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**The Gothic, Sexuality and Pornography
in the Early Works
of Angela Carter**

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Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně a uvedla v ní
předepsaným způsobem všechnu použitou literaturu.

V Olomouci dne

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation aims to examine the influences of traditional Gothic literature on the works of Angela Carter. It will further explore how and why Carter is considered a modern author writing in the Gothic tradition.

In Chapter 2 the origins of Gothic literature are introduced with its main features, themes and motives. A relevance to modern Gothic literature as well as the fiction of Angela Carter in particular will be established.

Chapter 3 will introduce the works that will be analyzed in this dissertation, placing them within the context of the subject of this dissertation.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 focus on three fictional works of Angela Carter, *Heroes and Villains* (1969), *The Magic Toyshop* (1967) and *Love* (1971). These novels will be analyzed following the principles of Gothic literature introduced in Chapter 2. The analysis will follow a similar pattern for each of the novels, and will center around four themes of Gothic literature: Gothic boundaries, decay, imprisonment and flight. Each chapter will begin with a short introduction to the novel to be analyzed followed by a subchapter on each of the themes.

Chapter 7 will focus on how aspects of sexuality and subsequently also elements of pornography are developed in each novel.

Chapter 8 is dedicated to an examination of Angela Carter's view on pornography and sexuality in her non-fictional work *The Sadeian Woman: An Exercise in Cultural History* (1979) where Carter explores the political thoughts of the Marquise de Sade.

The dissertation will close with a conclusion in Chapter 9 in which the major influences of the Gothic tradition on Carter's fiction are retraced. The conclusion will also demonstrate a shift from the traditional conceptions in Gothic literature to Carter's own conception of the modern Gothic novel.

CHAPTER 2

THE GOTHIC

A) The History and Origins of the Gothic

Gothic as a literary term most commonly designates a type of novel - and a group of writers for a long time considered marginal - written between the 1760s and the 1820s.¹ According to Brendan Hennessy “the Gothic novel...was originated in England by Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* in 1764;”² its subtitle ‘A Gothic story’ introduced the genre. Yet although the Gothic novel did indeed originate in that year it was not without preceding tendencies. On the contrary, the 18th century as a whole must be understood as a period of revival of the Gothic in literature as well as in architecture.

The word Gothic originally referred to the Goths, literally meaning ‘to do with the Goths’,³ the tribe that once assisted in the decline of the Roman Empire, and which in opposition to the civility of the Roman Empire was considered primitive and barbarous. As a literary term though, its connection did not lie, indeed certainly not in the 18th century, with the Goth tribes. Firstly, it must be taken into account that from the beginning of the 18th century, ‘Gothic’ was used to describe all things medieval and of the far past.⁴ In literature this also included English medieval poetry headed by the works of Chaucer, as well as the later works of Spenser and of the Elizabethan era.⁵ In architecture, as it still stands true today, ‘Gothic’ referred to predominantly ecclesiastical medieval buildings.

Secondly, the connection with the Goths was evoked rather by the notions about the Goth tribes that have been historicized: the perceived barbarism and savagery of often primitive but mainly unlawful and invading forces, the threat of

¹ David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: a history of Gothic fictions from 1765 to the present day*, vol 1 (London: Longman, 1980) 1.

² Brendan Hennessy, *The Gothic Novel* (Harlow: Longman Group Ltd, 1978) 7.

³ see Punter, vol. 1, 4.

⁴ see Hennessy 7.

⁵ see Punter, vol.1, 7.

these to civilized life and society⁶ and to the social and political order in which such a society functioned. In parallel, new ideas and new changes of order in society could have also been perceived as invading forces that would bring about a change to the existing status quo.

Just as the decline of the Roman Empire saw great changes all across Europe, the 18th century was a period of great changes in Great Britain and its neighboring countries. The French Revolution, the Enlightenment movement, and the surges of capitalism all brought about possibly welcome yet at same time apprehended invasions of changes. Changes of order initiated fears of the unknown which may have been perceived as threats to society of the time. While inciting great instabilities in both the social and political structures of Great Britain which transgressed into uncertainties about the socio-political boundaries,⁷ these same changes engendered a massive shift in family structures, and so consequently in the gender codification⁸ of society.

The contemporary use of the term Gothic retains an even larger number of meanings today. Apart from designating the Gothic novels of the 18th century, it is also used in a historical context, an artistic context, and an architectural context.⁹ In the literary context, it also groups a number of literary forms, starting with the paperback historical romances that make free use of early Gothic themes, the classical ghost stories, up to the popular and modernized horror fictions of the likes of Stephen King. In film the Gothic deeply manifests itself in horror and psychic thriller films, whether dealing with themes lifted straight out of 18th century Gothic fiction, or with the modern psychic horrors reflecting the fears and tensions of our contemporary world. As an underlining and binding characteristic, in early Gothic novels as in all its contemporary and modern forms, the “lines of confrontation between good and evil are invariably drawn up early,”¹⁰ creating a basic binary opposition, the boundaries of which are not always very clearly defined.

As a phenomenon Gothic literature is in itself concerned with boundaries and the transgression of boundaries. According to David Punter, Gothic writers

⁶ Donna Heiland, *Gothic and Gender: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004) 3.

⁷ Heiland 3.

⁸ Heiland 3.

⁹ Punter, vol 1, 1.

¹⁰ Horner and Zlosnik, *Gothic and the Comic Turn* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) 1.

“bring us up against the boundaries of the civilized...demonstrate...the relative nature of ethical and behavioral codes...place, over against the conventional world, a different sphere in which these codes operate at best in distorted forms.”¹¹ While remaining in the conventional world, a glimpse across the boundaries is enabled into a world of the uncivilized where the ethical and behavioral codes of society are stretched, distorted or directly transgressed.

Donna Heiland similarly claims that the Gothic “at its core is about transgression of all sorts.”¹² Next to the boundaries between the civilized and the beyond, Heiland also specified national boundaries covering both geographical and cultural boundaries, social boundaries between the rich and the poor, and the educated and uneducated. Heiland also pointed to sexual boundaries, including on one hand the boundaries of gender, and on the other what is expected, permitted or forbidden, rounding it up with the less tangible boundaries of one’s own identity.¹³ Entering into more specific detail, Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik elaborate that “Gothic writing always concerns itself with boundaries and their instabilities, whether between the quick/the dead, eros/thanatos, pain/pleasure, ‘real’/‘unreal’, ‘natural’/‘super-natural’, material/transcendent, man/machine, human/vampire or ‘masculine’/‘feminine.’”¹⁴ Just like the confrontation between good and evil, these binary oppositions touch several spheres where challenges to the boundaries that divide them allow not only an analysis but also a criticism of society.

B) Themes and Motifs in Gothic Literature

Early Gothic literature saw the establishment of several themes that remain characteristic till this day, and allow most definitions based on the original 18th century Gothic to “often remain relevant as critical parameters”¹⁵ both in the historical and cultural settings. According to David Punter, Gothic fiction can be defined by three basic concepts: the concept of paranoia, the concept of the

¹¹ David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: a history of Gothic fiction from 1765 to the present day*, vol. 2 (London; New York: Longman, 1996) 183-184.

¹² Heiland 3

¹³ see Heiland 3.

¹⁴ Horner and Zlosnik 1.

¹⁵ Punter, vol 2, 26.

barbaric and the concept of the taboo.¹⁶ These concepts commonly center on a Gothic father-villain, Gothic daughter and Gothic lover triangle. The Gothic father-villain often acts in opposition to and, at the same time, in replacement of a deceased good, yet always patriarchal, Gothic father.

The concept of paranoia where “the reader is placed in a situation of ambiguity with regard to fears within the text”¹⁷ and where the “attribution of persecution remains uncertain”¹⁸ was created in a number of ways. The supernatural and uncanny, in their very essence introducing the unknown and mysterious, evoked fear,¹⁹ insecurity and uncertainty. They were thus major contributions to the concept of paranoia. The supernatural was often represented as “divine agency,”²⁰ such as a falling roof annihilating the villain; it also manifested itself in the apparition of ghosts, specters, monsters and vampires. Superstitions, myth and imagination, naturally in opposition to sensibility and reason, reinforced the sense of paranoiac fear.

On a different note, new scientific and technological theories and progression began to rapidly push the boundaries of what was possible and/or desirable in the contemporary world into the unknown. This manifested itself in a tangible uneasiness, instilling uncertain fears of the unknown in scientific experiments in relation to society and religion.

Imprisonment as a theme was represented by physical imprisonment such as locking in a tower, house or room. Imprisonment also appeared as spiritual imprisonment, either within a society’s constraints, or within the individual’s mind. This introduced a sense of claustrophobia, and ran parallel to or heightened the sense of paranoia. In its most basic form, imprisoned innocent victims were often at danger from monstrous and cruel fiends, as well as madness, death and disease, violence, murder and torture, malevolent intrigue, incest and sexual perversion.

The concept of the barbaric is in its origins most intimately connected with depictions of a primitive and barbaric past.²¹ 18th century Gothic novels were typically set in a past easily identifiable by the settings of gloomy, remote castles,

¹⁶ Punter, vol 2, 183

¹⁷ Punter, vol 2, 183.

¹⁸ Punter, vol 2, 183.

¹⁹ see Hennessy 7.

²⁰ Hennessy 31.

²¹ see Punter, vol 2, 183.

ruins and convents,²² medieval principalities, and long-gone exotic and foreign cultures. The sense of the past was supported by scenes of emphasized molding and disintegrating age and decay, together with the perceived primitivism and barbarism of the different social rules in the Gothic society as opposed to the ones adhered to by current society. Where the novel was not actually set in the historic past, the present would nevertheless be encroached upon by the past. Past crimes and sins or the ancestral curse took their toll, characters suffered from the sins of their ancestors, a setting of a long decaying past contrasted to the contemporary present.

Violence in any form, and in its most extreme murder, assassination and war,²³ was seen as an obvious manifestation of barbarism of the past, and the present. But Gothic fiction also deals with violence of a more hidden kind, the violence of domestic, sexual and political oppression, mainly of women. These forms of violence were supported by a “portrayal of extreme situations, mostly situations of terror,”²⁴ highlighted through depictions of a white and black world of “simple moral and social oppositions,”²⁵ with clear distinction between evil and good, the basic example being the fair, innocent female victim ravaged the dark and sinful villainous type.

The notion of the past was also often ‘supported’ by what would have been perceived as stylistic archaic language (whether or not it was truly archaic). Indeed, as Victor Sage and Allan Lloyd Smith pointed out in their introduction to *Modern Gothic: A Reader* (1996), “the Gothic is not merely a literary convention or a set of motifs; it is a language, [and] often an anti-historicizing language, which provides writers with the critical means of transferring an idea of the otherness of the past into the present.”²⁶

The concept of taboo represented “areas of socio-psychological life which offend, which are suppressed, which are generally swept under the carpet in the interests of social and psychological equilibrium,”²⁷ and which more often than

²² see Punter, vol 1, 7.

²³ see Punter, vol 1, 137.

²⁴ Punter, vol 1, 8.

²⁵ Punter, vol. 1, 9.

²⁶ Victor Sage and Allan Lloyd Smith, eds., *Modern Gothic: A Reader* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996) 1.

²⁷ Punter, vol. 2, 184.

not were related to “questions of relations between the sexes.”²⁸ In its core definition, taboo implies what is ‘sacred’ and also ‘unclean,’²⁹ which leads to vacillation between “attraction and repulsion” and “emotional ambivalence.”³⁰ Gothic fiction not only attempts to come to terms with a changing sexuality between the sexes in society by questioning sexual roles and but also poses questions on taboo sexual practices – notably sexual violence and abuse, incest, rape,³¹ sexual stereotyping and exploitation³² within the family and society.

C) The Gothic and Sexual Roles

Gothic fiction, especially that written by female writers can “invariably ...[be] read as parables of patriarchy.”³³ Following the binary opposition of good father versus villain father, and invariably the Gothic villain - daughter - lover triangle, patriarchy becomes not the subject but rather a conventional Gothic structure in itself.³⁴ The Gothic daughter unconditionally finds herself under the permanent influence and control, indeed the entrapment, of one of the three male figures. Following the rules of a patriarchal society, “the passage of power though the male line”³⁵ continues, yet not unquestioned, in issues of gender and sexual roles, and the conventions of society.

On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that Gothic fiction is a fiction of transgression of boundaries, and indeed the boundaries of sexual relations as defined by patriarchal conventions and structures are transgressed. Through evidently evil and frightening acts of sexual violence, rape and incest, the boundaries of what is permitted in society are crossed. The emotional ambivalence of the characters towards these acts, and the oscillation between the attraction and revulsion of both the characters and the readers towards these themes are also transgressions of boundaries set by a patriarchal society. As it falls under what is considered taboo by touching upon the sacred aspect of the

²⁸ Punter, vol. 2, 184.

²⁹ Punter, vol. 2, 190.

³⁰ Punter, vol. 2, 190.

³¹ see Punter, vol. 2, 190.

³² see Punter, vol. 1, 92.

³³ E. J. Clery, *Women's Gothic: From Clara Reeve to Mary Shelley* (Salisbury: The Baskerville Press, 2000) 2.

³⁴ see Heiland 10.

³⁵ Heiland 12.

sexual in society as well as the unclean, Gothic fiction thus brings “focus on corruption in, or resistance to the patriarchal structures that shaped...political life and...family life, and gender roles.”³⁶

On a less frightening level, Gothic fiction’s general preoccupation with the changing social structures also allowed a focus on the question of changing sexual roles, notably the changing sexual roles of women in the set patriarchal structure. While in the 18th century such questions raised were then answered within parameters permitted by conventions of the patriarchal structure, as were the endings,³⁷ modern Gothic, in its incessant questioning of social structures that give shape to gender and sexual relations today³⁸ provides a voice that proposes and propels new endings and new answers.

D) The Modern Gothic of Angela Carter

Angela Carter often works within the framework of the classic Gothic tradition. While the settings of her novels may be described in the traditional Gothic manner, such as the description of the park in *Love*, they are also set against the background of a modern world, in this case in late 1960s Bristol. Carter also creates new settings, such as the post-apocalyptic worlds of *Heroes and Villains*, and *The Passion of New Eve*. Here, Carter retains a Gothic atmosphere through the “a fear of the barbaric not only from the past but also in the present and the future,”³⁹ and throughout both novels maintains a pervasive sense of decay.

In the same manner, Carter works with the taboos traditional to Gothic literature: rape, incest, female sexuality and male sexual violence. Reworking them within a modern reality, she thus deals with modern transgressions of boundaries of sexual taboos. In *The Magic Toyshop* Carter deals with female sexual awakening, rape, patriarchal domination, but also incestuous love. In *Heroes and Villains* she again deals with the same issue, yet in a more radicalized manner and with a different ending. In *Love*, Carter deals with sexual voyeurism, possession, and incestuous homosexuality. In *The Passion of New Eve* she adds a

³⁶ Heiland 29.

³⁷ see Punter, vol.2, 200.

³⁸ see Heiland 2.

³⁹ Punter, vol.2, 183.

whole range of sexual taboos: illegal abortions, rape, and transvestitism, and overall with the question of male supremacy and the relation of power and gender.

As previously mentioned, traditional Gothic fiction challenges conventions, including sexual and gender conventions, through the transgression of boundaries. Yet, as David Punter also points out, traditional Gothic fiction always returns to a conventional ending. Taboos are cleared away and a traditional patriarchal order is restored.

The following chapters will attempt to map the way Angela Carter follows the tradition of Gothic fiction. Four major Gothic themes will be explored, after which a focus will be given aspects of sexuality and its transgressions. This will lead to answering two questions. Firstly, of how does Angela Carter differ from the traditional Gothic that David Punter describes. Secondly, of how do her early Gothic works and the sexuality lead to Carter's understanding of feminism, sexuality and pornography in *The Sadeian Woman*.

CHAPTER 3

THE EARLY WORKS OF ANGELA CARTER IN CONTEXT

In the beginning, this dissertation aimed to steer away from a feminist relation and a feminist context within the works of Angela Carter and to focus only on the Gothic aspects.⁴⁰ However, an examination of her early works as a continuation within the vein of the British Gothic tradition could simply not ignore a feminist reading. Invariably, this also led to a close examination of sexuality in her works which has often been criticized for “pornographic and sado-masochistic sexual openness.”⁴¹ This served as a mapping of Carter’s early shaping of thoughts that culminated in a non-fictional work *The Sadeian Woman: An Exercise in Cultural History* (1979).

This dissertation will also focus on three of Angela Carter’s fictional works written in the 1960s: *Heroes and Villains* (1969), *The Magic Toyshop* (1969) and *Love* (1971).⁴² Carter wrote two other novels in this period, her first, *Shadow Dance*, in 1966, and *Several Perceptions* in 1968. Marc O’Day links these two novels with *Love* in what he terms the ‘Bristol Trilogy.’⁴³ On the other hand, Sarah Gamble finds that it has “very much in common...with *Heroes and Villains*.”⁴⁴ I have also chosen link *Love* to *Heroes and Villains* and *The Magic Toyshop* for two reasons. Firstly, unlike in *Shadow Dance* and *Several Perceptions* the narrative is, as Linden Peach⁴⁵ and Sarah Gamble confirm, “far more obviously more woman-centered,”⁴⁶ although in *Love* the male protagonist

⁴⁰ Throughout this dissertation the term ‘Gothic’ with a capital, following the example of David Punter as a leading critic and author on this subject. However, in citations, the various usage of cited authors will be respected.

⁴¹ Milada Frankova, “Angela Carter’s Mannerism in Rudolf II’s Curious Room,” *Brno Studies in English* 1999. <<http://www.phil.muni.cz>>.

⁴² Although published in 1971, this novel was actually written in 1969 while Carter still lived in Bristol.

⁴³ Marc O’Day, “‘Mutability is Having a Field Day’ The Sixties Aura of Angela Carter’s Bristol Trilogy,” *Flesh and the Mirror: Essays on the Art of Angela Carter*, ed. Lorna Sage (1994; London: Virago Press Ltd, 1995) 25.

⁴⁴ Sarah Gamble, *Angela Carter: Writing from the Front Line* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006) 39.

⁴⁵ Linden Peach, *Angela Carter* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1988) 24.

⁴⁶ Gamble, *Front Line* 68.

