The Grotesque in the Works of Federico Fellini and Angela Carter

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Abstract

Chapter one of this thesis attempts to explicate and analyze the controversy that has historically surrounded the grotesque. Contention over the grotesque has existed since the earliest known discourses on the subject by Horace and Vitruvius. The indeterminacy and paradoxical nature of the grotesque, which disturbed these men of antiquity, has continued to generate debate among modern theorists such as Mikhail Bakhtin and Wolfgang Kayser whose ideas serve as touchstones throughout this work. Understandably, theorists, who strive to create systems of ideas which attempt to explain and define phenomena, are drawn to the grotesque. However, they are inevitably placed in the paradoxical position of trying to categorize something which ultimately subverts the conventional logic which underlies that process. Furthermore, the standards of mimesis and decorum, from which the grotesque gets its disruptive force, are subject to society. Societies provide the different conventions and assumptions that determine the form of the grotesque. Therefore, the grotesque will always have to be approached in its historically specific contexts of production and reception.

What becomes apparent in analysing the grotesque is that attitudes toward its indeterminacy and paradoxical nature, which transgress the monologic binaries and implied hierarchies of Western thought, reflect the position of the observer or producer of the grotesque. If one espouses the cause of the low, as does Bakhtin, then the indeterminacy and paradox of the grotesque provides an egalitarian possibility for the marginalized. If one stands with the status quo, as does Kayser, the transgressing of the definitions and distinctions which support the status quo is experienced as frightening and sinister (Harpham, 73).

The differences noted between Kayser and Bakhtin as observers of the grotesque may also be made between Federico Fellini and Angela Carter as producers of grotesque texts. The following two chapters of the thesis explore how the grotesque is used in Fellini's films

(chapter two) and Carter's novels (chapter three). Carter, like Bakhtin, celebrates the grotesque as a means of empowerment, particularly for women and her work seems to employ the Bakhtinian theory of the carnivalesque. Fellini's films also use images of carnival, but Fellini, like Kayser, sees the grotesque as an isolating aspect of the human condition. Fellini uses the grotesque only to show humanity's alienation from a knowable world, whereas Carter uses it to demonstrate the possibilities of a totally new one. Carter appears to take the Fellinian, Kayserian, negative attitude towards the grotesque and turn it around for her feminist cause. She utilizes the emancipatory aspect of the grotesque inherent in its denial of hierarchy without, however, idealizing it as Bakhtin appears to. She is well aware that carnivals, like her novels, are author(ized).

In analyzing the continuum of Fellini's and Carter's works, both artists show an increased dependence on the use of the grotesque combined with postmodern strategies to support their intentions. However, the continuum of Fellini's oeuvre suggests the development of a modernist approach which attempts closure, but faced with the impossibility of final determinacy, turns to the quagmire of simulacra where no meaning is possible. Carter, on the other hand, increasingly uses the grotesque and postmodern strategies not only to reveal and deconstruct oppressive representations, but to allow agency for the reconstruction of new subjectivities. As this thesis will demonstrate, the grotesque's indeterminacy may provide a way to understand "reality" or the means to construct a better one.

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CHAPTER ONE: THE GROTESQUE MODERNIST VERSUS REALIST

The Two-Sided Act

> A sign does not simply exist as a given part of reality - it reflects and refracts another reality. Therefore, it may distort that reality or be true to it, or may perceive it from a special point of view, and so forth. Every sign is subject to the criteria of ideological evaluation (i.e., whether it is true, false, correct, fair, good, etc.). The domain of ideology coincides with the domain of signs. They equate with one another. Whenever a sign is present, ideology is present, too. (Volosinov quoted by Dentith, 23)

This situation is particularly acute when the sign is ambiguous and paradoxical as is the case with the word "grotesque". Underlying Volosinov's theory of the sign is the assumption that language is a social phenomenon, and he emphasizes the "'multiaccentuality of the sign', the idea that the signs of a language (words, above all) bear different accents, emphases and therefore meanings with different inflections and in different contexts. Meanings emerge in society and society is not a homogeneous mass but is itself divided by such factors as social class; signs do not therefore have fixed meanings but are always inflected in different ways to carry different values and attitudes" (Dentith, 23-4). The sociological pragmatics of Volosinov can be understood "as the study of language as it takes on meaning in the socially marked interactions between people" (29). Whether or not Mikhail Bakhtin wrote or contributed to the disputed texts of Volosinov, such a pragmatics is on tenor with his "translinguistics" or "metalinguistics" which become a helpful analytical tool when investigating the term "grotesque."

In his metalinguistics, Bakhtin calls the actual act of communicating in its particular situation or context an *utterance*. The utterance is a *dialogic* process in which not only the speaker or writer is involved, but also the implied or actual listener or addressee. Unlike Volosinov, Bakhtin "does not draw substantially upon the category of 'ideology' but instead insists upon the multiplicity of social languages that make up the apparent unity of a national language; any utterance therefore takes place between language users who are socially marked in the very language they use" (Dentith, 34). Bakhtin calls the various social languages (those of certain groups, classes, generations, occasions, etc.) *heteroglossia*. According to Bakhtin, heteroglossia is "not only a static invariant in the life of language, but also what ensures its dynamics ... Alongside the centripetal forces (provided by a notion of a 'national language'), the centrifugal forces of language (provided by various social languages) carry on their

uninterrupted work; alongside ... centralization and unification, the uninterrupted processes of decentralization and disunification go forward" (my parentheses, Bakhtin:1982, 272). Simon Dentith summarizes this theory:

> The conception of language as dynamically pulled between centre and periphery, between unitary national forces and heteroglossia, at once describes the tensions that are holding together and pulling apart a language at any one time, and also the same forces which, in given social, economic, political, artistic and educational histories, are producing the multiple changes that constitute the history of a language. These dynamic forces are not simply linguistic ones; they are produced by historical forces that are external to language but which act partly in language. Each and every utterance, in Bakhtin's account, is intersected by these forces, realizes itself only by virtue of participating at once in the 'normative-centralizing system of unitary language' and contributing to living heteroglossia. (Dentith, 35)

Every utterance must locate itself within the competition and contradictions that exist in heteroglossia. Bakhtin states that "the utterance not only answers the requirements of its own language as an individualized embodiment of a speech act, but it answers the requirements of heteroglossia as well" (Bakhtin: 1982, 272). In this theory, the force behind linguistic change becomes the very contradictions and conflicts which constitute a "language" (Dentith, 36). These contradictions and conflicts are "socially and politically marked so that some versions of the language enjoy prestige and others do not" (36).

In Bakhtin's conception of language, each word, like "grotesque", "comes to its user already marked by its history, bearing the traces of its previous uses, which any speaker or writer must either continue, deflect, or contest" (Dentith, 37). Whenever a word, like "grotesque", is uttered (in response to previous uses), it is part of a social and historical language whether it is religious, academic, aesthetic, of the middle class, of the working class, of the present or the past. There is also an (implied) addressee who may be a church-goer, a professor, an art critic, someone of power or someone marginalized. That addressee will give the utterance meaning which is alluded to through the socially marked language used.

If the utterance is written or recorded I can engage in the dialogue as well: utterances are "at once implicated in social historical particularity and also, by virtue of that very fact, capable of being engaged by other social and historical particularities - that is you and me in a later period" (Dentith, 19-20). There is no betrayal of original meaning, for the life of any word is made up of a succession of utterances, within which its meanings may be either

enriched, contested, or annexed, and the words of Bakhtin are no exception (3). Many of his texts could not be published in the Soviet Union, but when they finally were, they entered into new contexts and meanings. Language is an endless, incomplete progression.

When "grotesque" is uttered it not only forms part of a social language, but, similar to Volosinov's idea of "multiaccentuality", it is spoken or written with an evaluative accent or what Bakhtin calls in *The Dialogic Imagination*, "authorial intention" - "an attitude adopted toward that of which it speaks. This applies to the word of Bakhtin himself; it is clear that Bakhtin does not merely describe language as heteroglossic, he celebrates it" (Dentith, 38). It must be noted that "this position does not locate ultimate truth in intention; indeed, it does not locate ultimate artistic truth anywhere, for there is no last word to be spoken. Rather the provisional truth that does emerge...is inextricably grounded...in historical particularity" (56). Therefore, to understand the grotesque, I must address its different utterances in relation to contexts and intentions and furthermore, understand what the utterance is responding to and for whom it is made. Of course, "grotesque" is a particularly interesting case as its unfixedness and irresolvability make it more open to evaluative accent than most words and, more importantly, it becomes, for Bakhtin, an aesthetic manifestation that serves, perhaps unwittingly, to artistically reflect his own interminable metalinguistics. As I support Bakhtin's metalinguistics and believe his theory of the grotesque can be successfully applied to a politics of change, my own utterances of the grotesque will be celebratory, and I hope my reader's response will be positive as well.

A Species of Confusion

Geoffrey Harpham was correct when he described the grotesque as a "species of confusion" (Harpham, xiii). As he points out, it is usually not difficult to identify the grotesque within a work of art, but it is very challenging to specifically define the term itself. Grotesque finds its root in the early modern French word *crotesque* meaning "an adaption." The Old French root word, *crote*, is equivalent to the Italian word *grotta*, or cave. From *grotta* came the adjective *grottesco* and the noun *la grottesca* (Thomson, 13).

La grottesca, or the *grottesche*, was first used to describe an ornamental style in Italy. This style was discovered during the late 15th century in the excavation of Nero's Domus Aurea (Golden Palace). It consisted of:

> graceful fantasies, symmetrical anatomical impossibilities, small beasts, human

> heads, and delicate, indeterminate vegetables, all presented as ornament with fairly mythological character imparted by representations of fauns, nymphs, satyrs, and centaurs. (Harpham, 26)

The style appeared in Rome around 100 B.C., though it had appeared elsewhere earlier, and immediately provoked contention. Both Horace, in his *Ars Poetica*, and Vitruvius, in his *De Architectura* respond to the style negatively, denouncing it for its absurdity in presenting "impossibilities." In reference to the "new taste" of ornamental designs, Vitruvius states:

> Such things, however, never existed, do not now exist, and shall never come into being...For how can the stem of a flower support a roof, or a candelabrum bear pedimental sculpture? How can a tender shoot carry a human figure, and how can bastard forms composed of flowers and human bodies grow out of roots and tendrils? (quoted by Thomson, 12)

Neither Horace nor Vitruvius gave the style they so thoroughly rejected a proper name. It was only upon excavation of the palace site that artists and antiquarians conclusively referred to the designs as *grottesche* and only did so because they had to creep down into the "caves" of the ruins in order to observe them. "Grottoes" became the popular name in Rome for the chambers of ancient buildings which had been revealed by excavations, and though the style was not intended to be hidden or linked with "cave," the name is apt in that it suggests numerous and ambiguous associations. Harpham focuses on the "underground," "burial," and "secrecy," but he also makes more metaphoric connections, as do other scholars, like Mary Russo, for example, to the female womb.

It was the ambiguity of the grotesque that so unsettled and disturbed Vitruvius, Horace and many others. As Sylvie Debevec Henning points out in her reconsideration of the grotesque, Vitruvius maintained an Aristotelian logic that conceived the world "as static, harmonious and whole...Hard and well established lines were drawn between phenomena, each seen as finished, completed, strictly limited and finding its place in an unchanging hierarchy" (Henning, 108). She points out that the designs in the Golden Palace violate the principles of identity and difference on which this world-view rests. Identity depends on the definition and difference of the other. But, in the grotesque, flowers are more than flowers, they are animals. Beasts are human figures, and tender, fragile stems can support a roof. The traditional categories are, as she says, "de-formed." This deformation disrupts conventional logic and reveals its accepted categories to be insufficient. Such "insufficiency of traditional categories and dichotomous distinctions" can have serious implications for societal

organization (107).

The grotesque implies "an alternative logic of nonexclusive opposites and permanent contradiction which transgresses the monologic true-or-false thinking that is typical of Western rationalism" (Stam, 234). Western logic is built on an avoidance of contradiction. It demands clear and distinct categories which, in turn, necessitate some kind of definition. These categories are the foundations upon which "systems of decorum" are constructed in a society (Harpham, 73). How one should be, act, and look is shaped by the society's accepted categories of gender, race, religion and class. As Harpham points out, all systems of decorum are meant to maintain the status quo and to "keep the low and marginal in their places" (73). The privileged position of dominant groups in society is derived from the definition of other groups as less worthy of dominance. Therefore, those who benefit from and maintain such systems are more likely to find fault with the grotesque. For example, Bishop Joseph Hall, a Protestant clergyman of the Reformation, saw the grotesque as a threat to the Protestant principles of simplicity and "Truth unadorned". He attacked the grotesque as "visibly indecorous and immoral, dedicated to false principles, lust and Papism" (Henning, 109-111). His utterance is part of a social and historical language of religion. He must respond (with negative evaluative colouring) to earlier uses of the grotesque as they threaten his privileged language and his place within that socio-historical time.

The contention over the grotesque in art, begun by Horace and Vitruvius, has been readily carried over into literary studies. In the literary appropriation of the term, concerns about the grotesque have generally shifted from its artistic verisimilitude or virtue, to the word's actual meaning and usage. However, these new concerns are frustrated by the same ambiguity which so unsettled and disturbed Vitruvius. Henning shows how most contemporary theorists agree that the grotesque "disrupts the classical perception of ordered reality by failing to conform to accepted standards of mimesis and decorum," and does so through its employment of "contradiction and undecidability" (Henning, 107). Unfortunately, this summary does not offer a complete, comprehensive definition of the grotesque. It does not tell exactly what *it* means. As Harpham rightly claims, "no one has authoritatively ascertained or delimited" the constructs of the grotesque, although many have tried.

Understandably, theorists, who strive to create systems of ideas which attempt to explain and define phenomena, are drawn to the grotesque. However, they are inevitably placed in the paradoxical position of trying to categorize something which ultimately subverts

the conventional logic which underlies that process. Furthermore, the standards of mimesis and decorum, from which the grotesque gets its disruptive force, are subject to society. Societies provide the different conventions and assumptions that determine the form of the grotesque (Harpham, xx). As Arthur Clayborough writes in *The Grotesque in English Literature*:

> Grotesqueness may appear in anything which is found to be in sufficiently grave conflict with accepted standards to arouse emotion. In theory, therefore, there is nothing which might not be regarded as grotesque from some standpoint. (Clayborough, 109)

As a result, any theory on the grotesque will inevitably find support, and numerous theories exist, but a single, complete definition is impossible. It will always have to be approached in its historically specific contexts of production and reception.

It is not only grotesque images which undercut conventional logic and categorization, but the experience of the grotesque as well. The ambiguous fluidity of the *grottesche*, its confusion of heterogeneous elements, was for Vitruvius, "both monstrous and ludicrous" (Thomson, 12). The experience, or what Harpham calls the interval of the grotesque, like the grotesque itself, is a mixture of incompatibles. The interval is not to be confused with the subsequent attitude toward this illogical and discomforting experience, which for Vitruvius, for example, was clearly "indignant rejection". The uncertainty of whether to laugh or be fearful of such a paradox makes the interval of the grotesque both monstrous and ludicrous. It encompasses both elements, but does so without differentiating or dichotomizing. There are numerous ambiguous emotions aroused. However, disdain or approval toward the confusion has historically coloured literary applications of the term, and the grotesque sometimes became associated with either the monstrous or the ludicrous.

For Ben Jonson, who most likely shared Vitruvius's Aristotelian world-view, grotesque figures were "monsters against nature," and for the Calvinist poet, Sir John Davies, they represented man's fallen state (Henning, 111). However, Dryden explicitly links the grotesque to farce. For him, the grotesque is a fantastic comedy "which is out of nature". Richardson, on the other hand, sees the grotesque as anything or anyone that is low and vulgar, and thereby, "unnatural" (101). These applications fail to encompass the full meaning of the grotesque by denying either its horror or its humour, but the evident variation in meaning underscores the importance of context and intention, which is socially and historically unique.

Some early discourses on the grotesque were more open to its contradictory nature. For example, Friedrich Schlegel in his theoretical text *Athenäum* (1798), writes that the grotesque is constituted by "the unstable mixture of heterogeneous elements, the explosive force of the paradoxical, which is both ridiculous and terrifying" (Kayser, 53). However, it was only in the 19th century that literary studies started to focus on more serious analysis and critical evaluation of the term 'grotesque,' though these attempts were few and isolated (Thomson, 11). Once these studies began, critics generally came to accept and agree on the grotesque's paradoxical, agonistic intertwining of both the monstrous and the comic. For example, John Ruskin insisted that, "the grotesque is, in almost all cases, composed of two elements: one ludicrous the other fearful...There are hardly any examples which do not in some degree combine both elements" (Henning, 109). Victor Hugo believed the grotesque embodied the dual nature of humanity, both its comic and tragic elements. In arguing for a new dramatic form that could incorporate humanity's double nature, "the infinite variety of the comic, horrible and ugly" he maintained the use of the grotesque as a necessary, central device (Thomson, 17).

The emphasis on this relationship between the ridiculous and the horrible, as well as Hugo's arguments, created a strong conceptual relation between the grotesque and tragicomedy. Thomas Mann called the grotesque the "genuine style of the tragicomedy" (Henning, 110). M.B.V. Buren in his article, "The Grotesque in Visual Art and Literature," tries to formulate the three main oppositions fundamental for the grotesque, one of which is the tragic and the comic. In fact, he uses Schlegel and Hugo to confirm his theory. However, Karl Guthke, in his study of modern tragicomedy, makes a clear distinction between the genre and the grotesque:

> The grotesque is the vision of an absurdity, usually of cosmic dimension, which defies all intellectual efforts to clarify and elucidate its possible meanings in terms of human understanding. One of the charms of the tragi-comic, on the other hand, is the possibility to think through, almost *ad infinitum*, the complicated mechanism by which the comic and the tragic are intertwined and indeed identified. Tragicomedy remains within the confines of logic and what is generally accepted as the common characteristics of reality. It refuses to distort the world in such a way that we find it hard to recognize as ours. The grotesque play...on the contrary, would be deficient in an essential ingredient if it did not do precisely that. (quoted by Henning, 110)

As Henning argues, tragicomedy, though it manifests "a dissatisfaction with traditional rational categories and acceptable forms of thought" (110), ultimately remains within those

categories, whereas the grotesque "informs" them not only by making them known but also by simultaneously transgressing them. If a genre can be thought of as embodying "a historically specific idea of what it means to be human" then the connection made between the grotesque and tragicomedy by Hugo and Mann, crystallizes a particular view of the human condition shared by these two nineteenth century intellectuals (Clark and Holquist, 275).

Even in more recent studies, where the paradoxical nature of the grotesque is acknowledged and accepted, there have been attempts to define the grotesque through its relation to comparable literary terms. Philip Thomson, in his book, *On the Grotesque*, recognizes the uncertainty of the grotesque, its ambiguity, describing it as an "unresolved clash of incompatibles" (Thomson, 29). However, he insists that there must be "a certain pattern peculiar to the grotesque, a certain fundamental structure which is perceivable in the grotesque work of art and its effect, as there is in parody, say, or - to take a more complicated example - in irony" (19). After considering the grotesque in relation to numerous other modes and categories, it is chiefly this *unresolved* nature of the grotesque which distinguishes it from the other categories. Since the grotesque does not wholly fit into any existing categories, Thompson implies an agreement with Henning, in that the grotesque can only serve to inform the categories and, furthermore, cannot itself, either physically or emotionally, be fully categorized. In the end, he recapitulates his attempts at definition and only recommends that perhaps through a "process of consensus, comparison and argument," to which his work contributes, may we be able to "establish certain guidelines" on the grotesque (70).

Most contemporary studies, like Thomson's, allow for the "inner logic" of the grotesque which "contests the very premises of conventional logic, e.g., the principles of non-contradiction, difference and identity" (Bakhtin quoted by Henning, 107). The most exemplary studies are those done by Wolfgang Kayser in *The Grotesque in Art and Literature* (1963) and by Mikhail Bakhtin in *Rabelais and His World* (1984). These seminal texts, which dominate contemporary debate on the grotesque, are extensive works which attempt definition without failing to acknowledge, though in varying degrees, the agonistic tensions of the grotesque.

