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**THE METAMORPHOSIS OF IDENTITY AND THE MULTIPLE SELVES IN ANGELA CARTER’S POSTMODERN WRITINGS APPROACHED THROUGH**

**AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE**

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**SUMMARY**

The repressive societies constitute spaces of identity dehumanization and instability of the human beings, forcing them to choose between committing offences and alternative levels of conscience and reality. The fantastic favours a subversive portrayal of the identity as well as a parallel reality. In this framework, the metamorphosis of the characters is rather an ontological modification than a theriomorphic apparition. Excessive exhibiting has influenced the study of the extraordinary for a long time. In this thesis, I propose to conceptualize and tackle the spectacular transformation as a displaying process *in absentia* in which the human being glides into the theriomorphic stage via the lines of flight that indicate its ontological becoming.

The aim of the present thesis is to tackle via an interdisciplinary perspective the multiple selves and the metamorphosis of the characters’ identity in Angela Carter’s postmodern writings.

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The first three chapters comprise the theoretical background focused on Mikhail Bakhtin, Carl Jung, and Edward Soja, approached in terms of the carnival, carnivalesque, archetypes, and Thirdspace.

The first chapter is entitled “Bakhtin’s Approach to Chronotopes, Carnival and the Carnivalesque.” In this chapter, I have expanded upon an essay in method on Bakhtin’s “Forms of chronotope and time in the novel”, I have also focused on reflections and remarks on Bakhtin’s theory of the literary chronotope, the carnival and the carnivalesque, illustrating effective approaches for comprehending the applied theories. Our analytical approach to Mikhail Bakhtin, a twentieth-century Russian literary critic, and semiotician who established an epistemology that connected the notions of carnival, authority, and laughter, highlighted the fact that he tackled the Middle Ages and Renaissance in terms of the carnivals and popular festivals, looking at the history of the class stratification through the monologic versus the dialogic as means of communication. According to Bakhtin, the carnival was a kind of disobedience, sarcasm, and amusement. He intuitively perceived the social value of a person’s life experience in the Middle Ages as being constructed on two distinct levels: an official life governed by the social order’s hierarchy of daily living, and an unofficial carnival life of freedom of the daily social norms and boundaries. In this respect, the carnival is indeed a technique of dismantling the barriers and resolving the power inequalities and also hierarchies. The individuals that are constrained and oppressed by the hierarchical authority generate a humorous and hilarious mockery of it, resulting in a festive life. The carnival constitutes a transitory means of experiencing the fullness of life through free and familiar interactions. For Bakhtin “the unofficial carnival is people’s second life, organized on the basis of laughter” (1984b, 8).

Dealing with Bakhtinian dialogic theories, such as heteroglossia, carnival, and the carnivalesque, we have assumed that each of Carter’s works presented in the thesis can be regarded as a Bakhtinian “Deck of a Ship,” engendering a new Bakhtinian dialogue among them. The goal of my dissertation is to approach Angela Carter’s *The Magic Toyshop, Nights at the Circus,* and *The Bloody Chamber* from a Bakhtinian perspective in order to discover the implications of the carnival and the carnivalesque in her employment of the past tales.

*The Magic Toyshop* contains a complex and extended dialogue of languages of the fairy tales that do not exclude but rather communicate with each other in many various ways in order to represent precious examples illustrating the Bakhtinian carnival. Carter assembles all of these fairytales and exercises their creative and artistic freedom, displaying the linguistic systems’ creativity and flexibility.

*Nights at the Circus* tackles a carnivalesque environment where the actors are the performers and where the masks are shown in various ways, the scene representing the life of each actor who plays his role according to the norms dictated by the writer.

*The Bloody Chamber* itself treats an essential symbol of the hidden, dark side of human sexuality that nourishes itself on power and brutal manipulation. Angela Carter changes the traditional perspective of a fairy tale, choosing to write in accordance with the carnival tradition, emphasizing the limits and excesses of life, as well as the joy and joviality of the physical perspective brought by her opulent and delicious language. For properly decoding such issues, I have resorted to Bakhtin’s approach to carnival and carnivalesque. I have assumed that the castle represents some sort of carnival, where people play their role, manifesting freely their personality, gesturing and fighting in order to find their inner self, not in a peaceful manner, but in a rather dramatic one.

