dominant ideas. This approach of McGrath can also be seen as a political choice of rejecting the mainstream.

Authority is always an unnamed but effective force in the classic Gothic novel, such as *The Castle of Otranto*, *The Monk*, or *Dracula*. This authority signifies the feudal tyrants who have full control over each character. Although the power of this authority is not directly mentioned, the characters either obey the rules of him or resist against his "relentless" governance. Father and mother, the parents are the substitutes of this political power in the family. Each character in the novels of McGrath is portrayed as a potential murderer, rapist, or harasser. It is highly impossible to guess which family member will be the transgressor of the work while reading a McGrath novel. Even so, there is always a certain thing in his works mentioned in the thesis: the battle between the family members.

The thesis follows a bloody circle in its organization. It starts with a filicide, Stella of *Asylum*. Chapter II contains a mentally handicapped child, Dennis, who becomes his mother's murderer. The other half of the thesis contains people who force others to commit suicide. In chapter III, after his harassments to her, Jack pushes his daughter, Peg, for suicide. Last of all, *Trauma*'s Charlie unintentionally becomes the reason for his brother-in-law's death. It is a clear fact that each death in these novels is related to the participation of a family member. In addition to this, this circle is a good example of transgressive acts of family members, who are counted as safe and trustworthy. The parents, even children, in the organization of the family besides professions such as medical doctors, are represented as abusers of their roles. The doctor and mother in *Asylum*, mother in *Spider*, father in *Port Mungo*, and last of all, the psychiatrist in *Trauma* are examples of these abusers. They all take advantage of their either profession or roles in the family.

As a result, the thesis aimed to reveal the “new” thing in Patrick McGrath’s Gothic. Throughout the thesis, it can be seen that the main common point of the novels is family, and the narratives of McGrath are centered on this theme with a modern setting as the new source of terror. The protagonist of *Asylum* is neither rational nor healthy as he manipulates the actions while verbalizing them. On the other hand, it is also hard to say that *Port Mungo*’s Jack and *Trauma*’s Charlie are healthy. Their mental situation drags them to irrationality throughout these novels. As a result of madness, or perverse acts, the decay of the family in modern age exhibited with the connection to the old Gothic traits which prove themselves as persistent. There are some signs that McGrath pays tribute to show this indebtedness to Gothic. One of them is that the name of the character Stella having an affair with is Edgar, with whom McGrath refers to Edgar Allan Poe. Hence, it is possible to assume that McGrath acknowledges his bond with the tradition.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A



Yes, ultimately I believe this is true. And I am not just saying that because you were my student!! The supernatural is easily referenced in novels such as Salem's Lot and Pet Sematary where there is clearly an OUTSIDE force that exerts its influence beyond the mortal world. I am not sure the supernatural explained is Radcliffian in its explainable form, but a monster such as Pennywise in IT owes its existence to the town of Derry; it embodies the evil of the town itself and thus is a kind of sociological horror. Examples of this pervade his canon: Linoge in Storm of the Century, the salesman (forget his name) in Needful Things. Their evil cannot be separated from the town itself. Perhaps that's why they take up residency there?

Thank you very much for your time and great answer Professor. You always help me when I need. If you let me, I'll reference your answer here (I have already referenced to your work "Stephen King: America's Storyteller" but this answer is very important for me).



Yes of course. Good luck on the rest of your dissertation, Onur. I am very proud of you!

Appendix B

Re: Some Questions Regarding Patrick McGrath and The New Gothic



Patrick McGrath <mcgrathp@newschool.edu> göndericisinden 28/01/2020 19:47 tarihinde

 Ayrıntılar  Düz Metin

dear Onur,

I'm happy to answer any questions you have about the novels of mine you're studying.

As for the definition of New Gothic: I wrote the introduction to an anthology of new gothic stories about 20 years ago. It was published in the US by Random House and was edited by myself and Bradford Morrow. It was I think the first introduction readers had to the term, new gothic; I invented it. In the introduction I stressed the themes you've identified, transgression and decay, and madness, and suggested that the new gothic can be identified by what I called its furniture--by which I meant it is not furnished with old ruined churches and graveyards and stormy nights and persecuted maidens, skeletons, etc, as the old gothic was. It is modern and deals with cities and other contemporary settings, characters, realities and issues. But the themes of the old gothic remain dominant, transgression, decay, madness. I hope this is of some help with your jury. It would not be hard to contrast a story in the new gothic manner--there are several of mine collected--with, say, a tale of Edgr Allan Poe.

all best for now

Patrick

Re: Some Questions Regarding Patrick McGrath and The New Gothic



Patrick McGrath <mcgrathp@newschool.edu> göndericisinden 14/07/2020 15:28 tarihinde

 Ayrıntılar  Düz Metin

dear Onur,

Yes, please do add my emails. All good luck to you in your studies.

Patrick McGrath

Appendix C

Re: Some Questions on Patrick McGrath



Sue Zlosnik <S.Zlosnik@mmu.ac.uk> göndericisinden 24/01/2020 18:12 tarihinde

 [Ayrıntılar](#)

Dear Onur,

This is a difficult one to answer. Obviously you've read the introduction to the 1992 book edited by Patrick McGrath and Bradford Morrow because the answer you're giving your supervisor chimes perfectly with their descriptors. As they coined the term 'the new gothic', you are correct. You say your supervisor wants more, however. This leads me to point out that 'gothic' is a slippery term. Gothic writing has seen an evolution from the early period in the eighteenth century and even then it was varied in its emphases, Radcliffe, for example, being quite different from Lewis. Radcliffe attempted to make a distinction between horror and terror, which subsequent writers and scholars have found useful but only up to a point.

As your thesis is on McGrath, your starting point should certainly be the 1992 introduction. I would be hesitant to use definitions too rigidly; they can become a straitjacket. More useful, perhaps, is to look at the fiction is doing and to examine both its debt to and departure from earlier gothic forms. It's certainly my working practice to avoid trying to impose a template on any literary text. I would resist attempting to develop any comprehensive definitions - they only prove to be undermined by exceptions.

I don't know if this is any help. I can recommend Jocelyn Dupont's edited collection of essays, Patrick McGrath: Directions and Transgressions (Cambridge Scholars: 2012), if you haven't already come across it. There are some very good contributions there.

With every good wish,

Sue Zlosnik

Emeritus Professor

Department of English

Manchester Metropolitan University

Re: Some Questions on Patrick McGrath



Sue Zlosnik <S.Zlosnik@mmu.ac.uk> göndericisinden 15/07/2020 20:20 tarihinde

 [Ayrıntılar](#)

Dear Onur,

Yes, that would be alright - although it's quite acceptable to cite 'email correspondence with ...' and the date.

In haste and with every good wish,

Sue



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Meslek Etiği

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Uluslararası hakemli dergilerde yayımlanan makaleler:

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