Fear Of Life Versus Celebration Of life

Kayser attempts to define the grotesque as an aesthetic category reflecting the Romantic period, and Bakhtin as an aesthetic category characteristic of medieval folk culture. Both views facilitate understanding of the grotesque, and both accommodate and display sensitivity towards the grotesque's ambiguity. However, the grotesque cannot be essentialized into either of their definitions. Authorial intention is often evident in any utterance of the grotesque, but in comparing the analyses of the grotesque in the works of Kayser and Bakhtin, a strong opposition in their evaluative accents becomes most visible. Kayser and Bakhtin do not commit the past error of denying the existence of both the horrible and the humorous, but in discussing the interval of the grotesque they clearly emphasize one more than the other. However, even such emphasis is an attempt to make the grotesque logical. As Henning argues, efforts to resolve the physical or emotional ambiguities of the grotesque, in any way, limits the tension inherent in that indeterminacy.

As noted earlier, the grotesque serves to subvert all "systems of decorum" which are meant to keep the low and marginal in their places. Therefore, in the grotesque, what may be considered high is no longer distinct from what may be considered low, and thereby, the privileged position of one over the other is no longer possible. Hence, for the low and the marginal, the grotesque contains within itself potential rebellious and emancipatory powers. Furthermore, as argued above, attitudes toward the experience of the grotesque vary with the opinions and relations the observer has to the categories and systems in place. If one benefits from or agrees with the status quo, as does Kayser (Harpham, 73), the experience of the grotesque will be more negative, and Kayser admits his own lack of "wholehearted enthusiasm for the subject" (Kayser, 10). On the other hand, if one espouses the cause of the low, as does Bakhtin, then one's response is likely to be positive (Harpham, 73). As a victim of oppressive totalitarianism, Bakhtin is much more likely to align himself with the marginalized and celebrate the grotesque for its egalitarianism, than is Kayser. As a result, Bakhtin espouses an ultimately joyous view of the grotesque involving laughter and Kayser, a generally frightening and sinister one.

Their opposing attitudes or evaluative accents can be clearly seen in their commentaries on the *grottesche*. In describing the use of the *grottesche* in the Renaissance, Kayser states:

> By the word *grottesche* the Renaissance, which used it to designate a specific ornamental style suggested by antiquity, understood not only something playfully gay and carelessly fantastic, but also something ominous and sinister

> in the face of a world totally different from the familiar one - a world in which the realm of inanimate things is no longer separated from those of plants, animals, and human beings, and where the laws of statics, symmetry, and proportion are no longer valid. (Kayser, 21)

In this paragraph he acknowledges the non-dichotomizing, non-differentiating aspect of the grotesque by highlighting its "playfully gay" and "carelessly fantastic" aspects. However, the extract shows that for Kayser, the law's loss of validity is also ominous and sinister. Kayser proceeds to discuss, thereafter, all aesthetic treaties on the grotesque only in light of how readily they lend themselves to the interpretation of a more sinister experience.

Bakhtin, on the other hand, sees the *grottesche* as reflecting the positive and regenerative aspects of medieval folk culture. Manifestations of this culture, like carnival, opposed "the official and serious tone of medieval ecclesiastical and feudal culture" and temporarily freed people from its dogmatic and controlling social order (Bakhtin:1984, 4). In comparison to the official feasts, which used the past to consecrate and validate the eternal and indisputable existing hierarchies, values and norms, the carnival

> celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions. Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal. It was hostile to all that was mortalized and completed. (Bakhtin:1984, 10)

With this last statement on medieval carnival, one can perceive the connection Bakhtin makes between carnival and the grotesque. Bakhtin likens the synergistic designs of the *grottesche* to the material bodily principle, "that is, images of the human body with its food, drink, defecation, and sexual life" (18). These images are part of an aesthetic concept Bakhtin calls *grotesque realism*. Unlike the images of the classical canon (i.e., Doryphorous, "Winged Victory", or Botticelli's "Birth of Venus") which show an ideal, complete and finished image of a subject, images of *grotesque realism* are necessarily incomplete. They embody a perpetual process and the unfinished transformation of death and rebirth. By intermingling high and low and other opposing elements, the grotesque image is ambiguous. It is based on a materialistic concept of being that maintains the festive, universal, and utopian elements of carnival by celebrating the cyclical, regenerative existence of humanity. Therefore, in Bakhtin's analysis of the *grottesche*, the forms seem to give birth to each other:

> there was no longer the movement of finished forms, vegetable or animal, in a finished and stable world; instead the inner movement of being itself was

> expressed in the passing of one form into the other, in the ever incompleted character of being. (Bakhtin:1984, 32)

Here Bakhtin underscores, as did Kayser, the agonistic, non-dichotomizing aspect of the grotesque, but, in contrast to Kayser's work, there is no sense of fear or foreboding.

All of Bakhtin's historical analysis of the grotesque focuses on how close in chronology the time period under discussion was to medieval folk culture. Where Kayser attempts to show the eventual development of a definitive aesthetic category of the grotesque through history, Bakhtin tries to demonstrate the eventual loss of the term's liberatory essence, after its climax in the Middle Ages. Interestingly, in their discussions of the Romantic grotesque, Kayser and Bakhtin rely on many of the same texts. However, each uses them to support his opposing argument.

For Bakhtin, the Romantic Age not only took away the universal aspect of the grotesque, but also denied the important regenerating principle of laughter. He uses Bonaventura's *Nachtwachen* to prove his point, the same text that Kayser uses to illustrate how the ominous grotesque "totally destroys the order and deprives us of our foothold" (Kayser, 59). Victor Hugo's work, in various analyses, is either seen as showing an understanding for the role of the lower bodily stratum, and demonstrating the connection between eating, laughter and death, or illustrating the sinister foundation of the grotesque whose "ridiculously distorted and monstrously horrible ingredients... [indicate]...an inhuman, nocturnal, and abysmal realm" (58). The meaning of the utterance (by Bonaventura or Hugo) is made through the addressee (Bakhtin or Kayser) who comprehends within his/her own socio-historical space. The response is an utterance with its own intention and made in a certain context for us, as readers, to respond to.

Both agree that the decline of Romanticism brought on an equivalent recession in grotesque art. In the twentieth-century this trend was reversed, making grotesque art and theory a widespread phenomenon. However, once again, their interpretations of this phenomenon differ. In fact, in discussing the twentieth-century proliferation of the grotesque, Bakhtin highlights and summarizes the two opposing views. For Bakhtin, the grotesque in this century can generally be traced according to two main lines of development:

> The first line is the modernist form (Alfred Jarry), connected in various degrees with the Romantic tradition and evolved under the influence of existentialism. The second line is the realist grotesque (Thomas Mann, Bertold Brecht, Pablo Neruda, and others). It is related to the tradition of realism and folk culture and reflects at times the direct influence of carnival forms, as in

the work of Neruda. (Bakhtin:1984, 46)

I agree with Bakhtin that Kayser reads the grotesque through modernist eyes that mourn the loss of an accepted order. Though his findings are founded on the Romantic period, it is still the modernist forms which determine his understanding of that time. For Bakhtin, Romanticism separated the grotesque from its folk culture of humour and the carnival spirit. Only in its best grotesque works are there invocations of that spirit, though they remain, in general, aberrations. (He highlights Hoffmann and Sterne as examples, as did Kayser.) Using Kayser's terminology, Bakhtin states that in the grotesque, the world becomes "alien" precisely because the grotesque celebrates the "potentiality of an entirely different world, of another order, another way of life. It leads men out of the confines of the apparent (false) unity, of the indisputable and stable" (Bakhtin:1984, 48). This world is like a return to Saturn's utopian golden age, filled with carnival truth, and all its regenerative powers.

According to Bakhtin, the modernist view rejects the regenerative aspect of the grotesque by not acknowledging the material bodily principle or the cognizance of historical time and the developing life cycle. Instead, there is a strong focus on the psychological aspect. The *id* is "an alien, inhuman power, governing the world, men, their life and behavior" (Bakhtin:1984, 49). The "freedom of fantasy" with which the grotesque is so strongly associated is denied if the *id* controls the world. In Bakhtin's version of the grotesque world, "the *id* is uncrowned and transformed into a 'funny monster'" (49). Furthermore, Kayser's modernist stance creates oppositions inimical to the grotesque. The modernist concept of single and alienated otherness undermines the nondiscriminatory nature of the grotesque as it suggests binaries that conceal hierarchies (self/other) (Hutcheon:1988, 61). And when Kayser states that the grotesque creates a "fear of life," he poses an opposition between life and death, where for Bakhtin, there is no polarization between the two but a continual cycle. In conclusion, Bakhtin states that the grotesque and its aesthetic nature can only be understood in light of medieval folk culture, and any other positioning, i.e. through a modernist culture, will take away from the complexity and power of the grotesque and its carnival spirit.

Conditions Of Order And The Liminal Phase

Kayser's focus on the grotesque as Romantic, and almost entirely German Romantic, underpins his restricted emphasis on a sinister and alien world. However, Bakhtin commits

the same error of selective emphasis by focusing solely on medieval carnival folk culture (Buren, 46). The grotesque existed long before the middle ages and its powerful ambiguity does not stem from that particular historical period. Furthermore, as many critics have argued, carnival and, thereby, the *grotesque realism* which embodies the carnival process, may not be as radical as Bakhtin claims. Umberto Eco, in his introduction to *Carnival!*, writes that carnivals and circuses only pretend "to lead us beyond our limits" (Eco, 8). Throughout the centuries, social and political powers have continually used these "*circenses* to keep the crowds quiet" (3). Terry Eagleton argues:

> Indeed carnival is so vivaciously celebrated that the necessary political criticism is almost too obvious to make. Carnival, after all, is a *licensed* affair in every sense, a permissible rupture of hegemony, a contained popular blow-off as disturbing and relatively ineffectual as a revolutionary work of art. As Shakespeare's Olivia remarks, there is no slander in an allowed fool. (Eagleton quoted by Stallybrass and White, 13)

Bakhtin's work seems to propose (against the grain of his historical materialist principles) that simply by embracing the grotesque in its medieval spirit "we can regain fullness of meaning, purity of being, and natural innocence" and lie "breast to breast with the cosmos and with our fellow creatures" (Harpham, 72). Though I believe Bakhtin's intention is much more complex, such a proposal ignores the realization that though the grotesque may temporarily break with cultural canons, it is only possible because those canons have "invaded the structure of thought itself" (72). I believe Bakhtin's view, which refutes any notion of hierarchy, coheres more with the ambiguity of the grotesque; however, the grotesque does not necessarily issue in a sense of utopia or dystopia. Depending on the context and the observer, it may readily be felt to suggest either of these states.

Bakhtin himself may have recognized the carnivalesque techniques used by Stalin who employed "inversion and mockery to denounce stubborn opponents and consolidate his own power - examples being the famous 'Stakhanovite' movement, or the use of gigantic parades and festivals to glorify his rule" (Gardiner, 181). Furthermore, "the officially sanctioned aesthetic of 'socialist realism' encouraged artists to...adopt the traditions of Russian folk literature and oral traditions" although it ultimately promoted a wholesome, non-grotesque and sanitized conception of "the people" (181). Perhaps Bakhtin's overly idealized vision of carnival (and the grotesque) must be seen in light of its abuse. Nevertheless, carnival, like the grotesque, is an ambiguous phenomenon as numerous critics have argued. Michael

Gardiner writes, "carnival can either support or undermine the prevailing social order, depending on the constellation of socio-historical forces at play at any given juncture and the particular socio-cultural practices which these rituals and symbols are intertwined" (182). And Robert Stam writes:

> Real-life carnivals are politically ambiguous affairs that can be egalitarian and emancipatory or oppressive and hierarchical...Carnivals can constitute a symbolic rebellion *by* the weak or a festive scapegoating *of* the weak, or both at the same time. We must ask who is carnivalizing whom, for what reasons, by which means, and in what circumstances...Civic festivities have always been the point of convergence of conservative rituals that regenerate the status quo and subversive currents that threaten ossified hierarchies. Actual carnivals form shifting configurations of symbolic practices whose political valence changes with each context and situation. (Stam, 95)

Stallybrass and White also comment on the ambiguous nature of carnival, its potential for either power or oppression, but also the futility of trying to simplify carnival:

> It actually makes little sense to fight out the issues of whether or not carnivals are *intrinsically* radical or conservative, for to do so automatically involves the false essentializing of carnivalesque transgression. The most that can be said is that for long periods carnival may be a stable and cyclical ritual with no noticeable politically transformative effects but that, given the presence of sharpened political antagonism, it may often act as a *catalyst* and *site of symbolic struggle*. (Stallybrass and White, 14)

Harpham points out in his work, *On the Grotesque*, that the grotesque is "so omnipresent that nearly any theory at all can be supported by a judicious set of examples" (Harpham, xviii). Furthermore, no example is "truly exemplary" as evidenced by the differing interpretations Kayser and Bakhtin make of the same texts in order to suit their own purposes. Importantly, the numerous theories on the grotesque that do exist, serve to highlight its own ineluctable demand for continual re-interpretation. (Here one can note the similar demand made by language in Bakhtin's metalinguistics: the varied elements of the grotesque, like the numerous social languages that make up heteroglossia, become the centrifugal forces that compete with the centripetal force of a false, but unifying idea that there exists one meaning, or, in the case of metalinguistics, one national language). Here my earlier observation holds: what becomes clear as one scrutinises theoretical works on the grotesque, (I have cited Kayser, Bakhtin, Harpham and others), is that the grotesque is always made visible and interpreted against a ruling system of norms and within a specific historical and cultural context. Hence, for Bakhtin, the religious fervour and rigid social and political hierarchy that reigned in the Middle Ages serves to foreground the characteristics

of the folk culture he believes epitomized the grotesque aesthetic. And for Kayser, the Romantic grotesque is to be observed against the order and logic of the Enlightenment. Attitudes towards the grotesque will follow from the observer's relation to that ruling system of norms and her/his personal ideology, and its particular manifestations directly depend on the cultural conventions and assumptions of the time.

Culture establishes "conditions of order and coherence, especially by specifying which categories are logically or generically incompatible with which others" (Harpham, xx). A grotesque form will break with its culture's "conditions of order" and combine categories that, according to that culture, are incompatible. Therefore, within the grotesque, there exists both the normal and the abnormal. As a result, there is a strong sense of ambiguity, an aspect upon which both Bakhtin and Kayser agree. We can try to fit the form into the normal categories we are familiar with, but as a whole we can make little sense of it. As Harpham would say, we are "stranded in a 'liminal' phase" where "opposing processes and assumptions co-exist in a single representation" (14).

This liminal phase, the experience of paradox in the interval of the grotesque, which denies rational ways of thinking, is not merely irrational emotion. As Henning acutely points out:

> thinking does not, of course, necessarily depend on the use of reason, but can rather draw, as Nietzsche for one has demonstrated, on nonrational modes like paradox, in order to arrive at profound insights. Indeed, rational thought may obscure or distort important problems by forcing them to conform to pre-set and often narrow patterns of apprehension. Furthermore, the insistence of logic on clear and distinct categories, as on a linear notion of cause and effect, or on spatio-temporal presence, may, in fact, be unrealistic. Such concepts may deny life's complexities in an attempt to make it rationally coherent and comprehensible. The grotesque may provide one means of approaching a more flexible ordering, an ordering dependent on undecidable, rather than hierarchically distinct, categories. In doing so it does not lapse into mere 'emotion.' Similarly, emotion is never totally devoid of all thinking. (Henning, 118-9)

The creative exploitation of the undecidability and agonistic tension of the grotesque, which, as mentioned above, demands interpretation, can "lead the mind to new inventions." The liminal phase has the potential of giving birth to new concepts, ideas, and ways of seeing the world. In relating this point to Kuhn's notion of a "paradigm crisis" and the verge of scientific discovery, Harpham writes:

> This pregnant moment is a 'paradigm crisis,' when enough anomalies have

> emerged to discredit an old explanatory paradigm or model, and to make it impossible to continue adhering to it, but before the general acceptance of a new paradigm. The paradigm crisis is the interval of the grotesque writ large. (Harpham, 17)

This explains the prevalence of the grotesque at times of change or revolution.

"But I'm going to wave my freak flag high, high."

The above quotation, taken from a Jimmy Hendrix composition, "If 6 Was 9," indicates the positive appropriation of the term "freak," a form of the grotesque, as an impetus for social change in America during the 1960s (Russo, 75). Celebrating one's "freakishness," one's difference from the status quo, was a means to articulate America's need to acknowledge and accept its marginalized populations. By waving one's freak flag, one made visible the differences that existed in race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality. A contemporary equivalent is the appropriation of the term "queer" by gays and lesbians. Such a reclamation denies the derogatory application of those terms and throws the ruling system's orders and classifications into question. A queer is not necessarily "strange," nor is a freak, even in its application to circus side-shows, necessarily "abnormal". As Bakhtin points out, the idea of necessity, though always seemingly serious and indisputable in a culture, is "relative and variable" (Bakhtin:1984, 49). It is the consciousness that the order and rules of the times are not static which characterizes the carnival spirit and creates new possibilities. Therefore, by being a freak or a queer one may pave the way for change. Bakhtin writes:

> The principle of laughter and the carnival spirit on which the grotesque is based destroys this limited seriousness and all pretence of an extratemporal meaning and unconditional value of necessity. It frees human consciousness, thought, and imagination for new potentialities. For this reason great changes, even in the field of science, are always preceded by a certain carnival consciousness that prepares the way. (Bakhtin:1984, 49)

The systems of decorum which are designed to keep the low and the marginal in their places are "afflicted with built-in obsolescence" (Harpham, 74). Since these systems, which provide methods for separating the meaningful from the meaningless, are arbitrary, the methods themselves are vulnerable to change. When this condition is perceived, meaning is transferred from what was the meaningful to the meaningless. "Revolutions seek to reverse the meaningful/meaningless opposition, moving the bottom to the top in the name of greater fidelity to 'reality.' Grotesque is a word for that dynamic state of low-ascending and high-

descending" (74). The systems of decorum, not based on "reality", contradict their purpose by making the "real" ambiguous. This "crisis in the sense of reality is created by the systems we devise precisely in order to avoid such experiences. Trying to think in logical types and strict categories, we make ourselves prey for the imps of the indeterminate" (74). We cannot escape ambiguity as it is part of the "human dilemma" (74).

As Harpham demonstrates, even the seemingly meaningless designs of the *grottesche*, which border central representations, threaten the center by encouraging the eye to wander to the side. Within the *grottesche* designs the metamorphic hybrids abolish binary distinctions. Inevitably, the observer tries to make a unity between the margin and center and between the forms of hybrid design. Such an act can lead to a better understanding of how we see the world. As Harpham says, "Looking at ourselves looking at the grotesque, we can observe our own projections, catching ourselves, as it were, in the act of perception" (Harpham, 43). However, the grotesque image (like language) can never be completely interpreted. Grotesque images are marked by both the normal and the abnormal, and as such, they necessitate interpretation and definition, but at the same time resist them; grotesques can neither readily fit into our logical categories nor are they totally unrecognizable. However, as stated earlier, paradox can produce profound insights. There may not be a central truth, but interpretation, especially that which recognizes the grotesque, provides some meaning:

> Meaning is made through connections, by linking something with something else outside itself; it is made by establishing relations both within and outside the text, by ascribing intentionality to things that do not inherently possess it, by seeing elements in contexts other than the ones in which they occur, by seeing one thing as another. These operations are carried out at high intensity when we encounter grotesque forms... (Harpham, 187)

That is why the grotesque becomes a useful tool for works which wish to generate new meanings. We resist the grotesque and sometimes in art our interpretations fit and make sense, but the grotesque prospers in unconventional works that leave open the possibility of falsifying whatever truths one may get out of it. This art, through its dissonance, will ensure that there's always "something left to discover" (191). For, if one truly understood the grotesque, it would cease to exist.

The Grotesque, Bakhtin and Postmodernism

Numerous theorists, including Bakhtin and Kayser, agree on the tremendous proliferation of the grotesque in the twentieth century. As Bakhtin points out, this profusion has developed

along two main trends, what he calls the "modernist form" and the "realist grotesque". I believe these trends may be relabelled, "modernism" and "postmodernism". The increased application of the grotesque in cultural artifacts is in concert with both trends as they share a view which acknowledges the indeterminate and relative nature of societal systems and definitions. However, there are marked differences between these trends.

As indicated earlier, the modernist stance that Kayser adopts tends to mourn the loss of finality and the effect of this loss is alienation. This sense of alienation, as Bakhtin suggests, ultimately leads to binaries and implied hierarchies (self/other, life/death). In addition, the modernist artist, in a humanistic way, often attempts to impose a shape or order and for his efforts achieves "not resolution but closure - an aesthetic closure that substitutes for the notion of paradise regained an image...of a paradise fashioned by man himself" (Wilde quoted by Chabot, 26). Therefore, art is given autonomous status and the artistic imagination is privileged for its ability to bring some order to chaotic "reality".