Consequently, writing should not be whittled down to the epic text construction as a means of stabilization, but rather to a struggle in the dynamics of stabilization and destabilization between the known and the unknown, in a dialogical process of interaction where “what is” has still not been completely remedied, but rather open to involvement and mobilization beyond the immediate reach. In other words, the text must live on the borderline between what has already been made and what is still being made, leaving space for the reader’s personal response while reading. This requires the researcher’s looking beyond the pursuit for the ultimate answers and prepackaged offerings, focusing on how to bring the voices together - the voices of the author, the reader, and of those who are in the field, for example.

Bakhtin’s attention to multiple ways of thinking about our interaction with our environment and how we make sense of our experience has constituted an important invitation for us. We have embraced the idea that abstract theorizing cannot represent its open-ended and fluid nature. As previously stated, Bakhtin believed that understanding language in the sense of being already formed, structured, stable, and representational, as many linguistic philosophers genuinely think, is insufficient; he assumed that we needed to investigate how language is used and functions in practical manners through exchanges and utterances made in specific contexts and moments. As a result, the investigation of lived experience involves “not a means for revealing, for bringing to the surface the already ready-made character of a person; no, in dialogue, a person not only shows himself outwardly, but he becomes for the first time that which he is . . . *To be* means to communicate dialogically” (Bakhtin, 1984a: 252).

The second chapter is entitled “Soja’s Approach to Thirdspacing” and focuses on the interdisciplinary method employed in this doctoral study that has offered me a credulous way of understanding the spatiality of human life via Soja’s Thirspacing. It resulted that the Firstspace is concentrated on things “that can be empirically mapped.” Regarding the Secondspace, it is focused on “the ideas, in re-presentations of human spatiality in mental or cognitive forms.” These two spaces are to be more or less similar to the “perceived” and “conceived” spaces approached by Lefebvre, the so-called “real” and “imagined” spaces (10). The “lived spaces” have been practically regarded “as a combination of the “real” and “imagined” in various degrees (10).

For Soja, modernity is defined as a dual opposition, an opposition between two terms, so Postmodernity means overcoming this duality. In the first part of his book, Soja will apply the principle of overcoming, or the third as another, to various topics. The critique of the illusion, of transparency and opacity, lays the foundations for the theme of the trialectics which is so central to the recitation of the production of the Space, intertwining in a dialectically linked triad: the space practice – which makes reference to the perceived space, the representation of the space – which makes reference to the projected space, and the space of representations. As a consequence, Soja transforms Lefebvre’s three spatialities into a type of space, where the perceived becomes the Firstspace, the conceived becomes the Secondspace and the lived becomes the Thirdspace. But if “any of its three forms of spatial knowledge is given a priori or privileged ontologically, then there is a strategy to privilege the third form of spatial knowledge, in this case, the Thirdspace, in the sense of combating the tendency in the long term to confine spatial knowledge to the epistemology of Firstspace and Secondspace and their associated theorizing” (74).

These “three moments of the social space are described twice in the introductory chapter, twice in the form of an emphatically listed list” (Soja, 1996: 65). As Soja moved on to the idea that “Both the third space and Lefebvre’s most comprehensive notion of social space are understood in these three spaces - perceived, conceived and lived - all being inherently favored a priori” (68), we have finally decided to focus on Soja’s Thirdspace.