Lee does partly share the narration with Annabel.⁴⁷ Secondly, all three novels are from the period preceding Carter's two year stay in Japan between 1970 and 1972, where as she claims she had become radicalized as a feminist.⁴⁸ Although Japan was instrumental in Carter becoming a feminist, she had already "moved towards a feminist position at some time in the late sixties, a process which her experiences in Japan only intensified"⁴⁹ and when she grew to realize that "sexual liberation did not necessarily equate with female liberation."⁵⁰

Apart from showing the first signs of a feminist view, Carter's 1960 novels also "often adop[t] a surrealist perspective."⁵¹ It is interesting to note that Carter's interest in surrealism heightened during her time in Japan⁵² as well. Anna Watz focuses on a recent discovery of Carter's attempt at translating *Surréalisme et Sexualité* (1971) by the French feminist Xavière Gauthier in 1972. She points out that Carter's interest in surrealism originated in her student years, but later, possibly more aware as a feminis and under the influence of the 'feminist critique of surrealism' in Gauthier's work, Carter "'gave up' surrealism because its art...reduces women to passive objects – eroticized, idealized, and devoid of autonomy or agency."⁵³

Another term often attached to Carter's literary works is 'magic realism.' Marc O'Day points out that this term was first used to designate her works in the 1980s⁵⁴ then also retrospectively after her death to designate her previous works too. For the novels Carter wrote in the 1960s, this would be inaccurate, for according to O'Day the three novels of the 'Bristol Trilogy' were but "a sixties realism."⁵⁵ Marina Warner holds a similar view stating "the term is a misnomer in her case, because she is a sceptic, a satirist, and a supremely 18th century spirit."⁵⁶

⁴⁷ Sarah Gamble, *Angela Carter: A Literary Life* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997) 93.

⁴⁸ Angela Carter, "Notes from the Front Line," *On Gender and Writing*, ed. Michelene Wandore (London: Pandora Press, 1983) 71.

⁴⁹ Gamble, *Front Line* 97.

⁵⁰ Gamble, *Front Line* 97.

⁵¹ Anna Watz, "Angela Carter and Xavière Gauthier's *Surréalisme et sexualité*," *Contemporary Women's Writing*, September 2009. *Oxford Journals*. Knihovna Masarykovy univerzity, Brno, CZ. 15 Nov. 2009 <<http://cww.oxfordjournals.org>>.

⁵² see Watz.

⁵³ Watz.

⁵⁴ see O'Day 24.

⁵⁵ O'Day 24.

⁵⁶ Marina Warner, "Flights of Fancy," *New Statesman* 13 Feb. 2006. *Proquest 5000*. Knihovna Masarykovy Univerzity, Brno, CZ. 3 Dec. 2009 <<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb>>.

Linden Peach, although hesitantly, upholds the term but only considering it appropriate for her fiction written in the late 1970s.”⁵⁷

In *The Magic Toyshop* Carter makes use of fairytale and folklore, for example alluding to the story of Bluebeard several times. At this point in her career Carter “regarded the fairytale form as worth appropriating,”⁵⁸ and also adapting in *The Bloody Chamber* (1979). In this novel she also makes uses of mythology, bringing in the mythic story of Leda and the Swan. Similarly, mythology finds its place in *Heroes and Villains* where in this case Carter doesn’t perceive myths “as extraordinary lies designed to make people unfree but rather as something necessary and useful.”⁵⁹ In this novel, Carter’s interest in myths through which a female identity could be defined grew,”⁶⁰ but this trend did not show in *Love* only to reappear in *The Passion of New Eve* (1977). Later in her career, Carter would move away from mythic characters, stating in a 1988 interview with Anna Katsavos: “I used to be more interested in it. I’m not generally interested in doing that... I just stopped using these configurations because they just stopped being useful to me.”⁶¹

It is commonly known that Angela Carter read English Literature at Bristol University, which provided her with a sound knowledge of the English literary traditions. Carter herself pointed out that as a student focusing on medieval literatures she had “learned to read in layers.”⁶² This can also explain why throughout her career she would write in layers too. The three novels will be explored focusing on two aspects. Firstly, they will be placed within a framework of the British Gothic literary tradition to demonstrate how and to what extent Carter follows the tradition. This will also allow and investigation into whether Carter diverts from the traditional Gothic, and how, to create a modern Gothic work.

All three fictional works will be examined on the background of Gothic literature. For this reason a descriptive mapping of the history, origins and major

⁵⁷ Linden Peach, *Angela Carter* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1988) 7.

⁵⁸ Gamble, *Front Line* 66.

⁵⁹ Anna Katsavos, “An Interview with Angela Carter,” *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 1994 *Proquest 5000*. Knihovna Masarykovy Univerzity, Brno, CZ. 15 Nov. 2009 <<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb>>.

⁶⁰ see Gamble *Front Line* 82.

⁶¹ Katsavos, Online.

⁶² Allison Easton, “Introduction: Reading Angela Carter,” *Contemporary Critical Essays*, ed. Allison Easton (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd, 2000) 5.

themes in traditional Gothic literature will be presented. Following this, each novel will be explored according to four themes of Gothic literature. Firstly, the theme of boundaries and transgression of boundaries followed by the theme of decay, the theme of imprisonment, and also the very closely related theme of flight. These chapters will provide an answer to how Carter follows the tradition of Gothic literature and remolds it into a modern Gothic.

On a second level, aspects of sexuality and Carter's use of pornography that lead to a feminist interpretation will be focused on. Although *The Sadeian Woman* was written and published several years after the three novels to be analyzed, I perceive it as a culmination of the progress and evolution of her perceptions of sexuality and pornography that over the years helped shape her position as a feminist more often than not at odds with the mainstream.⁶³

⁶³ Gamble, *Front Line* 98.

CHAPTER 4

THE MAGIC TOYSHOP

Although Angela Carter found herself quite irritated that *The Magic Toyshop* was considered a Gothic novel, it would still to many such as Polly Shulman and Jeff Van der Meer “seem classically gothic.”⁶⁴ *The Magic Toyshop* is built on the traditional layout of the female Gothic framework. Following tragic death, the good father is replaced by a villain Gothic father. The Gothic daughter heroine, Melanie, is financially and emotionally fully reliant and utterly helpless. To complement the triangle, the Gothic lover enters the scene. At the same time, a second underlying and secret Gothic triangle appears. The same villain, Melanie’s uncle Phillip, is in a violently and “grotesquely exaggerated”⁶⁵ patriarchal relation to his wife Maggie. As the heroine of this second triangle, Aunt Maggie herself transgresses a new taboo – her secret lover is her own brother Frankie.

This novel is propped by a fairytale with strong Gothic features, the story of Bluebeard’s castle. Like Bluebeard, Uncle Phillip is also a king of his house, a tyrant who locks his wife within the house. And just like Bluebeard’s castle, Uncle Phillip’s house also hides secrets behind closed doors. But they are not necessarily Uncle Phillip’s secrets. While one secret is a secret of music and joy between the three Irish siblings, the other one is truly a secret of transgression against Uncle Phillip’s patriarchal order. It is the secret adultery and incestuous love. Sarah Gamble also compares Melanie to Alice in Wonderland, as she moves “into a dimension where the real and the fantastic mix and mingle...However, this is no escapist fantasy, but one which like a fairytale, is continually referring back to the social conditions out of which it is produced.”⁶⁶

Similarly to *Heroes and Villains*, the novel unfolds to the reader through the eyes of the adolescent heroine Melanie as she embarks on a path to adult womanhood. This path is represented as a journey from the house of her childhood under the protection of her father to the house of another patriarchal

⁶⁴ Polly Shulman, “Sex and Violence: Angela Carter’s body politics,” *The Village Voice* June 1993. *Proquest 5000*. Knihovna Masarykovy university, Brno, CZ. 15 Nov. 2009
<<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb>>.

⁶⁵ Gamble, *Front Line* 71.

⁶⁶ Gamble, *Front Line* 70.

figure to whom she can easily become prey.”⁶⁷ At the same time, similarly to *Heroes and Villains*, it is also divided into a world of simplified binary oppositions of the barbaric and civilized. Yet in *The Magic Toyshop* these oppositions do not represent the crude opposition of a primitive and barbarian tribal society versus a progressive and civilized societal structure. In this instance, Carter’s juxtaposition focuses on the class division within a single society. By focusing on binary oppositions of the characters, Carter also brings to surface oppositions between the middle and working classes of 1960s Britain.

A) Gothic Boundaries

The opening pages of *The Magic Toyshop* confront us with the intimate boundary Melanie, the central heroine, has come up against: the boundary between Melanie as young girl and Melanie as woman, between herself as a child and herself as an adult. In tentative exploration she crosses this boundary into her sexual adulthood and womanhood from which she, quite shaken, returns into her safe and familiar world. Nevertheless, this crossing of boundaries, however innocent, does forecast a second crossing, this time permanent. True to the Gothic pattern, the sudden death of her parents and so the loss of her father as the providing patriarchal figure propels Melanie into the world of adulthood from which there is no turning back.

Suddenly at the age of fifteen, Melanie is thrust from a world of rich rural comfort in “a house in the country, with a bedroom each and several to spare, and a Shetland pony in a field”⁶⁸ into a world of “down-on-its-luck South London.”⁶⁹ The binary oppositions of the upper middle class versus the poorer working class run parallel to intermingle with the traditional Gothic opposition of barbaric versus the civilized. From her father’s large red-brick house “with Edwardian gables, standing by itself in an acre or two of its own grounds; it smelled of lavender furniture polish and money,”⁷⁰ filled with books and art, silverware and expensive fashion, a home with modern toilets and baths taken every day, Melanie and her siblings are taken to live with their uncle. In a run-down South London

⁶⁷ Gamble, *Front Line* 74.

⁶⁸ Angela Carter *The Magic Toyshop* (London: Virago Press, 2003) 7.

⁶⁹ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 38.

⁷⁰ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 7.

suburb, “between a failed, boarded-up jeweler’s and a grocer’s....was a dark cavern of a shop, so dimly lit one did not at first notice it as it bowed its head under the tenement above”⁷¹ where not a single book was found, intellectual education had no value, and fashion was downgraded to what the patriarchal tyrant uncle considered appropriate for a woman to wear; where there was no hot water, no soap and the lavatory noisily flushed no water. This was a working class home.

The boundaries of class could not be more distinct than through the speech and accents of the inhabitants of each house. In the father’s upper middle class and educated home, even the housekeeper “spoke with an old-world, never-never land stateliness, like a duchess in a Whitehall farce.”⁷² In immediate contrast was the foreign lilt of the red sibling’s Irish, and the harshness of the working class “London accent grating on a nicely-brought-up ear.”⁷³ Melanie does not fail to understand the implications of the working class London accent has on her future and that of her siblings, among others their social descent.

The boundaries of culture and upbringing were reflected in the relation to religion as well. In the educated and upper middle-class environment, “father liked them all to go to church on Sundays. He read the lesson, sometimes, when he was at home...it pleased him to play gently at squire.”⁷⁴ This middle-class household allowed the luxury of free time for a gentrified approach to faith. In opposition, the working class home of Uncle Phillip only allowed time for work to earn “bread and butter.”⁷⁵ The only appearances of faith took form of low-brow meal blessings; and Sundays were headed by a highly stressful and violent family breakfast.

This boundary of cultures is also reflected in the evening pastimes of both households. The idyllic evenings Melanie had with her parents spent reading for pleasure reflected the educated and cultured middle class environment. In Uncle Phillip’s house, after the shop was closed, Aunt Maggie would continue her evening ‘working’. Even resting she was not permitted to be idle, and her activities aimed at a continued earning of keep sewing clothes for Uncle Phillip’s

⁷¹ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 39.

⁷² Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 3.

⁷³ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 58.

⁷⁴ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 8.

⁷⁵ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 87.

toys and puppets. Melanie maintained her middle class resting pastime, and although there wasn't a single book in the working class house, she continued rereading the few she had brought with her.

The boundaries are also set between the two mother figures that appear in the novel. Representing the upper middle class is Melanie's mother, the elegant and classy housewife of a celebrity writer, "an emphatically clothed woman, clothed all over, never without stockings whatever the weather, always gloved and hatted, ready for some outing...from a feature in a glossy magazine."⁷⁶ Although she never had to work, and a housekeeper tended for the home, the mother had still been "photographed in the kitchen in a frilly apron, mixing a cake...[for] a series of features about celebrities' wives and who they were and how they coped."⁷⁷ Working class Aunt Maggie "was a red woman...Her eyebrows were red as if thickly marked above her eyes with red ink but her face was colorless, no blood at all showing in cheeks or narrow lips. She was painfully thin."⁷⁸ Far from the picture perfect Mother, Aunt Maggie wore a "dirty apron in dark, printed cotton...pulled awry over her black skirt and sweater, and she appeared flustered. She might have pinned up her hair in her sleep, it was so untidy."⁷⁹ Yet Aunt Maggie was a working woman in all sense, apart from fully serving her husband, she also tended to the shop, did all the cooking and the housework. Where Mother was a representative wife, her main function to complement her husband, and ensure the household is representative too, Aunt Maggie had to earn her keep alongside her husband. For as Lorna Sage notes, "houses may symbolize mothers, but they belong none the less to patriarchal proprietors."⁸⁰ She had to work for him and the household, with no importance to how the household was represented towards the outside world.

As opposed to Mother, Aunt Maggie did cross the boundaries of her dirty run-down working class life into a world of beauty and pleasure in a manner Mother never did. In this manner, Aunt Maggie, who had less freedom given to her by her dominant husband was in fact less dependant on her husband, and did have a world of her own while Mother's always seemed to be an extension of

⁷⁶ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 10.

⁷⁷ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 54.

⁷⁸ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 40.

⁷⁹ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 71.

⁸⁰ Lorna Sage, "Introduction," *Flesh and the Mirror: Essays on the Art of Angela Carter*, ed. Lorna Sage (1994; London: Virago Press ltd, 1995) 6.

Father's world. Aunt Maggie had a world of music and dance that she shared with her brothers, a world in which she was free and truly herself, a world that she was a part of despite having to shield it from Uncle Phillip. This was a world of protest as much as a world of freedom and joy; and its main function was pleasure and not making earning her keep, and its boundaries were crossed whenever Uncle Phillip was not present to prevent it.

Yet the boundaries between what throughout the novel is as a matter of course perceived as the boundaries between the educated and the civilized in opposition to the uneducated and uncivilized, the prim and clean against the dirty and disheveled, and the modern and the old-fashioned, even the English as opposed to the foreign Irish are not always unambiguous. The uneducated, wild and uncivilized Maggie, Francie, and Finn were artists in their own right. Finn painted and danced, Maggie was a distinguished cook, and all three played music. What in the beginning was an opposition of the savage Irish people versus the cultured English middle class transforms itself through the eyes of the colorless Melanie, who possessed none of these skills. She herself realizes how "they were red and had substance and she, Melanie, was forever grey, a shadow"⁸¹. And although Melanie may have not realized it outright, she still is aware that their "love was almost palpable...warm as the fire, strong and smoothing as sweet tea."⁸² And while Melanie's memories of time spent with her family are calm, idyllic and serene, they do lack the easy warmth and love of the Jowle siblings, which is strongly projected into the grey and sterile relationship primarily between Melanie and her brother Jonathon.

B) Decay

In *The Magic Toyshop*, decay in its most ultimate form is represented by death. For Melanie the first signs of decay within her life appear with her mother's torn wedding dress, a sign of breakage with her life hitherto, and continue with Melanie's mental breakdown following the death of her parents, after which she must abandon her middle class life for Uncle Phillip's working class. Melanie becomes thus utterly defenseless also against decay in the form of

⁸¹ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 77.

⁸² Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 43.

social decline, and together with it, decay in the form of dirtiness and slovenliness.

In its most visible form, Melanie's social decay first shockingly arrives along with the Jowle brothers. Not only is this the first time that Melanie finds herself in the company of working class persons, it is also the first time she physically finds herself in such close proximity to working class men: "Melanie began to smell the men. She was puzzled for some moments as to the source of the smell, so little did she expect he brothers would be so dirty...their smell filled her nostrils until she almost choked with it. And also with horror, for she had never sat close to men who smelt before. A ferocious, unwashed, animal reek came from them both."⁸³

As Melanie came to know Finn better and closer, she noticed other features of decay, connected to his health; the discolored teeth, and even a decaying molar, as well as the seeming depression and loss of life following his fall during a staging of Uncle Phillip's plays. Aunt Margaret fared only slightly better in Melanie's eyes. In an old unbecoming dress, and with holes in her stockings, Maggie was the decaying counterpart of the picture of the middle-class housewife that Melanie's mother came to be.

Uncle Phillip's house also seems to be decaying and falling apart, which may seem strange due to the fact that Uncle Phillip certainly has the skills to do repairs and renovations around the house. Yet although he was able to create beautiful, intricate and ingenious wooden toys, damp stained the wall of the dining room,⁸⁴ the toilet did not work, "And no lavatory paper. It was all disgusting. They lived like pigs."⁸⁵ In comparison to Melanie's "fifteen combed and scrubbed years...clean underwear, [and] a cortege full of baths in which she has washed herself,"⁸⁶ it is not surprising that with the lack of hygiene and modern comfort, for Melanie, Uncle Phillip's household, especially Francie and Finn, was "dirty and common."⁸⁷

Melanie's expectations about her future life in London revolved around culture, theatre, and soirees. Yet her first occasion to leave Uncle Phillip's house

⁸³ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 36.

⁸⁴ see Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 46.

⁸⁵ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 77.

⁸⁶ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 36.

⁸⁷ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 77.

for a walk showed her a once good middle-class neighborhood “crumbling in decay,”⁸⁸ a sad and depressed place. She is also led to the park, once the site of the National Exposition of 1852⁸⁹ that Finn calls “the graveyard of a pleasure ground.”⁹⁰ Once a place of grandeur and pride, it has now become an overrun decaying jungle of “pervasive despair” and “desolation,”⁹¹ set to be finally torn down completely and replaced.

C) Imprisonment

Imprisonment in *The Magic Toyshop* is represented by the tyrannical patriarchal character of Uncle Phillip, and, in extension, by the boundaries and rules he sets, and finally by the physical boundaries of the house. Although no such rule is ever formally set, it is understood that Melanie is not to leave the house unless for errands, and she only does so, going for a walk with Finn, on the one occasion that Uncle Phillip is not in the house. Even though in her old life, she was not retained but rather encouraged to go out of the house, it seems that she does not suffer from this change.