Both modernism and postmodernism challenge societal concepts, but postmodernism, in its characteristically contradictory way, "uses and abuses, installs then subverts" these dominant ideas (Hutcheon:1988, 3). In discussing both modernism and postmodernism, Linda Hutcheon writes:

> Postmodern culture, then, has a contradictory relationship to what we usually label our dominant, liberal humanist culture. It does not deny it as some have asserted...Instead, it contests it from within its own assumptions. Modernists like Eliot and Joyce have usually been seen as profoundly humanistic...in their paradoxical desire for stable aesthetic and moral values, even in the face of their realization of the inevitable absence of such universals. Postmodernism differs from this, not in its humanistic contradictions, but in the provisionality of its response to them: it refuses to posit any structure or, what Lyotard...calls, master narrative - such as art or myth - which for such modernists, would have been consolatory. It argues that such systems are indeed attractive, perhaps even necessary; but this does not make them any the less illusory. For Lyotard, postmodernism is characterized by exactly this kind of incredulity toward master or meta-narratives: those who lament 'the loss of meaning' in the world or in art are really mourning the fact that knowledge is no longer primarily narrative knowledge of this kind...This does not mean that knowledge somehow disappears. There is no new paradigm here, even if there is change. (Hutcheon:1988, 6)

The contradiction of self-reflexivity and the undercutting of representation within a representation is not unique to postmodernism. What is newer, as Hutcheon indicates, is the "constant irony of the context of the postmodern version of these contradictions and also their

obsessively recurring presence as well" (x-xi). Most importantly, postmodernism challenges and interrogates the humanistic notion of consensus. "Whatever narratives or systems that once allowed us to think we could unproblematically and universally define public agreement have now been questioned by the acknowledgement of differences - in theory and in artistic practice. In its most extreme formulation, the result is that consensus becomes the illusion of consensus" (7).

> In contrast to modernism, the contradictions that characterize postmodernism reject any neat binary opposition that might conceal a secret hierarchy of values. The elements of these contradictions are usually multiple; the focus is on differences, not single otherness; and their roots are most likely to be found in the very modernism from which postmodernism derives its name...Many critics have pointed out the glaring contradictions of modernism: its élitist, classical need for order and its revolutionary formal innovations...; its 'Janus-faced' anarchistic urge to destroy existing systems combined with a reactionary political vision of ideal order...; its compulsion to write mixed with a realization of the meaninglessness of writing (in the works of Beckett or Kafka); its melancholy regret for the loss of presence and its experimental energy and power of conception. (Hutcheon:1988, 43)

Postmodernism, like modernism, has its contradictions, but "it foregrounds them to such an extent that they become the very defining characteristics of the entire cultural phenomenon we label with that name" (Hutcheon:1988, 43).

As articulated by Harpham earlier, such contradiction has potential to produce profound insight, and Hutcheon uses this concept as a model for a poetics of postmodernism. Hutcheon writes:

> The visible paradoxes of the postmodern do not mask any hidden unity which analysis can reveal. Its irreconcilable incompatibilities are the very bases upon which the problematized discourses of postmodernism emerge. The differences that these contradictions foreground should not be dissipated. While unresolved paradoxes may be unsatisfying to those in need of absolute and final answers, to postmodern thinkers and artists they have been the source of intellectual energy that has provoked new articulations of the postmodern condition...The model of contradictions offered here - while admittedly only a model - would hope to open up any poetics of postmodernism to plural, contestatory elements without necessarily reducing or recuperating them. (Hutcheon:1988, 21)

Hutcheon acknowledges that such a stance is itself ideological: "In order to try to avoid the tempting trap of co-option, what is necessary is the acknowledging of the fact that such a position is itself an ideology, one that is profoundly implicated in that which it seeks to theorize" (Hutcheon:1988, 21). Any discourse, including scholarly, will be ideological and

this one adopts a positive attitude towards paradox as potentially providing "new articulations".

Interestingly, Hutcheon's explanation of the postmodern ideology contains description suggestive of Bakhtinian theory:

> Within such a 'postmodernist' ideology, all a poetics of postmodernism would do would be consciously to enact the metalinguistic contradiction of being inside and outside, complicitous and distanced, inscribing and contesting its own provisional formulations. Such an enterprise would obviously not yield any universal truths but, then again, that would not be what it sought to do. To move from the desire and expectation of sure and single meaning to a recognition of the value of differences and even contradictions might be a tentative first step to accepting responsibility for both art and theory as *signifying processes*. In other words, maybe we could begin to study the implications of both our *making* and our *making sense* of our culture. (Hutcheon:1988, 21)

A poetics of postmodernism, like Bakhtin's metalinguistics, allows for the "contradiction of being inside and out". The addressee is part of the dialogic process and aware of the socially marked language alluded to in the utterance, but the addressee, from within the competing heteroglossia, must independently provide that utterance with meaning. The meaning is open to change with a different addressee and socio-historical context. Acknowledging the different, contradictory elements involved in the signifying process as well as the provisionality of the meaning obtained is exactly what a poetics of postmodernism allows for.

Throughout her *Poetics of Postmodernism*, Hutcheon maintains a close connection to Bakhtinian theory. She emphasizes that postmodernism is concerned to

> interrogate the nature of language, of narrative closure, of representation, and of the context and conditions of both their *production and reception* ...What postmodernist art and theory share is an awareness of the social practices and institutions that shape them. *Context is all.* Pragmatic semiotics and discourse analysis (as developed by feminists, blacks, poststructuralist historiographers, and others) are intended to make us uneasy, to make us question our assumptions about how we make meaning, how we know, how we can know...Like postmodern art, they end up being political and engaged, because they do not and cannot masquerade as modes of neutral analysis. (my italics, Hutcheon:1988, 54)

After this statement she makes the connection explicit:

> Perhaps the recent popularity of the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin owes much to the fact that they at once offer a framework in which to deal with those parodic, ironic, paradoxical forms of postmodernist practice and also make overt the connection between the aesthetic and the social, historical, and

institutional. (Hutcheon:1988, 54)

Robert Stam points out Julia Kristeva's observation in the late sixties that "Bakhtin uncannily foreshadowed major poststructuralist topoi: the denial of univocal meaning, the infinite spiral of interpretation, the negation of originary presence in speech, the unstable identity of the sign, the positioning of the subject by discourse, the untenable nature of inside/outside oppositions, and the pervasive presence of intertextuality" (Stam, 2).

Another concurrent phenomenon that Hutcheon does not mention is the dramatic surge of the grotesque in the last few decades. Though the whole of the twentieth-century is marked by this proliferation, there presently exists what Harpham calls "a moment of crisis" (Harpham, xxi). He writes that

> the grotesque is becoming less and less possible because of the pervasive, soupy tolerance of disorder, of the *genre mixte*. When the television talk-shows present the casual viewer with 'in-depth' interviews with, for example, transvestites and transsexuals, how can we continue to call the hermaphrodite grotesque? (Harpham, xx)

I would argue that this "crisis", together with the contemporary focus on Bakhtinian studies and postmodernism, is not coincidental. As Brian McHale contends in his book, *Postmodernist Fiction*, the "characteristic *topoi* of carnivalized literature are also characteristic *topoi* of postmodernist fiction" (McHale:1987, 173). Their common amplification marks a new kind of political challenge to contemporary systems and attitudes that is not "soupy" but substantial and necessary. A recent example which reflects, not only the co-existence and adoption of grotesque/Bakhtinian/postmodern ideas, but also the political action embodied in them, is the South African *exHibition project*. This project, by photographer Clive Hassall and journalist Adam Levin, documents drag and queer culture. What is most interesting is how Levin describes the motivation behind the work. Levin says of the project, "It's important because most people don't realise that a scene like this exists. It sets up a *dialogue between the fringe and the mainstream* and works towards a tolerance about embracing the extraordinary in people" (my emphasis, *Mail & Guardian* - 18-24/10, 1996). The intentional use (artistic utterance) of what is predominantly considered socially and historically grotesque sets up a dialogue with us that makes us aware, not only of societal meanings, but our own participation in supporting or contesting them. Hassall purposefully uses what he calls "extremity" of femininity to construct stills that demand response. The documentary is "offered as another of the discourses by which we construct our versions of reality, and both

the construction and the need for it are foregrounded" (Hutcheon:1988, 40).

Neither postmodernism, Bakhtinian theory, nor the grotesque seek universal truths. Each rejects binary opposition and recognizes the value of difference, contradiction, paradox, interpretation and the necessary interdependence of opposing elements. Dialogue needs both the speaker and the respondent, grotesque needs both the normal and the abnormal, postmodernist discourses need "the very myths and conventions they contest and reduce" (Hutcheon:1988, 48). Bakhtinian theory, the grotesque and postmodernism all acknowledge societal systems and their constructedness, but also make one aware of one's own participation in those systems and the agency that exists to accept or reject them. Though Bakhtin wrote much of his work in the 1930s, the grotesque and his theories have been embraced more recently by the marginalized for a reason. Feminists, for example, have been able to use his theories, as well as the grotesque and postmodernism, as useful springboards for their own causes. What all three espouse is a valuable and powerful process of change for the marginalized: the individual should see the construction, be aware, decide on a response, the individual has the power to construct his/her own meaning. The goal is not a final truth, but to question continually and be critical in order to respond provisionally in an empowering way. However, what becomes clear is that the author's intention or attitude, which often reflects his/her relation to the dominant system, effects the power of that agency as we will see in the case studies that form the major part of this dissertation, namely, a comparison of the discourses of Federico Fellini and Angela Carter.

Fellini And Carter

I have argued that attitudes towards the paradoxical grotesque tend to correlate with views on the present system. The differences noted between Kayser and Bakhtin as observers of the grotesque may also be made between Federico Fellini and Angela Carter as producers of grotesque texts. Carter, like Bakhtin, celebrates the grotesque as a means for empowerment, particularly for women, whereas Fellini, like Kayser, sees it as an isolating aspect of the human condition. Notably, the grotesque, for Fellini, is not frightening and sinister. It is lamentable as it shows our universal alienation, yet it simultaneously provides a levelling effect. However, Fellini does not attempt to suggest any empowerment beyond that levelling, which, we shall see is, in fact, ultimately negative. Both deal with marginalized subjects, but the authorial intentions differ. Fellini uses the grotesque only to show humanity's alienation

from a knowable world, whereas Carter uses it to show the possibilities of an ultimately new one.

In comparing the oeuvre of Fellini and Carter one can observe some other shared trends in their work besides the mutual focus on marginalized subjects. In looking back on their collection of works, one can detect marked shifts in approach and I will group their works, often decadically, for analysis. Although this kind of generalization tends toward oversimplification, it is a useful method to discuss changes in aesthetic production. More accurately, there is a continual expansion where certain texts will contain more thoroughly developed elements of past ones as well as ideas that will provide the focus of future works and so on. However, the groupings constructively serve to underscore the most striking emphases maintained within a series of texts before a shift in focus occurs. Another commonality between the two artists is that though both begin with social realism, their texts seem to become increasingly more postmodern and grotesque. Finally, despite the changes and developments that occur in both bodies of work, their opposing attitudes toward the grotesque remain constant throughout their productions.

Though Fellini is aware that the systems of decorum are constructs, this knowledge, as indicated earlier, serves to show our alienation from a logical, completely defined world. As a result, Fellini's use of the grotesque ultimately reflects a more Kayserian attitude. In his early works, Fellini's specific focus on the psychological underscores the modernist form which Bakhtin indicated in Kayser's work. Fellini's attitude remains primarily Kayserian throughout his films. However, the type of grotesque used in his films becomes more Bakhtinian, more reflective of grotesque realism, when his films appear to become more postmodern or accepting of the "(false) unity, of the indisputable and stable" (Bakhtin:1984, 48). The films of the seventies, like *The Clowns* (1970) and *Amarcord* (1973), are filled with carnivalesque imagery and reflect more of a postmodern poetics than his films of the sixties, like *8½* (1963) and *Juliet of the Spirits* (1965). These earlier films, though concerned with representation, ultimately seek order and closure through the metanarrative of Jungian psychoanalysis. The previous films of the fifties, categorized as social realism, contain a very moderate number of grotesque images, but have elements which anticipate the Jungian influence fully explicated in *8½* and *Juliet of the Spirits*. The postmodern techniques of the films of the seventies, which maintain indeterminacy while ironically pushing interpretation, are readily informed by the grotesque realism and parody that Bakhtin believes most clearly

expresses the spirit of medieval carnival in literary works.

Carnival in all its aspects, which Bakhtin highlights in *Rabelais and His World*, permeates Italian culture, and Fellini readily draws on this source for his own grotesque realism. As we have noted, the grotesque, with its unresolvable ambiguity and opposition to the norm, readily informs *both* modernist and postmodernist works which question representation, identity and difference. However, the use of the grotesque is limited in a modernist work that seeks closure. As stated before, the modernist artist, in a humanistic way, often attempts to impose a shape or order, and for his efforts achieves "not resolution but closure - an aesthetic closure that substitutes for the notion of paradise regained an image...of a paradise fashioned by man himself" (Wilde quoted by Chabot, 26). A work containing such an aesthetic closure will necessarily restrict the extent and form of grotesque imagery used as the ambiguous nature of the grotesque resists completion. Though the grotesque helps the modernist work to reveal the indeterminate nature of societal systems and definitions, the grotesque is often only applied to emphasize the alienation supposedly concomitant with that revelation. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, the stress placed on alienation leads to binaries and hierarchies that are inimical to the grotesque.

Fellini's films of the sixties attest to his modernist and "paradoxical desire for stable aesthetic and moral values, even in the face of [his] realization of the inevitable absence of such universals" (Hutcheon:1988, 6). In *8½* and *Juliet of the Spirits*, particularly, this desire entails the achievement of psychic unity for the main protagonist. The grotesque in these films only serves to enforce the alienating effect the different archetypes have on the protagonist. The grotesque, in its carnivalesque manifestations, flourishes in and better supports a postmodernist work that accepts uncertainty and defies final definition, like *The Clowns* and *Amarcord*. It does so, seemingly despite the author's opinion on the effects of that uncertainty.

However, upon closer investigation, Fellini's films of the seventies, like *The Clowns* and *Amarcord*, ultimately support the "modernist form" which denies the possibility of agency and meaning, and this is confirmed by Fellini's last series of films in the eighties. As Fellini increasingly focuses on representation, particularly film's participatory role, his attitude toward the effects of our constructedness becomes increasingly negative. It is clear in his later films that our indeterminate state does not contain any subversive potential. The world and humanity are constructed by representations, but, furthermore, those representations are

merely based on other representations. The subject is now more than alienated; it does not exist. His Kayserian attitude ultimately leads him to a position inimical to the positive impulse within postmodernism and his art serves to support theoretical arguments against the poetics of postmodernism Hutcheon describes. He apparently shares with Fredric Jameson, Jean Baudrillard and other critics an apocalyptic view that sees the postmodern world as mere simulacra, without meaning or any sense of agency. *City of Women*, *And the Ship Sails On*, *Ginger and Fred* and *Intervista* mark a lamentable decline to signification without origin and a shift "in the dynamics of cultural pathology [which] can be characterized as one...[where] the alienation of the subject is displaced by the latter's fragmentation" (Jameson, 14). Any positive interpretation or agency becomes impossible in a world where the subject exists only fragmentarily. As a result, Fellini's films of the eighties resist the poetics of postmodernism Hutcheon describes and the use of the grotesque, especially Bakhtinian grotesque, becomes very limited and similar to the alienating images of the grotesque Fellini uses in his films of the sixties.

I agree with Hutcheon that the views of Fellini, Jameson and Baudrillard do not take into account "the position from which they themselves lament, or the complexities of the cultural phenomena they claim to be describing. One of the lessons of the doubleness of postmodernism is that you cannot step outside that which you contest, that you are always implicated in the value, you *choose* to challenge" (Hutcheon:1988, 223). Their positions resolve the tensions inherent in postmodernism (as well as the grotesque), and, thereby, not only reject difference, but deny the "possible creative and contestatory impulses" (223). As Hutcheon argues in her response to Baudrillard's article, "The Precession of Simulacra":

> [P]ostmodern art works to contest the "simulacri-zation" process of mass culture - not by denying it or lamenting it - but by problematizing the entire notion of the representation of reality, and by therein suggesting the potentially reductive quality of the view upon which Baudrillard's laments are based. It is not that truth and reference have ceased to exist, as Baudrillard claims; it is that they have ceased to be unproblematic issues. We are not witnessing a degeneration into the hyperreal without origin or reality, but a questioning of what "real" can mean and how we can *know* it. The function of the conjunction of the historiographic and the metafictive in much contemporary fiction...is to make the reader aware of the distinction between the *events* of the past real and the *facts* by which we give meaning to that past, by which we assume to know it. Baudrillard's simulacrum theory is too neat; it resolves tensions which I see as ongoing and unresolvable and which perhaps should form the basis of any definition of postmodernism that pretends to be faithful to actual cultural practice. (Hutcheon:1988, 223)

Fellini's latest laments, as well as those of Baudrillard and Jameson, seem to be a more recent development of the twentieth-century modernist trend that Bakhtin describes. There is no longer a psychological emphasis because, for them, alienation is no longer possible, but the mournful loss of unquestionable definition and the imposition of closure are still evident. Furthermore, Bakhtin critiques the modernist view for its rejection of the regenerative aspect of the grotesque through its disregard for the material bodily principle as well as historical time. The postmodern theories of Jameson and Baudrillard, which appear to deny subjectivity and collapse history, do precisely the same thing. As Bakhtin states, there is a clear focus in the twentieth century on representation and the indeterminacy of meaning which is underscored by the increased use of the grotesque. However, attitudes, stemming from opinions and relations to dominant systems, may effect the potential agency identifiable within that indeterminacy. Attitude becomes the impetus for the two divergent trends Bakhtin discusses in relation to the twentieth-century use of the grotesque, the "modernist form" and the "realist grotesque," as well as the two twentieth-century theoretical and artistic trends, modernism and postmodernism. The kind of limited "modernist postmodernism" that Jameson, Baudrillard and Fellini share indicates the plurality within the movements. One must therefore recognize the multiplicity of both and speak of "grotesqueisms" and "postmodernisms" as we must speak of "feminisms". What all three seem to share is a general impulse for "unsettling/ resettling codes, canons, procedures, beliefs" (Michael, 15), although how that impulse is utilized marks the various strands in each. Furthermore, they must be acknowledged as constructions which are "always strategic and therefore political" (12). In regard to postmodernism, this point is acutely argued in Magali Cornier Michael's book, *Feminism and the Postmodern Impulse* (1996).

In discussing prevailing constructions of postmodernism, Michael writes the following:

> The dominant contemporary versions of postmodernism in its various guises as cultural dominant, theory and aesthetics have been formulated within a highly specific Western and chiefly academic cultural context that remains very much male-centered. This tendency by critics (particularly male critics) to construct male-centered paradigms is widespread and points to the difficulties of escaping a male-centered Western metaphysics that continues to dominate even as it is being challenged. (Michael, 12)

What Michael proposes is "to critique existing constructions as male-centered and to revise/reconstruct established versions of postmodern fiction so as to take into consideration recent fiction with feminist impulses that have been barred from the discussions because they

do not quite fit the model/constructions established by mostly male critics" (Michael, 12). She cites the example of Brian McHale and his book, *Constructing Postmodernism* (1992). The author acknowledges the constructed nature of postmodernism, saying, "postmodernism exists discursively, in the discourses we produce *about* it and *using* it", but fails to question who the "we" is and this negligence ultimately results in a limitation in his analysis to predominantly male texts (12). Repeated negligence may have historically caused feminist writers to disassociate from postmodernism. (It may also explain why women's fiction has also been almost totally excluded from the modernist canon). These established versions of postmodern fiction, which tend toward "endless anarchic play, overdetermination, underdetermination, indeterminacy, dispersal" (31), provide only deconstruction without acknowledging the ability within postmodernism to reconstruct, even though provisionally. Michael labels "alternative" those texts which utilize postmodern strategies and engage in deconstruction in order to create space for reconstruction (18), though these "alternative" texts exemplify exactly what Hutcheon describes for a poetics of postmodernism. Such a space is necessary for a focused political agenda that seeks change. She points out that "the political potential of postmodernism has in fact been exploited by a variety of politically engaged novels in the service of specific feminist, cultural, and racial politics" (218). As she says of the feminist works she analyses, "The specificity of feminist commitment brings a level of direct engagement to postmodern aesthetic strategies that makes them potentially more effective in transforming the reader's consciousness than when tied to the more detached politics of much (white male) postmodern fiction" (218). In light of Michael's analysis, Fellini's work may show a shift from modernism to postmodernism, but the strand of postmodernism he purports, denies the "possible creative and contestatory impulses" that Hutcheon and Michael show as effecting possible transgression for the marginalized. His strand of postmodernism, a late twentieth-century development of modernism, lacks focused political engagement and supports the white male status quo to which he belongs. Ultimately, it is a modernist position, sometimes disguised in its later postmodern form, Fellini maintains throughout his career, and it is the "modernist form" of the grotesque which dominates.