We have considered that the most profitable way of approaching Soja emerges from his increased preoccupation with Faucoult’s elaboration of a specific “geohistory of otherness,” especially in his critical approach to Hayden White, named by him as one of the “finest and most open-minded ‘metahistorians.” Soja highlights that White does not ignore spatiality, but is “unconsciously subordinating it to history” (17), instead of interlacing them so that he could acquire a deeper comprehension of the spatiality of human life. The most interesting element of study as concerns Soja’s Thirdspace has arisen from the fact that it “encourages,” due to or in spite of the “anti-modernist” and “anti-postmodernist” (4) expectations, a creative and indissoluble outlook of the modernist and postmodernist thinkers (1996: 5).

Soja’s Thirdspace constitutes one of the most brilliant ways of thinking in the sense that the author himself defines it as an encouragement in order to “think differently about the meanings and significance” of the environment, the home, the city, the place, the location, the landscape, the region, the geography or the territory, which according to Soja, means “the inherent spatiality of human life”.

The third chapter entitled “Jung’s Approach to Archetypes,” expands upon the assumptions made by Carl Gustave Jung, the well-known philosopher of the 20th century. We have started from the assumption that the psychological processes explained by Jung and which have been tackled in relation to Carter’s novels, can be viewed as part of the art of communicating with the readers, increasing their knowledge with respect to the social mask that makes the people and ourselves believe that our being is individual, only to discover that it is a simple trick, a compromise. Moreover, mention has been made of the fact that mental suffering begins when an individual identifies himself with his forged, illusory personality. When he keeps this mask permanently in the outer world, he ends up dissimulating, full of satisfaction, from a social point of view.

We have investigated how Jung, taking as a starting point the reflections and clinical observations of his medical thesis entitled *The Psychology and Pathology of So-called Occult Phenomena*, has set the foundations for his understanding of the psychic functioning in terms of “complexes,” describing them as personal, autonomous elements, belonging to the self, but which are not yet integrated or at least which are not recognized.

Taking into consideration the complex significance of the notion of *persona* as described by Jung, we have highlighted the fact that he conceives it as the identification of the ego with an image of himself, doubled with the qualities extracted from the collective imaginary that would be necessary for it to exist, to survive, in the absence of a sufficient feeling of self-esteem. The *persona* for Jung does not mean anything real; it is just an interface between the individual and society. Therefore, our approach to complexity and duplication has been conducted by resorting to the Jungian notions of *persona* and *shadow*. We have also discussed the peculiarity of the aspect of the ‘mutuality’ that resides in the Jungian concept of ‘transfer.’

We have explored the archetypes of the *anima*, the *animus*, the *shadow*, and the *persona*. The archetypes of *the persona* and *the shadow* are, without a doubt, the two psychic ways described by Jung that bring us closer to the theme of duplication, thus allowing us to explore it in an original way. Although it has not undergone any change since 1928, the concept of *persona* is interesting to be perceived in several ways, as it takes into account a way of identifying and constituting the ego, a way on the border between the inner world and that of the object and its relation to the collective representations.

We have pointed out the fact that what interests Jung, however, is primarily to identify the compensatory effects of lowering the mental level that reveals in the unconscious scene of the subject the ways of releasing a psyche that figures, personifies, and gives life to these complex contents. Jung describes these complexes in terms of their emotional tone, namely their very strong personal component, and at the same time, specifies their autonomy, which sometimes makes them difficult to identify with the conscious personality.

The fourth chapter, “An Interdisciplinary Perspective on Carter’s *The Magic Toyshop* – Resonant Echoes of the Fairy-tales and Myths in Angela Carter’s Writings,” is concerned with a detailed analysis of Angela Carter’s *The Magic Toyshop.* There have been tackled several important aspects within Angela Carter’s novel *The Magic Toyshop,* in terms of their mythical and fantastic connotations, of Bakhtin’s chronotope, as well as of Soja’s Thirdspacing, and last but not least, of the archetypes of Gustave Carl Jung. At the same time, I have been concerned with the complexity of the female status, pointing to its reinforcement and consolidation as a genre in the late-eighteenth century in England, and also to its structural deconstruction in the late twentieth century.