Melanie’s first feels the impacts of imprisonment by the Uncle Phillip with the expectations he has on her clothing, i.e. what he considers appropriate for a woman. As Finn pressingly explains to Melanie, Uncle Phillip “can’t abide a woman in trousers. He won’t have a woman in the shop if she’s got trousers on and he sees her.”⁹² Uncle Phillip also likes “silent women.”⁹³ This points directly to the dumbness of Aunt Maggie, as she is truly silent, but it also introduces Melanie to the notion that as a woman she is not expected to talk, and in extension not to have a voice or an opinion of her own.

Aunt Maggie’s silence was “a terrible affliction; it came to her on her wedding day, like a curse. Her silence.”⁹⁴ This silence is the result of her imprisonment through marriage to Uncle Phillip. She is only permitted to wear old, drab dresses that diminish her beauty and her personality, and lives in constant stress and fear of her husband. Possibly the most obvious sign of the

⁸⁸ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 98.

⁸⁹ see Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 99.

⁹⁰ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 101.

⁹¹ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 101-102.

⁹² Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 62.

⁹³ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 63.

⁹⁴ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 37.

strength of Uncle Phillip's imprisoning chains over Aunt Maggie is the only piece of jewelry she ever received from him – a choker. The big and ugly choker is the most basic and obvious symbol of Uncle Phillip's ownership and imprisonment of his wife. Holding her tightly under her throat, it indeed demonstrates his accomplishment of choking and silencing his wife into complete submission.

In the same manner, it is not only Melanie and Aunt Maggie that are imprisoned by Uncle Phillip, but also Francie and especially Finn. Finn is the Uncle's apprentice, he is in the closest daily contact with the Uncle, and surely carries the brunt of his violence, and has the bruises to show for it. Uncle Phillip is very aware of the fact that he has all three Jowle siblings imprisoned - Aunt Maggie through marriage to himself, and Finn and Francie through Maggie, having taken them in when they were orphaned. An Uncle Phillip also knows they would never leave Aunt Maggie to him, and that they are imprisoned in their obligation to earn their keep in his house.

This imprisoning obligation is to be extended on the three middle class siblings "to make into little Flowers."⁹⁵ Victoria, the baby, is naturally incorporated into the family as she becomes 'Aunt Maggie's baby', Jonathon is in Uncle Phillip's hands as his only interest is to build ship models, and he very readily contributes to his keep by building ships that were sold in the shop over Christmas. Only Melanie is left to be completely made over, and to lose any volition of her own.⁹⁶ To earn her keep, Melanie must work in the toy shop, there is no question of continuing her education. On top of that, Uncle Phillip devises a plan for her to play in one of his private puppet shows.

D) Flight

The perspective of running away from Uncle Phillip's household first occurs to Melanie following her first breakfast in her new home. The non-working lavatory, the bath with not more than a trickle of cold water, the dirtiness and squalor of her new home, and the oppressing and frightening presence of Uncle Phillip all contribute to the thought that she could run away. Yet in this instance her thoughts of running away were only typical contemplations of a teenager,

⁹⁵ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 144.

⁹⁶ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 76.

imagining herself “Brewing Nescafe on her own gas-ring... and painting one wall geranium red and another cornflower blue.”⁹⁷ Partially an idea of flight from her current situation, it is also a young person’s romantic yearning for independence.

Yet for at the moment, Melanie has no real desire for flight. Although not particularly happy in her new environment, and aware of her imprisonment in the clutches of Uncle Phillip, she does not have the volition to rebel in any way against her Uncle or her situation. In comparison to Marianne from *Heroes and Villains*, Melanie has no true will of her own and does not seek to break free of her current imprisonment.

On the other hand Finn is the first to break the imprisonment of the Gothic Uncle Phillip. He does so by chopping up his Swan puppet because “Phillip Flower loved it so,”⁹⁸ and because through all his work he “put himself into it.”⁹⁹ For Finn, the swan directly represents Uncle Phillip and his intentions for Melanie – not only a staging of the rape of Leda by the swan, but also a manipulation of Finn and Melanie into a situation that would end up with Melanie undone. By killing the swan, Finn had also ‘killed’ and chopped up Uncle Phillip, and buried him too. Finn’s initial reaction upon waking to this reality the following day was terror. But after realizing Uncle Phillip had left the household for the day, and Finn broke the news Francie and Aunt Maggie, going as far to taking the liberty of sitting in Uncle Phillip’s chair. By killing and chopping up the swan that had attacked Melanie, by now one of their own, he had freed partially also Francie and Aunt Maggie from the terrible hold that Uncle Phillip had over them.

Uncle Phillip return from his outing like a Bluebeard, only to find himself betrayed by his wife, and in a manner he would never have considered possible, cuckolded by his own brother-in-law.¹⁰⁰ Yet it is also at this moment of truth, that both Francie and especially Maggie break free from the imprisonment of Uncle Phillip. Aunt Maggie “found her old voice again the day she was freed”¹⁰¹ and along with her voice a new courage. Maggie and Francie had decided to truly (and not only symbolically) finish with Uncle Phillip, while Finn and Melanie were given the opportunity for a final flight from the imprisonment of Uncle Phillip.

⁹⁷ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 78.

⁹⁸ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 174.

⁹⁹ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 174.

¹⁰⁰ see Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 195.

¹⁰¹ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 197.

CHAPTER 5

HEROES AND VILLAINS

In *Heroes and Villains* (1969) Angela Carter perhaps most clearly and most fundamentally employs the Gothic form. In fact, Carter wrote this novel “because she was irritated that critics called her second novel, *The Magic Toyshop*, a Gothic, and she wanted to show them what a real Gothic looked like.”¹⁰² Building her plot on the traditional layout of the female Gothic novel of the good Gothic father replaced following his death by the Gothic villain father, and recreating the Gothic villain - heroine - lover triangle, Carter centers her plot around the basic juxtapositions of the barbaric and the civilized, of Gothic chaos and a contemporary order, stressing the binary oppositions typical for Gothic fiction throughout the novel as seen through the eyes of the heroine Marianne.

Heroes and Villains “is a more extreme reworking”¹⁰³ of the themes apparent in *The Magic Toyshop*. As a young Gothic heroine, Marianne leaves the safe patriarchal world of her father and enters into a tumultuous world where again her safety is assured by a supreme patriarchal authority. Yet in this new world, the boundaries between the Gothic villain and lover are far from clear, and Marianne’s sexuality becomes central to the maintenance, or dissolution, of patriarchal authority.

A) Gothic Boundaries

Marianne’s world of *Heroes and Villains*, set up against a background of a no man’s land of deformed human-like ‘outcasts of the outcasts,’ is divided by the boundaries between the Community of Professors and the Barbarians. This basic Gothic binary opposition of ‘Professors’ versus ‘Barbarians’ was created following the strongly apocalyptic ‘War’ – the boundary between the world as was then, the Past, and the world as now, the Present. The world of the Community was of an educated and civilized “tranquil order,”¹⁰⁴ an order based

¹⁰² Shulman, Online.

¹⁰³ Gamble, *Front Line* 74.

¹⁰⁴ Angela Carter, *Heroes and Villains* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1981) 14.

on the scientific, the new, well-kept and clean. In juxtaposition was the world of the Barbarians, a world of the illiterate and savage, a world of superstitious chaos; dismal, dirty and decaying. While the tribal Barbarians led a semi-sedentary, semi-nomadic lifestyle, travelling and settling down in different areas according to the time of the year, the traditional society-based Community lived all year round in their village, built according to a given structure and surrounded by protective walls. The Community kept livestock and grew crops, while the Barbarians hunted and, in times of need, raided the Community. While the civilized Community clearly set up a formal class division of Professors (the elite), Soldiers and Workers, the tribal Barbarians had no such structure, their leaders were partially selected according to a hereditary structures, partially by deposition of a formal leader, but always involving a good amount of respect through fear and superstition.

All the same, both worlds share the basic Gothic feature of the encroachment of the past upon the present. The present world of the Barbarians and the Community was pre-determined in the past, before the 'War,' when a former division of society ensured the Professors, and those they deemed suitable and useful, survived in deep shelters. The Barbarians somehow managed to find survive, while the Outcasts suffered the greatest damage of the nuclear-like war debilitating their minds and deforming their bodies, both groups somewhat carrying over into the present the results of the curse of social pre-determination.

The encroachment of the past into the present is even further stressed by the Community's preoccupation at preserving the Past. Marianne's father, a Professor, "reconstructed the past; that was his profession."¹⁰⁵ He maintained a large library full of books and thoughts from the past, and a museum with relics in glass cases¹⁰⁶ from times before the War. The past in the Community is one of documented history, a past classified by reason, order and education. And it is in this world of reason and order Marianne was raised.

In the world of the Barbarians, the encroaching past is more of a Gothic kind. Fuelled by a fearful superstition and mysticism, the Barbarians protect themselves with amulets and charms, symbols of a relic past. In superstitious fear they gesture against the evil eye, which Marianne only much later recognizes as

¹⁰⁵ Carter, *Heroes* 8

¹⁰⁶ Carter, *Heroes* 9.

the sign of the Cross, the sign of a religion forgotten to the pre-War past, and make use of incantations.

If the Barbarians temporarily cross the boundaries into the world of the Community during raids, then Marianne is the one who permanently crosses the boundary from the world of the Professors into the world of the Barbarians. Yet she is not the only one. A similar crossing of boundaries was effectuated by Mrs. Green, Jewel's foster mother who becomes Marianne's surrogate mother, and Dr. Donnally, who replaces Marianne's father as a ridiculously Gothicized villain father figure.

Marianne's crossing of boundaries between the two worlds is brought about by her feeling of imprisonment and deprived freedom within the world of the Community and her subsequent escape. Throughout her childhood, Marianne is, just like all the members of her Community, brought up within its walls, she "was not allowed to go outside the outer wire fence away from the community"¹⁰⁷ but like a princess "lived in a white tower made of steel and concrete."¹⁰⁸ As a six year old, she experiences total imprisonment when locked up in a high room in this tower by punishment, during which she is witness to the killing of her elder brother during a Barbarian raid on the community.

Marianne flees the imprisonment she feels in the community by wandering out beyond the outer wire fence of the community, although it was forbidden to do so, and already this very early, she herself perceives these trips as escape,¹⁰⁹ even though temporary and of limited duration. But as her Professor father said there were "no such things as ghosts so she would go off by herself into the swamp"¹¹⁰ and then further out into the ruins and the heart of the city in ruins, and one day even further into the forest. These trips out of the boundaries of the Community allow Marianne her first glimpses of the outside world from which she, and those in the Community, is isolated from. For the moment she is still the product of her upbringing and would not have been able to free herself, she remains emotionally and practically within the walls of her Community. Nevertheless, these trips are precursors of her future flight that frees her from the Community never to come back.

¹⁰⁷ Carter, *Heroes* 2

¹⁰⁸ Carter, *Heroes* 1.

¹⁰⁹ Carter, *Heroes* 11.

¹¹⁰ Carter, *Heroes* 7.

B) Decay

The pervading sense of decay prevalent throughout the novel that Marianne herself experiences. Seemingly the only one to venture out of her Community, she first provides us with glimpses of the long decayed world of the past as she “penetrated to the fossilized heart of the city...where nothing existed but chunks of blackish, rusty stone. Here even the briars refused to grow and pools of water from the encroaching swampland contained nothing but viscid darkness.”¹¹¹ Here she found no sound, no signs of life, only “rags with putrefied flesh.”¹¹² The same sense of putrefying decay is reinforced constantly throughout the novel, and is reflected not only in the world of the Barbarians, but also, surprisingly, in the world of the Professors.

When Marianne has her second glimpse ever of the Barbarians in the forest, they do not seem as wild and savage and glorious as during the raid 10 years ago. They are the picture of decay and disintegration of pre-War society, one of poverty, misery and sickness; they are the “cruelly dispossessed survivors.”¹¹³ At exactly the same time, mental decay crosses the boundaries of reason into the Community – Marianne’s father is dead by the hands of Marianne’s nurse in a fit of Gothic madness. The nurse “loved [them] when [they] were alive,”¹¹⁴ but decay is also the result of age, and both she and the Professor have grown old and less alive. Marianne too is barely ‘alive’ but decaying within the Gothic imprisonment and confinement Community. And so hers becomes the struggle to shed the decaying past by cutting the last threads that tie her to her good Gothic father. Marianne burns his books and throws away his clock – the two signs of culture and order but also relics of the past – and cuts her “long, fair hair so she resembled a demented boy”¹¹⁵ far more than the Gothic maiden.

In the Community all is done to keep mental decay at bay, order is reinstalled after each raid, what is destroyed is rebuilt or repaired. Members of the Community that go mad are considered as “maladjusted,” “lack[ing] in discipline” or “deformed,” should be “given treatment” or “subjected to tests and then

¹¹¹ Carter, *Heroes* 11-12.

¹¹² Carter, *Heroes* 12.

¹¹³ Carter, *Heroes* 14.

¹¹⁴ Carter, *Heroes* 15.

¹¹⁵ Carter, *Heroes* 15.

operated upon,”¹¹⁶ and in certain cases are simply shot dead by the soldiers. In the tribe, decay is pervasive everywhere. Poverty, dirt, malnutrition, illnesses, and diseases touch upon every member of the tribe; they are openly visible and rarely treated. The tribe lives in anything partially suitable they find, with no attempt to better their environment. When Marianne enters the tribe of the Barbarians, she is taken to live in a house of the pre-war past that she barely recognizes from her father’s books, yet this one “was a gigantic memory of rotten stone, a compilation of innumerable forgotten styles now given some green unity by the devouring web of creeper, fur of moss, and fungous growth of rot.”¹¹⁷ This house, although lived in, is “wholly abandoned to decay”¹¹⁸ and as Marianne will see not only from the outside but from the inside as well.

Physical bodily decay, in the form of gangrene, greets Marianne as she first enters the house, “the reek of putrefaction...filled the room...she had never smelled decaying flesh before.”¹¹⁹ It is Jewel’s brother, dying from a festering wound, his body in decomposition even before he is truly dead. Decay in the form of death strikes later as well, when the tribe’s babies become ill and die.

Living with the tribe, the sense of decay surrounding Marianne is constant and only deepens; her living conditions get no better, but rather worse. She also begins to decay, there is no effort from her part either to prevent this decay from spreading, to make anything cleaner or more bearable, and she is only a passive spectator, decaying along too. Even following her wedding when she moves in with Jewel into the tower, she watches the tower erode till there is hardly a rock over their heads.

C) Imprisonment

As a typical Gothic heroine, Marianne grew up a prisoner in both the physical and mental sense in her father’s world, only to exchange it for and even more horrifying imprisonment in her Gothic lover’s world. Physically, she was held prisoner within the walls of the Community, butt also “lived in a white tower

¹¹⁶ Carter, *Heroes* 9-15.

¹¹⁷ Carter, *Heroes* 31.

¹¹⁸ Carter, *Heroes* 31.

¹¹⁹ Carter, *Heroes* 36.

made of steel and concrete.”¹²⁰ Like a princess, she lived up high, above the heads of others, a symbol of her rank as a Professor’s daughter. This type of imprisonment is repeated again, much later on, after her marriage to Jewel when she joins him in their new quarters in the decaying house. Their room was in the oldest and highest part of the house, up a spiral staircase leading up into a tower where “higher and higher they went.”¹²¹ Although symbolizing Marianne’s high status in the tribe, high up in the tower with her husband, again she becomes unreachable, symbolizing her even greater imprisonment and isolation from the tribe.

But even previous to her marriage to Jewel, Marianne was a prisoner in the tribe. While Marianne was recovering from the snake-bite she received during her flight from the Community, Jewel would visit his foster mother and check up on her, yet these visits stopped and “nobody visited her now she was well for now she was a prisoner,”¹²² and her status in the tribe changed. Marianne was not permitted out of her room and like many prisoners locked up for a long time, she “no longer had any clear idea of how long she had been there.”¹²³ Her imprisonment was more apparent during the long periods she was left alone in her room. There being no locks Marianne “was fastened into the room by means of the trunks of some trees which were placed across the door outside,”¹²⁴ her isolation relieved only when Jewel’s foster mother brought her food or came in to sleep.

Like all Gothic heroines, Marianne is constantly under the forced guardianship of a patriarchal figure. Brought up by her father, following his death her guardian, under the conventions of a patriarchal society, becomes her uncle. In the world of the Barbarians, she is again either under the directive of the Gothic villain father Donnally, only to become, after her marriage to Jewel, her husband’s complete responsibility and property.

¹²⁰ Carter, *Heroes* 1.

¹²¹ Carter, *Heroes* 75.

¹²² Carter, *Heroes* 40

¹²³ Carter, *Heroes* 41.

¹²⁴ Carter, *Heroes* 41.

D) Flight

Marianne's periods of imprisonment are interrupted by her many flights, creating a cycle of imprisonment and flight throughout the novel. The precursors of Marianne's flights are her escapes from the Community into the swamp and then further out into the heart of the city in ruins where it was forbidden to go. After the death of her father, another Barbarian attack provided Marianne with a chance for her final flight from the Community and the imprisonment she felt within it. When she brought food to the injured Jewel hiding in a shed, she immediately answers 'yes' to whether she would go with him as "there was nothing but custom to keep her in the village,"¹²⁵ and it was that very custom she was seeking to escape.

Although "she found she was accepting his offer to rescue her,"¹²⁶ in an act of reciprocal rescuing Marianne makes use of her capabilities to drive the community's lorry. But before they drive out Jewel marks her with his war paints and she becomes his "hostage,"¹²⁷ and his property. Before leaving one patriarchal society, she has already become a repressed victim of an even more strongly patriarchal tribe.

Later in the novel, Marianne decides to flee the tribe after she almost got gang-raped by Jewel's six or so brothers, "she had no reason or desire to stay in this disgusting and dangerous place."¹²⁸ This time, Marianne does not wait to be rescued, but escapes on her own. Similarly though, her flight is not planned, and she leaves the tribe with no provisions. Yet once on the road, "the further she went the happier she grew."¹²⁹ Having never come across any danger during her ventures out of the Community's walls, she felt safer on the road than "among these strangers"¹³⁰ of the tribe. Having left the horrors of the tribe behind, an aspect of hope rises that the road she was on could lead to a better world. Yet this time her break is interrupted by Jewel and she is brought back to the tribe, now truly raped and utterly humiliated, and what more to be imprisoned yet further by

¹²⁵ Carter, *Heroes* 18.

¹²⁶ Carter, *Heroes* 18.

¹²⁷ Carter, *Heroes* 18.

¹²⁸ Carter, *Heroes* 51.

¹²⁹ Carter, *Heroes* 52.