Both Fellini and Carter share a common distrust for logic and definitions. As Fellini says in his book:

> I hate logical plans. I have a horror of set phrases that instead of explaining reality tame it in order to use it in a way that claims to be for the general good

> but in fact is no use to anyone. I don't approve of definitions or labels. Labels should go on suitcases, nowhere else. (Fellini:1976, 53)

For Carter, labels can be likened to myth and religion, which, for her, present "ideas about ourselves which don't come out of practice; they come out of theory" (quoted by Altevers, 20). However, as argued above, although both reveal representations, including their own, to be constructions, the agency suggested to us differs with their attitudes. For Fellini such knowledge is positive, at least in his films of the seventies, in that we can no longer be justified in judging others as less worthy, but it also suggests a universal isolated state where no meaning is possible. Carter, on the other hand, believes that as a woman writer she has a mission to "redeem language for women", or any marginalized group (Goldsworthy, 9) to allow for an "infinitely greater variety of experience", and "to say things for which no language has previously existed" (Carter quoted by Blodgett, 49). The increased use of the grotesque, as Harpham points out, indicates a clear a lack of adequate language. There are significant portions of experience that can only be represented by this undefinable, "non-thing", the grotesque. Therefore, the grotesque, its undecidability and agonistic tension, becomes most suitable for her purpose. It is this purpose which ultimately differentiates Fellini from Carter in their use of the grotesque. For Carter it not only makes us aware of constructions, but suggests our ability to construct our own empowering meanings.

Most of Carter's work forms part of the "alternative" feminist postmodernism discussed above. Carter is first and foremost a feminist though she utilizes postmodern strategies for her cause. She does not accept Foucault's deconstruction of the subject, but rather believes in the 'self, as autonomous being,' and in the 'unique *I*'" (quoted by Altevers, 19). Like Fellini, she shows the constructedness of representations, including her own, but unlike Fellini, she specifically reveals them as stemming from "relations of power and politics" (19) and illustrates the consequences of such constructions. The grotesque takes on a new significance when used to address women's issues.

For Bakhtin, the central image of grotesque realism is the grotesque body. The grotesque body is connected to the world, and, therefore, those parts of the body which interact with the world are most emphasized - "the open mouth, the genital organs, the breasts, the phallus, the potbelly, the nose" (Bakhtin:1984, 26). The grotesque body, as mentioned above, is also unfinished and transforming. It is "a principle of growth" that represents the human race, "the ancestral body of the people", and its continual development.

The materialist bodily principle exceeds its own limits in regeneration, "in copulation, pregnancy, child birth, the throes of death, eating, drinking, or defecation" (26). Interestingly, this heavy reliance on the "trope of the body" is shared by Kayser (Russo, 8). For him:

> the grotesque is related most strongly to the psychic register and to the bodily as cultural projection of an inner state. The image of the uncanny, grotesque body as doubled, monstrous, deformed, excessive and abject is not identified with materiality as such, but assumes a division or distance between the discursive fictions of the biological body and the Law. The strange image of the body which emerges in this formulation is never entirely locatable in or apart from the psyche which depends upon the body image as prop. (Russo, 9)

Mary Russo also points out that "Subjectivity as it has been understood in the West requires the image of the grotesque body and she cites the Freudian canon and its "creature features" as an apt example (Russo, 9). More specifically, it is the female grotesque which is featured in subjectivity studies on the low and marginal. It can be deduced from Bakhtinian grotesque realism that women, because they "interact" more with the world in a particularly regenerative manner, i.e., become pregnant and give birth, are more readily aligned with the grotesque than men. His most exemplary grotesque image is that of laughing, senile, pregnant old hags. This point is further confirmed with a more general view of the grotesque. If the grotesque conflicts with societal norms, then women, who in general fail to conform to society's ideal, unrealistic yet accepted standards of physical beauty and decorum, become model grotesques. As one critic writes:

> the female body is already displaced and marginalized within social relations since it is often a body which must either conform to a set of regulated norms or be dismissed as Other. Therefore, the body which is female and grotesque must be recovered from a place of double exile. (Johnson, 44)

Women become easy targets for alienation and marginalization and perhaps that is why they are foundational to psychoanalytic theories and theories concerning the low and marginalized, like Bakhtin's. Russo writes, "The figure of the female hysteric, ungrounded and out of bounds, enacting her pantomime of anguish and rebellion, is as foundational to psychoanalysis as the image of the 'senile, pregnant hag' is to the Bakhtinian model of grotesque realism" (Russo, 9).

I believe Carter would agree with Russo's criticism of Bakhtin's notion of the bodily grotesque. Russo notes that Bakhtin "fails to acknowledge or incorporate the social relations

of gender in his semiotic model of the body politic, and thus his notion of the Female grotesque remains...repressed and undeveloped" (Russo, 63). Here Bakhtin edges towards a compliance with the "modernist postmodern" theories discussed above. Sally Robinson, in *Engendering the Subject* (1991), criticizes the same neglectful politics, specifically Derrida's position in *Spurs*, saying, "Such a politics makes irrelevant the historically constituted experience of gender difference, including the differences among and within women" (Robinson, 78-9). She argues that it is "precisely the neglect of 'experience' in (certain) postmodern/poststructuralist theory that Carter critiques in her novels" (my parenthesis, 79). As Foucault asserts, the human body and especially the female body is "the 'site' at which all forms of repression are ultimately registered" (quoted by Gass, 76), and Carter seeks to appropriate the female grotesque (much like the appropriation of terms like *freak* and *queer* discussed above) to reveal abuse and bring empowerment. Fellini shows us the game and his own participation in it, but Carter is out to "change the rules and make a new game" (Carter quoted by Katsavos, 13). When used and produced by the marginalized the grotesque takes on a much more liberatory tone.

As is the case with Fellini's oeuvre, changes in Carter's aesthetic production are quite marked and one can see a correlation in her work between the use of the grotesque and postmodern technique. In her novels of the sixties, which Carter describes as social realism, she explicitly assumes the role of a male author and there are few grotesque images. However, beginning in the seventies, the grotesque becomes more central in her attempts to reveal femininity and female sexuality as social constructs rather than as realities. In *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* (1972), Carter uses postmodern parody to explore male conceptions of sexuality and in *The Passion of New Eve* (1977) the constructedness of gender becomes the central concern (Bonca, 61). With this last publication, near the turn of the decade, Carter begins to offer her own idea of female sexuality (Bonca, 61) which is best expressed in her next two novels, *Nights at the Circus* (1984) and *Wise Children* (1991). In these two works, Carter offers her most postmodern, positively Bakhtinian grotesque, and "affirmative feminism" (Altevers, 19). Carter takes the Fellinian, Kayserian, negative attitude towards the grotesque and turns it around for her cause. She utilizes the emancipatory aspect of the grotesque inherent in its denial of hierarchy without, however, idealizing it as Bakhtin appears to. She is well aware that carnivals, like her novels, are author(ized).

Making A Spectacle

Bakhtin notes in *Rabelais and His World* that during carnivals, which in total took up approximately three months per year, people lived in this nonofficial realm; it was "life itself, but shaped according to a certain pattern of play" (Bakhtin:1984, 7). According to Bakhtin, there was no differentiation between spectator and actor; carnival was not a spectacle. Carnival was "a pageant without footlights and without a division into performers and spectators" (quoted by Cunliffe, 51). Everyone lived in it and was subject to its laws, "the laws of its own freedom". Though Bakhtin espouses the egalitarian, and, thereby, emancipatory effects of such a lack of differentiation, carnival, for Bakhtin, becomes politically effective only when it enters the institution of literature. He locates "ideological combat at the pulsating heart of discourse" (Stam, 8), and argues that "it is only in literature that popular festive forms can achieve the 'self-awareness' necessary for effective protest" (Wills, 131). It could be that "the power of carnival to turn things upside down is facilitated by bringing it into dialogic relation to official forms" (132). However, Stallybrass and White argue that literary carnival, which includes the grotesque, "doesn't possess the same social force as actual carnival may once have done. Displaced from the public sphere to the bourgeois home, carnival ceases to be a site of actual struggle" (130). The spirit of carnival, which is expressed in the grotesque, is then weakened through the ineluctable distinction created between the reader (spectator) and the representation (spectacle). However, I believe that it is exactly through our awareness of "spectacality" that we as spectators can appreciate its constructedness and I think Bakhtin would agree. Bakhtin's espousal of "literal" carnival reflects an overriding philosophical view, discussed previously, that acknowledges the impact of groupings and the socio-historical, but underscores the importance of an individual's critical alterity; they are interdependent. Political action for Bakhtin stems from our own understanding of how we see the world.

I would agree with Caryl Emerson that Bakhtin's theory supports the "new liberal humanist subject" to which Emerson claims Russian intellectuals, "confronted by a political and spiritual void" of the postcommunist era, are turning (Emerson, 13). However, I disagree that Bakhtin's carnival world is governed by "utopian antipolitics", that it is "a world where 'repression, subversion, marginalization, and suicide' are simply laughed away" (9). Instead, I agree with Dentith that it is a potential space for a "utopian realm of community, freedom, equality, and abundance" (Bakhtin quoted by Dentith, 76). Furthermore, I believe Bakhtin

placed tremendous emphasis on the egalitarian aspects of a dehierarchized world in order to construct a "cryptically polemical counter-image of popular festive forms to rebuff Stalinism's 'vertical', hierarchised rendering of the history of the Russian *narod*" (Cunliffe, 66). In 1929, he was arrested as part of a purge of religious intellectuals in Leningrad, and after being labelled politically suspect, all his academic works were banned from publication until the 1960s (Dentith, 5-6). It was in the politically conscious space of internal exile that he wrote *Rabelais*. Interestingly, this period was his most prolific and the extremity of his experience is revealed in the infamous fact that he used part of one manuscript as smoking paper. His work inevitably responds to his own totalitarian experiences of low-status.

Furthermore, though it would appear in *Rabelais* that Bakhtin views contemplation and spectating as inherently less progressive than full carnival participation, this opinion is undermined in other works. Robert Cunliffe uses the example of Bakhtin's early essay, "Author and hero in aesthetic activity". He points out in his article, "Carnival and Drama", how this work conveys Bakhtin's "misgivings about the 'expressive' view that the activity of readers and spectators of art consists solely in 'empathizing' with or 'co-experiencing' the contemplated object" (Cunliffe, 62). For Bakhtin, "empathy leads to the collapse of alterity" (62). A lack of alterity prevents one "from construing social reality as heteroglossic, that is made up of hierarchically ordered, competing perspectives" (57). Bakhtin's metalinguistics, as well as his work on the novel, support a general theory that takes into account the socio-historic and the individual. Liberation lies in a combination of the two. As Dentith points out in reference to Bakhtin's theory of the novel:

> Unlike other historicizing accounts of the novel which restrict it by tying it down with historical explanations, in Bakhtin's account the necessary entry into a historically particular language is the condition of the novel's, and indeed our own, freedom - for we can only ever take on meaning in dialogue with other equally grounded particularities (i.e., people). It is *because* the word of the author has to pass through the word of another, in Bakhtin's conception of the novel, that the novel grants you freedom. (Dentith, 56)

Therefore, in artistic works, footlights are viewed favourably as they enable the spectator to have an active role and not become "like charmed snakes or Oedipus...blind to the actions of the other" (Dentith, 64). Although the carnival Bakhtin describes appears to be a space where the "critical and potentially disruptive 'dialogue' [between the marginalized and]...the official other is neutralised" (65), Cunliffe points out numerous instances where Bakhtin himself indicates footlights operating in carnival, allowing participants actively to

analyze the phenomenon. More importantly, he raises the issue of Bakhtin's (and Rabelais') position in relation to carnival: "Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World* is itself a spectative analytical treatise on how Rabelais, spectator par excellence of carnival, gave it a 'new free and critical *historical* consciousness' by watching and then translating the carnival world into the parodistic dialogic word" (66). I do not believe that when writing *Rabelais*, Bakhtin was "writing a liturgy and a 'requiem' for the individual body" as Mikhail Ryklin argues (Emerson, 14). Bakhtin is aware of the dangers of total immersion, perhaps believing, as Ryklin argues, that it may be the enabling force of totalitarianism: "The people's invisibility and faith in utopia were essential for the 'ecstasy of Terror' to work" (14), and Bakhtin may even have been aware of the carnivalesque strategies used by Stalin as mentioned previously. However, carnival, in light of Bakhtin's theories, must be seen as a response to totalitarianism and as an utterance to us that not only expresses a disdain for the abuse of power structures, but also a need for critical awareness and the possibility of human agency. Carnival, as a folk concept, speaks to the oppressed masses who must be cognizant of the constructed hierarchies and situations that ideological conceptual space overturns. "Making a spectacle" (like Bakhtin's notion of signification) enables the viewer (interlocutor) to contemplate and actively respond to, make meaning from, the spectacle. It makes sense then that Fellini and Carter, who are both concerned to illustrate the constructedness of images, often have their own works focus on movie stars and performers. However, as argued above, the authorial intentions can affect the agency that uncertainty suggests. Depending on who is producing and who is observing, the grotesque's indeterminacy may provide a way to understand "reality" or the means to construct a better one.

CHAPTER TWO: FEDERICO FELLINI
FROM INDIVIDUATION TO UNIVERSALIZATION

Art-cinema, Modernism and Fellini

> For the classical cinema, rooted in the popular novel, short story, and well-made drama of the late nineteenth century, 'reality' is assumed to be a tacit coherence among events, a consistency and clarity of individual identity. Realistic motivation corroborates the compositional motivation achieved through cause and effect. But art-cinema narration, taking its cue from literary modernism, questions such a definition of the real: the world's laws may not be knowable, personal psychology may be indeterminate. Here new aesthetic conventions claim to seize other 'realities': the aleatoric world of 'objective' reality and the fleeting states that characterize 'subjective' reality. (Bordwell, 206)

David Bordwell, in his book *Narration in the Fiction Film*, repeatedly uses Fellini films to underscore his analysis of what he terms "art-cinema narration". However, Bordwell mostly limits his focus to those films of the fifties and sixties. These films best conform to his set of conventions and manifest modernism's concern for indeterminacy as well as its particular emphasis on the psychological. Later films, such as *The Clowns* and *Amarcord*, show a visible disregard for psychology and mark Fellini's adoption of a more postmodern poetics. The increased and ironic use of self-reflexivity along with the disappearance of existential crises prevent his later films from readily fitting the art-cinema mode. In this chapter, I will highlight how art-cinema narration works in the early Fellini films, focusing on *8½* (1962) and *Juliet of the Spirits* (1965), in order to emphasize his modernist approach as well as the dramatic shift Fellini makes in the seventies with *The Clowns* and *Amarcord* and his films of the eighties. The comparison between his different filmic periods will assist in establishing that, despite a move towards grotesque realism and postmodernism and the possible agency suggested by the two, Fellini ultimately continues in a modernist vein only to pronounce judgement on *la condition humaine* (Bordwell, 207).

As art-cinema narration, like literary modernism, questions the assumed coherency, consistency and clarity of reality, it responds by providing its own realism that is more noncohesive, inconsistent and ambiguous. Art-cinema conventionally uses "the aleatoric world of 'objective' reality and the fleeting states that characterize 'subjective' reality" in order to represent human drama better. These conventions motivate and are supported by certain techniques such as a "loosening of cause and effect, an episodic construction of the syuzhet,

and an enhancement of the film's symbolic dimension through an emphasis on the fluctuations of character psychology" (Bordwell, 206).

The loosening of cause and effect is maintained through a tenuous linking of events and/or the use of chance. The scenes of *La Strada* (1954) are organized around chance encounters: "As Zampanò and Gelsomina journey from town to town, characters are introduced then seen no more - which is lifelike, but unlike plotted films, where characters who appear at the beginning must also function in the middle and reappear at the end" (Murray: 1978, 40). The travels of Zampanò and Gelsomina not only recall the itinerancy of the performing troupe in *Variety Lights* (1950), but are similar to the aimless wanderings of the paparazzi, glitterati, and intelligentsia in *La Dolce Vita* (1960). As one critic writes, "Wise men or fools, clowns or vagrants, heroes or 'expedients', brutes or saints, intellectuals or the unlettered, Fellini characters are destined to chance encounters" (Salachas, 217). Although chance is used to loosen cause and effect, it also attempts to provide an aleatoric and thereby, more probable ending to the syuzhet. Bordwell uses the example of *Nights of Cabiria* (1957), when, at the end, the dancing youths "miraculously materialize to save Cabiria from despondency" (Bordwell, 207).

The lack of a causal chain of events and predetermined limit is a technique which attempts to provide a more "objectively" realistic representation of life. The more or less episodic construction is often supported by equivocal characters that "slide passively from one situation to another" (Bordwell, 207). The drifting protagonists Cabiria, the prostitute, and Marcello, the journalist, are well suited to trace out "an itinerary which surveys the film's social world" (207). This itinerary as well as certain character types and "objective" realism are necessary to support the art film's thematic crux: the "attempt to pronounce judgements upon modern life and *la condition humaine*" (207). The latter aspect, which I will focus on, is most often portrayed through another form of schema, subjective or "expressive" realism (207). Fellini begins to apply this schema in *La Dolce Vita*, but expressive realism is more fully explicated in his later films of the sixties.

As previously indicated, Bordwell identifies early twentieth-century literature as a "central source for art-cinema models of character causality and syuzhet construction" (Bordwell, 208), and art-cinema readily adopted the typically modernist technique of the "boundary-situation" (208). Certain events in the film lead the protagonist to a "recognition that she or he faces a crisis of existential significance" (208). Furthermore, the boundary-

situation

> provides a formal center within which conventions of psychological realism can take over. Focus on a situation's existential import motivates characters' expressing and explaining their mental states. Concerned less with action than reaction, the art-cinema presents psychological effects in search of their causes. The dissection of feeling is often represented as therapy and cure. (Bordwell, 208)

According to one interview, Fellini claims all his films contain "a character who goes through a crisis" (Murray:1978, 53). Zampanò (*La Strada*), Cabiria (*Nights of Cabiria*), Marcello (*La Dolce Vita*), Guido (*8½*), and Juliet (*Juliet of the Spirits*) certainly do undergo a crisis. However, such a critical point is difficult to establish in Fellini films that lack an obvious protagonist such as *The Clowns*, *Amarcord*, *Orchestra Rehearsal* or *And the Ship Sails On*. The boundary-situation and psychological realism are most evident in his films of the sixties and are best utilized for causal impetus in *8½* and *Juliet of the Spirits*.

Before discussing those two films, a few other characteristics of art-cinema narration must be mentioned. The boundary-situation and psychological realism are supported in art-cinema by the use of "[d]reams, memories, hallucinations, daydreams and fantasies, and other mental activities" (Bordwell, 208). These techniques dramatize the character's mental state and maintain the viewer's curiosity about the character's development (208). The conventions of expressive realism and character psychology may effect the spatial and temporal organization of the film. Often, the surroundings in *Juliet of the Spirits* and *8½* are actually projections of the protagonists and these images are frequently repeated. Furthermore, both films manipulate time through the recurring use of flashbacks, which transport us to the past, and fantasies, which seemingly stop time for their duration. By using flashbacks and fantasies along with present views, Fellini portrays the three levels "on which our minds live: the past, the present, and the conditional - the realm of fantasy" (Fellini quoted by Alpert, 170).

The viewer's insight is often limited to the psychological, and this restriction of knowledge may consequently either "enhance identification" or "also make the narration less reliable [as]... we cannot always be sure of the character's access to the total fabula" (Bordwell, 209). For Fellini though, the former consequence is probably of greater significance as his main concern is to portray our common human condition. As he said in regards to the autobiographical nature of *8½*, "I hope I can say [that *8½*] is a picture about all men, and therefore about me" (quoted by Murray:1985, 135).