Bakhtin’s chronotope, the archetypes of Jung, especially his *anima, animus, persona, and the shadow*, and also Soja’s Thirdspacing, all have been employed to decode the intricate significance of Angela Carter’s *The Magic Toyshop*. Consequently, mention has been made of Bakhtin’s choronotope that settles accurately the time and place of the action, due to the fact that the notion of the chronotope means exactly “time-space,” highlighting, in this way, the intrinsic connection between the temporal and spatial bonds which are artistically denoted in literature. We have argued that its relevance emerges from the fact that it shows the inseparability of time and space, time being regarded as the fourth dimension of space. It has been depicted the chronotope as a formally constitutive category of literature. As already mentioned, in the literary artistic chronotope, the temporal and the spatial dimensions merge into one concrete whole. In this respect, time, as it were, thickens, and easily becomes artistically visible; similar to space, it has become responsive and charged with the displacements of history, time, and plot. Moreover, this special fusion of axes features the artistic chronotope and has been turned into a good account in our close reading of Carter’s novel.

Concerning Soja’s Thirdspace, we have highlighted that it establishes the specific background by recontextualizing spatiality. It has been revealed the fact that the particular meaning of the ‘space’ may vary from the most local to the global geographies. As illustrated above, ‘space’ does not represent only the architectural, and geographical area, but the social one, as well. This chapter has aimed to investigate and define the dynamics of the ‘Thirdspace,’ as a key notion, and to position it in the specificities of the urban within the area of transgression. Moreover, the explorations of the Thirdspace by Soja, enriched with comments on Bell Hook, an African-American cultural critic, have revealed the fact that, once its frontiers have been reconceptualized, it facilitates to creatively inquire into the ‘connected spacialities of race, class, and gender,’ partly tackled in our thesis as well. Furthermore, we have turned into account Bell’s choice of “marginality as a space of radical openness” (qtd. in 1996: 13), where she recomposes the “lived spaces of representation as potentially nurturing places of resistance, real-and-imagined, material, and metaphorical meeting grounds for struggles over all forms of oppression” (qtd. in 1996: 12). This has been accomplished when we depicted Uncle Philip’s toyshop, filled up with conflictual social and emotional issues, due to the marginal position of those that dwell there. The theoretical framework for understanding the mechanisms of my critical approach has been enriched by resorting to comprehensive literature about self-identity, which has been employed in relation to the concept of Thirdspace. The case study has aimed to exemplify the relationship among various characters, especially those involving the protagonist, Melanie, but also Finn and Uncle Philip, and to demonstrate their functionality within the space-time coordinates.

The depiction of the characters’ inner selves and intense emotional drives has been accomplished via Carl Jung’s archetypes, more specifically via *anima* and *animus, shadow, and persona.* We have closely observed the assumption that archetypes are direct and spontaneous projections of the characters’ unconscious, being activated in visions, dreams, and fantasies.

As concerns the Gothic fiction, developed and detailed by Ann Radcliffe in reaction to male Gothic fiction, later by Matthew Lewis, and meaningfully revised by the Victorian writers such as Emily Brontë and Charlotte, in terms of the formula of the unfortunate, forsaken, and persecuted heroine and also the villain-hero that victimizes the female heroine, we have embraced the idea that such references have been exploited self-consciously by the postmodern writers, Angela Carter being no exception to this trend.

Thus, our approach to Angela Carter’s *The Magic Toyshop* has expanded upon some of the cultural devices which make the Gothic heroine submit more or less to the male authority, Melanie, being Carter’s female protagonist who refuses to be victimized. *The Magic Toyshop* has been interpreted by us in connection to the political climate as well, in which the work was written, namely the discourse present in the second wave of feminism, concerned with the cultural and material elements of women’s submission. References to Gothic fiction which is “probably more popular than [...] ever” (Heiland, 2004: 156), and to the female Gothic styles have been made with respect to the women’s apprehensions and fears about sexual relationships which will probably persist as long as the concept of the love and the romantic love has a strong impact within the cultural sphere.