¹³⁰ Carter, *Heroes* 52.

marriage to Jewel. At this point, Marianne “did not intend to run away again yet...for she knew she would be tracked...and returned to the stinking castle,”¹³¹ but this was only for the time being, ‘yet’ suggesting that she would indeed plan to escape at some later point.

¹³¹ Carter, *Heroes* 60.

CHAPTER 6

LOVE

In *Love*, published after *Heroes and Villains*, Angela Carter returns to a British setting. In a run-down urban and academic environment, also labeled as ‘provincial bohemia’¹³² by Marc O’Day, Carter lays out a destructive sexual triangle connecting Annabel, Lee and his brother Buzz. Similarly to *Shadow Dance* (1966), where the plot also revolved around a love triangle of two men and a woman,¹³³ the novel ultimately ends with suicide – Annabel’s.

As mentioned earlier, the term ‘magical realism’ cannot be applied to this novel. Marc O’Day aligns it within a “sixties realism saturated with domesticated Gothic and psychological fantasy elements”¹³⁴ with no ‘magic’ involved. Patricia Juliana Smith regards *Love* as a novel of sensibility and a “literary first cousin [of] the Gothic novel.”¹³⁵ Sue Roe on the other hand, in her essay “The Disorder of Love: Angela Carter’s Surrealist Collage,” claims that the heroine Annabel “exists outside even the traditions of female Gothic”¹³⁶ only in certain instances “behave[ing] like a Gothic heroine,”¹³⁷ and Anna Watz supports this saying the novel is “written from a...maddening perspective and is steeped in the surreal dreamworld.”¹³⁸ For Sue Roe, the novel is “as Annabel sees the world: messy collage of the imaginary and the real.”¹³⁹ Yet the novel’s central love triangle and opening Gothic setting still invites an interpretation in the traditional Gothic line. Lee sets out as the villain husband who abuses Annabel sexually and mentally, yet he is also the husband and lover that takes care of Annabel. Buzz is the distant lover, but in a relationship consumed only in a desire for Annabel that fails to meet on the same level as Annabel’s desire for him. Enhancing the overall Gothic queerness of the setting, Annabel and Buzz themselves carry villainous streaks

¹³² see O’Day 25.

¹³³ see O’Day 26.

¹³⁴ O’Day 24.

¹³⁵ Patricia Juliana Smith, “All You Need is Love: Angela Carter’s novel of sixties sex and sensibility,” *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 1994. *Proquest 5000*. Knihovna Masarykovy Univerzity, Brno, CZ. 15 Nov. 2009 <<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb>>.

¹³⁶ Sue Roe, “The Disorder of Love: Angela Carter’s Surrealist Collage,” *Essays on the Art of Angela Carter*, ed Lorna Sage (1994; London: Virago Press, 1995) 63.

¹³⁷ Roe 63.

¹³⁸ Watz 3.

¹³⁹ Roe 64.

too. Annabel is mentally volatile and dangerous to herself, Buzz is violently unpredictable and a danger mainly to others and has the “outward appearance of the hypermasculine sexuality attributed to the Gothic villain.”¹⁴⁰ Both become monstrous towards the mentally stable and so differently vulnerable Lee. Beneath a Gothic veil of madness and transgressed taboos unfolds a drama of sexual passions, possession, adultery and violence.

A) Gothic Boundaries

Beginning almost like a fairytale with the opening words “One day”, the reader is immediately introduced into a typically eerie Gothic setting. In a park surrounding a long demolished 18th century mansion, decaying into a wilderness with “spread[ing] green tangles,”¹⁴¹ Annabel sees the uncanny and mysterious picture of “the sun and the moon in the sky at the same time,”¹⁴² the sight of which “filled her with a terror which entirely consumed her.”¹⁴³ A Gothic sense of foreboding is instilled together with the understanding that things are not the way they should be and that there must exist an external reason for her terror. The seemingly unnatural occurrence is none but the sun setting in the west and the moon rising in the east, with no “supernatural or fantastic violations of the laws of everyday life.”¹⁴⁴ For Annabel the occurrence represents “two contrary states at once...a dreadful rebellion of the familiar”¹⁴⁵ from which she attempts to flee in frenzy and hide in fear. Through the “collision between the orderly cool rationality”¹⁴⁶ and Annabel’s “terror of the imagination”¹⁴⁷ the ambiguities of the underlying Gothic boundaries of the common and the uncanny are set.

These same boundaries are further emphasized by a description of the park and within it of the boundaries between different eras of the past, but also between the sides of the park. The south side of the park, basked in light, positive, normal, holds no interest for Annabel. The “Gothic north, where the ivy-covered tower

¹⁴⁰ Smith, Online.

¹⁴¹ Angela Carter, *Love* (1971; London: Chatto and Wyndus Ltd, 1987) 1.

¹⁴² Carter, *Love* 1.

¹⁴³ Carter, *Love* 1.

¹⁴⁴ O’Day 24.

¹⁴⁵ Carter, *Love* 2-3.

¹⁴⁶ Smith, Online.

¹⁴⁷ Smith, Online.

with leaded ogive windows skulked among the trees...transforming the park into a premeditated theatre” filled with “magic strangeness” and “curious silence”¹⁴⁸ provides an ambiguous background to the fear and nightmares, and also the “nervous pleasure”¹⁴⁹ of Annabel’s unhinged mind. This side also reflects the ‘other’ side of Annabel’s mind, and the unsettling foreboding that lingers.

Similarly to *The Magic Toyshop*, *Love* also draws attention to the boundaries between social classes and the underlying tensions. Buzz and Lee are from working-class backgrounds and “represent the two trajectories for the working-class boy born in the forties.”¹⁵⁰ Annabel on the other hand is from a rich middle-class background that “smelled of soap and money”¹⁵¹ and listened to “baroque harpsichord music.”¹⁵² Although Annabel seems not to see nor care for these class differences, her parents only partially accept Lee because he is a university graduate and a teacher, and Buzz because they consider him a future artist – the new bourgeoisie. Lee faces the same boundary of class division with one of his mistresses, his university lecturer’s middle class housewife, when he realizes that one of the attractions he held for her was that she romanticized him as a working-class “thug.”¹⁵³

The boundaries of two different worlds are also set by the opposition of the physique and character of the two Collins half-brothers, Buzz and Lee. Although they shared the same mother, and the same upbringing by an aunt, they are foreign and strange to each other through their fathers. At the same time, they function as the opposite shadow of the other, in what Sarah Gamble calls the ‘Gothic mode.’¹⁵⁴ Lee is the fair-haired man with clear blue eyes, went to grammar school, became a teacher, and “gave the impression of perfect naturalness, utter spontaneity, and entire warmth of heart.”¹⁵⁵ His savage, dark, coarse brother Buzz, whose own mad mother was convinced her “child of a dark stranger...was touched with the diabolic,”¹⁵⁶ had no interest in education or work, communicated sporadically and erratically, and had aggressive, disconcerting and strange ways

¹⁴⁸ Carter, *Love* 2.

¹⁴⁹ Carter, *Love* 1.

¹⁵⁰ O’Day 48.

¹⁵¹ Carter, *Love* 28.

¹⁵² Carter, *Love* 17.

¹⁵³ Carter, *Love* 22.

¹⁵⁴ Gamble, *Life* 98.

¹⁵⁵ Carter, *Love* 12.

¹⁵⁶ Carter, *Love* 13.

about him. This also gave him what Patricia Juliana Smith calls “the outward appearance of the hypermasculine sexuality attributed to the Gothic villain.”¹⁵⁷ These opposites manifested themselves in the relationships and approach of each of the brothers towards the mentally unstable Annabel. While Lee provided Annabel a stabilized environment where seemingly her madness was reined in, Buzz encouraged and stimulated her mind into excesses.

The central underlying boundary of the novel is the boundary between sanity and madness. The Collins brothers’ first introduction to madness was in childhood when their mother gone utterly mad in public. Lee is aware that Annabel is strange and non-balanced, nevertheless he is still attracted to her “because of her strangeness which seemed to him qualitatively different.”¹⁵⁸ Annabel surely also appealed to him because of her “‘feminine’ traits of physical and mental frailty and [especially the] passive victimage peculiar to the Gothic heroine.”¹⁵⁹ Buzz, following his initial distrust and dislike, even jealousy, was in his self-groomed perversity Annabel’s “only intermediary between her private experience and the common one,”¹⁶⁰ that is, between the world “rendered into nightmare by being filtered through [her] insane imagination”¹⁶¹ and the ordinary world as existed and was seen by others.

Annabel’s interior and private world was a world of “mythology”¹⁶² in which she had “the capacity for changing the appearance of the real world which is the price paid by those who take too subjective a view of it.”¹⁶³ In food she looked for spiders and snakes, in her bedroom she saw birds and feared she would touch out at dragon’s wings. Annabel’s madness provided her with the boundary-less world of a “suffering schizophrenic, with no clear sense of the boundaries between self and other, inner and outer, intra- and interpersonal, private and public, fantasy and reality.”¹⁶⁴ Annabel’s view of the exterior world was not one where she clearly saw people, but only shapes and figures in “a series of

¹⁵⁷ Smith, Online.

¹⁵⁸ Carter, *Love* 17.

¹⁵⁹ Smith, Online.

¹⁶⁰ Carter, *Love* 4.

¹⁶¹ Gamble, *Front Line* 83.

¹⁶² Carter, *Love* 34.

¹⁶³ Carter, *Love* 3.

¹⁶⁴ O’Day 50.

interesting conjunctions of shapes”¹⁶⁵ that in essence are a random “messy collage of the imaginary and the real.”¹⁶⁶

Lee himself became integrated into Annabel’s mythology¹⁶⁷ and her “desire for a fairy-tale figure,”¹⁶⁸ for Annabel clearly did not seek the companionship of mere human beings. Lee became a different creature every time Annabel drew him – first as a “golden lion too gentle to eat meat,”¹⁶⁹ then a carnivorous unicorn, followed by a unicorn with an amputated horn. And on the clean white barren walls of Lee’s bedroom, she drew a large tree with imaginary animals and “transform[ed] it into an exotic wilderness of the imagination.”¹⁷⁰

When Annabel was not painting and drawing Lee as a mythological creature, she still perceived him more as an object. As an art student, she only saw the different colours of his surface rather than as a person with flesh and blood.¹⁷¹ As to herself, she was only conscious of herself as being no more than a pair eyes with no body.¹⁷² Her body was incapable of appreciating sensual touches, and her mind was incapable of emotions and often in a motionless state. Annabel wished herself to be a mask, bland and colourless behind which she could hide and undisturbed live out her life.¹⁷³

Buzz’s photographic view of a static world stands in juxtaposition to Annabel’s imaginary and mythological world of surfaces and colours that swirl around her and over which she has no control.”¹⁷⁴ Buzz looked at the world through the camera and found the still images between each closing of the shutters as more trustworthy.¹⁷⁵ The resulting static photographs provided him with a stable security of a past that he could hold in his hands. Likewise, the photographs provided security for Annabel as their lack of motion and depth held no danger for Annabel but rather provided her with “a true story.”¹⁷⁶

¹⁶⁵ Carter, *Love* 16.

¹⁶⁶ Roe 39.

¹⁶⁷ As Sarah Gamble points out, the names of Annabel and Lee are influenced by Edgar Allan Poe’s poem ‘Annabel Lee.’ see Gamble, *Life* 94.

¹⁶⁸ Smith, Online.

¹⁶⁹ Carter, *Love* 24.

¹⁷⁰ Gamble, *Front Line* 84.

¹⁷¹ Carter, *Love* 30.

¹⁷² Carter, *Love* 30.

¹⁷³ Carter, *Love* 4.

¹⁷⁴ Carter, *Love* 4.

¹⁷⁵ Carter, *Love* 25.

¹⁷⁶ Carter, *Love* 4.

Both Annabel's and Buzz's fashion of viewing the world were devoid of emotion. Both objectified the subject of the picture thus creating a boundary between the real world and the one they managed to create for themselves, and partially for each other. Yet Buzz's photography would take on a yet more disturbing essence. His photographic voyeurism encroached upon Lee and Annabel's personal and intimate life, resulting among others in a series of photos where she was not fully clothed. This photographic voyeurism further crossed another boundary of 'normality' too when Buzz photographed Annabel during her terrifying experience on the hill. Most disturbingly, and clearly crossing over boundaries of taboo, Buzz photographed Annabel having slashed her wrists in a suicide attempt before even calling an ambulance.

B) Decay

True to Angela Carter's introductory Gothic hilltop setting, the sense of decay is introduced in the description of the hill park and its past world eeriness. It is also supported by a picture of the disintegration over the years of an architecture that belonged to a different era. Unlike *The Magic Toyshop*, where Melanie finds herself in a decaying environment both inside the house as well as during her walks in her surroundings, and in *Heroes and Villains*, where Marianne also leads a life in the Barbarian tribe surrounded by material decay, *Love* does not provide us with an external world that crumbles and falls apart. The sense of decay rather spreads in the form of decay of the mind and it is for this reason that Sarah Gamble claims "it is the utter horror of this retreat into psychotic isolation that makes *Love* Carter's real Gothic novel of the sixties."¹⁷⁷

The central principle of decay in the novel is the process of growing madness that takes place in Annabel's mind. When she first meets Lee, Annabel has already gone through her first breakdown, and it seems that her relationship with Lee stabilizes her mind for a while. But when Buzz returns from his voyage abroad, Annabel soon finds him to be an accomplice to the strange ways she views the exterior world and the fashion she lives within her interior mythological world, and in this manner the decay of her mental state finds support.

¹⁷⁷ Gamble, *Life* 94.

On the day where Annabel's mind was already unbalanced by her terrifying experience on the hilltop, she witnessed Lee having sex with a girl at a party at their flat; for Annabel this was "a recreation of the sun and moon in appalling harmony."¹⁷⁸ Previously having told Lee that if he ever deceived her she would die, and now personally watching this "event that threatened to disrupt her self-centered structure,"¹⁷⁹ Annabel's mythological view of the situation only permitted a solution through suicide - evidence of the ultimate decay of her mind that was not contrary to a conclusive decay of body.

Through this circumstance, decay of their brotherly relationship was introduced into the lives of Lee and Buzz. On the one hand Buzz held Lee responsible for Annabel's suicide attempt due to his public infidelity; on the other hand Buzz was partially responsible too, as he supported Annabel in her strange ways. It is through this suicide attempt that the decay of his own twisted mind manifested himself as he took pictures of Annabel bleeding near to the death, and Lee becomes finally aware of this. This and the request that Buzz leave their common household to allow Annabel to return home creates a new boundary between the brothers and hastens the decay of their relationship.

Following her first suicide attempt in the novel, Annabel herself became a picture not only of mental decay but of physical decay too. Previously already very slim and lanky, in the mental hospital she rapidly decayed into a ghost-like spectre "ghostly woman white as a winding sheet and shrouded in hair...her hands...looked like dried flowers, nothing but veins and transparency."¹⁸⁰ More than ever before, Annabel has physically and mentally become the exemplary female Gothic victim."¹⁸¹

C) Imprisonment

Annabel's madness is not only the central theme of decay in the novel. Her madness also develops the theme of imprisonment. Annabel is always imprisoned, and her prison walls are those she creates for herself in her mind. But Lee and

¹⁷⁸ Carter, *Love* 44.

¹⁷⁹ Carter, *Love* 45.

¹⁸⁰ Carter, *Love* 62.

¹⁸¹ Smith, Online.

Buzz also end up imprisoned within the confines of her mind. Before meeting Annabel, Lee was certainly a man of freedom.¹⁸² His sense of freedom was reflected in his bedroom which was free of any furniture but the bed. For Lee not possessing anything represented freedom¹⁸³ as possessions would entail responsibilities and constrictions. In extension, a condition of this freedom was also freedom from the constrictions and responsibilities of a relationship with a woman. This suggests that for Lee, having a relationship was analogical to having the possession of a woman.

As Annabel enters Lee's world, she becomes the possession that causes him to lose his freedom. She imprisons him within the boundaries of her own world in a dark green jungle filled with mythological animals. In this changed environment Lee finds himself out of place, yet he is just as trapped within it alongside Annabel. His imprisonment grew in parallel to her mentally unstable world of a partially voluntary and self-inflicted imprisonment that shielded her from the exterior world she refused to comprehend.

Following her suicide attempt, Annabel realizes her absolute powers and capabilities of further imprisoning Lee within her world. Through his sense of responsibility for her and guilt for what has happened, he suddenly finds himself imprisoned in a world where Annabel is not the only detainer. Annabel's psychiatrist, the hospital nurse and Buzz all contribute. Buzz even shows deep admiration at how Annabel imprisons Lee by branding him as a possession. She forces Lee to obtain a tattoo with a heart and her name in Gothic letters on his breast. It is common practice that tattoos in the shape of a heart represent love and romance but this was a tattoo of punishment and mental manipulation.¹⁸⁴ In what Smith calls a "quasi-masculine"¹⁸⁵ act, Annabel had thus branded Lee into one of her possessions."¹⁸⁶

¹⁸² Carter, *Love* 14.

¹⁸³ Carter, *Love* 14.

¹⁸⁴ Gamble, *Front Line* 87.

¹⁸⁵ Smith, Online.

¹⁸⁶ Carter, *Love* 71.

D) Flight

As opposed to Melanie in *The Magic Toyshop* and Marianne in *Heroes and Villains*, Annabel does not attempt to flee from her household with Lee and Buzz. In fact, there seems to be no need for flight as she is one of the “vulnerable girl-women who inflict damage on all around them through the sheer extremity of their self-victimisation.”¹⁸⁷ Yet according to Sarah Gamble, we can find a trace of the image of flight in this novel as well. Gamble attaches it to Annabel’s bedroom painting: “The single tree evokes the biblical imagery of *The Magic Toyshop* and *Heroes and Villains*, where in both cases it becomes a symbolic of an attempted escape from patriarchal structures. But it has no such positive connotations in this novel.”¹⁸⁸

Annabel’s closest act to flight is suicide. But her reasons are not to flee the unbearable of her inner world, nor the terrifying of the external world. Her suicide attempts are more or less planned acts of masochistic revenge.

¹⁸⁷ Gamble, *Literary* 93.

¹⁸⁸ Gamble, *Front Line* 85.