In addition to "objective" and "subjective" verisimilitude, there is a third schema

shared by most art-cinema which Bordwell calls "overt narrational 'commentary" (Bordwell, 209). Any "breakdown of objective realism which is not motivated as subjectivity - can be taken as the narration's commentary" (209). Bordwell states that the occurrence of, for example, "an unusual angle, a stressed bit of cutting, a striking camera movement, an unrealistic shift in lighting or setting, a disjunction in the soundtrack" would reveal the marked self-consciousness of art-cinema narration and the existence of an intrusive author which announces his or her control over what we know (209). The particular example Bordwell focuses on is the "open-ending characteristic of the art-cinema" (209). Ambiguous non-classical endings not only make the viewer "leave the theater thinking", but acknowledge that "life is more complex than art can ever be" (209-10). However, despite the rejection of absolute certainty found in classical denouement, art-cinema, like modernist fiction, does attempt to provide closure, particularly through "therapy and cure" (208).

Subjective realism, Carl Jung and the Grotesque

In many of Fellini's early films, the director's analysis of *la condition humaine* involves an application of subjective realism fully indebted to the psychological studies of Carl Jung. In his own book, Fellini praises Jung and expresses the profound "determining effect" of Jungian thought on his artistic perspective:

> It was like the sight of unknown landscapes, like the discovery of a new way of looking at life; a chance of making use of its experiences in a braver and bigger way, of recovering all kinds of energies, all kinds of things, buried under the rubble of fears, lack of awareness, neglected wounds. (Fellini:1976, 147)

The progression of Fellini characters from *Variety Lights* to *La Dolce Vita* has been discussed as sequentially developing Jungian concepts ending with individuation (Burke:1984, 103), but the process of ego differentiation and personality development is most fully explicated within individual films of the sixties like *8½* and *Juliet of the Spirits*. In fact, the director himself underwent Jungian psychoanalysis during the production of *8½* (Geduld, 138). Jung "emphasized a cognitive unconscious and interpreted psychic disturbances as the individual's attempt to achieve a wholesome integration of the various parts of the personality" (Conti & McCormack, 294). The unconscious is made up of images or archetypes which are experienced through projections, dreams, fantasies, etc. "Learning to understand the archetypes and the roles they play in our lives is a process Jung called individuation" (295).

Both Guido (*8½*) and Juliet (*Juliet of the Spirits*) undergo individuation and Fellini uses the grotesque to inform this process.

The various, often conflicting, parts of the protagonist's personality which require integration serve to enhance a loss of order in the protagonist's world. The psychological world parallels the modernist view of the world "in which entropy rules, order dissolves and the grotesque becomes the normal" (Richardson, 103). Fellini fills his films with conflicting images to show how complex our world is: In *La Strada*, the festive wedding scene is juxtaposed with the loneliness of the young boy, Osvaldo, who is ostracized by the celebrants. There are also more subtle complexities as when in a long shot Fellini reveals a religious procession on the right-hand side of the screen and on the left-hand side a sign reading: "BAR" (Murray:1986, 46). There are the rich and the poor; the simple house of Cabiria is compared to the castle of young Lazzari and the opulent lifestlye of the effete Maddelena is contrasted with the run-down abode and destitute life of the prostitute. The opening scene of *La Dolce Vita* juxtaposes a statue of Christ and women in bikinis and the closing scene the innocent Paola and the monster fish. There is even the more general oscillation of light and dark throughout his films. As one critic writes, "Through juxtapositions, Fellini dramatizes the disintegration of modern life...Each work is, in its own way, a lament for a nonexistent, or at least, a lost order" (Richardson, 111). The grotesque image, earlier described as an "unresolved clash of incompatibles" (Thomson, 29), then serves to emphasize both the clashing, incompatible parts of our world and psyches as well as the realization that our own existence in this world is grotesque and paradoxical. Individuation comes with the acknowledgement and the effectively unifying acceptance of that paradoxical state.

One important aspect of individuation is the assimilation of the animus or anima archetype which contains "elements of the opposite sex. The anima, for example, can be defined as 'the woman within,' that is, an inner figure which is the bearer of all feminine contents in Man's psyche" (Conti & McCormack, 295). Both Guido and Juliet assimilate the archetype of the opposite sex, although it is, problematically, the anima archetype for Juliet, instead of the animus, which causes the most psychic disturbances. In both films, the images of the female archetype are often manifested through grotesque representations.

Although *8½* has been authoritatively read as analogous to the creative process and performance of the director/artist and *Juliet of the Spirits* as being concerned with the roles

of women and the pressures exerted on them by society, I will employ a specifically Jungian framework in my analysis. This approach is useful as it enables me to incorporate the different subject matter of both films, but, more importantly, it allows me to show how Fellini's focus on Jungian psychoanalysis in these films foregrounds the modernist form of the grotesque Bakhtin indicated in Kayser's work. Typical of art-cinema narration, *8½* and *Juliet of the Spirits* adopt the boundary situation of modernist fiction. As stated above, despite the rejection of absolute certainty in both genres, the boundary situation is used to present psychological effects in search of their causes, the dissection of which is often represented as therapy and cure (Bordwell, 208). Fellini specifically uses Jungian psychology for his dissection, and, in this case, individuation becomes the cure. This cure not only imposes a false sense of closure typical of modernist fiction, but is also an acceptance of living in an unknowable world. The denial of meaning reconfirms the alienation concomitant with the modernist form of the grotesque and establishes the binaries and hierarchies grotesque realism refutes.

8½ and *Juliet of the Spirits*

The opening scene of *8½*, "in which Guido finds himself in a grotesque traffic jam" (Conti & McCormack, 296), takes the viewer "immediately and pictorially to the heart of Guido's yearnings and myriad problems" (Murray:1985, 138). The nightmare at first seems to be a realistic portrayal of a traffic jam until we become aware of a bare-breasted woman in one of the cars and the improbable silence that exists with the exception of Guido's heavy breathing (138). The illusoriness of the scene is confirmed once we see Guido float away over the sea, and then pulled back to earth by a rope. The fact that most of the shots are from Guido's perspective and that throughout this scene and half of the next we are not shown Guido's face, underscores Fellini's intention that this is a situation that we share with Guido; we will at some point face this crisis that we presently experience with him as a representative of humanity. The crisis, according to Jung, should take place during middle age and individuation will only be achieved through the assimilation of the animus or anima archetype and acceptance of death. Such a "mid-life crisis" is a common literary theme as well and is often referred to as "the night journey" (Conti and McCormack, 301). Like Odysseus and Aeneas, Guido is "midway through a long and perilous journey...[and] [d]uring the journey he is confronted with dangerous challenges, which, once overcome, lead to

wisdom" (302). The challenges for middle-aged Guido though, are psychological. He can no longer deal with the chaotic aspects of his life, and the nightmare serves as "a warning from the unconscious" that Guido not only needs, but is indeed ready for, "a psychological journey to get in touch with his inner self" (296).

The opening scene of *Juliet of the Spirits* is similar to *8½*'s as throughout the sequence we do not see Juliet's face: "Half-concealed behind a partition, her back to the camera, Juliet cannot decide whether to wear a wig or even what dress to wear for the intimate dinner she has planned to celebrate her fifteenth wedding anniversary" (Murray:1985, 158). However, in contrast to *8½*, most of the shots do not come from the protagonist's perspective, and this fact, perhaps unwittingly, supports Juliet's dilemma. The scene is not subjective realism, but it takes us to the heart of Juliet's crisis. Significantly, Juliet is seated at a mirror, then, changing one or two items, she turns to other mirrors, desperately trying to find the right look or image. In fact, the "entire scene is shot with mirrors as background" (de Lauretis, 58). Juliet's problem is that she is "trapped inside a house of mirrors" (58). She is "unsure of her identity, indecisive about her role in life" (Murray:1985, 158) because of the "multiple and often conflicting images of Woman that are incessantly held up, suggested, or exhibited to her by her culture, her family, her religion, and her own fantasies" (de Lauretis, 57).

Juliet is a middle-aged woman who, for the most part, exists in terms of her husband and her role as housewife. Her subsidiary role is confirmed in the following scene when her husband Giorgio arrives having forgotten their anniversary and furthermore, invites over a houseful of people for a party. As Teresa de Lauretis writes in her critical essay on the film, "Fellini's 9½":

> The mirror, like her husband, sends back negative images to her...She does not fit the image of Woman that she sees posted all around her. Her mother tells her to wear make-up; her husband's mistress is a fashion model. The clairvoyant suggests Juliet does not please her husband because she's not sexy enough...And her Catholic upbringing gives her yet another image of Woman: the martyred saint who preferred death to losing her virginity. (de Lauretis, 59)

Later on in the film, Juliet does have a nightmare very similar to Guido's. Where Guido dreams he is pulled from the sky into the sea by a rope tied to his foot, Juliet dreams she pulls a barge out of the sea by a rope. The water is a Jungian symbol for the unconscious, full of conflicting and disturbing images, from which neither protagonist may escape (Geduld,

144).

According to Jung, the assimilation of the animus or anima archetype comes in stages which are experienced in life, as well as in the films, through psychic disturbances, such as flashbacks, dreams, and fantasies (Conti and McCormack, 296). In fact, our knowledge that Guido is experiencing an anima crisis is revealed via a flashback. While he is dining at the spa, Guido and others are entertained by a magician, an old school friend of Guido's, and his telepathic assistant, Maya. Maya reads from Guido's mind the word "Asanisimasa" which triggers a flashback to his youth. As a child, he was told to use the term for protection against a curse. However, the word comes from an Italian version of "Pig-Latin, in which each vowel of a word is repeated with an 's'" (Baxter, 182). Therefore, "Asanisimasa" translates into "Anima".

As *Juliet of the Spirits* is frequently interpreted as "the feminine counterpart to *8½*" (Tornabene, 50), the viewer expects to see Juliet undergo the same process of individuation as Guido does, but with the focus now on the animus crisis and not the anima (Geduld, 137). It should now be Luisa's turn (Guido's wife), though the setting and characters have been changed. However, there is a much stronger correlation between Juliet and Guido than Juliet and Luisa (137). The focus in both films is the protagonist's individuation, but "the problem of the animus is less striking in *Juliet* than the problem of the anima...which is, after all, Guido's problem" (141). As Carolyn Geduld points out in her essay, "Juliet of the Spirits: Guido's Anima", the "correspondence between Guido and Juliet is built into the structure of both films" (139). In addition to the delayed character identification and symptomatic nightmares, both plots contain infidelity (Guido, Giorgio), elements of the supernatural (mind-reading, seance), critics (Daumier, Juliet's mother and sisters), unsatisfactory turns to external means of help (Cardinal, Bhishma) and most importantly, psychic disturbances which express *female*, archetypal conflict. Both Guido and Juliet go through the stages of the anima as Juliet is actually Guido or "Fellini in drag" (Baxter, 206). As Teresa de Lauretis acutely argues, *Juliet of the Spirits*, despite its female protagonist, reconfirms Laura Mulvey's "model of the representation of Woman in narrative cinema" (de Lauretis, 59), as well as Virginia Woolf's argument that "Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice his natural size", the "figure of man" here being Fellini (quoted by de Lauretis, 53). Other critics, like Franke Burke, have also argued on the masculine construction of femininity in the film (see

Burke:1992). I agree with the criticisms; however, for my purposes, I must read the film at face value even though it may be, as de Lauretis points out, "objectionable" (60).

The Asa Nisi Masa flashback in *8½*, which emphasizes Guido's crisis, also introduces the viewer to the first stage of Guido's anima. The flashback contains scenes from Guido's early childhood when he spent summers with his grandmother and aunts in a country house in Gambettola. It is an idealized vision of country life. The grandmother and aunts lovingly take care of Guido, bathing him in the lees of new wine, as the Tuscan ritual demands, and tucking him into bed with soft white sheets. Their nurturing role belongs to the first stage of the anima. However, there is also a libidinal side to the first stage and furthermore, this aspect is revealed through a flashback.

La Saraghina was a prostitute from Guido's childhood who lived on the beach and sold herself to the local fisherman for sardines or "saraghine" as they are called in the Riminian dialect of Italy. La Saraghina, whom Fellini described as "a fabulous and disquieting monster, a sort of Moby Dick", is one of the most grotesque images in the film (Herman, 254). She is a very large, unkempt woman with a big-bosom and a wild mane of tangled hair. Although large women often play a role in Fellini films ("La Bomba Atomica" in *Nights of Cabiria*, the monumental Anita Ekberg in *La Dolce Vita* and *The Temptations of Dr Antonio*, the buxom Gradisca in *Amarcord*), La Saraghina is more complex than most. She serves as "both a symbol of crude sexuality and innocent nature, both the devil and the powerful, awe-provoking incarnation of the life force" (Murray:1985, 145). When we first view La Saraghina she is quite frightening and performs an "'obscene' rhumba" (144). However, our attitude towards her soon changes, particularly after the priests arrive to chase the young boys away from "the devil". The comic scene, filmed in high motion, contrasts with the grim and oppressive congregation of black-robbed clerics who fiercely reprimand Guido and shame him by showing him "the tears he has brought to his mother's eyes", (though the sideways glance the mother gives suggests she may be performing to please the priests as well as, perhaps, to effect the greatest amount of guilt) (145). Later, when Guido returns to the beach, Saraghina "is no longer a monstrous creature thunderously dancing the rhumba, but a gentle figure elevated on a chair, with a white veil on her shoulder, singing celestially" (Burke:1986, 166). Like the grotesque, she cannot be simply defined, but is a clash of incompatibles: she is not only lust and Satan, but also a positive sexual force and an angel. The paradox cannot be resolved through the enforcement of one element and the

censuring of the other by the church and his mother. Saraghina's devilish side can not be given absolute predominance and thereby somehow provide order (Lewalski, 118). Guido must accept all elements in order to move on to the second stage of the anima.

Geduld argues that the two childhood memories of Guido are psychically equivalent to the two childhood memories of Juliet. Juliet's circus memory is tantamount to Guido's memory of La Saraghina as both "recall the wonder and terror of sexual awakening" (Geduld, 142). At the circus, Juliet encounters the Strong Man who is "surreptitiously ogled by her mother" and the voluptuous trapeze artist, Fanny, who becomes her grandfather's lover (142). The grandfather is Juliet's protector and when he and Fanny "take off in the circus airplane, Juliet is left behind and exposed to the double threat of first, her mother, who appears in one flashback as an evil queen, and second, the strong man", who is associated in the film with fascism (142). It could be due to resentment towards her grandfather's abandonment or in response to her ruthless mother's lust that Juliet finds difficulty in dealing with her sexual side, but, for Juliet, images of virginal martyrdom are equally as problematic as lascivious and sexual ones.

Geduld equates Guido's farmhouse memory to Juliet's memory of the school play which depicts the death of a sainted martyr as both show "the child Juliet and the child Guido...in the care of warm female figures" (Geduld, 142). For Guido, the figures are his grandmother and aunts and for Juliet, they are the nuns. However, I do not believe we are to see the nuns as "warm female figures". Juliet's memory, like the second part of Guido's Saraghina memory, serves to emphasize the virgin/whore dichotomy which is reinforced by the Catholic Church. The protest of Juliet's protective grandfather, "who stops the show and more or less accuses the audience of cannibalism", prevents Juliet from placing greater significance on being saintly and chaste (143). The two dreams of Juliet and Guido establish the dichotomy both must struggle with in the first stage of the anima. There is one notable connection that Geduld makes between Juliet's memory of the school play and Guido's farmhouse memory: Guido's recitation of "Asanisimasa" is analogous to Juliet saying "I wish only to save my soul", as *soul* was interpreted by Jung to mean anima or animus (143).

For both Guido and Juliet, the stages of the anima are represented through different, conflicting images of women. Among the antithetical models offered to Juliet are

> her two maids, the saintly Elisabetta and the sensual Teresina; her two sisters, the righteous Adele and the narcissistic Sylva; her two friends, the childish Val and the lusty Dolores; and two spirits (representatives of the unconscious in

> Jungian theory): Iris, the saintly one who promises a Christian "love for everyone"...and Olaf, the heathen who embarrasses Juliet with his coarse remarks. (Geduld, 145).

As Juliet is modest in manners and conservative in dress, her own antithesis is her neighbour Susy, a woman of vice who self-admittedly likes to "eat, dance, gamble, and fight". Appropriately, Susy is played by the same actress as the voluptuous Fanny. Both represent the sensual and sexual side of Juliet that she has repressed. The excessiveness of Susy is dramatically captured in her immoderate dress, blonde cotton-candy hair and wanton lifestyle. Her decadence is often portrayed grotesquely. The villa she lives in is "something between the *Playboy* mansion and a brothel" (Baxter, 207), yet it also houses the suicidal Arlette who is willing to die for "true-love". The "furnishings are luxurious but the plaster in many places is peeling off the walls" (Murray:1985, 167). Her yard is full of strange vegetation and grotesque sculptures, which the camera often focuses on, such as the bust of a woman with an eagle's head and the body of a lion with the head of a woman. She shares the villa with a side-show of people: Lola the prostitute, her boyfriend and sage, Momy, who is seventy-five, "but wants to make love every day", Granny Olga who hasn't slept in five years, but can look at you and know your problems, and her androgynous godson. When Juliet attends Susy's party, she is faced with the image of woman as sex-goddess and whore. At the party, one woman kneeling on the floor is repeatedly asked by a man, "What is your name?". And the woman responds differently each time, first replying, "sex", then, "body", then "goddess". Furthermore, the guests at the party play a game in Lola's honour where they must "create an atmosphere of a bordello". However, Susy is not a flat character; "[d]espite the life she leads, she's perhaps the most human character and the most normal Giulietta meets" (Baxter, 198). In one significant scene there is a still of Susy's face that shows it half shadowed and half lighted. What the still suggests is that Susy is both good and bad, or at least what society labels as "bad". Like Saraghina, she is grotesque. She does not conform to societal norms and being open to difference, she is able to claim, "I accept everything. I deny myself nothing."

Not only are the female archetypal images sometimes portrayed as grotesque, but the resulting confusion as well. Everything Juliet has feared from childhood is combined and confused in the one grotesque manifestation of Bhishma, the hermaphrodite medium. Bhishma's sex is indeterminate like the nuns, but "she has Fanny's exaggerated sensuality"

(Geduld, 146). Bhishma has the stereotypical vanity of a woman who will "look in the mirror to feel better", yet also spews out the misogyny of a stereotypical male: "[a]ll women want to be sirens, but don't know their trade." The hotel where Bhishma stays "was once a brothel, although it is now open to religious functions" and the room itself "is part hospital (associated with martyrdom) and part bordello" (145-6). Furthermore, the increasing confusion makes it more difficult for Juliet to differentiate between the conflicting images, and they grotesquely merge together. For example, Iris, at one point, turns into Susy and thereby, the Christian message, "love for everyone", is ironically sexualized. Also, near the end, Juliet is combated by intermittent images of the virgin/whore dichotomy (martyr child/Laura and Susy/Fanny), but what appears to be the former will often metamorphose into the latter.

In *8½*, Guido also experiences myriad, discordant images of women. Besides Saraghina and the women of the farmhouse, there is the young intellect, Gloria, the desperate French actress, the muse, Claudia, and Luisa's friend, the trustworthy Rossella. As in *Juliet*, the images get confused and women repeatedly fail in the film to conform to Guido's simple classifications (Murray:1985, 145). Guido's mistress Carla, who represents the second stage of his anima, is both nurturing and undemanding, like his grandmother and aunts, but also sexual and vulgar like Saraghina (Conti & McCormack, 300). In one scene, he asks Carla to play the role of a whore and he suitably puts heavy make-up on her, but she responds by saying, "I don't think I like being a prostitute. I'm really a homebody." Guido has difficulty keeping the categories separate (Murray:1985, 145). Guido's wife Luisa personifies the third stage of the anima which is spiritual (Conti & McCormack, 301). However, the censorship and feelings of guilt with which Guido's mother is associated are also connected to Luisa and the separate archetypes grotesquely converge in one of Guido's daydreams. In the dream, an innocent kiss from his mother turns libidinal and she then transforms into his wife Luisa (301).

Guido and Juliet must reconcile the opposing archetypes as the alternatives they are offered are not desirable. Guido could try to be like his friend Mezzabotta and pretend he is young by dating women less than half his age, but Guido sees the poor effect this has on his friend. Juliet could kill herself for love, be a martyr, as her young friend Laura did. Or, she could pine away, perpetually on the verge of suicide, as does Susy's friend, Arlette, but Juliet sees the futility of their actions. Guido and Juliet must assimilate the conflicting images and

each must do it individually.