Apart from tackling the concepts of Bakhtin, Jung, and Soja, the chapter has also traced the boundaries between the fairy-tale, female Gothic fiction, and the romance novel. There have been inserted comments on the literary fairy-tale, which originated in the late seventeenth century in France, as the main forerunner of the female Gothic novel in the late eighteenth century. Equally significant have been our considerations about the fact that both genres, in fact, preceded the modern romance novel, sharing many similitudes both in reception and in content, being centred on various ideas regarding the ‘sublime experience,’ ‘miraculous transformation’ or ‘wondrous change.’ They have been tackled in this chapter and will be further exploited as methodological lenses in the next chapters. The fairy-tales, romance novels, and female Gothic fiction have been inserted and turned into account in order to explain the female characters’ desires and fears. Such methodological devices have been helpful instruments to illustrate the complex female identity and evolution which continuously takes place in Carter’s novels between two diametrically opposed poles.

The fifth chapter, “An Interdisciplinary Perspective on Carter’s *Nights at the Circus,* Metamorphosis of Identity in the Novel,” is focused on Angela Carter’s *Nights at the Circus* approached via an interdisciplinary perspective*.* In order to take into consideration, as a point of reference, the identitarian metamorphosis of Carter’s characters, there have been tackled some relevant aspects in relation to *Nights at the Circus* in terms of their fantastic and mythical connotations, of Mikhail Bakhtin’s carnival and carnivalesque, of Jung’s archetypes of *persona* and *shadow*, as well as of Soja’s Thirdspacing. At the same time, I have been concerned with the complexity of the female status, pointing to its reinforcement and consolidation as a genre in the late-eighteenth century in England, and also to its structural deconstruction in the late twentieth century.

The fictional reality from Carter’s novel dislocated and unfolded between its phantom and utopian version has been depicted especially in Lizzie’s Marxist discourse and the true version of magical realism. The latter has been identified in the last part of Carter’s novel, where the fantastic discourse displays its ability to divide and destabilize the logic of the real world in order to allow the manifestation of new forms of representations of identity. I have demonstrated in my approach to *Nights at the Circus* that the fantastic sphere is “contaminated” by the features of postmodernism, including the carnivalesque, metafiction, reflection, and self-referentiality. Some strategies and approaches, such as self-reflexivity, which characterize the transformation and becoming of the character Fevvers together with the carnivalesque and also the metafictional have been investigated.

I have pointed out that the functionality of the spatial environment relies on language, nationality, personal and social education, or traditions that significantly affect a person’s behaviour, facilitating the acquisition of a certain sense of individuality. Significantly, in Carter’s novel, the characters show maturity in expressing their thoughts and feelings, being ready to assume what they say.

The depiction of the subversive methods of the fantasy world in approaching the self-construction has been turned into account in this chapter, due to the fact that the interpenetration of the postmodern discourse highlights the representation of the self-image, or of self-knowledge. Postmodernity has been explored and turned into bold relief through the fact that it focuses on the individual’s desire to learn, understand, and overcome the multitude of boundaries, hindrances, and prohibitions that characterize the modern way of thinking about identifying and constructing one’s own identity.

We have tackled the pulsations of fantasy and utopia in our approach to this novel and pointed out that the metamorphosis and becoming of Fevvers occur right at the intersection of the three literary models: the level of utopia, the fantastic, and realism. The description of the “new woman” has been dealt with as arising from the intermingling of the dialectics of the code, representing the realist current and the dialectics of the fantastic sphere. They have been further exploited by us in order to highlight how they break the banality and the traditional patterns with the help of the binary logic of the Western society, how they facilitate the main character Fevvers the possibility to regain her position as a talking subject and, at the same time, to create an openness toward the exact and irreducible identities for what the Whole or complete and complex Self means.

Special attention has been paid to the transformations and metamorphosis of the characters, due to the fact that personal identity shapes the personality of the individual. The larger-than-life Fevvers, one of Carter’s most resistant and enduring characters, has been tackled from a double perspective: as an angel, having the wings of an angel, and also as a completely practical and down-to-earth person.