CHAPTER 7

SEXUALITY AND PORNOGRAPHY

In the following two chapters, the term pornography will be much used. Because this term has a wide range of use, it is necessary to define how it will be used in this paper. Susann Kappeler possibly provides the best definition of pornography for the purposes of this paper. “Pornography is not a special case of sexuality; it is a form of representation.”¹⁸⁹ This definition does not necessarily have to omit aspects of eroticism, as the erotic and pornography overlap, and it is not always easy to distinguish one from the other¹⁹⁰ or to define the differences. For the purpose of clearness, the term pornography is understood in this paper as a method and form of representing sexuality. A pornographic gaze or view is then to be understood as a manner of viewing a person or a situation with sexual connotation.

A) The Magic Toyshop

In the opening pages of the novel, we come across Melanie, at the age of fifteen, whose sexuality is budding. Newly exploring her sexuality, she maintains it within the parameters of the society she knows and the models of women she encounters. The model of her mother, a prominent house-wife, is always perfectly dressed and leads a perfect home. As Sarah Gamble notes, ““femininity, in this context, is just another costume: cultural construct rather than natural condition.”¹⁹¹ Melanie casts herself against the models of women described in literature (she is currently reading *Lorna Doone*) as well as models of women of famous painters. Yet all these “various preconceived images of Woman and female sexuality”¹⁹² are set within a patriarchal arrangement of society, which is upheld by her extreme naïveté and expressed in her wish “Please God, let me get married. Or, let me have sex.”¹⁹³

¹⁸⁹ Susanne Kappeler, *The Pornography of Representation* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986) 2.

¹⁹⁰ Kappeler 36.

¹⁹¹ Gamble, *Front Line* 70.

¹⁹² Peach 11.

¹⁹³ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 8.

Melanie experiments with marriage. She “gift-wrapped”¹⁹⁴ herself in various wedding dresses by using her net curtains. Finding her mother’s wedding dress she puts it on in the night, and becomes the little white bride of the night. Against the Gothic strangeness of the night concealing many secrets behind its veil of darkness we see the contrasting the dress of a “Symbolic and virtuous white. White satin shows every mark, white tulle crumples at the touch of a finger, white roses shower petals at a breath. Virtue is fragile.”¹⁹⁵ Virtue is indeed fragile as Melanie finds out too late she has thrust herself too early into the world of mature sexuality for which she is not yet ready. In bridal and innocent white, Melanie projected the picture of herself as a virtuous bride, and, on the one night, explored the limiting boundaries of her sexual maturity.

As Melanie explores her sexuality, the reader gains a pornographic view of herself. Posing semi-naked for imaginary classic painters, she “felt particularly wicked when she posed for Lautrec”¹⁹⁶ in a pose that she associated with wantonness and inappropriateness “drag[ing] her hair sluttishly across her face and sitt[ing] down in a chair with her legs apart and a bowl of water...at her feet.”¹⁹⁷ Melanie is thus “already regarding herself from a male-identified perspective, envisaging her future adult female role as a man’s bride or muse, which leads her to continually assess her body’s worthiness as the object of male desire”¹⁹⁸ and “constructed entirely through and by masculine representations of sexualized women.”¹⁹⁹

Melanie not only explored her body and her sexuality visually, she also explored it physically, described by Carter always with a pornographic quality to it. She explored her breasts and further, “clambering her own mountain ranges, penetrating the moist richness of her secret valleys.”²⁰⁰ While on the one hand it seem that already Melanie’s “passage into the patriarchal system is inevitable,”²⁰¹

¹⁹⁴ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 2.

¹⁹⁵ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 13.

¹⁹⁶ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 1.

¹⁹⁷ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 1.

¹⁹⁸ Gamble, *Front Line* 69.

¹⁹⁹ Elisabeth Mahoney, “‘But elsewhere?’: the future of fantasy in Heroes and Villains,” *The Infernal Desire of Angela Carter: Fiction, Femininity, Feminism*, eds. Joseph Brislow and Trev Lynn Broughton (Harlow: Addison Wesley Longmann, 1997) 78.

²⁰⁰ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 1.

²⁰¹ Gamble, *Front Line* 69.

on the other we can see that in fact for the moment “the real object of her desires is herself”²⁰² manifesting in these instances of autoeroticism.

Melanie has a pornographic view of Finn as well who becomes an “object of dubious desire,”²⁰³ a desire that is marked by doubt and wavers between attraction and repulsion. She watches not only his face, but his whole body, focusing on certain parts of it as if with a camera view. She not only measures up his physicality but also watches his movements closely. At times she gives Finn animal attributes. “The curl of his wrist... It was as if he had put on the quality of maleness like a flamboyant cloak. He was a tawny lion poised for the kill- and was she the prey?”²⁰⁴ At other times, Finn gains mythological attributes of a fantastical and exotic world. “Maybe his legs were hairy under the worn-out trousers, coarse-pelted goat legs and neat, cloven hooves. Only he was too dirty for a satyr.”²⁰⁵ And it is this dirt and squalor that Finn emits around him that diminishes his aura of the fantastic and exotic, and also repulses Melanie. Other time, Melanie’s view of Finn changes to being simply descriptive with a tinge of disgust. “Finn padded with a squishy noise on his bare and filthy feet. And his toe-nails were long and curved, like the horns of a goat, reminding Melanie of the cloven hoofs she thought he might have had. His toe-nails looked as if a knife would blunt on them and could not have been cut for months, possibly years.”²⁰⁶

Within a few months of living in London, Melanie’s approach to and understanding of love and sexuality, has shifted too. It is as if Finn has now become the model of male sexuality against which her own rising sexuality reflects. “She remembered the lover made up out of books and poems she had dreamed of all summer; he crumpled like the paper he was made of before this insolent, off-hand, terrifying maleness, filling the room with its reek. She hated it. But she could not take her eyes off him.”²⁰⁷ The romantic lovers in the books and poems were not real, they were fictitious and imaginary, and stood in her mind as she would have imagined them to be, not ever having come into contact with sexual maleness beforehand. Yet Finn is real, he is real in the way he moves and smells, and even though he does not fulfill her expectations of a lover, Melanie is

²⁰² Gamble, *Front Line* 69.

²⁰³ Gamble, *Front Line* 72.

²⁰⁴ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 45.

²⁰⁵ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 54.

²⁰⁶ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 64.

²⁰⁷ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 45.

very aware that he is much more than she could have imagined. Melanie also feels the sexual tingling between them, yet she is not always sure, whether his interest in her is sexual or not. Nevertheless, Melanie always adopts a passive role, her curiosity manifested only in waiting to what he would do to her or with her. “She thought he was stretching out his lordly paw and playing idly with her.”²⁰⁸ This new sexual game frightens Melanie, but she is also in constant anticipation of it. Beginning with her hair, long and black, he says she should not tie it up – it is indeed a symbol of youth and sexuality, and traditionally only married women tie their hair up to hide their sexuality. Finn wants Melanie’s hair down, to show her young and unscathed sexuality. He brushes her hair for her in what begins as a sexually charged and intimate moment. “He concentrated. He had, she saw, stopped playing with her. The atmosphere around him changed, grew less charged, more ordinary. He was simply doing her hair, fluffing it out like a real hairdresser. For secret reasons she acknowledged but did not understand, she felt bitterly offended.”²⁰⁹

A breaking point in the house of Uncle Philip is the staging of the Rape of Leda. Melanie is to play the part of Leda, in what is otherwise a puppet show. For Uncle Philip, she is truly no more than a puppet, possibly even less as she is alive and cannot be created and controlled in the same fashion as his puppets. In the play, the swan puppet becomes his ultimate instrument. Aunt Maggie, Francie, Jonathon and Victoria are the unwilling audience of a pornographic rape scene during which the swan “settled on her loins...She thrust with all her force to get rid of it but the wings came down all around her...She was covered completely by the swan but for her kicking feet and her screaming face. The swan had mounted her.”²¹⁰ The swan then reverted to what it truly was “an artificial construct, a puppet, and somebody, a man, [was] putting strings on the puppet.”²¹¹ Sarah Gamble considers this to be an “example of the intentionally contradictory way in which Carter treats the issue of patriarchal control...representing it in threatening, monolithic terms and deflating it at one and the same time.”²¹² Yet although the swan becomes the puppet again, and Melanie’s first reaction to it was a

²⁰⁸ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 45.

²⁰⁹ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 46.

²¹⁰ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 167.

²¹¹ Anna Katzakos, Online.

²¹² Gamble, *Front Line* 72.

suppressed laughter, the swan had in fact acted as “the displaced representative of Uncle Phillip’s incestuous desires.”²¹³ Although there was no penetration, this ‘stage rape’ had the same effects on Melanie as of a real rape. It seemed to Melanie she had lost consciousness for a few moments, and it took some time for her to recover from her shock and to “put Melanie back on like a coat, slowly.”²¹⁴ Although she was off the stage, dressed and refreshed “she still felt detached, apart.”²¹⁵

But this stage rape was to have been preceded by another rape orchestrated by Uncle Philip. Finn was supposed to have rehearsed the play with Melanie, but Uncle Philip’s plans extended further. While rehearsing, Melanie tripped and Finn fell on top of her. “She was seized with a nervous, unlocalised excitement. They lay together on the bare, splintered boards...She was changing, growing. All that was substantial to her was the boy whom she touched all down the length of her but did not touch.”²¹⁶ This time again, Melanie is full of anticipation and expectation, but still passive, waiting, “What would he do to her?”²¹⁷ Again, she does not take control but waits, as do the women in her books of fiction and poetry. Although Finn does succumb to the moment too, he violently tears away to hide in a closet, more aware than Melanie of what is happening, and how it has been orchestrated by Uncle Philip. Furthermore, he is very well aware of the reasons why.

Uncle Philip wanted Finn to “rehearse Leda and the swan...Somewhere private...rehearse a rape with Melanie...He wanted [Finn] to do [Melanie] and he set the scene.”²¹⁸ As Finn correctly understands, Uncle Phillip was playing with them as if they were the puppets he creates.²¹⁹ Melanie cannot imagine why Uncle Philip should want all this, but Finn hits the nail. It is Uncle Philip’s way of completely imprisoning Melanie within his world. As opposed to Victoria and Jonathon, the previous not able to object to the way her life is turning, the latter with no interest to change it, Melanie is the only of the three siblings who still compares her previous life to her current one, and is able to judge and so to revolt

²¹³ Gamble, *Front Line* 72.

²¹⁴ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 167.

²¹⁵ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 168.

²¹⁶ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 149.

²¹⁷ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 149.

²¹⁸ Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 152.

²¹⁹ see Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* 152.

against it. Uncle Philip thinks so lowly of Finn that he truly suspects him to succumb to the heat of the moment and the suggestiveness of the play as to truly take over and force Melanie into sex. Melanie, by becoming “undone” and possibly getting pregnant at such a young age, would be destroyed. Any aspirations of hers to stay within a middle-class society would also be destroyed. By raping Melanie by proxy, Uncle Philip premeditated this violation to degrade her into another silent puppet toy within his possession.”²²⁰

B) Heroes and Villains

Marianne’s first awareness of her sexuality is through the warning threats of rape of her nurse. These threats are patriarchal sexual violence, and of the Barbarians, that would allow the old woman to control the behavior of the young girl through fear and intimidation²²¹: “They slit the bellies of the women after they’ve raped them and sew up cats inside...One day the Barbarians will get you and sew a cat up inside you and then you’ll know, all right.”²²² Although Marianne’s pragmatism prevented her from believing this, she nevertheless did feel a ripple of fear, the possibility of barbaric sexual violence heightened by her memory of the killing of her brother. “Will you rape me and sew a cat up inside me?”²²³ is the first question she poses to the Barbarian Jewel.

In the Barbarian tribe, Marianne is warned to eat only what Jewel’s foster mother, Mrs. Green, gives her and to stay beside her, as a so-called “health precaution,”²²⁴ clearly meant as a ‘sexual health precaution’ against the destructive Gothic and barbaric male element. At this point, and due to the apparent status of Mrs. Green in the tribe, Marianne decides she must be a sort of “domestic matriarch,”²²⁵ with not only domestic but also tribal political powers. In this case too, the house is the domain of the ‘domestic matriarch’ yet it is in the

²²⁰ Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape, Feminisms: a Reader*, ed. Maggie Humm (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992) 72.

²²¹ Brownmiller 72.

²²² Carter, *Heroes* 10.

²²³ Carter, *Heroes* 18.

²²⁴ Carter, *Heroes*, 42.

²²⁵ Carter, *Heroes* 43.

possession of the patriarchy.²²⁶ Once outside the core of the domain of the matriarch, the kitchen, Marianne finds she has left a protective circle.

The boys have become hunters of prey again, this time of sexual prey, and have transformed into predators with “eyes like dead wood and grinning mouths equipped with the whitest teeth.”²²⁷ Marianne realizes that she is on the way to becoming a victim of gang rape and tries to duck under the arms of the boys to get back to Mrs. Green. Mrs. Green does nothing more to help her other than show a “despairing gesture”²²⁸ and called their names saying there were children in the house, which Marianne knows is not reason enough to stop them going through this ultimate act of violence.²²⁹

The scene turns into a pornographic scene. Jewel appears and like Mrs. Green he adopts the position of spectator. His laughter seems to work as a signal to the brothers to continue with their game of prey and predation²³⁰ and they move in closer, one “deliberately put his hand beneath the opening of her embroidered shirt and felt her right breast...All gasped and moved in closer...They directed her inexorably towards the table.”²³¹ Mrs. Green was “distressed but also perhaps obscurely satisfied as what would certainly take place.”²³² She becomes a condescending female figure within the patriarchal structure. This is reminding of the group rape of Albertina in *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffmann* (1972). Also taking place on a kitchen table, Albertina’s rape took place in the presence of all the females of the community. While the brothers knew they were intending a rape on Marianne, and seemed to enjoy the moment, the Centaurs “clearly did not know it was a rape.”²³³ As Desiderio states, it seemed to be an act of ideology with none aware that it could be morally wrong.”²³⁴ Marianne’s only self-defense becomes her closed eyes and pretence of not being there,²³⁵ “an act of self-effacement”²³⁶ in an attempt to block out the violence she was being

²²⁶ Sage 6.

²²⁷ Carter, *Heroes* 48.

²²⁸ Carter, *Heroes* 48.

²²⁹ Carter, *Heroes* 48.

²³⁰ Sage 5.

²³¹ Carter, *Heroes* 48.

²³² Carter *Heroes* 49.

²³³ Angela Carter, *The Infernal Desire Machine of Doctor Hoffmann* (London: Penguin Book Ltd, 1972) 180.

²³⁴ Brownmiller 72.

²³⁵ Carter, *Heroes* 49.

²³⁶ Mahoney 81.

submitted to. Her unexpected savior in the end is Donally, who throws into the faces of the young men the terrifying myth of “women [who] sprout sharp teeth in their private parts, to bite the genitalia of young men.”²³⁷ This breaks the atmospheric danger of the moment. Marianne decides to escape the tribe, in an act of absolute refusal of this horrifyingly barbaric and patriarchal structure. This is a refusal in direct opposition to the female acquiescence of Mrs. Green.

Jewel interrupts her escape and claims that they’d “have to establish common ground in order to communicate as equals.”²³⁸ Marianne furiously understands her escape both from the tribe and from the possibility of being raped is at an end. “He pressed her down into the rich, moist earth itself”²³⁹ and like the earth she is to be his receptacle. Jewel tells her she will “find [him] the gentlest of assassins.”²⁴⁰ This rape is as much an assassination of her virginity as it is of conquering, degradation and possession.²⁴¹

This time again, the rape scene turns into a pornographic description: “Feeling between her legs to ascertain the entrance, he thrust his fingers into the wet hole so roughly she knew what the pain would be like; it was scalding, she felt split to the core but she did not make a single sound for her only strength was her impassivity...Taken force, the last shreds of interior flesh gave...a tower collapsed upon her.”²⁴² In imitation of the myth of the missionary position, Jewel is the strong male principle, driving down and into the female, the entrance to her womb becoming his right to her person through marriage. In a disturbing quasi imitation of mythical female orgasm a tower falls, although there can be no pleasure in rape.

Jewel’s violence was offset by “a bizarre piece of courtesy,”²⁴³ ensuring her she wouldn’t bleed for long he cleaned her from the blood. Although Marianne understood that he had just raped her, and that she would now not experience the spiritual defloration after marriage her father told her about, she could still not understand the reason why he had raped her, asking “It was the very worst thing that happened to me since I came away with you...because it was intentional.

²³⁷ Carter, *Heroes* 49.

²³⁸ Carter, *Heroes* 54.

²³⁹ Carter, *Heroes* 55.

²⁴⁰ Carter, *Heroes* 55.

²⁴¹ Brownmiller 72.

²⁴² Carter, *Heroes* 55.

²⁴³ Carter, *Heroes* 56.

Why did you do it to me?”²⁴⁴ And Jewel very truthfully answered that it was a “matter of [...] traditional hatred”²⁴⁵ of men towards women and their sexuality, and also because he was “very frightened of [her].”²⁴⁶ Through this act of violence, domination and humiliation he could subdue her, she in fact again becomes marked by him, even more so because he deflored her. And her subjugation will continue as she will have to marry him, he will “swallow [her] up and incorporate [her].”²⁴⁷ But as Elisabeth Mahoney points out, Marianne in fact has still not been subjugated, but maintained a ‘superior status.’²⁴⁸ These patriarchal decisions are not made by him but by Donnaly, a grotesque Gothic villainous father figure who has decided that Marianne will become Jewel’s wife and property.

If Jewel was frightened of Marianne, it is because, as he admits, he is frightened of anything he doesn’t know. For Jewel, Marianne as woman and her sexuality represent the unknown. His fear becomes tangible when during their wedding he recognizes her to be the little girl that watched him while he killed his brother. This moment is the marking point in the shift of their relations. For hot-blooded and passionate barbarian Jewel, Marianne’s lack of angry passion over the death of her brother, her coldness instills a superstitious abhorrence into Jewel, believing she would become the death of him. For Marianne this is a ridiculous thought for as she points out, he has made her bleed several times, her red blood proving she is no ghost and no different to him, and that he is physically stronger and more powerful than she is.

Marianne’s perception of herself changes alongside her sexual awakening. Marianne’s gaze also gains a pornographic aspect: “Marianne gasped, for the rider looked just as if he had come from the hands of original nature...pure essence of man in his most innocent state, more nearly related to the river than to herself. His eyes were closed, perhaps he was dreaming.”²⁴⁹ In a similar manner, she examines Jewel too. Yet now, her examinations of him change with her growing sexuality. While Jewel’s fear grows with his conscience of Marianne’s strength, so do his manifestations of anger and violence “as if he were helplessly trying to prove his

²⁴⁴ Carter, *Heroes* 55.