As one critic writes in reference to Guido's images, "since these opposites exist in the environment he has created in response to an inner need, he cannot look to external circumstances to find a solution. He must find the answer within himself, since the source of the conflict lies within himself" (Conti &McCormack, 303). However, both Guido and Juliet turn to external sources. Juliet unsuccessfully seeks advice from her doctor and Bhishma. The former attributes Juliet's spirits to "bad digestion" and his medical advice to her is, "Go swimming, buy yourself a horse and take it jumping, but above all, tell your husband to make love to you more often." (The audience knows that the doctor suggests these activities as he attributes Juliet's psychic disturbances to boredom, however water [the unconscious] and horses [power, particularly sexual] ironically have symbolic significance in Jungian psychoanalysis. As such, the activities he suggests for Juliet are valuable). Bishma only offers her quotes from the *Kama Sutra*, a lecture on how "love is a religion, your husband God", and misogynist remarks noted earlier. Both Bishma and the doctor come across as dramatic, vain "Hollywood types" and this image makes us question their competence. They are more like actors. The doctor is always sleekly dressed, suntanned and sporting shades, and Bishma's "act" is reinforced in the beginning of the scene when the entrance to his suite is lit by a spotlight.

Guido, in pathetic desperation, fantasizes about untenable solutions to his dilemma. There is the recurring image of his muse, Claudia, whom we first see at the beginning of the film walking out of the woods and offering Guido the curative water of the spring. She reassuringly declares to Guido in one of his fantasies that she will stay with him always and more importantly, "create order...create cleanliness". As Fellini says, Guido projects his own confusions through Claudia: "his desire for an ideal woman who would tell him, both as man and artist, what to do; she is his nostalgia, his childish desire for protection, his romanticism. These are all embodied in a figure who mocks him because she is only an abstraction" (quoted by Murray: 1985, 140). He also imagines audience with the Cardinal in attempts to find salvation from the church. However, his "mechanically orthodox advice ... demonstrate[s] the foolishness of Guido's search for answers from institutional authority" (Burke:1986, 167). When he finds himself in the same place as both his wife and mistress, Guido peers contemplatively over the rim of his spectacles (a technique used throughout the film to signal a fantasy) and imagines the two women "chatting and dancing together as old

friends" (Conti and McCormack, 303). The fantasy expands to include numerous women from Guido's life: a Danish air hostess, a French actress, a blonde model, Gloria (his friend's young lover), and Luisa's friend, Rosella.

There are more grotesque women as well such as a black dancer and singer whose movements and make-up suggest a cat-like creature, a French showgirl (Jaqueline Bonbon), past her prime and poorly fitted in an abbreviated outfit of feathers and sequins and, of course, La Saraghina. These women are portrayed grotesquely as they represent the synthesis of divisive elements in Guido's life. They are both stereotypical images of woman - woman as having natural, animal-like sexuality, woman as sexual object for entertainment (necessarily girlish as there's no such thing as a "showwoman") or woman as devilish whore - and actual, real-life women in Guido's life.

What is often referred to as "the harem" scene, takes place in the same country house as Guido's first flashback. Here he imagines all the different women of his life can come together and live happily in the idyllic environment of his childhood. In the fantasy, Guido sees himself as a kind of Santa Claus or father figure. He first appears in the doorway of the farmhouse "with fake snowflakes cascading about his shoulders, his arms filled with gifts" (Murray:1985, 148). Despite his authority, he needs the women to take care of him and the women bath him as did his grandmother and aunts in one of the large wine vats. However, this time he is an adult and bathes with his hat on which functions not only as "an anti-erotic device by comically removing our sense of the man's naked body underneath the water but also maintaining the symbolism of the hero as an authority figure" (148).

Guido cannot become a boy again and he must face the fact that he is middle-aged and growing older. Hoping to avoid the reality of maturation, Guido insists that the women in his fantasy be shunned to "the Siberia of the second floor" once they reach the age of twenty-six (Murray:1985, 150). The acknowledgement that this escape is impossible comes with the harem's revolt. Wagner's "Ride of the Valkryies" plays loudly and the scene becomes a grotesque circus where Guido, the woman-tamer, tries to quell the female beasts with a whip and herd them up to bed. The grotesque underscores the chaos as well as certain images of the archetypal projections that Guido must assimilate. Furthermore, the importance of this scene is marked by the seemingly incongruous, but portentous earlier rendering of Wagner's composition at the beginning of the film when Guido wakes from his first nightmare at the spa.

Isabella Conti and William McCormack, in their joint article "Federico Fellini: Artist in Search of Self", explain the psychological significance of the fantasy:

> The insurrection is...a warning to Guido of the dangers which await him if unconscious materials proliferate unchecked and invade his consciousness with projections. For these projections can become dominant and draw energy that rightly belongs to the archetype. To remain the master of his own life, then, Guido must become aware that the source of the fascination exerted by these women upon him is in reality within himself and that it is a single, unique source: the archetype of the anima...He must also realize that the only way of remaining in command is to withdraw the projections and return them to the anima, hence to himself. This can be accomplished only through awareness and a wilful act of the ego. The function of the unconscious ends once it has made clear the terms of the conflict. In this fantasy scene Guido takes a whip to the women and herds them upstairs to bed. Only Luisa remains. The decision to send the women upstairs can be interpreted as an assertion of the ego. (Conti & McCormack, 304)

Guido has reached the third stage of the anima and his platonic relationship with Rossella, who represents the "superior wisdom" of the fourth stage, indicates that he is "proceeding in the right direction" (Conti & McCormack, 304). In Guido's last encounter with his muse Claudia she has materialized as an actual actress to play the role in his upcoming film. They drive together trying to find a spring, but they significantly end up at an empty piazza. For Fellini, the moment of critical insight, or the final arrival at the boundary-line of what was referred to earlier as "the boundary-situation", is best set in the atmosphere of "a beach or a piazza at night; for silence, the emptiness of night, or the feeling that the sea is close by, brings the character into relief; this isolation allows him to be himself without any special effort" (Fellini quoted by Baxter, 53). Here Guido again sees a vision of his muse, but he acknowledges and accepts it as his own archetypal projection. He "has no trouble recognizing the difference between the muse and the woman who only represents her. It is the victory of the archetype in its purest form" (Conti & McCormack, 307).

In an interesting article by Frank Burke, "Modes of Narration and Spiritual Development in Fellini's *8½*", the author highlights Guido's progress towards individuation through the movement of what he calls "narrative acts". Burke argues that Guido moves from "dreams (his opening tunnel nightmare of entrapment; his cemetery encounter with his parents, producer, and wife) to memories (the Asa Nisi Masa and Saraghina sequences), to fantasies (his steambath audience with the Cardinal, the harem sequence) to screentests, and then to visions which are beyond private fantasy" (Burke:1986, 165). Each movement reveals

a closer step towards growing consciousness and control. As stated earlier, the harem scene established the terms of conflict for Guido and the screentest, argues Burke, serves as a confession to others, "an expose of his failed attempts not only to make a movie but to make sense of his life" (167). However, the screentest is "essentially a private creation, one man's version of reality". As Luisa says to him at the screentests, "What you give to people is an idealized version of yourself," and she accuses him of showing only what he chooses to show (167). The fantastical projections he makes in life are as dishonest and unsuccessful as the spectacular he has contracted to shoot. Guido must go beyond authorial control, stop his dependence on others for answers and abandon his film, which he decidedly does at the empty piazza with Claudia. He tells Claudia there will not be a part for her in the film "because a woman can't change a man or save him...Because there won't be a picture, because I refuse to film a lie". His refusal to make a dishonest film is symbolically manifested during the screentest just before Claudia's arrival. During this scene, Guido fantasizes that his incessant critic, Daumier, whose standards for Guido's film "are those of strict logic and perfect classical order", is hanged (Lewalski, 115). Even at the end of *8½*, Daumier is left by Guido locked in a car as the former believes "that where strict order is not possible one should decide not to contribute further to the chaos, and should make a Declaration of Silence" (120).

In the penultimate sequence, Guido is at the press conference, supposedly to announce the launch of the film, but this setting transforms instead into what Burke calls a vision of "individual authorship" (Burke:1986, 165). In this vision, Guido publicly and deliberately

> annuls all the aspects of himself that are implicated in his need to direct film fantasies - especially his escapism and immaturity. He crawls under a table (as he did as a little boy in the Asa Nisi Masa sequence) and ritualistically shoots himself in the head. In effect, he kills off his childishness, his arrested self. (Burke:1986, 168)

He no longer needs to escape or blast off to Mars, the subject of his intended sciece fiction fantasy. The people in Guido's life, especially the women, are "no longer locked into fixed, ego-protective identities", and his imagination may flow freely (169). He is "released from the bondage of making a picture that merely engages his conscious mind...it is the unconscious from which true inspiration springs" (Murray:1985, 139). Instead of turning out a simple picture about outer space, Guido must "project a complicated story about his own confusions, uncertainties, and compromises - he abandons his original idea and can begin to

conceive of a genuine artistic creation. What the viewer has watched for 135 minutes, then, *is* the movie that Guido intends to make...or *has* made" (137).

The lawn party in *Juliet* is the equivalent of Guido's press conference. The lawn party is held the day after Susy's party where Juliet decidedly gives up "the attempted persona of prostitute" (Geduld, 147). Knowing that Giorgio plans to leave her and disappointed by the images of woman she has been offered, Juliet struggles with an identity crisis. The pressure and intensity of the press conference is equalled in this scene through the bombardment of images which flash before Juliet's eyes. As Juliet prepares herself for the party, frightening images of Susy, Fanny, Laura, the martyr child, and combinations of the four, appear wherever Juliet turns. She seems unable to escape these phantoms, though through some beckoning, Juliet regains composure and comes out to the party. The guests have been entertaining themselves with psychodramas conducted by a woman psychiatrist. One guest tells Juliet, "It's a fantastic experience. You'll feel liberated. It's like seeing yourself in a mirror right there before you. You begin to understand your neurosis." The images from Juliet's unconscious then begin to haunt her again. It becomes overwhelming and Juliet screams, "My life's full of people who talk, talk, talk. Go away, all of you!" The psychiatrist, Fellini's mouthpiece, informs Juliet, to her surprise, that her command also includes Giorgio: "You long for your husband to go away. Without Giorgio you'd become yourself." The next day, after Giorgio leaves her, Juliet must make a decision to either kill herself as Laura seductively proposes or actually "become" herself.

The final scenes of both *Juliet* and *8½* show that the process and achievement of individuation is therapy and cure for the two protagonists. Near the end of *Juliet*, when the protagonist must make her fateful decision, all the images from her unconscious call to her. She is afraid and begs her mother to help her. However, the mother despotically commands her, "Don't move, obey me!" The insensitivity angers and strengthens Juliet enough for her to respond back, "You no longer frighten me!" Now Juliet is ready to free herself from the domination of others, come to terms with her unconscious, and become her own person. A small door appears (an egregious instance of Jungian symbolism) and behind the door is the child Juliet tied to the burning grill of the martyr (Murray:1985, 172). She sets herself free and the images from her unconscious no longer have any power over her. The scene switches to the front lawn where all Juliet's phantoms and their props appear in an enormous wagon that is being drawn away. Her grandfather also appears with Fanny and the airplane they took

off in together years before. The grandfather tells Juliet, "Don't hold on to me - you don't need me any longer. I, too, am an invention of yours; but you are full of life," and he flies off. (Here, Juliet has arguably come to terms with her animus). With all the haunting images gone, the adult Juliet opens her front gate and progresses towards the woods. She can now move on with "a healthy attitude toward the complexity [the grotesquerie] of life, a true synthesis of the material and the spiritual" (172).

Synthesis for Guido comes in his final vision of unity, though that unity is necessarily grotesque. Guido's film set turns into a circus replete with clowns and a circus ring within which all the conflicting aspects of Guido's psyche come together to join hands and form a complete circle, or more appropriately, a mandala. He now understands his chaotic reality saying, "All this confusion. It's me, myself. As I am, not as I would like to be. And it doesn't frighten me any more." By "embracing the real, Guido apparently relinquishes his need for the ideal" (Murray:1985, 153). Despite such closure, his success at therapy and cure, Guido doesn't change in regards to his failed fidelity. He asks his wife to accept him as he is and tells Carla he will phone her tomorrow. What is important for Fellini is that Guido has accepted his projections for what they are. He now understands himself and his need for all the women in his life. "[A]ll that a modern man is capable of saying about ordering his loves and the aspects of himself [is] he will live with them, and attempt to learn more" (Lewalski, 120). What Fellini seems to suggest in this ending is that Guido's state, and the human condition in general, is full of incompatible elements that we must accept in order to live completely and honestly. We are grotesque, and Guido's acceptance of this condition is made evident by the closing circus scene.

For Fellini, the clown, which is, in some form, present in many Fellini films, "is a mirror in which man sees his grotesque, deformed comical image" (Fellini:1976, 123), (though Fellini may use other grotesque images as well, like the monster fish or the feathered woman in *La Dolce Vita*). Like the clown, we put on an act and avoid who we are through fantasy, disguise and false gaiety. In *8½*, Guido's clownish antics are portrayed through his fantasies and once we even see him wearing a false nose. Furthermore, *8½* is filled with actors and artists who epitomize our ability to escape into the make-believe. Such attempts at evasion are found throughout Fellini's early films as evidenced by his focus on performers and artists (*Variety Lights*, *La Strada*, *La Dolce Vita*, *Juliet of the Spirits* and *8½*) and the equivocal portrayal of social gatherings (the wedding feast in *La Strada*, the numerous orgies

in *La Dolce Vita* and the licentious festivities in *Juliet of the Spirits*). The "heroes are naturally prone to break their isolation by plunging into the turmoil of collective celebrations: the party, circus, spectacle, orgy, procession, and masquerade form the most elementary, most artificial, but also most tempting remedies against isolation" (Salachas, 218). However, "at the heart of the wildest abandon there inevitably appears the sneering spectre of solitude and disarray" (209).

The complex metaphor of the clown is not limited to representing only the weak aspects of the human condition. Importantly, the clown also positively embodies "all the irrational aspects of man, the instinctive part of him, the touch of rebellion against the established order which is in each one of us" (Fellini:1976, 145-6). Indeed, "[i]t's good for your health to be a clown...because you can do anything you like" (127). The clown is both comic and tragic. It is grotesque and paradoxical, but paradoxes, for Fellini, should be "cheerfully stood up to" (141). The use of the clown, the circus or anything foolish abnormal or fanciful by Fellini, is a recognition of the bizarre in life. As one critic writes, "this recognition of the bizarre is at the center of Fellini's world, the physical parallel of his response to the irrational, the source of both his humor and his sense of dread" (Harcourt, 249), and both are always present. Although the director describes the mood of *8½* as "melancholy, almost funereal", he finishes the description with, "but also resolutely comic" (quoted by Hyman, 124). His repeated summary of *8½* as "a comic film" underscores Fellini's point that the only possible response to our grotesque state is laughter (quoted by Murray:1985, 154). We must laugh at it as we do at a clown.

Though the clown does not play a central role in *Juliet of the Spirits* there is one brief, but significant appearance. Near the end of *Juliet*, there is a scene shot in the living room. The television is on and Juliet ironically sees two lovers on the television. The man and woman smile and say, "Our happiness has only one name." Just then, Giorgio enters the room, packed and ready to leave Juliet for a young lover, and the image on the screen switches to a clown. The first image may portray the false expectations and ideas that we are indoctrinated to believe during our life and the second, the grotesque reality. Also, once Juliet has finally said goodbye to her haunting images and grandfather, loud circus music begins to play, indicating her own acceptance of that reality.

La Condition Humaine

For Fellini, like Kayser, the grotesque and solitude are inseparable. The closing scenes of *8½* and *Juliet of the Spirits* show how Guido and Juliet have come to terms with their grotesque existence. They have achieved individuation and self-acceptance, but the latter

> can occur only when you've grasped that *the only thing that exists is yourself*, your true, deep self which wants to grow spontaneously, but which is fettered by inoperative lies, myths and fantasies that propose an unattainable morality or sanctity or perfection - all of it brainwashed into us during our defensive childhood. (my emphasis, Fellini quoted by Alpert, 178)

As Fellini says of the concluding scene of *Juliet*, "Juliet *alone*, at the end of the film, should mean the discovery of individuality" (my emphasis, quoted by Costello, 299). Coming to terms with one's paradoxical state which fails to conform to societal ideals, is the first step to finding truth. "[E]veryone has to find truth *by himself*" (my emphasis, Fellini quoted by Harcourt, 242), and a solemn sense of isolation surrounds almost all of Fellini's protagonists. In regards to the grotesque Gelsomina, "someone halfway between St Rita and Mickey Mouse" (Fellini:1976, 54), the director writes how her encounter with the idiot boy, Osvaldo, "stresses strikingly Gelsomina's loneliness" (Fellini:1978, 9), that he "used it to give Gelsomina an exact awareness of solitude" (Murray:1978, 44), but that same loneliness encompasses Cabiria, Marcello, Guido and Juliet. The protagonists are grotesque and alienated. In fact, when Fellini thinks of the grotesque characters he takes from his life, he can not help but think of the images portrayed in the paintings of Hieronymous Bosch (Fellini:1976, 11), the artist Kayser most directly referred to for his analysis of the grotesque as alienating. Fellini's grotesque characters reflect the Romantic genre Bakhtin critiques in *Rabelais*:

> Unlike the medieval and Renaissance grotesque, which was directly related to folk culture and thus belonged to all the people, the Romantic genre acquired a private 'chamber' character. It became as it were, an individual carnival, marked by a vivid sense of isolation. (Bakhtin:1984, 37)

Fellini's firm belief in our own grotesqueness is underscored by his insistence that his works are not grotesque at all. He has explained that

> When I introduce rather odd characters into my films, people say I'm exaggerating, that I'm 'doing a Fellini.' But it's just the opposite; in comparison with what happens to me all the time, I feel I'm softening things, moderating reality to a remarkable degree. (quoted by Lavery, 85)

We are all grotesque to the same degree, but the marginalized of society seem to serve

Fellini's purpose best. The travelling troupe in *Variety Lights* and Gelsomina and Zampanò (*La Strada*) with their "gaudy, soiled costumes, their grotesque numbers, and...wretched hopes" (Salachas, 211), the provincial, unemployed of *I Vitelloni*, the swindlers of *Il Bidone*, and Cabiria, the prostitute, all underscore our common grotesque existence as we, sometimes uncomfortably, identify with them and their apparent lack of power. Even the fictional characters in *Fellini Satyricon* (1969) can be recognized in today's world as the director compares Encolpius and Ascyltus to "two hippie students, like any of those hanging around today in Piazza di Spagna, or in Paris, Amsterdam or London" (Fellini:1978, 17). Furthermore, there are the "actual" people at the end of *Fellini: A Director's Notebook* (1968). These "diverse, eccentric people [try] to win the director's attention and, hopefully, a part in his next film" (Rosenthal, 289). The parade of people is like a "circus" or "sideshow" (289), but for Fellini this circus reflects life and our own grotesque existences. According to Fellini, if the portrayal of these characters leaves the audience with mixed feelings, "with a slight uneasiness", the film has achieved its objective (Fellini:1976, 151).

Our discomfort comes with the recognition of a shared condition. Here we can begin to see how Fellini uses film for "white magic" or "the liberation of the spectator", and we can appreciate the possible positive levelling effect that comes with Fellini's synopsis of *la condition humaine* (Fellini quoted by Hyman, 122). We are as grotesque as those we relegate to the periphery of society. As one critic writes, "Fellini is consistent in his belief that every human life is valuable and interesting" (Rosenthal, 289), and the director specifically applies this attitude to his own films as he makes "no difference between a star and a man brought in from the street" (Fellini:1976, 108). In fact, Fellini often advertised in local newspapers looking for people with certain looks regardless of acting experience. Edra Gale, an American opera singer studying in Milan, answered his advertisement for "fat girls" and got the part of Saraghina. He also dressed up "writers, restauranteurs, salesmen and businessmen as actors...[In *8½*]...all the servants and employees in the hotel were from aristocratic families of the *Almanach de Gotha*...[and] the guests were all people from the Rome asylum for the aged" (Baxter, 185-6). Another critic comments that "Fellini never becomes a prosecutor who condemns his characters, not even the meanest of the lot, nor does he ever serve as the devoted lawyer who gives them his unconditional support" (Salachas, 214), and this "ambiguous and rather uncomfortable position" is shocking to "the filmgoer who likes things to be clear-cut" (214). It is necessary, in fact, that the audience comes with "preconceived

critical notions" in order for his point to be made (Tassone, 261). His position, as well as his characters, reflect and accommodate our own ambiguous condition: "Fellinian ambiguity is not a game. It is the emanation of the mystery of an ambivalent reality" (262).

