

## Non-Identity and Paradoxicality in Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*

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**Keywords:** identity, interior dialogue, existential, sign, subjectivization, paradoxicality, Gothic

**Abstract.** Angela Carter (1940-1992) in her famous short story, *The Bloody Chamber*, depicts a protagonist whose identity seems to be a predetermined sign in a signifying loop from which she can make no escape. In the first part of our paper, we attempt to show how The protagonist's ensuing psychological tension is aggravated by the conflict which she feels between her ideal ego (as an innocent girl) and her ego-ideal (a rare talent for corruption) and which leads her to unrelenting introspection and interior dialogue with her existential states. Such interior dialogue provides the protagonist with an existential ground on which she deprives all her life events of their presence by signifying (or verbalizing) them through Derridean Differance. Therefore, her interior dialogue results in non-identity in her subjectivization both in the realm of signs and of (social) events. Then, we focus on the protagonist's paradoxical urges spontaneously outflowed from within which, by resisting symbolization, provide her with the possibility of becoming what she thinks she has never been and allow for her moments of self-determination. Finally, we illustrate how such psychological odyssey takes shape in the Gothic setting which arouses, in Lacanian terminology, pre-symbolic tendencies and which involves the coincidence of Gothic horror with the horrors of social reality.

### Introduction

As storytelling creatures, human beings transform their existential states into stories and tales. The study of narrative is the study of the ways human beings narrate their experience in the world. Fairy tales are mainly short stories which depict folkloric fantasies and carry many insights into social values, family tragedy, and personal psychology. The adventures in fairy tales often reflect the journeys we encounter in our life; therefore, they are glimpses into the power of imagination and portray life issues in miniature.

Angela Carter (1940-1992) is the author of children short stories, poetries, radio plays, and film and television scripts. All of her work intends to demythologize the naturalized and automatizes fictional modes. She tries to question universal narratives and show how local narratives can be quintessential in forming the identity of human beings. To this end, Carter evades definitive and conclusive concepts by incorporating a plurality of diverse ways in which fairy tales have been formed.

In her essay, *Angela Carter's The Bloody Chamber and the Decolonization of Feminine Sexuality*, Merja Makinen [1] aims to depict how Carter in *The Bloody Chamber* actively engages the reader in a feminist deconstructive reading; she also analyzes the relation of a feminist strategy to an assessment of Carter's readership. Makinen draws upon Naomi Schor's viewpoint on the function of irony which is to reject and, at the same time, "re-appropriate the discourse that an author is referring." Makinen, also, points out how the same mechanism of the irony in Carter's tales rewrites the old texts by playing with and upon the earlier misogynistic versions. Nonetheless, a significant question raised by Makinen is whether the deconstructive irony present in Carter's narratives can be recognized if the reader is uninformed by feminism; the answer is 'no'. To prove this claim she draws upon Mary Kelly's statement that 'there is no such thing as a homogenous mass audience. You can't make art for everyone. And if you are pleased within a particular movement or organization, then the work is going to participate in its debates.' In fact, Makinen mentions that Carter's tales summon an active preoccupation with feminine discourse. [1]

In contrast with Makinen's claims of the impossibility of the activation of the deconstructive irony without being informed by feminist discourse, in this paper we intend to show how the readers, regardless of their gender and sex, can identify a kind of universal experience and realize more and more of the protagonist, whether they are familiar with feminism or not. We discuss the identity formation of the protagonist and the way it is always in process by focusing on the defining principles in subjectivization which are both pre-constructed and evolving in accordance with the logic of differentiation found within the social universe. The social events, however, can be reread within their linguistic counterparts (signs) as we concentrate on the protagonist's search in to the meaning of her identity. A sign owes its existence (and its meaning) to its difference from the other signs. In *The Bloody Chamber* the protagonist's identity seems to be a predetermined sign, in an unending chain of signs, and her attempts to free herself from such predetermination and gain access to a scope beyond language seem absolutely impossible. That's why we see her in a loop of which she can't find a way out.