Equal attention has been paid to the power of the word, insisting on the fact that Carter’s characters mark the break with the collective discourse in a sudden and imminent way, on the one hand, and, on the other, with the phallocratic, proposing instead a new discourse that promotes, as an alternative, the body language as being prior to the expression through words and social constructs. Furthermore, we have stated that Fevvers rejects her own corporality, alienated by visible signs, being the bearer of a language codified according to socio-cultural norms.

Our approach to Angela Carter’s *Nights at the Circus* has expanded upon sobriety and transparency, as well, highlighting the figures of women who stand out “from the binary representation of the gender precisely by recovering the maternal symbolic order, an image that finds its echo in the way of thinking of many theorists,” proposing a rethinking of the woman’s status at another level in the future, which consists in a metamorphosis of the classical woman in her relationship with the greatness and the fullness of her status.

The concepts of the carnival and carnivalesque illustrated by Mikhail Bakhtin have been applied to Carter’s writing to underline the profoundness of the writer and, at the same time, the originality of the style. We have turned into account Bakhtin’s theory and applied it to Carter’s character, Fevvers, demonstrating that she fully illustrates the concept of carnivalization, because it is through the appearance of a very special body, within a multitude of behavioural patterns, that she manages to question this identity. Mention has been made of the parody of the dominant discourses and representations, commented upon in relation to the metamorphoses of Fevvers, and which constitutes the subversive constructions, both ironic and comic, functioning as true correctors of reality. We have pointed out that the carnivalesque exploits the distinctive feature of the ideology, which, as the thought is always in the service of the power, represents a mystification of the language through language. We have also highlighted that the carnival favours excess and revolt, both present in each of Angela Carter’s novels because it announces the end of a cycle and the desire for renewal that imposes a new system of values, mainly in relation to the newly acquired women’s status as the new woman.

We have also tackled Bakhtin’s chronotope and the chronotopic identity and focused on his assumption that the chronotope represents a specific category of content form manifested in literature, where time symbolically compresses, condenses, and becomes visible, where space absorbs the movement of time and, on the fact that the markings of time are revealed in space, while the space is measured by time itself. We have also exploited Bakhtin’s theory and the chronotopic identity consisting in the connection of the social and the public fields with what is private and even fundamentally intimate.

Another important methodological lense employed for decoding Carter’s novel consists of Jungian archetypes, mainly the *persona* that stands for the social mask that the characters wear under different circumstances and situations, all depicted and commented upon in relation to Fevvers and Walser.

Our methodological grid for approaching Angela Carter’s *The Magic Toyshop* has also turned into account Soja’s Thirdspacing to exemplify firstly the relationship among various characters, especially those involving the protagonist, Fevvers, but also Walser and Lizzie, and secondly, to demonstrate their functionality within the space-time coordinates. The Firstspace of objects has been approached in relation to the circus, further interrelating with the Secondspace of thought, tackled in terms of the characters’ mental patterns and psychological transformations.

As concerns Soja’s Thirdspace, through the invitation to surpass the limits of our understanding of the world and acquire a “critical awareness of space” (1996: 10), it has been tackled as representing a “real and imagined” space, an experienced and lived habitat, rendered concrete via the symbol of the circus, the best place for Carter’s artists to act their performance and have the chance to experience new polarities.

The last chapter, entitled “An Interdisciplinary Perspective on Carter’s *The Bloody Chamber,* Reflections on the Marvelous Tale and Characters”, is dedicated to particular postmodern writing by Angela Carter, *The Bloody Chamber.* Angela Carter, famous for her non-conformist and aggressive way of writing, has attempted to use her writing skills to criticize the unfair male domination and white superiority. In *The Bloody Chamber*, she has depicted how cruel the male individual can be and how weak the female protagonist can feel. Using feminism and oxymoron, the story perfectly reflects how women were treated and how men dominated them. Nevertheless, the novelist offers a new perspective and direction by depicting the protagonist’s awareness of self-determination and courage, qualities that the female characters portrayed by the writer will acquire in the end.