Concomitantly, there seems to be another message revealed in Fellini's portrayal of the marginalized. Perhaps, the director shares with one of his most admired painters, Toulouse-Lautrec, an abhorrence for "the World of Beauty", convinced that "the purest and loveliest flowers thrive on wasteland and rubbish heaps" (Fellini:1976, 56). The marginalized of society, by not fitting societal norms are perforce more aligned with the grotesque, and therefore, more able to live life honestly and openly. (Maybe that is why Guido and Juliet have such a difficult time as they are conformists for half their lives). This possibility is validated by the fact that Fellini's "most affirmative character", Steiner (*La Dolce Vita*), who is seemingly perfect, but controlled by social constraint, ends up committing suicide and Saraghina (*8½*), who is a grotesque prostitute, is one of the most lovable Fellini characters. It may also explain why Susy (*Juliet of the Spirits*), who is the goddess of vice, is "the most human character and the most normal Juliet meets" (Baxter, 198). Furthermore, Steiner "is the modern déraciné eclectic, a man with only intellectual allegiances. For him, all experience is filtered through the mind" (Harcourt, 252). The logic and intellect Steiner embodies adversely resists the paradox that dominates the world. Not only must we recognise our common condition, but we must also live accordingly, being honest and accepting of our grotesque state, despite the pressures and limitations imposed on us by society and our own rationality.

"I'm a liar, but an honest one".

One critic comments how Fellini's characters "[c]ertainly...live in the contemporary world, but they...remain on the sidelines of the institutions that govern them. At best, they are journalists" (Salachas, 213). Interestingly, Guido the journalist, the least marginalized character, is the character Fellini most identifies with, once stating, "I am Guido." In the film, Marcello is dressed in Fellini's "trademark black Stetson and dark suit, and [is] even coached...in his habits of sitting backwards on chairs and nervously jiggling his foot" (Baxter, 180). Like Fellini, Guido is a middle-aged filmmaker trying to make the most honest film possible though there are obstacles that must first be overcome. There exists, in fact, a double mirror construction. As one critic points out, "It is not just a film about the cinema, it is a

film about a film that is presumably itself about the cinema; it is not only a film about a director, but a film about a director who is reflecting himself onto his film" (Metz, 132). The film's syuzhet as well as numerous characters and anecdotes are admittedly autobiographical, "this was a personal story - my memories of childhood, my present troubles, my relationship with producers" (Fellini:1976, 92).

Juliet of the Spirits is also autobiographical. The character of Juliet is arguably a portrayal of Fellini's wife, Giulietta Masina, who, like her namesake Juliet, also believes in séances and considers herself to be a good medium (Baxter, 199). In discussing the film and his direction of Masina, Fellini remarked that he repeatedly said to his wife, "I want you to play *yourself*. What I'm asking you to do is what you *always* do - what I'm asking you to feel is what you *always* feel" (quoted by Baxter, 206). Even the dreams and visions Juliet has are taken from Fellini's diary (not Masina's, which poses an important problem not only for Masina to play herself, but also, as De Lauretis points out, for the film in general, which seeks to explore individuation in a woman). Juliet's husband, Giorgio, is "a Fellini clone in well-cut houndstooth sports jacket and greying hair" (204). Furthermore, the Fellinis' celebrated their twentieth anniversary during the making of the film, and as one observer said on the set, "All the defects of Federico's own marriage are in it" (203). However, for Fellini, there is a very tenuous difference between autobiography and fiction. He cunningly claims, "I'm a liar, but an honest one" (Fellini:1976, 49).

In a very solipsistic manner, Fellini borrows from his own life in order to make the most honest film possible. His biography becomes "a filter, a spyglass which he uses the better to capture life as it is" (Tassone, 263). He recognizes that in his application of autobiographical details they become his own representations, not ultimate truth and, indeed, Fellini has been reproached "for not always telling the same story in the same way" (Fellini:1976, 49). Representations are subjective and therefore, will somehow necessarily conflict with whatever the truth may be. For Fellini, "there is no objective reality in [his] films, any more than there is in life" (Fellini quoted by Harcourt, 253). Fellini makes a direct point of this in *Juliet of the Spirits* when Juliet watches the film made by the private detectives. As Juliet watches the documented perfidy of her husband, one of the detectives says to her, "I always ask clients to regard everything we show them with a certain detachment. Ours is an objective point of view, and therefore limited. Reality at times may be quite different, more innocent." The appearance of the detectives in the film, like actors,

reinforces the idea of film as construction. More importantly though, are the ironic contradictions in the statement. The film implicitly defines Juliet as the humiliated victim of sexual betrayal. "Without a betrayed wife as its audience, the detectives' film looks much more like a bit of badly photographed soft-core porn, like, in other words, a male fantasy" (Waller, 79). And, their film is certainly not objective if it does not portray reality, but then reality is always subjective as it is accessed through subjective representations, like film and memory. Fellini likes to play tricks on his audiences which serve to emphasize that our ideas and representations are never ultimately true. For example, playing on prevailing ideas of gender, Fellini will often use women for male parts (the priests in *8½*) and men for female parts (the nuns in *Juliet of the Spirits*).

Fellini correctly claims the right to contradict himself (Fellini:1976, 53). He states that "[e]verything and nothing in my work is autobiographical" (preface). Fellini then, not only calls attention to the constructedness of the subject, but also to the paradoxical nature of that subject. In this sense, our own identities are like the movies and Fellini makes the connection clear when he states, "I am film" (preface). Furthermore, the incompatibles within our individual identities also exist within the exterior world. Fellini attempts to show these contradictions in his films, as discussed previously, but even the film itself serves as an example: "The cinema is very much like the circus" (98) and the "movie business is macabre. Grotesque...a combination of a football game and a brothel" (108).

For Fellini, "[m]aking a film doesn't mean trying to make reality fit in with preconceived ideas; it means being ready for anything that may happen" (Fellini:1976, 100). For example, Fellini never makes the mistake of fitting the actor to the character. Instead, he does just the reverse by trying to fit the character to the actor (Fellini:1978, 5). His filmic attempts thereby remain relatively more realistic than those of neorealism or at least, more than certain definitions of that genre. He points out the contradiction inherent in some neorealists' claims to reality: "Who was it - Zavattini? - who said that the film-maker must not try to influence reality by telling a story, that his job is simply to record what passes in front of the camera? Well, no film was ever made that way. Not even by Zavattini" (quoted by Bluestone, 62). For Fellini, neorealism, "in the original, pure sense...[means] a search into oneself, and into others...I must be truthful in my films" (Fellini quoted by Harcourt, 246). In order to be as truthful as possible, Fellini, like Guido, must "project a complicated story about his own confusions, uncertainties, and compromises" (Murray:1985, 137). Film

is just one way "of interpreting and remaking reality, through fantasy and imagination" (Fellini:1976, 111), and it does not necessarily have to correspond to a dominant social view or schemata of previous films. In fact, Fellini blames the limited success of *The White Sheik* (1952) and *Il Bidone* (1955) on their failure to meet "the prejudices of the public" and their refusal "to follow the usual conventional ways" (Fellini:1978, 9-10). Actually, many Fellini films first received hostile reactions from critics and audiences (Baxter, 192) and the director continually had to battle to find producers who would allow him to produce a film as he wished (Alpert, 110).

Art-cinema narration "often signals that the profilmic event is...a construct" (Bordwell, 210), and as mentioned above, the constructedness of film is very significant for Fellini. The director underscores its importance through certain techniques. Besides the self-reflexivity, inherent, for example, in *8½*'s mirror construction, other general methods are applied to emphasize his texts as film. For example, Fellini only adds dialogue to a film after he has made it, and the voices he uses will not necessarily be those of the actors; he will even use his own. Fellini does not "give a damn about whether or not images and sound went together in realistic terms" (Alpert, 234) as, according to the director, the actor plays better without such constraints (Fellini:1976, 110). Fellini often uses the same actors. Giulietta Masina appears in eight Fellini films and Marcello Mastroianni, the actor most strongly aligned with the director, appears in five. Besides Mastroianni, numerous other, less prominent actors in *La Dolce Vita* are used again in *8½*. For example, Annibale Ninchi, Marcello's father in *La Dolce Vita* is now Guido's father. Prince Vladim Wolkonsky returns as the concierge of Guido's hotel and Polidor, the clown, plays himself in both. Many actors used in *8½* reappear in *Juliet of the Spirits* (which supports the argument of Geduld and De Lauretis that Juliet is most strongly aligned with Guido). Mario Pisu, who was Guido's friend, Mezzabotta, appropriately becomes Juliet's husband Giorgio as both chase young women. (Also, "Giorgio" is the name of the character who robs and tries to drown Masina in Nights of Cabiria). Sandra Milo, who played Guido's mistress Carla, is used to play the Susy/Iris/Fanny in *Juliet* and Mario Conocchia, who was Guido's neglected production collaborator, becomes the lawyer that Juliet rejects. Even the film crew remains consistent with Ennio Fliaiano, Tullio Pinelli and Brunello Rondi collaborating on screenplay and script, (although Fliaiano is recognized to be the hanged scriptwriter Daumier in *8½* and, in fact, eventually left the team) and Nino Rota on music (Baxter, 181). Fellini also utilizes artificial

sets, such as the papier mâché ship, "The Rex", in *Amarcord*, and the sea of plastic bags used in the same film as well as in *Casanova* and in *And the Ship Sails On*. Or he uses incomplete sets like the hotel lobby in *8½*. One actor on the set of *Juliet*, fed up with the film's "synthetic milieu", complained to Fellini, "Everything around me is fake," and Fellini responded, "Just like in Life." (208). Even his symbolic use of grotesque images reminds the audience that the film is a creation as it assaults our preconceived notions and provides a conscious distance.

The constructedness and self-reflexivity identify the marked self-consciousness and intrusive author of art-cinema narration. The awareness of authorship is partially achieved through the technical means of "overt narrational 'commentary'". As typical of art-cinema narration, Fellini "manages complex shifts in viewpoint, alternating 'objective' and 'subjective' perspectives on the action" (Murray:1985, 137). However, he makes a point of blurring the two by dispensing with structural continuity: "For example, instead of proceeding from a shot of Guido in the present to a flashback or fantasy and then back to Guido in the original shot,...Fellini jumps forward from the flashback or fantasy to the next scene in the present" (137). Or, in *Juliet of the Spirits*, "sometimes more than one character is presented suddenly with a completely unreal look, so much so that a stimulating ambiguity between fantasy and reality is created" (Fellini quoted by Murray, 158). Once Juliet has denounced her mother, the latter immediately ages and the audience wonders whether this image or one seen throughout the film is false. Another example of the intrusive author in *Juliet* is the half-shaded, half-lit shot of Susy discussed previously. The commentaries confirm Fellini's stand that there is "no dividing line between imagination and reality" (Fellini:1976, 152). Other commentaries in *8½* are the long shots of the spa with its patients ritualistically queuing for the fountain, as well as the use of celestial white lights in the garden, both of which convey a satirical mood (139). The spotlight used in front of Bhishma's suite in *Juliet* is another similar comment. In these instances, Fellini notes our feeble attempts to find strength and salvation outside of ourselves. (Guido's mistress, Carla, in fact, gets extremely ill from the "curative" water). As indicated before, self-acceptance can only come from oneself.

Furthermore, the systematic repetition of techniques applied by Fellini to indicate authorial commentary as well as self-reflexivity and filmic constructedness, asks the audience "to unify them as proceeding from an 'author'" (Bordwell, 211). Art-cinema's "extratextual emphasis on the filmmaker as source" is clearly evident in Fellini's oeuvre. Not only does

the autobiographical nature of most Fellini films emphasize the director as source, but even the names of the films make direct connections: *Fellini Satyricon*, *Fellini Roma*, *Il Casanova Di Federico Fellini*, Fellini's *Orchestra Rehearsal*. Fellini also gave *8½* its title since he would, "if one counted his shares of *Luci del varietà*, *Un'agenzia matrimoniale* and *Boccaccio '70* as halves, have made eight and a half films by the time he finished" (Baxter, 189). Furthermore, at a première of *8½*,

> [f]ilmmakers in the audience carped that Fellini had once again arrogated himself the traditional sign of stardom by placing his name above the title in the final credits. The slightly pompous logo of the film, '*8½*' in ornate Victorian script...was more than matched by the credit '*Ideato e diretto par*' - 'Conceived and directed by' - which followed. (Fellini also took the usual credits for writing and directing). Albert Lattuada conceded, though with bad grace: 'It was a smart thing for him to do. It made him more important than the stars - it made *him* the star'. (Baxter, 192)

Therapy and Cure

Bordwell points out that authorial address and commentary appear to be incompatible with art-cinema which attempts verisimilitude through objective and subjective realism. However, art-cinema "seeks to solve the problem in a sophisticated way: through ambiguity" (Bordwell, 212). The audience must negotiate between filmic realism and the film as construct and decide which schemata motivate a particularly puzzling passage; the truth is relative. For example, in watching *Juliet of the Spirits*, we can motivate the glamorous, youthful image of Juliet's mother on grounds of subjective verisimilitude (Guilietta sees her mother this way) or of authorial commentary (the narration shows her mother as being this way) (212). Either explanation is equally valid, and that "these schemata are mutually exclusive creates the ambiguity" which is foregrounded in art-cinema (212). As Bordwell states in comparing classical narration to art-cinema, "The syuzhet of classical narration tends to move toward absolute certainty, but the art film, like early modernist fiction, holds a relativistic notion of the truth" (212). He goes on to underscore the importance of ambiguity in the art film, writing:

> Ideally, the film hesitates, hovering between realistic and authorial rationales. Uncertainties persist but are understood as such, as *obvious* uncertainties. Put crudely, the procedural slogan of art-cinema narration might be: 'Interpret this film, and interpret it to maximize ambiguity'. (Bordwell, 212).

The ambiguity, which is used to emphasize the thin line between subjective, objective and

constructed reality, demands interpretation. Though that interpretation may seem "open-ended", in films like *8½* and *Juliet of the Spirits*, a specific resolution or "notion of the truth" is provided.

Fellini can not bear people who define him too precisely (Fellini:1976, 114) and believes that interpretations take away his freedom (87), but as stated above, his use of ambiguity, particularly the grotesque, demands interpretation. In fact, the establishment of a genre whose operations rely on ambiguity necessitated the need for interpretive institutions. As Bordwell points out:

> A cinema of ambiguity required machinery to interpret it. During the 1960s, film criticism took up a task it has for the most part clung to ever since. Now the critic was expected to explain what a film meant - fill in the gaps, explicate the symbols, paraphrase the filmmaker's statements. (Bordwell, 231)

Furthermore, with the new focus of director as artist and source, "there corresponded certain narrational aspects which critics could highlight. Through an emphasis on 'character,' the cinema could now achieve the seriousness of contemporary literature and drama, insofar as the latter were thought to portray modern man's confrontation with a mysterious cosmos" (Bordwell, 231). Academia was drawn by art film's need for analysis. As one distributor of *8½* remarked:

> Every egghead found something *different* - like looking at a painting...I showed it to every egghead professor school that I could find and it became what *I* call a cocktail picture. 'Have you seen *8½* ?' - you know, I don't think half of them understood it...Now it's become a picture you teach from, a fuckin' *classic*.' (Baxter, 193)

Although the verisimilitude art-cinema and Fellini tried to portray demanded the use of ambiguity, with a clear psychological emphasis (particularly Jungian) in both *8½* and *Juliet*, critics and academics focused on psychic unity and the solution it provided for the human condition. All the ambiguities, paradoxes, and mysteries of life are seemingly solved through Jungian reasoning as suggested in the following comment made by Fellini: "He [Jung] allowed us to go through life abandoning ourselves to the lure of mystery, with the comfort of knowing that it could be assimilated by reason" (Fellini:1976, 147).

There are numerous aspects of Fellini films that suggest a resistance to the conclusiveness and absolute certainty of classical cinema, but their opposition is limited through the forced closure of individuation. One predominant characteristic, briefly mentioned above in regard to art film's thematic crux, is the "perpetual movement" of Fellini characters:

> Whether it is the Vitelloni wandering about the beach or town at night or Moraldo setting off at the end on his own for we don't know where; whether it is the peasant families at the end of Il Bidone...that walk by beyond the reach of the dying Augusto; or whether it is the complete Fellini-Anselmi entourage descending that vast structure at the close of *8½* and dancing round and round the circus ring together in an infinity of perfect movement - whatever the context and whatever the film, this perpetual movement is central to Fellini. (Harcourt, 243)

The restlessness of movement seems to reflect our continual and unpredictable travel through a disordered life. However, it is also analogous to the Fellinian tenet that "only by moving on, by probing and searching, can we ever come to know the purpose of life" (Harcourt, 243). Perhaps the infamous processions which abound in Fellini films reflect a more negative option of movement. Religious, orgiastic, festive and fascist processions may exemplify ritual action that suggests progression, but actually enables the participants to retreat within the ritual in order to avoid the more difficult path of self-analysis and understanding. The latter process, which Fellini characters undergo, at least in his early films, may not seem as ordered as the procession, but it is often described by critics as circular (Costello, Free, Harcourt, Tassone) and therefore, more complete and unifying. There is no absolute conclusion in *8½* and *Juliet of the Spirits*, as we are encouraged to see the film as part of the main characeters' life journeys. Furthermore, the endings are ambiguous and need reflection. However, the endings do not qualify as "open". Despite Fellini's aversion to solution, the audience interprets the mutual individuation of Guido and Juliet as "therapy and cure" for the chaos they live in.

From Cure to Carnival

Fellini's early films, particularly *8½* and *Juliet of the Spirits*, conform to Bordwell's description of art-cinema narration. The modernist influence of art-cinema is not only detectable in the emphasis on the psychological and the chaotic portrayal of life in a seemingly meaningless world, but in the paradoxical attempt to secure some type of solution which limits the "open ending". The influence of modernism is also evident in Fellini's application of the grotesque. The grotesque in the early films is mainly used to inform the mental and social disorder modern humanity suffers from in the individuation process as well as exemplify our common human condition. While equating our condition to the grotesque, Fellini, in a very Kayserian way, concomitantly parallels the latter with isolation and

alienation.

Beginning in the seventies, there is a marked shift in focus for Fellini. The modernist influence appears to wane and there is no longer a search for a cure or psychic unity. As Geduld says in regards to the change, "Evidently, for Fellini, the past can no longer be called upon to heal the present in quite the same way as it could in *8½* and in *Juliet of the Spirits*" (Geduld, 151). Not only is psychological realism abandoned, along with the boundary-situation and psychic disturbances, but so is the use of a central protagonist. *The Clowns* (1970), *Fellini Roma* (1972), *Amarcord* (1973) and Fellini's *Orchestra Rehearsal* (1979), may have predominant characters, but no one character holds greater significance than any other. This change is conducive to a move towards "carnivalization" as "[c]arnivalesque art is uninterested in psychological verisimilitude or conventional audience identification with rounded personalities" (Stam, 109). For Bakhtin, the theories of psychologists, such as Freud and Jung, suggest an "ambition to locate a world beyond the social and historical" (Hutcheon:1988, 3). Carnivalesque art, like carnival itself, must acknowledge the latter, and indeed, Fellini's films of the seventies, like *The Clowns* and *Amarcord*, are consciously historical in their representations of specific societies and the social relations within them. In fact, the films seem to parallel Hutcheon's category of "historiographic metafiction" as the films are popular texts "which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages" (5). Beyond this analogue, there is another noticeable tendency towards a more postmodern poetics as the self-reflexivity, (including the emphasis on filmic constructedness and authorial address), introduced in the early films, now greatly increases not only in quantity, but also in the concomitant degree of irony. The combination of the above changes also creates a shift in Fellini's application of the grotesque. Images of grotesque realism, described and celebrated by Bakhtin, appear to replace the frightening and alienating grotesque images previously used by the director. However, as discussed earlier, the grotesque and carnivalesque techniques may not always be employed for the empowerment of the marginalized and the potential agency is necessarily affected by the authorial intention. Regardless of Fellini's shift towards a potentially empowering approach, he nevertheless maintains his modernist stand, and in a universalizing way, continues to pass judgement on *la condition humaine*. Carnival does predominate in Fellini films of the seventies, but its form is what Robert Stam would call an "ersatz or degraded" one.