In the second part of our paper, we bring forth Lacanian Psychoanalysis, particularly his concept of imaginary in order to shed light on the concept of the animal within us which is considered working outside the usual functioning of language. Our point of departure is the question raised by Michael Lewis in his *Derrida and Lacan: Another Writing*; if man has language isn't he an animal? If yes, can this animality open a door for him to access the Real? [2] We will try to show what constitutes the present is something other than language, and the paradoxical urges spontaneously outflowed from within (which resist symbolization) can provide the subject with the possibility of becoming what she thinks she has never been. Such paradoxicality can be illustrated in *The Bloody Chamber* particularly when it makes the heroine stop being a predetermined signifier and allows for her moments of self-determination. Furthermore, by adopting the notion of "parallax view" which is defined by Žižek as "the apparent displacement of an object (the shift of its position against a background), caused by a change in observational position that provides a new line of sight," [3] it will be argued that the heroine's question of her identity and of who she is and she is not, are the results of her positionality (as a poor girl or a rich man's wife). In the third part of our paper, we'll argue how Carter embarks on her social analyses by using Gothic conventions and placing her tale in the Gothic setting which arouses pre-symbolic tendencies and involves the coincidence of Gothic horror with the horror of social reality.

### Interior Dialogue

Kathleen E.B. Manley, in her article *The Woman in Process in Angela Carter's "The Bloody Chamber"* [4] intends to bring into light how the protagonist is active in writing her story even though Marquis, her patriarchal husband, tries to impose or inscribe his own authority on her existence. Manley's depiction of the protagonist's subjectivization is limited to her entrance in the social arena by Marquis and her marriage with Jean-Yves after his death. She portrays the way the protagonist's past and her mother's story serve her as an affirmative narrative which metamorphoses the protagonist as a naïve girl into a brave, cognizant woman. Following Manley's line of argument, we can say the protagonist has been entangled in such subjectivization since her childhood, and her subjectivity is in fact the result of her perceptive and cognitive interactions with the transcendental locus of discourses in which she has found herself to be.

Our entire knowledge of the world is both established and developed as a consequence of individual (and collective) acts of perception. However, these structures have defining principles which are both pre-constructed and evolving according to the logic of differentiation found within the social universe. In other words, such principles do not exist in some value free Platonic realm; rather, they are the products of already-established values which influence the status quo and/or emerging social forms.

To differentiate oneself from the other functions as a springboard for self-realization, this is what Derrida defines as 'Differance' and through which social agents (whether individuals, groups, or institutions) get hold of their identities:

Differance is what makes the movement of signification possible only if each so-called 'present' element, each element appearing on the scene of presence, is related to something other than itself, thereby keeping within itself the mark of a past element, and already letting itself be vitiated by the mark of its relation to the future element, this trace being related no less to what is called the future than to what is called the past, and constituting what is called the present by means of this very relation to what it is not, to what it absolutely is not. [5]

To see how such Differance affects the protagonist's identity we should trace her present as far as it is merged with her past and her anticipated future.

In the beginning of *The Bloody Chamber*, the heroine narrates the story in retrospect; in this regard, mark of the 'past' is left on her status quo. As a poor, seventeen year old Parisian pianist, she describes the night she travelled alone to her would-be husband's, Marquis's palace. She lies in her train compartment, excited to be leaving her childhood behind and entering womanhood:

I remember how, that night, I lay awake in the wagon-lit in a tender, delicious ecstasy of excitement, my burning cheek pressed against the impeccable linen of the pillow and the pounding of my heart mimicking that of the great pistons ceaselessly thrusting the train that bore me through the night, away from Paris, away from girlhood, away from the white, enclosed quietude of my mother's apartment, into the unguessable country of marriage. [6]

At the first sight, "awake in the wagon-lit in a tender, delicious ecstasy" seems to us symbolic representation of peace in the mother's tomb, where no lack and loss is perceived. However, this image stands in a sharp contrast to the phallic image of piston which speeds up the protagonist's transition from innocent virginity to the world of womanhood and of erotic pleasures. The duality of 'girlhood/marriage' is molded by the heroine through her privileging womanhood over girlhood in the context of perceiving differentiation between these two modes of living. Moreover, by encountering Marquis, the heroine finds herself in a new arena of social hierarchies which determine what she is and is not.