I have tackled the fact that *The Bloody Chamber* touches on magical realism, as well as on the aspects of the fantasy world, the Gothic universe, and the magical world. I have turned into account the gender stereotypes in the myths of feminist criticism which have been reversed not only by content but also by the creative style and characters. The character’s transformation has been depicted in terms of her own identity and also in relation to cultural identity, this aspect representing the base of the fantastic metamorphoses Carter has been concerned with in her writings.

I have investigated the basic contexts, methods, and themes present in Carter’s story. References have been made to the three types of contexts: the literary context tackled in relation to the genre, the story having been adapted from the seventeenth-century folktale by Charles Perrault, called “Bluebeard,” which is still quite popular nowadays.

The second type of context is also related to the genre, more specifically, to the Gothic. I have assumed that the Gothic setting allows Carter to explore the characters’ deep psychological states. Moreover, the darkness of this tale arrises from issues related to sexuality and excessive male power.

The third context is the socio-historical one that interrelates with the Second Wave Feminism, precisely because *The Bloody Chamber* was published in 1979, a period of time when there flourished “Second Wave Feminism.”

Angela Carter herself was an active feminist and she is definitely bringing feminist ideas into her stories that interrelate with three main themes. The first depicted theme is the connection between violence and sexuality, *The Bloody Chamber* comprising the pornographic artwork that the wife finds in the husband’s private room, aligning the husband with the Marquis de Sade. Another key theme is the connection between gender and power employed to highlight the protagonist’s turning from a powerless person to a powerful and free narrator, being no longer just a fairy tale character, but a character of action and value.

Another relevant theme that I have closely explored is the relationship between mother and daughter meant to underline the crucial change from Perrault’s narrative, in the sense that Katherine’s mother saved her from her husband’s brutal behaviour.

I have investigated the methods employed by Carter and I have mainly focused on symbolism. Thus, I have interpreted *The Bloody Chamber* itself as an essential symbol of the hidden, dark side of human sexuality that nourishes itself on power and brutal manipulation. I have closely explored symbolism, the most important symbol being that of the sea, interpreted as an accomplice in the husbands’ violent behaviour. Another important symbol is that of the Gothic castle, described as “a fairy tale castle.” As concerns the symbolism of the sinister wedding gift, I have assumed that it symbolically connects her marriage to her death. In terms of the symbolism of music, music has been interpreted as the way to soothe the soul, to ennoble and calm the person in question and it is tackled in relation to Saint Cecilia.

Angela Carter changes the traditional perspective of a fairy-tale, choosing to write in accordance with the carnival tradition, emphasizing the limits and excesses of life, as well as the joy and joviality of the physical perspective brought by her opulent and delicious language. For properly decoding such issues, I have resorted to Bakhtin’s approach to carnival and carnivalesque. I have assumed that the castle represents some sort of carnival, where people play their role, manifesting freely their personality, gesturing and fighting in order to find their inner self, not in a peaceful manner, but in a rather dramatic one.

Moreover, within this role-playing atmosphere, each character develops from the beginning to the end, with ups and downs, unforeseen situations, and, all the time, experiencing many behavioural changes, going through a process of initiation and progress toward a clear and original identity, being constantly in the search of the self.

I have strongly relied on Bakhtin’s preoccupation with the evolving character of culture in a world that is constantly changing and where people are involved in their journey to perfection, as is the case of the two lovers who, in the end, overcame all the obstacles. It actually happens in tune with Bakhtin’s suggestion that the renewal of the return to the norm takes shape even during the festival that projects the hope for a more harmonious future, without social inequality. And this is precisely Carter’s representation of the carnival as “devoid of fear, piety, perfectly critical, but at the same time positive and not nihilistic” (Bakhtin, 1990: 273). It happens due to the fact that this new aspect emerges from a temporarily utopian world, allowing people to recognize their strengths and enjoy the recognition of an imperfect world, inhabited by incomplete individuals, always in transition and therefore always renewed, allowing the characters to enjoy another day of celebration and another opportunity to get rid of all social constraints.