²⁴⁵ Carter, *Heroes* 56.

²⁴⁶ Carter, *Heroes* 56.

²⁴⁷ Carter, *Heroes* 56.

²⁴⁸ Mahoney 82.

²⁴⁹ Carter, *Heroes* 65.

autonomy to her when she knew all the time he vanished...when her body ceased to define his outlines.”²⁵⁰ Now, it is not Jewel’s sexuality that defines the presence of Marianne, but Marianne’s own body that defines the existence of Jewel within her world.

C) Love

Very early in the novel, Buzz presents Annabel with a gift of pornographic photographs. The photographs are of a whore, “a glum, painted young woman...(torso and legs sheathed in black leather, sex exposed)...blocked at every orifice.”²⁵¹ This pornographic view is violent and fetishistic, and solely masculine. The woman is painted white and her face shows no depth or emotion,²⁵² in fact it is impossible to see her true face. The woman’s mouth is “blocked” too, she is silenced. For Annabel, these photographs represent a “true story” and “love.”²⁵³ These images instilled no fear in Annabel, but comfort because they were motionless and still. The woman on the picture is like a mask. Anonymous, she neither shows nor causes any emotion, and these are traits Annabel yearns for.”²⁵⁴ Here, Carter shows a diversion from the mainstream feminist perception of the approach of women to pornography. While Buzz is in line with how men are perceived of “placing women in the swamp of pornography”²⁵⁵ and his “photographic interests lie chiefly in the area of the pornographic,”²⁵⁶ Annabel is not. As Lynne Segal notes Andrea Dworkin’s claim that women will become free at the moment pornography ceases to exist,²⁵⁷ Carter presents us with the option that a women may find refuge behind the anonymity of pornography.

Annabel’s first sexual experience happens on the day she begins to take over Lee’s bedroom by covering his walls with her mythological jungle. This is the moment that Lee decides is the right time for him to ‘take’ her sexually. Even

²⁵⁰ Carter, *Heroes* 89.

²⁵¹ Carter, *Love* 4.

²⁵² Carter, *Love* 4.

²⁵³ Carter, *Love* 4.

²⁵⁴ Gamble, *Front Line* 87.

²⁵⁵ Lynne Segal, *Is the Future Female?* (London: Virago Press Ltd, 1987) 105.

²⁵⁶ Gamble *Front Line* 87.

²⁵⁷ Segal 105.

though Lee (wrongly) sees Annabel as wearing an old worn t-shirt of his as a method of protection and barrier against his advances, he does not question Annabel about her readiness or willingness, and so he does take her. And, as Lee expects, she is truly a virgin. Yet Annabel does not protest against what is to be done to her, in fact she is completely detached from it and allows it to be done to her. The act is described graphically, like a film, with a constant presence of a camera lens hovering above them. Annabel makes no conscious effort to take part in the act or to ward it off, she adopts a completely passive role, allowing herself to be undressed and otherwise manipulated with “without appreciating the extraordinarily erotic effect of her passivity, her silence.”²⁵⁸

The first that Annabel becomes aware of is that she does not feel anything when Lee touches her even though she is aware that she should.”²⁵⁹ Annabel feels no arousal, but also finds no reason to resist to Lee. In fact, she seems to be quite indifferent to the whole event, although she is also aware that “the castle of herself was clearly about to be invaded.”²⁶⁰ This suggests that the act borders with a forced sexual act where she is not really permitted to voice a decision. Aware this act was supposed to be in some way ‘significant,’ Annabel attempts to do “what she was supposed to do,”²⁶¹ or rather what was expected of her to allow to be done to her. Similarly to Marianne in *Heroes and Villains*, once the act was over, Annabel asks “Why would you want to do this to me?”²⁶² Although this was not a violent and humiliating rape, Annabel nevertheless did not share Lee’s sexual arousal and climax. She had no sensual appreciation of Lee’s closeness or touches²⁶³ and could not quite comprehend the purpose nor the pleasure of this act.

On a different occasion, Lee reached out for Annabel while she was sleeping and she woke mistaking him for an incubus,²⁶⁴ a mythological masculine creature that rapes women in their sleep forcing itself on top of them. Yet within her own mythologizing world, Annabel has succubus-like fantasies involving Lee as well, at the basis of which lies not the traditional desire to simply suck him of

²⁵⁸ Carter, *Love* 33.

²⁵⁹ Carter, *Love* 32.

²⁶⁰ Carter, *Love* 32.

²⁶¹ Carter, *Love* 33.

²⁶² Carter, *Love* 16.

²⁶³ Carter, *Love* 33.

²⁶⁴ Carter, *Love* 35.

his manly strength and discard him, but rather her own fantasy of “totally engulfing him.”²⁶⁵ This was strangely related to the concept of having children. Instead of giving birth to a child, and expelling it from her body, Annabel envisaged sucking Lee into her womb, where he would exist only within her, and so in this manner actually cease to exist. Annabel takes over his person, annihilates him, but still keeps him enclosed and imprisoned within her. Through her sexuality Annabel’s possessiveness over him and her tendencies to imprison him are underlined.

Throughout the novel, Lee commits adultery with three women. Annabel guesses his involvement with the professor’s wife and Lee is surprised by her impassive distress²⁶⁶ partially caused by her belief that he would not return. Lee is relieved when he finally ‘recognizes’ Annabel as a ‘thing’, an object to be loved. He sees her body as an object too, covering space in his room, a “body of the girl on the white floor, which was the only object to disturb the emptiness of the room but for her record player.”²⁶⁷ As Lee objectifies her, Annabel becomes familiar to him again; she becomes safe and harmless, and does not arouse the confusion and fear Lee experiences when he feels “trapped”²⁶⁸ by her gaze.

Although not clear at the beginning, this Annabel’s gaze is a clue to her tendencies of possessiveness towards Lee. Although never overtly stated, it is possible that Annabel is truly attempting to trap and imprison Lee within her hypnotic gaze, pulling him into herself through her eyes and so annihilating him within her, although her sexual passivity and compliance may suggest not more than insecurity as reason for her gaze of scrutiny. Alongside her gaze, Lee also fails to understand Annabel’s suicide threats with their underlying sexual tones of possessiveness over his person and his body.

Not only is Annabel objectified by Lee, becoming more familiar to him through mainly through sexual objectification, so is Lee objectified by Annabel. As Lee objectified her within a traditional patriarchal framework of relations between men and women, and “saw her newly magic outlines were those of a thing that need to be loved,”²⁶⁹ Annabel finally in his eyes gained the attributes of

²⁶⁵ Carter, *Love* 35.

²⁶⁶ Carter, *Love* 23.

²⁶⁷ Carter, *Love* 23.

²⁶⁸ Carter, *Love* 23.

²⁶⁹ Carter, *Love* 24.

a woman, a being whose emotional needs (he thought) he understood. But Annabel was in no way a young woman Lee thought she was. And her perception of Lee was not one based on that very pattern of male-female relations. Annabel's view of Lee was also as different. For her, Lee was a possession as much as any other objects she possessed, and although He occupied the most important place among these possessions"²⁷⁰ as an object he had to fit into Annabel's mythological world precisely in the place she designated for him.

On the day of Annabel's terrifying experience on the hill, Lee is publicly adulterous on the balcony of their flat. Annabel watches the whole act, in which instance Lee as an object is seen as revolting against her. She does not feel betrayal as emotional pain, rather as a shift in the order of objects in her world over which she has now lost control. Committing suicide is thus Annabel's only way of exiting such a world and bringing it to a standstill.

Lee is deceived by Annabel too, and not only that, also by his won brother. Yet Annabel's sexual encounter with Buzz is not what either was expecting. As opposed to Lee, Buzz was not a possession within Annabel's world, he was rather someone she shared and built her mythological world with. And within this world, neither has positioned the pother within it as Annabel had positioned Lee within her world. Buzz failed in his attempt to take Annabel as a lover, and Annabel's sexual mythology of her encounter with Buzz is shattered. Finally, Annabel's most prized possession, Lee, decides to permanently leave her world. Annabel stages her this time fatal suicide as a final piece of mythological art which, again, only Buzz fully appreciated the meaning of and finalizes it with a photograph.

²⁷⁰ Carter, *Love* 39.

CHAPTER 8

THE SADEIAN WOMAN

The Sadeian Woman: An Exercise in Cultural History is according to Angela Carter “neither a critical study nor a historical analysis” of Marquis de Sade’s works. It is rather Carter’s “interpretation,”²⁷¹ within a contemporary frame, of some of the issues that he examined. In particular Carter is interested in the relationships between sexual power and freedom. This she puts into connection with political power and freedom and the position of women in society. *The Sadeian Woman*, commissioned by Virago in 1977 but not published till 1979, touched upon the debates that were to flare up in the next decade,²⁷² notably the debates surrounding pornography. It is interesting to note that this study also provoked a great deal of criticism from the side of feminists, who do not side with Carter’s refusal to read de Sade’s works as misogynistic. Indeed, at the time, some of her contentions may have been considered almost sacrilegious, although a closer look at the contexts in which they were interpreted show them to be contestable at most, and often simply misinterpreted.

A) Pornography and The Sadeian Woman

*“Pornographers are the enemies of women only because our contemporary ideology of pornography does not encompass the possibility of change, as if we were the slaves of history and not its makers, as if sexual relations were not necessarily an expression of social relations, as if sex itself were an external fact, one as immutable as weather, creating human practice but never a part of it”*²⁷³

For Angela Carter, sexual relations are an extension of social relations between individuals and within society. Pornography, as possibly the most

²⁷¹ Angela Carter, *The Sadeian Woman: An Exercise in Cultural History* (London: Virago Press Ltd, 1979) Introductory Note.

²⁷² Sally Keanan, “Angela Carter’s *The Sadeian Woman*: Feminism as Treason,” *Contemporary Critical Essays*, ed. Allison Easton (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd, 2000) 37.

²⁷³ Carter, *Sadeian* 3.

simplistic representation of sexual relations nevertheless seems to exist in a vacuum, and in opposition to sexual and social relations which themselves cannot exist in a vacuum. Lynne Segal also points out that most feminists tend not to write about sex within the context of relationships, but usually as if sex existed autonomously.”²⁷⁴ Sex and sexual relations are not external to social relations but are determined by them, they are part of human practice that reflects social relations of individuals within society. Sex “is socially defined and controlled...[and] tied in with all the social practices and institutions.”²⁷⁵ Hence, the selection of sexual partners and relations are determined and limited in the same manner as our social relations. As Carter points out, “we do not go to bed in simple pairs...we still drag there with us the cultural impedimenta of our social class, our parents’ lives, our bank balances, our sexual and emotional expectations.”²⁷⁶ This aspect is not limited to a sexual relationship within the boundaries of a stable social relationship, such as is marriage. It directly affects those sexual relations that are borderline to society, and so in extension also pornography.

At this point, it seems that Carter heads the idea that pornography should not be perceived as external to social and sexual relationships. Pornography is a constant phenomenon throughout history, but how it is approached, whether in welcome or refusal, is formed and limited by “social artifice.”²⁷⁷ It is also in this point that we discover a contestable point which she herself does not fail to point out. Sexual relations are surely not an external factor to human practice, they are not immutable, and are in all manners a part of human practice. But to what extent is pornography a part of human practice, and to what extent does it involve mainly the viewer/reader? And, if pornography is a part of human practice to what extent can it be considered also as part of sex and sexual relations?

What may at first almost seem like a counter attack on the more radical feminists’ position on pornography²⁷⁸ is in fact an attempt to bite into the core of the causes and sources of animosity of women towards pornography and its producers. Through an introduction into the nature of pornography, and so also

²⁷⁴ Segal 97.

²⁷⁵ Segal 71.

²⁷⁶ Carter, *Sadeian* 9.

²⁷⁷ Carter, *Sadeian* 9.

²⁷⁸ But that was yet to come, as the most radical debates on pornography started in the 1980s, after the publication of this work.

into the nature of sexual relations, Angela Carter introduced the central idea that pornography is the enemy of women, but only because women, like men, still allow it to be. Perceiving that late 1970s ideology of pornography had not changed much since Victorian times, she was nevertheless persuaded that “one’s very existence is instrumental in causing changes”²⁷⁹ but that the very people that so strongly opposed pornography were just as much, if not more, slaves of history. Such a statement would have been violently opposed by feminists such as Andrea Dworkin who perceived pornography as abnormal and “hateful,”²⁸⁰ and suggested that pornography “creates the reality of ‘the imperial power of men.’”²⁸¹ Similarly, Susan Brownmiller stands out against pornography as being a pointing mark towards rape and other forms of violence against women.²⁸² On the other hand, Lynne Segal adopted the opposite pole of opinion by suggesting that in fact, pornography shows a declining power of and a weakness that needs to be somehow compensated.”²⁸³

Carter again sparked controversy by claiming that “women too readily identify with images of themselves as victims of patriarchal oppression, that in effect they are frequently complicit with that oppression.”²⁸⁴ In this instance again, Carter is in opposition to Brownmiller and Dworkin who drive to maintain the status of oppressed victimage to patriarchy and sex crimes.”²⁸⁵ By viewing themselves as oppressed and as victims, for Carter, it is also women themselves who support their own oppression in society and, in extension, how they are represented sexually and also in pornography. In other words women allow no space for change by not effectuating change themselves and within themselves. They continue to be bonded by history and the social status quo, instead of creating a new history of change and transformation, and more importantly freeing all ‘possibility of change.’ For some, Carter’s feminist approach harbors “an active desire to change women’s position in society.”²⁸⁶

²⁷⁹ Carter, *Notes from the Front Line* 76.

²⁸⁰ Andrea Dworkin, *Pornography: Men Possessing Women, Feminisms: a Reader*, ed. Maggie Humm (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992) 83.

²⁸¹ Segal 106.

²⁸² see Brownmiller 71.

²⁸³ Segal 107.

²⁸⁴ Keenan 39.

²⁸⁵ Gamble *Front Line* 100.

²⁸⁶ Rosalind Delmar, “What is feminism?,” *What is Feminism?*, eds. Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley (London: Basil Blackwell, 1986) 13.

A) Primordial pornography

In *The Sadeian Woman*, Carter begins her analysis by examining the core of pornography in its most primordial form – graffiti. She saw it as “involving an abstraction of human intercourse in which the self is reduced to its formal elements...the probe and the fringed hole, the twin signs of male and female in graffiti.”²⁸⁷ A rudimentary description of this image is presented; it is one we find in countless variants in all pornography, and one that, still today, is integral to the general consciousness of the position of the male and female in society. The ‘probe’ is “always presented erect, in an alert attitude of enquiry or curiosity or affirmation; it points upwards, it asserts.”²⁸⁸ As Judith Butler asserts, the male element in pornography is “the instrument of...radical freedom.”²⁸⁹ This picture, indeed central to pornography, reflects the position of men in society, a position of assertiveness and alertness, of virility and positivity, of a spatial and intellectual movement forward that is reserved to the male population, and is in itself an affirmation of masculinity.

In contrast, or rather in complementation, “the hole is open, an inert space, like a mouth waiting to be filled...nothing but zero, the sign for nothing, that only becomes something when the male principle fills it with meaning.”²⁹⁰ The hole, fringed in ornament, is nothing when on its own; it is empty, passive, waiting to be filled. The hole cannot fill itself; it is a picture of a minus, in negativity. Along similar lines, Judith Butler reminds us that for Simone de Beauvoir “women are the negative of men, the lack against which masculine identity differentiates itself.”²⁹¹ This is the affirmation of femininity, and this defines the area reserved for the female in society. In pornography “women do not normally fuck in the active sense. They are fucked in the passive sense,”²⁹² they do not actively take part in action, let alone produce action. Rather, action is produced upon them and women are but passive consenting recipients.

²⁸⁷ Carter, *Sadeian* 4.

²⁸⁸ Carter, *Sadeian* 4.

²⁸⁹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (London: Routledge, 1999) 16.

²⁹⁰ Carter, *Sadeian* 4.

²⁹¹ Judith Butler 14.

²⁹² Carter, *Sadeian* 27.

B) Pornography and Myth

The simplification and abstraction of human intercourse in the style of graffiti is considered by Carter to be the “mythologizing of sexuality”²⁹³ and in extension of society and the roles of men and women. In not allowing for change, women alongside men, remain part of, and also supportive of, the same myths. The basic myth that Carter strives to expose is the “myth of patience and receptivity”²⁹⁴ of women waiting in an existence of passivity and silence. It is as if their very existence is confirmed only by the actions of men upon them, the ‘fringed hole’ nothing more but a dumb and silenced opening to be filled by the male other.

Claiming she was “in the demythologizing business,”²⁹⁵ Carter strove to expose, break and bring to destruction all myths that she, without any exception, considered “*are* extraordinary lies designed to make people unfree.”²⁹⁶ Carter attacked them all, starting with the patriarchal Judeo-Christian myths of “the redeeming purity of the virgin”²⁹⁷ and the healing mother, to the “insulting mythic redefinition[s]”²⁹⁸ of woman goddesses, priestesses, female oracles so readily adopted by many women, and at times encouraged by feminists under the “popularized notion of femininity as having innate qualities.”²⁹⁹ But far from giving value to women’s position in society, these redefined myths were for Carter no more than an indulging patriarchal permission for controlled speech of the sort that was never to be readily taken too seriously as it didn’t relate to, nor would it have been allowed to relate to, actual reality³⁰⁰. They seemingly awarded women with a status and power, but in essence would also constrict women further within sets of yet more rigid rules and expectations.

²⁹³ Carter, *Sadeian* 4.

²⁹⁴ Carter, *Sadeian* 5.

²⁹⁵ Carter, “Notes from the Front Line” 71

²⁹⁶ Carter, “Notes from the Front Line” 71.

²⁹⁷ Carter, *Sadeian* 5.

²⁹⁸ Carter, *Sadeian* 5.

²⁹⁹ Keenan 45.