As the heroine enters the palace, she misrecognizes Marquis's late wife as diva; dazzled by her celebrity, the inferiority of her childhood comes to the foreground. Carter casts light on the heroine's past appearing on the present scene:

The first of all his ladies? That sumptuous diva; I had heard her sing *Isolde*, precociously musical child that I was, taken to the opera for a birthday treat. My first opera; I had heard her sing *Isolde*. With what white-hot passion had she burned from the stage! So that you could tell she would die young. We sat high up, halfway to heaven in the gods, yet she halfblinded me. And my father, still alive (oh, so long ago), took hold of my sticky little hand, to comfort me, in the last act, yet all I heard was the glory of her voice. [6]

In fact, the very moment of her entrance in the world of womanhood is codified and signified by the recognition of her inferiority in the binary of Dive/Child. Bearing in mind she is now, as Marquis's new wife, taking the superior position of diva, this binary opposition shows the arbitrary and contingent nature of cultural values. However, so engrossed by such cultural hierarchy she prefers to consider Marquis's three wives as symbols of his eclecticism of taste, and herself as a new member of his beauty gallery:

... Married three times within my own brief lifetime to three different graces, now, as if to demonstrate the eclecticism of his taste, he had invited me to join this gallery of beautiful women, I, the poor widow's child with my mouse-coloured hair that still bore the kinks of the plaits from which it had so recently been freed, my bony hips, my nervous, pianist's fingers. [6]

The social arena in which the protagonist, now, feels entrapped is where she initiates to reflect on the concept of innocence. But, what makes the protagonist an innocent and naïve girl? To Manley, innocence, here, is an essentialist concept in that she considers the bride's innocence and naïveté as her indisputable and incontestable acceptance of the stereotypical patriarchal views of an

experienced man.[4] Following the wedding's consummation, the protagonist is surprised about her innocence:

Then I realized, with a shock of surprise, how it must have been my innocence that captivated him — [6]

As Manley points out, the above passage “emphasizes the bride's uncertainty,” and also, “the bride's innocence, to him, signifies the possibility of guilt; she believes this story of hers could be true.” [4] Nonetheless, uncertainty, born in the protagonist by her communications with Marquis, results in questioning her own identity and her own innocence, not necessarily in the acceptance of Marquis's view. As she feels like losing innocence, she realizes a thrilling ambivalence:

No. I was not afraid of him; but of myself. I seemed reborn in his unreflective eyes, reborn in unfamiliar shapes. I hardly recognized myself from his descriptions of me and yet, and yet—might there not be a grain of beastly truth in them? And, in the red firelight, I blushed again, unnoticed, to think he might have chosen me because, in my innocence, he sensed a rare talent for corruption. [6]

The protagonist's psychological tension is triggered by the conflict she feels between her ideal ego (as an innocent girl) and her ego-ideal (a rare talent for corruption). This conflict can be more illuminated by applying the distinction Žižek makes between imaginary identification and symbolic identification, the two Lacanian concepts:

... [I]maginary identification is identification with the image in which we appear likeable to ourselves, with the image representing 'what we would like to be', and symbolic identification, identification with the very place from where we are being observed, from where we look at ourselves so that we appear to ourselves likeable, worthy of love. [7]

As far as the protagonist is involved in the imaginary identification (which leads to her ideal ego) she sees herself as an innocent girl (and a new member of Marquis's beauty gallery who's changed her position as an inferior child to that of a diva's). But, as with the symbolic identification (which results in her ego-ideal) she has no choice but to be corrupted in order to appear worthy of love from the very place where she is being observed by Marquis. Milan Kundera, in his *Life IS Elsewhere*, depicts a woman (the mother) who feels the same conflict between her two identifications, yet he introduces Jaromil (the mother's son) as a mediator onto whose “seemingly integrated personality” the mother projects her psychological tension in order to resolve it. [8] However, Carter creates no such an external mediator and this leads to the protagonist's unrelenting introspection and interior dialogue with her existential states; the reason why her trouble with her identity aggravates more and more.

