**The mysterious cabinet (from Northanger Abbey): COMMENT**

**COMPREHENSION**

1.

1. Catherine finds a manuscript in the cabinet

2. She is very upset: “her heart flutters, her knees tremble, her cheeks are pale” (l.7) and her hand trembles (l.8). She is also very curious and excited. Her reactions are exaggerated; in fact, there is no reason to think that the manuscript contains some important information

3. She wants to read the manuscript immediately because she wants to discover what is written on it (l. 10-11)

4. She tries to make the candle burn brighter, but she extinguishes it by mistake (l. 15-16). She is clumsy and funny, the opposite of the typical heroines of the Gothic novels

5. She is terrified because it is completely dark, so she goes to bed and she hides under the blankets (l. 25-26)

2.

1. She hears the wind outside the house (l. 20) because there is a storm, she hears someone walking in the house (l. 22), she imagines that the curtains around her bed are moving, as if someone was hidden behind them (l.40) and she imagines that someone is trying to open the door of her bedroom (l. 41-42), she hears murmurs and moans (l. 42-43). All these noises scare her even more; they are typical noises of horror stories, but most of them aren’t real, she only imagines them. She feels in danger, but actually there is no real reason to think that this is a dangerous situation

2. She remains under the blankets in her bed

3. She wonders what is written in the document

4. She can’t sleep because she is too scared by the noises and she is too curious about the document

5. Even if she is sure that she will not be able to sleep that night, she falls asleep after 3 o’clock. The next morning, she discovers that the document is simply a list of clothes that must be washed

**ANALYSIS**

3.

At the beginning of the novel, Catherine is described as a rational girl, full of good sense, but in this situation she abandons her good sense completely and she imagines that she is the protagonist of one of the Gothic novels she likes. She is driven by feelings and imagination and she doesn’t analyse the situation rationally.

4. In this novel Jane Austen writes a parody of the Gothic novels because she uses the conventional elements of these books in a funny way: for ex. the scene takes place at night, outside there is a storm and strong wind, Catherine is alone and she remains in complete darkness, she feels in danger and she hears terrifying noises

5. Even if everything ends well and Catherine marries Henry, she risks to ruin his love story because of her absurd ideas that come from the novels she reads. Jane Austen wants to warn the readers against the dangers of irrationality and excessive fantasy; she wants to underline that life is not a Gothic novel and that people should use rationality and good sense in every situation.