I have also turned into account Jung’s psychological archetypal model in relation to his approach to *anima*, *animus,* and *shadow* archetypes. Relevant items of information emerged from the history of language and the linguistic matrices that were usually sent back to the old images of the primitive world, where *anima* signifies brightness, because, for the primitive people, the soul represented a flame, being located in the vecinity of the fire and of the earth. In classical Chinese philosophy, the *anima* is regarded as “a feminine part of the soul” (Jung, 1994: 95). I have also explored the animus and anima dichotomy in terms of the submerged versus the emerged concepts. Thus, it follows that *anima*, the feminine feature can be interpreted as the emerged construct normally associated with women, while animus, as the emerged construct characteristic of men. Approaching them from an archetypal perspective, *anima* appears to be the feminine submerged construct characteristic of men, while the *animus* is the very opposite of it, standing for the masculine submerged construct characteristic of women. I have concluded that each individual possesses not only the characteristics of a single-sex, but, in a lower measure, those characteristics of the opposite sex as well, anima being the archetype present with men, while animus, the archetype present with women, due to the fact that man has acquired feminine characteristics through living in the vecinity of women throughout the ages, and, similarly, women have acquired masculine features by living in the proximity of men.

Significant interpretative results emerged from approaching the archetype of the *shadow* which is the dark, hidden side of ourselves that the ego cannot tolerate. Such forms of repressed hostility or elements of unaccepted sexuality, regarded as “animal instincts” (Jung, qtd. in Hall, et. al, 2002: 89), inherited by some individuals during the historical evolution from less developed to highly developed human entities, have facilitated me to tackle how the Marquis’ shadow being active has been projected upon Katherine who somehow felt likely to take over a negative charge in order to emancipate herself.

A Jungian psychoanalytic reading of the story also facilitated my approach to the Marquis as the *animus* archetype, through the fact that he embodies centuries of patriarchy, possessing power and status, becoming sexually animated, and seeking out creative women who can help him enjoy his libertine existence.

As concerns the significance of the dungeon, I have approached it in relation to the protagonist’s intention to surface her shadow self in terms of its repressed contents and claim her sexual and creative energy, symbolically descending into her husband’s unconscious through the dark passage of the dungeon. The mother is also invested with archetypal connotations depicted in relation to the female protagonist’s unconscious. Katherine is saved by a strong feminine archetypal figure, the mother. Approached in psychoanalytic terms, the mother represents the force within all women that can act when it is time to destroy or annihilate the outer destructive impulses.

I have also inquired into the dynamics of Soja’s ‘Thirdspace’ in relation to *The Bloody Chamber*, as the Thirdspace originally and creatively is focused on the “lived spaces of representation as potentially nurturing places of resistance, real-and-imagined, material, and metaphorical meeting grounds for struggles over all forms of oppression” (1996: 12), the castle being the best illustration of Soja’s theory.

The case study has aimed to exemplify firstly the relationship among various characters, especially those involving the protagonist, the young girl, but also her mother, the Marquis de Sade, and the piano-tuner and, secondly, to show their functionality within the space-time coordinates; the Marquis appears immersed in an ‘ideal’ world, where everyone else must be obedient in front of him and everyone must strictly listen to the rules that he dictates, the characters being obliged to do and live according to his own will. On the other hand, the protagonist is already dehumanized by accepting the harsh conditions imposed by the owner of the house, hardly managing to break out of the state of inhumanity and fear imposed by the Marquis who has created a world of dreams and sexual fantasies, a world of his own, where he believes he is the absolute master of all the others. But, due to a series of unexpected situations and a new turn of events, at the end of the story, the castle turns into a real habitat, because the characters, kept under pressure by him for a certain period of time, break away and escape from the imposed cage, having the ability to be free again and enjoy individuation, in Jung’s terminology.