The protagonist's interior dialogue which gives rise to the awareness of her given positions arises only through her self-questioning and her confronting at each stage of her enunciations the other stances opposed to them. Her position is a form of debate and dialogue; her stance is dialogic not by merely acknowledging other perspectives and then circumventing them, but by recognizing her own perspectives along with their limitations in their own right. Such stance driven by ambivalence is a type of “negotiation” which goes beyond the premises of essentialism which for any particular phenomenon designates a set of universal features essential to its identity. But, how does such interior dialogue bridge the gap between its own elements including words (and specifically signs) and the events happening in the social arena? Does this interior dialogue help the protagonist to construct an identity for herself? As Zima states

What applies to signs in texts and texts themselves also applies to events in a person's life. This is one of the central arguments of Deleuze's *Différence et répétition*. Like Derrida's meaning, the event is never present, can never be made present, for it takes place between a past which is no more and a future which is not yet. Its presence is cancelled in the transition from past to future and endlessly differed. Its meaning is situated either in the past or in the future; it is never present, never there as the actual, original event. This is why in Deleuze's

view – like in Derrida’s – the repetition of events is always a repetition with difference, an ‘iterability’ which entails a disintegration of the individual subject. [9]

In fact, where difference and deferral dominate the perception of all entities and events which act as signs, factual events are no more be identified as stable, ‘present’ meanings, therefore an individual subject loses its stability (and consequently its identity) in a process of “repetition comparable to iterability.”[9] As with *The Bloody Chamber*, Carter seems to depict the heroine as a sign whose meaning is deferred throughout the story by her identity and difference with the images or notions such as diva, the portrait of Saint Cecilia to whom she compares herself, Queen of the Sea, innocence, girlhood, womanhood and corruption, all of which she encounters in the differentiation inherent in the social universe. Carter’s avoidance to name the heroine might allude to this universal loop in which everyone is likely to be entangled no matter which gender roles she or he plays and whether an individual is a man or woman.

The interior dialogue provides the protagonist with an existential ground on which she deprives all the events of their presence by signifying (or literally, verbalizing) them through Derridean Differance. Through interior dialogue, any event occurring on the scene of presence, like a sign which verbalizes it, is associated with something other than itself which happened in the past; therefore the present event preserves within itself the sign of a past event as a sign keeps within itself the mark of its preceding signs in the syntagmatic context. In addition, the event is already influenced by the mark of an anticipated future event like a sign whose meaning is determined by the signs following it in a syntagmatic relation. This unending trace constitutes the present as the impossible and suspends the identity between the past which is no longer and the future which hasn’t occurred yet. In fact, Differance inherent in interior dialogue mirrors the iterability of events in the realm of signs and offers the individual subject (here, the protagonist) a non-identity in its subjectivization both in the world of signs and of (social) events.

### **Animalic Human and the Parallax Gap**

It is a mental odyssey for the protagonist toward self-understanding that undergoes many hazards from her husband’s side who is considered either as a symbol of patriarchy or the shadow of the innocent girl, yet what we intend to do is to look more at the Marquis and the protagonist as the object *as* to each other. In the first part of our paper, we pointed out the subjectivization of the heroine, the dependence of her reality on her subjective constitution in social arena, in this part we focus upon the materialist supplement as a feature in heroine which reinscribes subject into its own image in the guise of a stain (the objectivized splinter in its eye).

There is a third realm for Lacan which is imaginary that puts us beyond the oppositionality of symbolic and real, and human being is characterized by a triplex binding of symbolic, real and imaginary. For Lacan we are not entrapped by language, we are confined by our bestial nature. The imaginary is the sphere of Gestaltic images which, when discerned, activates instincts. We are not simply gripped by language without remainder. The animal stands firm. The imaginary is the animal within us. The imaginary is tied to the symbolic in the guise of object *a* of desire. So the real of the imaginary and the real of the symbolic are superimposed, and there is no complete severance of the imaginary and the symbolic. [2]

Derrida ignores prehuman or pre-symbolic material tendencies, and for Lacan what constitutes the present is something other than language, so if the symbolic is bonded with and limited by imaginary, therefore, this must result in a different understanding of us about the real in a different way. There is differentiation not just appositionally from the symbolic, but from *both* the symbolic and the imaginary. [2]

In “Parallax View,” Žižek mentions that materialism means that the ‘reality I see is never whole’, not because a large part eludes subject, however, since it contains a stain, a blind spot, which illustrates subject’s inclusion in it. Žižek finds Lacan’s object *a* as the clearer example where we can see this structure. The object *a* is the moment of desire which always continues to the other, which is always possessed by the other.[3] Materialism can be seen both in the heroine and Marquis, it is not a direct assertion of their inclusion in objective reality rather it resides in the

reflexive twist through which they are included in each-others' picture constituted by themselves, it is this reflexive short circuit, this significant redoubling of themselves as they stand outside and inside their pictures that bear witness to their "material existence."