³⁰⁰ Carter, *Sadeian* 5

These ancient myths revived were termed by Carter as “consolatory nonsense.”³⁰¹ It may indeed be consolatory for those that perceive pornography as being ultimately a “degradation of women...in order to postulate, exercise, and celebrate male power...its perpetuum, expansion, intensification and elevation.”³⁰² But Carter maintains the view that this is but another form of consoling women into submission in a rather ‘flattering’ manner. Aiming to provide a deceptive “emotional satisfaction,”³⁰³ these myths ingeniously conceal all background motives that Carter recognizes as the original impulse for their creation and revivment.³⁰⁴

Carter’s attacks strike at not only the redefined myths of femininity but also at the traditional mythic imagery and positioning of sexual roles in the traditional and conventional familial setting, namely the Judeo-Christian missionary position. Although a “man must approach a woman on his knees, just as he approaches god”, he nonetheless remains to be found in an erect position. He is on his knees “to show humility before his won [and awarded] erection.”³⁰⁵ This instrument that affirms his masculinity and his superiority is in pornography also considered by Dworkin a weapon, a “saber penetrating a vagina.”³⁰⁶ The man remains to be pictured upright and forward moving, constantly assertive. The woman is retained in a state of receptiveness beneath him, waiting, and “her submission is the apex of manhood,”³⁰⁷ and the confirmation of his manhood and of her subservient womanhood. The myth of the missionary position is countless times recreated not only in pornography, but even more so in the arts, in literature and in film:

“it implies a system of relations between the partners that equates the woman to the passive receptivity of the soil, to the richness and fecundity of the earth. A whole range of images poeticizes, kitschifies, deparicularizes intercourse, such as wind beating down corn, rain driving against bending trees, towers falling, all tributes to the freedom and strength of the roving,

³⁰¹ Carter, *Sadeian* 5.

³⁰² Dworkin 84.

³⁰³ Carter, *Sadeian* 5.

³⁰⁴ Carter, *Sadeian* 5.

³⁰⁵ Carter, *Sadeian* 7

³⁰⁶ Dworkin 83.

³⁰⁷ Carter, *Sadeian* 7

fecundating, irresistible male principle and the heavy, downward, equally irresistible gravity of the receptive soil. ”³⁰⁸

This imagery supports the myth of the wild, strong and roving male principle and the myth of the mild and receptive female, whose, it is not to be omitted, main sexual function is fertile reproduction. The male beats down on the female, drives against her, while she bends beneath his force and strength; he brings down her round void towers while she bears the destructive forced. He is the only left standing upright. And his is an explosive force, one that leaves its mark, fecundating the receptive soil. The woman’s richness is defined by her capability to receive his strength, to bend and break beneath it, to be conquered, and then to bear the fruit.

According to Carter, the missionary position, the only position sanctified by the Judaeo-Christian tradition, should also be redefined on the mythic level.

*Any woman may manage, in luxurious self-deceit, to feel herself for a little while one with great, creating nature, fertile, open, pulsing, anonymous and so forth. In doing so, she loses herself completely and loses her partner also*³⁰⁹.

“Myth deals in false universals, to dull the pain of particular circumstances”³¹⁰ and like the woman deceiving herself on account of the mythology of her sexual experience, so does pornography, the mythologizing of sexuality, also deal with the same false universals. By reducing women into the universal ‘fringed hole’ with whatever mythic characterizations they are permittedly ascribed, pornography denies any existence and “complexity of human relations”³¹¹ and so the existence and complexity of sexual relations and indeed social relations. If pornography, in its parallel likeness to its simplest form, pornographic graffiti, is created by and itself recreates myth, so are the males and

³⁰⁸ Carter, *Sadeian* 8.

³⁰⁹ Carter, *Sadeian* 8.

³¹⁰ Carter, *Sadeian*, 5.

³¹¹ Carter, *Sadeian*, 6.

females it portrays unarguably by nature “mythic abstractions”³¹² and archetypes unrelated to the contexts of social and sexual relations.

If the mythologizing aspect of pornography denies any relation to social and sexual relations, then this denial is further confirmed by pornography’s typically targeted audience – men.³¹³ Through pornography, mythical female sexual archetypes are created on the basis on false universals with no social context, and so the “false simplicity of fable”³¹⁴ is repeatedly recreated.

C) **Pornography in Literature**

Pornographic literature may hold several functions; on the most basic level it carries the instructive function, covering the sexual act in purely descriptive and didactic terms.³¹⁵ On the less instructive level, its function is to arouse and excite the reader through depiction of sexual acts with a “gap left in it on purpose so that the reader may, in imagination, step inside it”³¹⁶ although he/she may never become a part of it.

Just as Carter finds fault with myth, so does she find fault with pornography in terms of it picturing incomplete and mythically false archetypes. Yet she permits the idea that pornography has the “potential to force the reader to reassess his relation to his own sexuality, which is to say his own primary being, through the mediation of the image”³¹⁷ or the created by the text. This potential applies to men, and according to Carter, especially to women who are given the opportunity to tangibly see and read how the myths and archetypes of the negativity of female sexuality it reinforced.³¹⁸ Due to this, radical feminists of the 70s perceived pornography as yet another instrument of subordination and repression of women, and called for an outright ban of pornography. One reason for this is because in pornography “the male engages in sexual actions without the female...she serves

³¹² Carter, *Sadeian* 6.

³¹³ Carter, *Sadeian* 15.

³¹⁴ Carter, *Sadeian* 16.

³¹⁵ Carter, *Sadeian* 12.

³¹⁶ Carter, *Sadeian* 14.

³¹⁷ Carter, *Sadeian* 17.

³¹⁸ Carter, *Sadeian* 17.

merely as a visual stimulus.”³¹⁹ Carter as opposed to Dworkin saw pornography as being not only repressive of women, but of men too³²⁰ because pornography “keeps sex in its place, that is, under the carpet. That is, outside everyday human intercourse.”³²¹

Carter suggested a different path. According to Kimberly J. Lau her aim was not “so much to demarcate the moral boundaries of pornography but rather to suggest that pornography might offer a mode of interrogating any and all sexual acts in their specific historical and material contexts.”³²² Returning to her initial proclamation that pornography is in the position of enmity to women only because women do not encompass the ideology to change, we realize that Carter was indeed suggesting the possibility of change. This change would force pornography not to “remain in the service of the status quo”³²³ and would withdraw that status of taboo from the sexual.

D) The Moral Pornographer

Angela Carter has now entered the area due to which she was so harshly criticized by the anti-pornography feminists, indeed by most feminists. She introduces the idea of the moral pornographer, which is a term that she admits “got [her] into a lot of trouble with the sisters.”³²⁴ For Carter, a moral pornographer is in other words a pornographer who is not necessarily an enemy to women.

Carter claims that when visual or literary pornography becomes art it does so through a more complex plotting and characterization of its actors, which in turn must engender a development of social relations between the characters that then must be reflected in their sexual relations. But at this point, according to Carter, the pornographer becomes “faced with the moral contradictions inherent in

³¹⁹ Magali Cornier Michael, “Angela Carter’s Nights at the Circus: An engaged feminism via subversive postmodern strategies,” *Contemporary Literature* 1994. *Proquest 5000*. Knihovna Masarykovy Univerzity, Brno, CZ. 15 Nov. 2009 <<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb>>.

³²⁰ Carter, *Sadeian* 18.

³²¹ Carter, *Sadeian* 18.

³²² Kimberley J. Lau, “Erotic Infidelities: Angela Carter’s Wolf Trilogy,” *Marvels and Tales* 2008. *Proquest 5000*. Knihovna Masarykovy Univerzity, Brno, CZ. 15 Nov. 2009 <<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb>>.

³²³ Carter, *Sadeian* 17.

³²⁴ Katzavos, Online.

real sexual encounters”³²⁵, and he is forced to choose between incorporating the possible moral contradiction to reflect the realistic, or whether remains in the realms of the archetypes and the myths. For Carter it is “Out of this dilemma that the moral pornographer is born.”³²⁶

Carter continues to ascribe several attributive functions to the moral pornographer. For one, the moral pornographer uses pornography in advocacy of a sexuality that entails an “absolute sexual license”³²⁷ for both the female and the male involved in sexual relations. He thus refrains from maintaining the world of sexuality as the domain and in the hands of the male and opens it to encompass the stamp of female sexuality as a truly free female experience. He thus also introduces such a world and prescribes how it may work.³²⁸

The moral pornographer may on different occasion use pornography to bring to surface the imbalance of current sexual relations, and to submit them to criticism.³²⁹ He would bring sex out from under the carpet, expose the repressive forces of pornography on women, but also men and uncover and deconstruct the myths and archetypes that stand in the way of sexual freedom. For Carter, such a pornographer although transgressing the boundaries deep into the obscene “would not be the enemy of women, perhaps because he might begin to penetrate to the heart of the contempt for women that distorts our culture”³³⁰ and the perceptions of the negative, empty, meaningless and passive sexuality of women.

Nicole Ward Jouve, in her essay “‘Mother is a Figure of Speech’” claims that Carter indeed “was the *moral* Pornographer, using Pornography to make her reader think, instead of indulge, or want to imitate.”³³¹ That is because Carter employed a pornographic view to demonstrate the violence and humiliation of rape. She also used the pornographic view to demonstrate, in the case of Melanie, how men see women, but even more importantly, how women end up seeing themselves within the male gaze.

³²⁵ Carter, *Sadeian* 19.

³²⁶ Carter, *Sadeian* 19.

³²⁷ Carter *Sadeian* 19.

³²⁸ Carter *Sadeian* 19.

³²⁹ Carter *Sadeian* 19.

³³⁰ Carter *Sadeian* 19-20.

³³¹ Nicole Ward Jouve, “‘Mother is a Figure of Speech,’” *Flesh and the Mirror: Essays on the Art of Angela Carter*, ed. Lorna Sage (London: Virago Press Ltd, 1994) 151.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

Gothic fiction challenges conventions, namely the conventions of a patriarchal society, through the transgression of boundaries set by these conventions. As mentioned in Chapter 2, having challenged the conventions, traditional Gothic fiction always reverted back over the boundaries it transgressed, especially in questions of gender roles and sexuality within a patriarchal society. Thus, traditional Gothic fiction provided an ending where the traditional patriarchal order was restored.

In this manner, Gothic fiction allowed an analysis and criticism of society. By allowing to question gender and sexual roles, Gothic fiction also questioned the existing patriarchal structures. However, traditional Gothic fiction did not provide much opportunity to suggest a new or at least modified model within society.

By following a traditional Gothic pattern in her fiction, Angela Carter also challenged modern British society. But if Carter challenged the traditional conventions of her time, she did not transgress the set boundaries only to return to a conventional ending. Carter rather strove to go further and to break clear of conventions, especially those set by the modern patriarchal society. In the three novels analyzed in this dissertation, Carter does so in two areas. The most obvious break with traditional Gothic is how Angela Carter devises the actual ending of each novel. The second area is where Carter deals with sexuality in relation to patriarchy. These two aspects are what distinguish Angela Carter as a writer of Modern Gothic. Interestingly enough, over the decade that Carter wrote these three novels, these two aspects have helped form Carter's position as feminist and have contributed to the ideas she presented in *The Sadeian Woman*.

As mentioned in Chapter 8, Carter questioned in *The Sadeian Woman* not only the conventions of traditional patriarchal society in relation to pornography, sexuality and the relation of the sexes. Carter also challenged the conventions set by those that were already charging in opposition to patriarchy and the impositions it brought upon the position of women within society. Through her

works of fiction, Carter then truly presents the possibilities of final change to the set conventions.

In all three novels discussed in the previous chapters, the three Gothic heroines lived in a patriarchal society of more or less rigid conventions. Marianne transgressed the boundaries of both patriarchal societies she was a member of by running away from one, and then refusing to succumb fully to the rules and conventions of the other. Melanie did not have the time to understand the limitations and conventions of her father's household before facing the restrictions and curtailments of that of her uncle. And Annabel was in herself a challenge to the conventions of her society that she was not even capable of truly following.

These three novels can be compared in many aspects. Following the themes described in each chapter, we can see the similarities between the three novels along which Carter continues in the tradition of the Gothic novel. In *Heroes and Villains* an overall decay of society is reflected in the apocalyptic wilderness beyond the walls of the Professor's village as well as the living conditions of the Barbarians. In *The Magic Toyshop*, Melanie is confronted by the decaying South London suburb and the run-down and decaying house of her Uncle Phillip. This again reflects decay in Melanie's life in the form of social descent. In *Love*, Annabel mainly deals with her own mental decay.

Similarly, all three heroines are imprisoned within the patriarchal societies they live in. Melanie has grown happy in the home of her father, following the example of her mother and conforming to her father's patriarchal expectations from his wife and his daughter. Melanie only feels the weight of her imprisonment in Uncle Phillip's house, who has installed grotesquesly patriarchal rules within his household. Yet although Melanie understands the implications of how Uncle Phillip is imprisoning not only her, but also the rest of their household, she never even considers rebelling or leaving.

Marianne on the other hand is in constant rebellion and flight. She is first imprisoned within the walls of the Community, a patriarchal societal construct. She is then imprisoned a second time within Jewel's house, where a matriarch is tolerated but only because she conforms to the patriarchal structure of the Barbarian society.

In terms of gender, the position and role of all three heroines is determined by the patriarchal societies they live in and the men they are surrounded by.

Melanie is primarily to be used as a means of earning money for the household of Uncle Phillip. If she does not earn her keep, she is useless for him, and just like an object for which there is no use, she will be made rid of. For Uncle Phillip, Melanie also carries another function as an object. She is to play part in his theatrical puppet staging as a true object – a puppet – that moves and speaks according to the patriarchal uncle who hold and pulls the strings.

Marianne is given a particular place and position in the Professors' society, and she must conform to it. Her emotions and her mind are given no space for individuality because, after all, she is only a girl. In the society of Barbarians, her position is even lower. Marianne is expected to be nothing more than an extension of her husband, to do what he demands from her, and, most importantly, to ensure the continuation of the tribe by giving birth to as many boys as possible. Marianne is thus seen as a sexual object, one that gratifies the needs of the male, and provides the tribe with more males.

Annabel's position as Gothic female in the small patriarchal household is the most interesting. It seems nothing at all is expected from her and her complete passivity is accepted by Lee, who doesn't or refuses to see her as a girl with special needs and attributes. Over the period that he doesn't understand who she is, he finds himself afraid of her. It is when he recognizes, or convinces himself that he recognizes, in Annabel attributes of what he considers to be true femininity that she becomes a 'thing' (equaling a woman) rather than a woman. Her sexual passiveness is for Lee also an unsurprising manifestation of femininity.

In terms of sexuality and violence many aspects are comparable too. In all three novels, the heroines are confronted by rape. Melanie is raped on stage, by a swan puppet. Although this rape does not involve penetration, Melanie's experience seems to have just as much of an impact. She is shocked into silence and into detachment from her body and her environment. It seems that Melanie was not too aware of the dangers of rape to begin with, and that although she was in the company of men she considered lower and more primitive, she did not think of her body and her sexuality as something that may be taken away from her. This rape on stage was not the only sexual violence planned on Melanie. By staging a scene and setting in which Finn and Melanie were to practice this final theatrical scene of the rape of Leda, Uncle Phillip hoped that Finn would force himself sexually onto Melanie. Melanie, either in her innocence and lack of experience, or

in plain ignorance, did not understand the meaning of this planned act. Yet in fact, this is an indirect rape of Melanie by her own uncle, indeed, an indirect incestuous rape. And this rape too carried similar implications as the rape of Marianne. The total possession of Melanie and of her body and mind by the Uncle Phillip would be complete, and her social and mental degradation finalized.

Here, Carter's break with traditional Gothic convention manifests itself, although quite subtly, through Finn rather than Melanie. Melanie remains passive and receptive. It is Finn who seems to understand how the patriarchal uncle has imprisoned the members of the household. It is also Finn who does not behave in the manner Melanie expects throughout their relationship. When suddenly in a situation that may have led to sexual intercourse, it is Finn who revolts against it, knowing Melanie herself is not ready, and also understanding that she is not aware of all the implications carried.

Marianne is brought up to believe the first thing the Barbarians would do to her is rape her, she is fully aware of this danger. She first encounters this danger when she is almost gang-raped, an act stopped by the order of Donally the patriarch. Later on, she is truly raped, by Jewel, but again on the orders of Donally. This rape is an act of imposed possession, an act of enforced domination of the male over the female, a punishment through humiliation, and a demonstration of the physical and social strength of the male over the female. But while Melanie has been subdued and victimized by her stage rape, Melanie is not a passive victim. She lashes back with sharp words and sharp look at the Barbarian boys and Jewel. Although aware she has been humiliated, Marianne stands her ground and fights back. Here again, Carter has broken with the conventions of a victimized Gothic female.

In the case of Annabel, rape as an enforced sexual act is slightly ambiguous. It is to be noted that during her first sexual encounter with Lee, Annabel held no protest. She did not react in anger and rage like Marianne, nor in fear and shock like Melanie. Annabel in fact did not react at all. Yet Lee had in a manner forced Annabel to have sex. As the patriarchal male, Lee simply decided that it was the right time. True to the patriarchal pattern, he was providing for her keep and he took care of her, and she lived and slept in his bed, taking the position of a partner. In his eyes, all this gave him entitlement to decide when the first sexual act should take place, and place it did take, without Annabel being questioned, and without her

consent. Carter's break with conventions happens when Annabel and Lee mutually rape each other. Throughout the novel, Annabel seems to be the passive, victimized Gothic heroine, and so the sudden outburst of sexual violence is a surprise for both Annabel and Lee.

Connected with the sexuality of the three heroines is also the aspect of pornography. In this aspect too, Carter breaks sharply with the traditional Gothic, as the passive Gothic heroines were perhaps only ever subjected to a male's pornographic gaze. In Carter's novels analyzed in this dissertation, if the three heroines are subjects of a male pornographic gaze, they are also its makers. Marianne is she is pornographically objectified by the Barbarian brothers. Yet Marianne herself also has a pornographic gaze, but hers gaze uncovers the beauties of the male body, which she cannot but help appreciate.

Melanie's pornographic gaze is firstly turned towards her own body. With her sexuality only but budding, she gazes at her body through (unawaredly) the eyes of men. She explores herself in the manner she may be pornographically explored by them. But like Marianne, she also turns her pornographic gaze to Finn, partially in admiration of his body and its movements, partially in abhorrence.

Carter breaks with convention differently in the case of Annabel. For Annabel, pornography represents the truth and the facts. In the pornographic pictures she receives, she does not perceive any sexuality or eroticism, not does she feel any degradation or humiliation. While Annabel's own gaze at Lee only objectifies him, and ascribes shapes and colors to him, it is not pornographic.

Marianne's awakened sexuality, and also her discovered pregnancy also give her strengths previously unknown. She gradually realizes that she is able to use these strengths and powers not only in relation to her husband Jewel, but also in relation to her brothers-in-law, and overall to the tribe of Barbarians she lives with.