The heroine is the focus of Marquis's libidinal investment, she is innocent supposed to be corrupted. There are some significant moments when we can find out how the heroine and the Marquis are each other's object *as*. To see this, for a moment it is necessary for us to lay aside the binaries innocent/corrupt, and assert this antinomy as irreducible to some symbolic categories. The heroine's innocence originates from Marquis's gaze since Marquis finds the heroine innocent and goes on to impose his own picture. It seems that what Carter does in this tale is to moves beyond differentiability or play of the binaries. Let's look back to Deconstruction's central argument which was that the event in one's life is never present, or what applies to signs in texts and texts themselves also applies to *events* in a person's life, however, there are some moments in the story when Carter places the heroine out of differentiability. The heroine has always found herself frail and innocent from the gaze of the social "Big other," to her Marquis appears as object *a*. It is through him she can be connected to the dazzling images of great women, i.e. her murdered wives, and it is through him she can corrupt herself out of the innocent figure. So, the heroine is paradoxically innocent and at the same time the origin of corruption. What we intend to do is to renounce all attempts to reduce one aspect to the other, and by asserting the innocent/corrupt antinomy as irreducible we do away with considering one position as opposed to another position, but as irreducible gap between the positions itself, the purely structural fissure between them.

If we take the heroine as a reified signifier and all the events in her life as text, the animality and her urge toward corruption wouldn't be explained deconstructively. Let's take a look at the moment when Marquis leaves the heroine on their wedding bed without deflowering her:

And I began to shudder, like a racehorse before a race, yet also with a kind of fear, for I felt both a strange, impersonal arousal at the thought of love and at the same time a repugnance I could not stifle for his white, heavy flesh... [6]

As we pointed out if we take heroine deconstructively as a reified signifier or subject placed and predefined in the fabric of society, she would be either an innocent, ready to be written as a corrupt, and it wouldn't be sufficient to account for the paradoxical urges spontaneously outflowed from within, the love and the repugnance, the animality, the lust for Marquis's white, heavy flesh, these are the urges that resist symbolization. This moment can be referred as Lacanian 'lalangue' which is a symptomatic moment in the use of language where its real lettricity or trace structure comes to fore. In his book, *Derrida and Lacan: Another Writing*, Michael Lewis explicates this symptomatic moment not necessarily as a symptom of repression, but the symptom of one's presence. [2] This might be the symptomatic moment when the heroine feels love and hate at the same time, because paradox indicates that we can be the one we think we are not, paradox can foreground the repressed animalic side of alongside our human side. Lewis points out to these symptoms as 'the only way in which one's real desire can find expression in the symbolic.

According to Lacan, lalangue is the infiltration of the real into symbolic, then real is no longer opposed to the symbolic, however, Derrida sees human as condemned to oppositional relations, and if there is any real outside language or the symbolic. Paradox is the moment when real appears, this is the moment of conglomeration of the opposites, the undeconstructible duality of the same and the other, the paradoxical nature of the heroine's 'desirous dread'. The oneness of the signifier which is the result of paradox can be seen also in Zizek's analysis of the Parallax view.