In all three novels, Carter attempts a final break with the traditional Gothic ending. Typically a traditional Gothic ending would entail the return of the Gothic heroine into unchanged patriarchal society. But this is not the case for any of Carter's three novels.

The Magic Toyshop offers two endings centering round the image of the patriarchal house and prison. Maggie as a Gothic heroine wife breaks free from patriarchal tyranny by finally finding her voice and fighting back. But while Maggie and Francie stand up for their taboo relationship, with the blessing of Finn and Melanie, they are not permitted to survive the fire that consumes Uncle Phillip's household and the patriarchal structure it represents.

Finn and Melanie represent the true break with traditional Gothic convention. They escape the burning and collapsing patriarchy and exit into a new world which they can mold according to their rules. They are free of the constraints of patriarchal organization they have just escaped. Such an ending opens endless possibilities, and so in a manner speaking it functions not only as an ending but also as a new beginning for which the future is unknown."³³²

In *Heroes and Villains* brings a disposal of both the old as well as the new patriarch of the Barbarian tribe. Marianne, with her conscious sexuality and also her pregnancy, decides to become the leader of the tribe. Such an unconventional ending in a Gothic novel proves a change within the mind of the Gothic heroine. This Gothic heroine will certainly instill change in the patriarchal arrangement of her society.

In *Love*, Carter breaks free of the traditional conventional ending by using a taboo itself. In this novel, the Gothic heroine Annabel is not forced in the end to return to a patriarchal arrange. Instead, Annabel is the one that takes the final decision into her hands. She orchestrates her suicide in which she artfully designs herself to fit into the world within her mind as she created it, and thus she refuses any adaptation to conventions.

³³² Gamble, *Front Line* 73.

CHAPTER 10

RESUME

Diplomová práce měla za cíl prozkoumat vliv tradiční britské gotické literární tvorby v dílech Angely Carterové a předložila otázku, jakým způsobem může být Carterová zařazena jakožto současná autorka využívající gotické literární tradice.

Kapitola 2

V Kapitole 2 byl uveden historický přehled původu a vzniku termínu gotická literatura v britském kontextu, který v 18. století zprvu označoval typ románu, a dokonce skupinu spisovatelů, z let 1760 až 1820. Toto označení původně představovalo středověkou literární tvorbu počínaje dílem Chaucera a konče literární tvorbou Alžbětinské éry. Zároveň vznikalo spojení představy o kmenech Gótů, kteří přispěly k rozpadu Římského imperia, a jejichž primitivnost a barbarita představovala hrozbu civilizované společnosti a o politickém uspořádání. Gotická literatura vznikající v politicky a společensky měnící se Británii 18. století tudíž vznikla částečně i jako reakce na tehdejší měnící se poměry v britské společnosti a domácnostech.

Gotická literatura 18. století se nejvíce vyznačovala zabýváním se hranicemi a mezy dané společností, a to hlavně překročením těchto hranic. Umožňovala totiž bezpečné zhlédnutí za hranice těchto mezí do necivilizovaného světa, kde etické a společenské kodexy byly přinejmenším překrucované.

Po základním přehledu o původu britské gotické literatury byly představeny základní témata a motivy gotické tradice. Mezi základními koncepty patří koncept paranoie, koncept barbarství a primitivnosti a koncept taboo. Tyto koncepty se opíraly o základní trojúhelník gotického otce-zlosyna, gotické dcery-hrdinky a gotického milence. Další témata, které byly rozvinuty v rozborech tří literárních děl Angely Carterové byly téma uvěznění, téma útěku, téma rozkladu, a také koncepce minulosti.

Ve spojení se změnami ve společenském řádu v Británii 18. století, kdy docházelo také k tlakům v oblasti pozice žen a mužů ve společnosti, dovozovala gotická literární tvorba zaměření na genderové a sexuální role ve společnosti. Gotická literatura, která byla hlavně psána ženami, se stala ze své podstaty

přirovnáním k tehdejšímu patriarchálnímu světu. Patriarchizmus už nebylo předmětem, ale spíš ve své podstatě konvencí gotické literární tvorby. Zároveň, jelikož je gotická tvorba tvorbou překročení mezí, tak samozřejmě docházelo k překročení a překrucování daných patriarchálních konvencí a struktur.

Angela Carterová psala svá díla převážně v rámci britské gotické tradice. Tak jako gotická literární tvorba předkládá výzvu daným společenským, a tudíž i sexuálním konvencím té doby, tak i současná tvorba Carterové předkládá výzvy konvencím moderní doby. K tomu Carterová využívá jak základní gotický trojúhelník zlosyna –dcery/hrdinky-milence stejně tak jako tradiční gotické témata aby nakonec vytvořila svou vlastní moderní gotickou tvorbu.

Kapitola 4

Román *The Magic Toyshop* (Kouzelné hračkářství) je postavený na základech tradičního gotického románu. Po smrti dobrého gotického otce Melanie dochází k jeho nahrazení zlým patriarchálním strýcem Philippem a objevuje se gotický milenek Finn. Tentokrát se ale souběžně objevuje druhý gotický trojúhelník. Strýc Phillip se nachází jako gotický zlosyn také ve vztahu k vlastní ženě, která ale překračuje hranice velkého taboo - jejím milencem je její vlastní bratr.

Zde je základní gotickou hranicí hranice mezi vzdělaným a kulturním světě střední třídy rodičů Melanie, a chudobném a robotnickém světě dělnické třídy domácnosti strýce Philippa. Zároveň je to hranice mezi životem v minulosti a životem v současnosti.

Rozklad představuje nejprve smrt rodičů Melanie, což představuje další rozklad jejího dosavadního života. Poté se najednou Melanie ocitne ve světě, ve kterém je stále obklopena rozkladem a úpadkem. Jednak je to o celkovém úpadku čtvrti v jižním Londýně, která kdysi prožila lepší časy, jednak je to rozklad domácnosti strýce Philippa, kde se nenachází mimo jiné tekoucí teplá voda a splachující záchod, ale hlavně je to postupný rozklad sociálního a třídního zařazení Melanie a jejich dvou sourozenců.

Strýc Phillip je hlavním a vlastně jediným vězňem v tomto příběhu. Přestože Melanie sama jaksi silně neprožívá pocit uveznění, není pochyb o tom, že nesmí opustit dům jejího strýce. Mnohem více se ale ve vězení nachází teta

Maggie, u nichž se to nejvíce projevuje ztrátou řeči po svatbě se strýcem Phillipem. Na obecné rodně je věznění představeno strachem Maggie a jejich dvou bratrů před porušováním pravidel strýce Phillipa a nemožností odchodu z jeho domácnosti.

Přestože Melanii napadne možnost útěku, tato možnost není žádnou vážnou a tudíž vykonatelnou touhou. Zato její gotický milenec Finn je prvním, který jakýsi únik uskuteční a to rozsekáním jedné z nejoblíbenějších loutek strýce Phillipa. Vzhledem k tomu, že pro Finna, ale i pro zbytek rodiny, představuje tato loutka strýce Phillipa samotného, je její zničení jakýsi symbolické zničení velikosti a síly strýce Phillipa a představuje pro ně jisté osvobození z jeho věznitelských vlivů.

Na prvních stránkách románu je nám představena dospívající Melanie, která objevuje vlastní tělo a prozkoumává svou vznikající sexualitu na podkladu společenských a uměleckých vzorů, a vše je velice podrobně a pornograficky popsáno. Ona sama pohlíží pornografickým způsobem na Finna. Zkoumá nejen jeho tvář, ale i tělo a pohyby, sama je ale v jakýchkoliv sexuálně motivovaných projevech úplně pasivní. I Melanie zažije znásilnění, přestože nedojde k proniknutí. Její strýc zinscenuje divadelní hru, kde Melanie zastává roli antické Ledy, a je znázorněně znásilněna tou samou loutkou labutě, kterou později Finn zničí. Největším překvapením ale pro ni nastává zjištění a pochopení incestního vztahu mezi tetou Maggie a jejím bratrem Franciem, která nakonec vyústí v založení požáru a zničení domu strýce Phillipa a pravděpodobným zahynutím všech kromě Melanie a Finna.

Kapitola 5

Kapitola 5 je rozborem díla *Heroes and Villains* (Hrdinové a zlosynové). Zde Carterová pravděpodobně nejvěrněji využívá tradiční gotickou formu, kdy dobrý patriarchální otec gotické hrdinky je nahrazen zlým padouchovským otcem a kde se k dovytváření gotického trojúhelníku zároveň objevuje gotický milenec. Podkladem pro román se taktéž stává základní binární opozice mezi barbarským a primitivním civilizovaným světem, mezi gotickým chaosem a moderním pořádkem.

Základní gotickou hranicí je hranice mezi světem Komunity profesorů a světem Barbarů, která byla vytvořena po apokalypticky znějící Válce. I toto vytváří hranici mezi tehdejším světem v minulosti a tím současným. Svět Profesorů je světem strukturované společnosti řízené pořádkem a pravidly, je to soběstačný svět rozumu a vzdělání. Oproti tomu je svět Barbarů světem chaosu a nepořádku, základního kmenového uspořádání, svět bez vzdělání ale zato plný pověr.

Téma rozkladu se protíná celým románem a je čtenáři představen očima hlavní hrdinky Marianny. Marianna poprvé stojí tváří v tvář rozkladu při nepovolených výletech mimo obranné zdi Komunity. Zde nachází rozkládající svět minulosti, a mnohdy i hadry pokrývající dávno zhnilé lidské ostatky. Rozklad se dotkne i perfektního světa Profesorů a to formou duševního zhroucení chůvy Marianny, která v záchvatu šílenství zavraždí Marianniného otce. Marianne sama se jistým způsobem zevnitř hroutí, a tudíž se rozhodne zbavit se své minulosti. Ve světě Barbarů ale nachází rozklad formou chudoby, podvýživy a častých smrtí jak nemocných dětí tak zraněných mužů.

Uvěznění Marianna pocítila uvnitř Komunity a to již od dětství. Dobrovolný odchod z komunity se tudíž stává jejím prvním skutečným útekem. Poté co je Marianna nedobrovolně uvezněna pod ochranou patriarchálního vůdce Barbarů se znovu pokusí utéct, ale její útek je zmařen a následuje ještě větší forma uvěznění a to svatbou.

Kapitola 6

V románu *Love* (Láska) Angela Carterová znovu využívá základního gotického trojúhelníku, kdy Lee představuje mnohdy patriarchálního zlosyna ve vztahu k Annbele, a Buzz je téměř v pozici jejího milence. Tentokrát ale není tento gotický trojúhelník jasně vymezený vzhledem k tomu, že jak vyšinutá Annabel tak stejně vyšinutý Buzz v sobě nosí známky gotického padoucha ve vztahu k mnohem stabilnějšímu a tudíž jinak zranitelného Lee.

Základní gotickou hranicí v tomto románu je hranice mezi duševním zdravím a normálností a psychickým narušením a bláznovstvím. Jako jediný ze tří se jeví Lee jako normální a vede skoro běžný pracovní život středoškolského učitele. Zato Buzz se vymyká všem normám, ale na to je Lee od dětství zvyklý.

Možná i proto mu zpočátku soužití s mnohem více narušenou Annabelou nečiní takové potíže. Annabel prožívá vnější svět s velkou hrůzou a snaží se v něm nastavit určitou nehybnost. Zato její vnitřní svět se hemží barvami a mytologickými zvířaty a představami. Tento její vnitřní svět je schopna pouze částečně sdílet s Buzzem.

Rozklad je znázorněn především rozkladem mysli Annabely, hlavně po jejím nezdařeném pokusu o sebevraždu poté co zahlédla podvádějícího Lee. To způsobí jednak i určitý duševní rozklad u Leeho, ale hlavně rozpad jeho blízkého vztahu s Buzzem, který je donucen odejít z jejich společné domácnosti.

Uvěznění je zde představeno šílenstvím Annabely, která tímto nejen uvěznuje sebe samu ve svém světě, ale nutí i Leeho se vzdát svých svobod a svého prostoru a přizpůsobovat se jejímu světu. Annabel doslova proniká do světa Lee, modifikuje ho, a tím přetahuje Leeho do jejího vlastního světa. Po jejím pokusu o sebevraždu je toto uvěznění ještě hlubší, a navíc zpečetěno tetováním, které si Annabel po Leem vynutí.

Kapitola 7

Melanie se nachází v období sexuálního dospívání. Porovnává sebe s ženskými vzory které ji obklopují, ať je to vlastní matka, hrdinky z románů, či ženy zobrazené malířky. Zkoumá vlastní tělo na které pohlíží pornografickým pohledem, kdy sebe sama však vnímá tak, jak by ji vnímal mužský pohled. Podobným pornografickým způsobem si později prohlíží i Finna, kdy zkoumá jeho tělo i jeho pohyby. Ve vztahu k němu je ale Melanie vždy pasivní a čeká na to, co s ní bude chtít sám dělat. Nakonec je to však její vlastní srtýc, který je strůjcem jejího zatím nejhlubšího, avšak také nejvíce negativního sexuálního zážitku. Je to nepřímé znásilnění při divadelní hře, který zanechá na Melanii velice silný dojem, přestože nedojde k opravdovému fyzickému znásilnění.

Marianna si je poprvé vědoma své sexuality po varování o znásilnění vlastní chůvou, která ji chce nahnat strach před Barbary a taky ji chce výchovně udržet pod kontrolou. Přestože se jí nic nestane při jejím prvním setkání s Jewelem, stává se později málem obětí skupinového znásilnění všemi jeho bratry. Nakonec ke znásilnění opravdu dojde při jejím pokusu o útěk od Barbarů. Znásilní ji Jewelem, kterého si musí druhý den vzít za muže. Brzy poté ale dojde u Marianny

k probuzení sexuální touhy, a zároveň k probuzení její vnitřní ženské síly, které se Jewel začne sám obávat. Annabel je co se týče sexuálního života velice pasivní a zdrženlivá. Přestože nestojí o dotyky jejího muže Lee, nevidí ani důvod proč by se jim měla bránit. Zajímavé na ní ale je, že když obdrží darem pornografické fotky od jejího švagra, přijímá tento dar velice ráda. Tyto pornografické fotky totiž v ní vzbuzují zájem a touhu stát se stejně anonymní jako žena na těchto fotkách.

Kapitola 8

Kapitola 8 se zaměřila na nebeletristické a feministicky laděné dílo Angely Carterové - *The Sadeian Woman: An Exercise in Cultural History*. V něm se Carterová zaměřila na rozbor pornografie a to ve spojení se sexuálními a sociálními vztahy ve společnosti. Zde Carterová zastává názoru, že pornografie je nepřítelem žen právě protože současná společenská ideologie neobsahuje možnost změny náhledu na sexuální vztahy. Sexuální vztahy pro Carterovou úzce souvisí se sociálními vztahy. Tudiž by se podle ní nemělo na pornografii pohlížet jako na záležitost, která se vyjímá těmto vztahům. Carterová nejprve analyzuje podstatu pornografie ve své nejzákladnější znázorněné podobě – graffiti. Toto Carterová považuje za „mytologizování sexuality“ a sama pak následně atakuje veškeré sexuální mýty. Carterová he totiž považuje za falešné zobecňování sexuálních a tudíž i sociálních vztahů s cílem překrytí pravdivé exitující podstaty.

Carterová přitom ale poté připouští, že pornografie přece jen může donutit čtenáře k přehodnocení svého vztahu k vlastní sexualitě prostřednictvím pornografického obrazu či textu. Následně dokonce představuje pojem morálního pornografa při tvrzení, že pakliže se pornografie stane uměním (jak vizuálním tak i literárním) to znamená, že se tak stane pouze díky komplexnějšímu ději a charakterizováním aktérů, což zároveň přináší vyvinutí sociálních a sexuálních vztahů mezi aktéry a podle Carterové umělec v tuto chvíli stojí tvář v tvář s morálními rozpory vlastní opravdovým sexuálními setkáním.

Kapitola 9

Pakliže se tradiční gotická literatura snaží napadnou společenské konvence, zejména konvence patriarchální spolčnosti, překročím hranic konvenčnosti, přece jen na závěr díla překročí zpět tyto hranice k ukončení příběhu v rámci

daných a existujících konvencí. Tímto způsobem umožňuje tradiční gotická tvorba analýzu a kritiku společnosti a jejích konvencí, ale zároveň neposkytuje možnost se od nich odprostit. Využíváním tradičního gotického vzoru Angela Carterová napadá konvence moderní britské společnosti. Carterová ale nepřekračuje hranice konvencí své doby aby je posléze znovu překročila zpět. Naopak, snaží se o odproštění a odbourávání těchto konvencí.

Melanie s Finnem se nakonec ocitnou osvobození od patriarchálního strýce Philippa. Zde se Carterová odprostuje od konvencí tradiční společnosti, neboť oba dva stojí na prahu nového života, kde se mohou volně rozhodnout, jak v něm pokračovat. Marianne sice přijde o svého muže, ale zároveň vzrůstá vnímání její vlastní síly a rozhodne se stát náčelnicí kmene Barbarů. Annabel vše vyřeší po svém a to pečlivě naplánovanou sebevraždou.

ANOTACE

Tato diplomová práce má za cíl prozkoumat vliv tradiční britské gotické literární tvorby v dílech Angely Carterové a předkládá otázku, jakým způsobem může být Carterová zařazena jakožto současná autorka využívající gotické literární tradice. Zároveň bude prokázán její posun od tradičního pojetí gotického románu k jejímu vlastnímu pojetí moderní gotické literární tvorby. Po definování původu gotické literární tvorby, včetně hlavních znaků, témat a motivů se práce zaměří na tři romány Angely Carterové (*Heroes and Villains* (1969), *The Magic Toyshop* (1967) a *Love* (1971)). Analýza se bude vyvíjet podle stejného vzoru a zaměří se na čtyři základní témata gotické literatury: gotické hranice a meze, rozklad neboli úpadek, uvěznění a útěk. Každá kapitola bude uvedena krátkým úvodem do daného románu a následovat budou podkapitoly ke každému z témat. Poté se práce zaměří na projevy sexuality a také pornografie v každém díle. Dále se práce bude věnovat pohledu Angely Carterové na pornografii a sexualitu ve svém nebeletristickém díle *The Sadeian Woman: An Exercise in Cultural History* (1979), ve kterém Carterová probádala politické myšlenky Markýze de Sada. Diplomová práce bude ukončena závěrem, ve kterém budou vytýčeny hlavní znaky odlišnosti moderní gotické literární tvorby Angely Carterové od tradiční gotické literatury.

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