Zizek defines 'object *a*' as pure parallax object. We'd better pause a moment and define what parallax is. According to Zizek Parallax's standard definition is 'apparent displacement of an object caused by a change in observational position that provides a new line of thought. He then goes on to add philosophical twist to his definition, and points out that the observed difference is not only subjective, but rather subject and object are inherently mediated, so that "an epistemological shift in the subject's point of view always reflects an ontological shift in the object itself." [3]

So far we have considered the heroine and marquis as each other's object *as*, and the paradox seen in here is not about a difference between two explicitly existing objects, but a minimal difference which separates one and the same object from itself (Heroine seen as innocent and the origin of corruption). As accounted by Zizek, "minimal difference" cannot be based on positive substantial properties. [3]

By entering the castle, the heroine turns into a dazzling image of a woman whom she thought she was miles away from. The castle is an environmental change in her position and as a girl when she was outside it, she was the opposite of what she becomes when she steps into it as Marquis's bride. It is not the differentiability of language which makes the reality of what she is, however, a parallax gap, or the minimal difference. As a girl she was a musician, just the same as Marquis's late wife, but she could not see her as an outstanding one, only the minimal difference could open her eyes to reality of who she is.

Consequently, unlike Makinen's claim that deconstructive irony cannot be triggered if the reader is uninformed by feminism and Carter's tale evoke a similar active association with feminist discourse [1], it can be said that Carter's tale as a literary *Marchen*, or the written version of a fairy tale, provides liminal spaces and experiences for the readers from different backgrounds for examining social processes by reader's exposure to new information included in the narrative.

Liminal experience of the reader is the theme of Cheryl Renfroe's article '*Initiation and Disobedience: Liminal Experience in Angela Carter's "The Bloody Chamber."*' In this article, she points out the way Carter brings changes in the way people feel about themselves, particularly by "reassessment of the social fictions that regulate [their] lives." [10]

In the last part of our paper, we will further expand the way Carter's aims to have social analyses by using Gothic conventions and embedding the tale in Gothic setting which trigger pre-symbolic tendencies and involves the coincidence of Gothic horror with the horror of social reality.

### **The Gothic Conventions and the Real**

Benjamin Noys starts his article 'The Horror of the Real: Zizek's Modern Gothic' with an excerpt from H. P. Lovecraft's short story 'The Call of Cthulhu' (1928) [11]:

The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age.

In his Article, Noys posits that the modern Gothic fiction has opened up 'terrifying vistas of reality' that challenge our everyday commonsense outlook of existence. Noys finds this perspective as compatible with the work of Slavoj Zizek who glosses the concept of Lacanian Real as 'the irreducible kernel of jouissance that resists all symbolization.' Zizek views the Real as the moment of *horror*. Even though the 'Real' is considered by Zizek as unrepresentable, he approaches it by alluding to contemporary horror Gothic texts from Ridley Scot's *Alien* (1979) to Patricia Highsmith and Stephen King. These texts foreground the allegorical representation of the Real as horrifying 'Thing.' We intend to argue that Carter's postmodern narration with its paradoxical and unconventional characterization induces an intricate, paradoxical experience of reader-initiation which coincides the Gothic horror with the horror of social reality.

The heroine voyages far from the placid island of girlhood, which is the symbol of ignorance and purity, into the castle of womanhood which opens up the terrifying vistas of reality to her (true nature of Marquis). We pointed out in the second part of our paper that how the heroine turns into a dazzling image of a woman whom she thought she was miles away from. Since the genesis of all her symbolic realities is Marquis (heroine's object *a*), she never stops finding out who he really is, nothing satiates her, even the great wealth, so, let's take a look at this passage from the tale:

When everything was lit as brightly as the café in the Gare du Nord, the significance of the possessions implied by that bunch of keys no longer intimidated me, for I was determined, now, to search through them all for evidence of my husband's true nature. [6]

So, the castle is not only a great place for fulfilment of desire, but also a prison from which she can't flee, and Marquis is the prison guard. The way the old Marquis takes the young heroine to the castle and gives her all the keys to search wherever she wants, 'the key to the picture gallery, a treasure house filled by five centuries of avid collectors'. The keys can be supposed as the emblematic of capitalist order's promises, they are fulfilled with the price of the heroine's being treated as an object, it is manifest in different moments, for example, Marquis makes her put on the ruby choker, kissing it before he kisses her mouth, however, it doesn't result in the heroine's being objectified since the of Gestaltic images are perceived which activate the instinct and make the symbolic unstable, such as the moment when Marquis watches her in the gilded mirrors, she finds her 'with the assessing eye of a connoisseur inspecting horseflesh'. And the result of Gestaltic images can be found out in the following lines:

And, for the first time in my innocent and confined life, I sensed in myself a potentiality for corruption that took my breath away. [6]

The forbidden bloody chamber is where she faces the horror of the 'Real', and it is in the wake of finding out about who Marquis really is she unconsciously goes out of the luring symbolic order which had dragged him to the darkest part of the castle. As Noys points out, the Real is the 'point of intervention to violently and radically alter the coordinates of the existing capitalistic order'. Therefore, the horror of the Real results in the shattering of the capitalistic order which has created a giant symbolic order inside which the heroine is incarcerated. This is how Žižek views the Real in his analysis of *Alien* in *The Parallax View*:

fascination with the monstrous alien should not, however, be allowed to obfuscate the anticapitalist edge of the *Alien* series: what ultimately endangers the lone group on a spaceship are not the aliens as such but the way the group is used by the anonymous earthly Corporation who wants to exploit the alien form of life. [3]

As Noys says, "This is not, according to Žižek, a matter of arguing that the aliens 'really mean' Capital but a demonstration of how Capital parasitizes itself on 'pure life'. [11] The horror is not the 'Thing', or even the ambiguity of its emergence, but of Capital as parasite.

Marquis can be viewed as symbol of Capital like aliens, however, to de-reify the Real we need to have the same reading strategies as those of Noys': first to read not as horror, but the Real as some kind of fiction; secondly, to read the Real as topological twist. Therefore, we can move away from the fascination with animalic human towards the analysis of distortion in outlook resulting from social antagonism and inconsistency of the symbolic.

When the heroine sees the picture of 'Saint Cecilia at her celestial organ', she sees herself as she could have wished to be, and then the heroine says, "I warmed to a loving sensitivity I had not hitherto suspected in him." Saint Cecilia's image arouses her interest in him, however, afterwards when she faces the truth in the bloody chamber, everything changes completely:

My music room seemed the safest place, although I looked at the picture of Saint Cecilia with a faint dread; what had been the nature of her martyrdom? [6]

So, it can be seen that the image which was indubitably considered as divine is thrown into question. Earlier we pointed out the way the images had molded the reality in which the heroine lives, but when truth is revealed to her, all she sees is social antagonism, no one can be trusted since the nature of everything she used to value is in doubt:

... as soon as the tide receded from the causeway, I would make for the mainland—on foot, running, stumbling; I did not trust that leather-clad chauffeur, nor the well-behaved housekeeper, and I dared not take any of the pale, ghostly maids into my confidence, either,



since they were his creatures, all. Once at the village, I would fling myself directly on the mercy of the gendarmerie.

But--could I trust them, either? [6]

The castle can be seen as the emblematic of a society rife with dazzling and luring images and a screen for the fragmentation of social bond, and the bloody chamber holds the dark hidden truth which brings distortion in perspective and opens up terrifying vistas of reality.

## Conclusion

In this paper, we have discussed the identity formation of the protagonist by focusing on the defining principles in subjectivization which are pre-constructed yet evolving in accordance with the logic of differentiation found within the social universe. Moreover, we have reread the protagonist's life events through their linguistic counterparts (signs) as we've scrutinized the protagonist's exploration in to the meaning of her identity. In *The Bloody Chamber* the protagonist's identity seems to be a predetermined sign in an unending chain of signs and her attempt to free herself from such predetermination seems absolutely impossible. This failure gives rise to the protagonist's psychological tension which is intensified by the conflict she feels between her ideal ego and her ego-ideal and which pushes her into unremitting introspection and her interior dialogue with her existential states. Such interior dialogue offers the protagonist an existential ground on which she deprives all her life events of their presence by signifying (or verbalizing) them through Derridean Differance. Such interior dialogue leads to non-identity in her subjectivization both in the world of signs and of (social) events. However, we have illustrated how the protagonist's paradoxical urges spontaneously outflowed from within, by resisting symbolization, provide her with the possibility of becoming what she thinks she has never been and allow for her moments of self-determination. Then, we have shown how her psychological journey takes shape in the Gothic setting which stimulates, in Lacanian terminology, pre-symbolic propensities and which encompasses the coincidence of Gothic horror with the horrors of social reality.

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