Grotesque Realism in *The Clowns* and *Amarcord*

Evidence of Fellini's transition may be traced back to his last film of the sixties, *Fellini Satyricon* (1969). Bakhtin cites the *Satyricon* of Petronius as an example of the Menippean genre which is, for him, "profoundly rooted in the Saturnalian tradition and prepares the way for literary 'carnivalization'" (Stam, 97). *Fellini Satyricon* certainly prepares the way for the highly carnivalized films of the seventies. The "oxymoronic characters", and the "violation of the norms of decency" which pervade *Fellini Satyricon*, are shared by the more fully carnivalized films like *The Clowns* and *Amarcord* (97).

In *The Clowns* and *Amarcord*, Fellini applies the two literary modes most associated with carnival - parody and grotesque realism (Stam, 10). We noted in the first chapter that the latter utilizes images which express the key topoi of folk culture - "the grotesque body, gay relativity, free and familiar contact, banquet imagery, marketplace speech, and the bodily lower stratum" (10). As both films contain numerous characters but no central protagonist, the casts are experienced by the audience as a whole. Together they represent the body of the human race. It appears to be an attempt, like that by Rabelais,

> to structure the entire picture of the world around the human body conceived as a body...But it is not the individual human body, trapped in an irreversible life sequence that becomes a character - rather it is the impersonal body, the body of the human race as a whole, being born, living, dying the most varied deaths, being born again, an impersonal body that is manifested in its structure, and in all the processes of its life. (Bakhtin quoted by Lodge, 40)

This body is "defined by the organs of self-transgression, the bowels and the phallus, mouth and anus, a body perpetually in the process of becoming, eating and defecating, copulating, giving birth and dying at the same time" (Lodge, 40).

In the opening scene of *The Clowns*, the child Fellini awakens in the middle of the night to the clamor of the circus' arrival. He is very excited, and the next day he is allowed to experience the show in all its grotesque glory. The circus is a celebrational collocation of life, death and rebirth. There are the clowns, giants and midgets, who with hammer, gun, canon, axe or roast unsuccessfully seek to slay each other. Not only do they resurrect from the most mortal blow, but in a Bakhtinian way, their life force is celebrated through their numerous scatological interactions. There is also the death-defying fire-blower, Spanish knife-thrower, and Fakir Burmah who is buried alive for forty days, all of whom come out unscathed. The women, as usual, are most grotesque. There is the mermaid, Neptuna, who eats live fish, and Miss Matilda, the Amazon, who successfully wrestles and wallops any

man. Her only competition seems to be an equally gigantic and brutish Miss Tarzan, and they comically perform to "Flight of the Valkryies" as did "the Harem" in *8½*. However, the child Fellini's reaction to this show is uncontrollable tears. The crying child is slapped and taken out of the tent, and the audience discovers that the child is afraid of the circus stars as "they too much resembled the people of his village" (Free, 194).

The connection between the circus people and those of Fellini's hometown is made explicit when we see the townsfolk for ourselves. The midget clown becomes the local and mad midget nun. Miss Matilda becomes the wife of a resident drunk. Her size and strength enables her to pick up her comatose husband and wheelbarrow him away with ease. The simpleton, Big John, is as awkward and buffoon-like as any clown, and the customary scatological interactions within the circus are equally normative in the town as one man nonchalantly farts on the hostile coachman. No one gets respect. The uniformed, tyrannous stationmaster receives "raspberries" from a passing train full of young boys. The same mocking notion is given to other authoritarian characters such as the lawyer and the Latin teacher. The madness of the circus reflects the lunacy shared by the villagers. For "E guàt," who lied about fighting in the Great War, the slightest provocation triggers him into enacting war experiences; however, his fantasy is perpetuated by the Thespian contributions of the other *vitelloni* (Fellini:1976, 23).

The scatological grotesque and focus on the lower bodily stratum increases in prominence during this period of filmmaking and is epitomized in *Amarcord*. In *Fellini Satyricon*, Trimalchio and others indifferently void themselves at the table. In *The Clowns*, the circus horse farts and urinates on the dead clown, Augusto. "A mother at the burlesque show in *Roma*, ushers her young son into the aisle to relieve himself" (Lavery, 91), and in *Amarcord*, urination and flatulence are eminent. In the latter film, urination can function as a form of disobedience as when "Titta pisses on a prominent citizen's hat from the balcony at the movie...[or when] Berlouin prankishly but ingeniously creates a mysterious puddle at the feet of an unsuspecting nerdish boy trying to solve Signoria Leonardis' mind-boggling math problem at the blackboard" (91). Perhaps pissing on authority (prominent citizen, schoolteacher) is not only rebellious, but also has a somewhat levelling effect. Elsewhere in *Amarcord*, urination is celebrated as important, natural and necessary. Titta's grandfather joyfully recites the diddy, "To be fit as a fiddle, a man's got to piddle. There's something amiss if a man can't piss!" Volpina, the local nymphomaniac, unconsciously squats on the

beach to relieve herself and mad Uncle Teo urinates whenever nature calls, regardless of whether his pants are zipped up or not. Even the boys of the town, "water the dying embers of the Fogarazza [bonfire]" as a social ritual (91). Flatulence is also important as evidenced by "the school-boy controversy over the perpetrator of in-class flatulence during the art teacher's alcohol-aided lecture on 'la perspective'" (91). Furthermore, the grandfather has the remarkable ability not only to fart consecutively for a long duration, but rhythmically as well.

The classical bodily canon, which seeks to "eliminate protrusions", "close all orifices", and "ignore all evidence of fecundation" (Lavery, 89), is defeated through the rampant sexuality that characterizes the town. As David Lavery writes of the town's schoolboys:

> *Amarcord*'s schoolboys can think of little else but sex. They walk in procession behind Gradisca and her sister on the Piazza delle Erbe, keeping time to the swaying motion of their broad hips. They fantasize 'posterior intimacy' with the statue of 'Winged Victory,'[an example of the classical canon]. They attend the agricultural fair to watch the farm women mount their ample posteriors suggestively on their bicycles. And their mutual masturbation in a car, as each fantasizes about a particular woman of the town claimed as his sole obsession, even ignites the vehicle's headlights. Of course, the boys only mirror the adults of the town. (my brackets, Lavery, 93)

There is a long scene in the film dedicated to Biscein's account of how he sneaked in to the Grand Hotel and managed to ravish twenty-eight women from the visiting emir's harem. Another scene depicts how "Gradisca", or "May it please you", got her name by offering herself, in order to get a new dock for the town, to a famous "prince of the blood royal" (Fellini quoted by Alpert, 241). In the American version of the film, she is affectionately referred to by the townspeople as "S'il vous plâit". Her body and that of the town's tobacconist have ample carnivalesque protuberances. The latter provides Titta with his first sexual experience, and he almost chokes on her copious mammae. The whole town stops to watch the local madame, Dora, drive along the Corso in an open carriage to show off "the new intake of her house" (Fellini:1976, 10) - (in typical Fellini fashion, the backdrop to the carriage scene is a religious painting) - and Volpina's nymphomaniac character appears throughout the film. In Titta's family as well there is his uncle, Il Pataca, whose name is a Riminian term for a vagina, mad Uncle Teo who repeatedly shouts from the treetops, "I want a woman," and the elderly grandfather is sexually obsessed, incessantly making advances on the family's maid. Even *Il Duce* is not exempt from the pervasive sexuality as one *vitelloni*,

making an obscene gesture, says to the camera, "Ah! I say only this...Mussolini has two balls this large!"

The sexual fecundity of the town is perhaps more pronounced in contrast to the "guardians of the bodily canon" (Lavery, 93). The authoritarian priests of Guido's school in *8½* reappear in *Amarcord*, this time more concerned with the dangerous sexuality of the schoolboys than of the local prostitutes. Don Balossa warns the boys that the saints "cry when you touch yourself", and during one confession he just looks at the face of a young boy and accusingly shouts out, "Toucher! You're a toucher!"

Other images of carnival and folk culture are shared by both *Amarcord* and *The Clowns*. Each film utilizes banquet imagery. In *The Clowns*, the entire documentary crew sits down to feast with circus stars, clowns, and experts on circus history, and in *Amarcord* there is Gradisca's wedding banquet and the prodigious dinner scenes of Titta's family. These latter scenes often contain most of the marketplace speech used in the film. The mockery and abuse, used by Titta's family, is also used as part of the clown's repartee and is based on grotesque realism. Titta's father repeatedly calls his son a "turd" and the clowns verbally attack each other over a debt of ten sausages. The tolerated beatings and acceptable physical, sometimes sexual, interactions between the clowns and members of Titta's family and community mark an atmosphere of "free and familiar contact" as well as "gay relativity". The emphasis on the continuing human cycle of life, both death and birth, is evident not only in the beginning of *The Clowns* as discussed earlier, but also in the final scene which ritualistically enacts the death and rebirth of the Auguste clown. *Amarcord* begins and ends with the "manine" (fluff balls) of spring blowing through the air. The changing seasons in the film correspond to the changing seasons of life which include new life (Gradisca's wedding) as well as death (Titta's mother). In fact, the townspeople celebrate the seasonal changes with festivals such as St. Joseph's Day, when they burn the winter witch's effigy on the *fogarazza* to celebrate the coming of spring and the passing of winter.

Parody in *The Clowns* and *Amarcord*

In addition to grotesque realism, Fellini uses self-reflexivity in both films in order to parody the assumed authority and authenticity of film, particularly narrated film. Parody, as Hutcheon points out, "is a perfect postmodern form...for it paradoxically both incorporates and challenges that which it parodies" (Hutcheon:1988, 11). The parody that Fellini uses is

not "ridiculing imitation" (34), but an ironic parody that signals our awareness of the inescapable fact that "social reality is structured by discourses" (7). How we know the world and our accessibility to its history are conditioned by textuality. As Hutcheon writes, "We cannot know the past except through its texts, its documents, its evidence, even its eye-witness accounts are *texts*" (16). These texts (i.e., documentaries, articles, memories) are representations which are inherently subjective and limited. For Hutcheon, the point of postmodern parody in a text is to raise consciousness of this situation, while acknowledging the text's own participation in the representative process in order to avoid pernicious complicity and provide the observer with a sense of agency through what Edward Said termed, "critical consciousness" (224).

Film is parodied in both *The Clowns* and *Amarcord* through a forced awareness of the films as constructs and particularly, as ones created by Fellini. In *The Clowns*, the adult director Fellini attempts to document the history and disappearance of the clown. The film within a film construction not only self-reflexively draws attention to the film as creation, but more specifically and ironically to the construction of this particular film and Fellini as author, since the director and film crew star in the production. As Fellini writes, "The only documentary that anyone can make is a documentary on himself," and the first two sections of the film are, in fact, based on the childhood memories of the director (Fellini:1976, 120). The syuzhet of *Amarcord* also stems from Fellini's childhood memories of the provincial world of the 1930's during Mussolini's reign. Titta is one of Fellini's best friends and his family provides a number of the characters portrayed in the film. The film's action takes place in the director's hometown of Rimini, which is also featured in the first half of *The Clowns*. Although the plot of the latter film is based on a clown documentary, the film is actually, as Fellini says, "the parody of an enquiry" (120). *Amarcord* is not a documentary, but it is an historical look into the fascist past of Italy. As such, the film does not specifically parody the documentary form, but the assumed authority of historical depictions, which share with the documentary a focus on a particular past event or era.

In both *The Clowns* and *Amarcord*, parodic effect is most strikingly obtained through the use of unreliable narration. Although there is a multi-character focus in both films, each also contains one or more narrators. The "script girl", who provides relevant script information during the documenting process, and Fellini, himself, who narrates the film's direction in *The Clowns*, the town idiot Guidizio and the pompous lawyer in *Amarcord*, all

underscore film as construction, but, more importantly, they ironically force the audience to question the authenticity of that particular construction. The director is aware of his audience and relies, as mentioned earlier, on the prejudices that the audience brings to the cinema. One expectation Fellini correctly assumes of the audience is its initial trust and belief in the reliability of the narrator. However, neither the "script girl", Fellini, Guidizio, nor the lawyer are ultimately trustworthy characters.

In *The Clowns*, the "script girl", Fellini, and the rest of the film crew, appear much more absurd than the clowns they are attempting to document. The crew of twenty will pile out of one small automobile (a Mini-Mote), they comically bump heads, and knock over equipment they are presumably masters of. At one point, the crew "goes to the Fratellini home to see a rare documentary of the three Fratellinis only to discover that no one knows how to operate the projector" (Free, 196), and often, there is a striking physical resemblance between the crew and the clowns they are researching. How is the audience to trust the verity of a documentary made by clowns?

In *Amarcord*, it is the village idiot, Guidizio, who opens the film. "[W]ith the self-assurance of the ignorant," (as the script notes), he attempts to provide the audience with an "officious explanation" for the arrival of the *manine* (Bondanella:1992, 42). The use of the village idiot to open the historical account "casts doubt upon the reliability of the narrative process" (42). Although the audience may expect the village idiot to be unreliable, the doubt he initiates is confirmed by the other key narrator, the highly-educated town lawyer. The lawyer appears to be a monumental resource of historical knowledge, however, our perception of his role as an omniscient, reliable narrator is undercut immediately upon his first appearance (43). As the lawyer expatiates on the town's ancient origins and the numerous people who have lauded its virtues, "he is repeatedly interrupted by the vulgar sound of a raspberry" (43). During most of the lawyer's narrations, he is harassed and mocked in some way.

Furthermore, Fellini himself provides some of the persecution. Sometimes this participation is less noticeable. For example, as Peter Bondanella notes in his article, "Fellini & Politics", the raspberries delivered on the soundtrack are actually provided by Fellini. However, sometimes the director's invalidating intrusions are more obvious. Bondanella describes the final scene where the lawyer appears:

[W]hile discussing the historic proportions of the unusual snowstorm,...the

> lawyer is struck by a snowball thrown by some unidentified person off camera. The lawyer declares that the person who threw the snowball was *not* one of the boys in the town, and given his disrespectful treatment by the raspberry delivered by Fellini earlier, the obvious conclusion is that Fellini has also thrown the snowball at him. (Bondanella:1992, 43)

As in *The Clowns*, Fellini's personal participation serves to emphasize that "the world he has created...is a cinematic artifact, not a historical 'fact' that is susceptible of historical proof or documentation" (Bondanella:1992, 43). The title of the film, *Amarcord* or "I remember", confirms this point as one critic points out:

> Fellini's use of dialect in the title reveals the personal, idiosyncratic quality of his story, while his choice of a reflexive verb ("io mi ricordo" in standard Italian) rather than a transitive one suggests the mind's action upon itself as it turns inward in memory. The very title, then, signals Fellini's disclaimer of historical authenticity, telling us that this film records reflexively the constructs of his own mind, and not the data of the empirical world. (Marcus, 420)

Fellini does not limit his parody to the documentary and historical film, although they serve as the central foundations upon which he builds his parodic commentary. Those genres serve his purpose best as they have historically and most readily assumed authenticity. However, Fellini also parodies, through metacinematic devices which reveal "overt authorial commentary", characteristics of other film genres such as the dramatic techniques and iconolatry of the silent film and Hollywood. William Free writes how in *The Clowns*, the "most obviously and broadly comic parody is the poolroom scene" (Free, 195). He describes the parodic parallel Fellini makes between this scene and the silent film:

> When the village loafers are shooting at the rear of a tavern, a middle-aged man dressed in 1920's driving coat, gloves, and goggles enters with an overdressed blonde à la Marilyn Monroe to the background music, 'Fascination.' The village dandy, every woman's vision of Ramon Navarro in his youth, and the woman exchange soulful looks, broken only by the obscene suggestion and gesture of Guidizio. In this scene, the silent film, itself grotesque measured against our standard of reality and against the films of our time, becomes the ground against which the actions of the villagers and the idea of the film itself become comic. (Free, 195-6)

There is another scene in the movie which parodies the glitterati and extravagance of Hollywood. When Fellini and the crew go to the Cirque Orfe, they discover Anita Ekberg there about to purchase a tiger. The director momentarily metamorphoses the film into a photo shoot. In front of the tiger cage, Anita Ekberg turns with every click of the camera, making seductive faces and purring like a tiger. This scene also ironically serves to parody

Fellini's own work as he too has used Anita Ekberg as a Hollywood sex symbol in a number of his films. In *Amarcord*, a similar parody of Hollywood's iconolatry takes place in the local cinema. Titta follows Gradisca into the empty movie theatre where she goes to watch her beloved Gary Cooper in *Beau Geste* (1939). The scene shows Gradisca smoking as she stares at the screen. "When Titta gazes at Gradisca through the thick cigarette smoke enveloping this female figure...the smoke...glamorizes her as if she were seen through a soft focus movie lens" (Bondanella:1992, 41). In these authorial commentaries, Fellini parodically uses and abuses conventions from popular film in such a way that he "can actually *use* the invasive culture industry to challenge its own commodification process from within" (Hutcheon:1988, 20).

In *The Clowns* and *Amarcord* metacinematic devices not only illustrate film's inability to provide absolute truth, but its power to create false images or touchstones. The latter point is best captured in the above-mentioned theatre scene in *Amarcord.* It depicts how "Titta and the rest of the village have transformed Gradisca into an object of mediated desire, since their passion for her is determined by the model of the Hollywood movie star...As we gaze at Titta as he gazes at Gradisca gazing at Gary Cooper...we are prompted to evaluate both Titta and Gradisca as two characters who relate sexually to members of the opposite sex only through a form of mediated sexuality that originates in the cinema" (Bondanella:1992, 40-1). The inability of film to meet our expectations of absolute truth is best illustrated in the short "Rhum" scene of *The Clowns*. In that scene, Fellini or "Bellini", as the female curator calls him, goes to the French television studios to view the only filmed performance of the clown, Rhum. As Free writes, "The Rhum film is so short and so technically unsatisfactory that we are left with a sense of having watched an illusion. Rhum is more ghostly and mysterious than ever. The film cannot capture reality" (Free, 196).

Fellini does not claim to capture reality. He lies as honestly as possible. In order to do so, he utilizes parody, and this least affected technique predominates in the films of the seventies, particularly in *The Clowns* and *Amarcord*. The autobiographical nature of the films and Fellini's own participation in them make the parody particularly ironic and mark his own inclusive role in the production of representations which he questions. The contradiction of the self-reflexive and the historical, and of being critical of film through film, are recurring and intended dilemmas which are necessarily handled ironically. Fellini's new parodic focus on representation seems to suggest a more postmodern approach. Furthermore, the

combination of parody and grotesque realism seems to support a more Bakhtinian attitude. There are other aspects of the films which contribute to this hypothesis. Before discussing those elements, it should be noted that although Bakhtin never discusses film, his theories readily apply to film studies as Robert Stam successfully argues in his work, *Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism and Film*. Without going into detail, Stam emphasizes the 'migratory' cross-disciplinary drift of the Bakhtinian method, the historical permeability of the [film] medium by developments in literary theory and criticism (Stam, 17), and that Bakhtin's "definition of *text* as 'any coherent complex of signs' encompasses everything from literature to visual and aural works of art" (18). Moreover, "Bakhtin's metaphors for textual processes...are both aural ('the orchestration of voices') and visual ('the multiplicity of focuses'), which further facilitates the passage from a verbal medium like literature to an audiovisual medium such as film" (19).

In *The Clowns* and *Amarcord*, the number of characters and lack of protagonist suggest two other Bakhtinian concepts, "polyphony" (multi-voicedness) and "heteroglossia" ("literally, many-languagedness", Lodge, 11). The number of characters that receive equal attention attests to the films' "polyphonic" structures. Peter Bondanella, in fact, refers to *Amarcord* as a "choral" film (Bondanella:1992, 39). Besides the main narrators, Biscein and a random peasant are allowed to speak directly to the camera as are some of the clowns and the crew in *The Clowns*. Both films contain languages that provide centripetal and centrifugal forces. In *The Clowns*, there are the languages of the provincials, the clowns, each from different countries and social backgrounds, and the official language of the documentary film crew. In *Amarcord*, there is also the language of the provincials, but additionally, of foreigners, like those in the American films and the visitors that come to town, and there is the authorized language of the fascist regime that we get glimpses of in the first film. Polyphony and heteroglossia suggest a move away from the modernist concept of single and alienated otherness, which "has associations of binarity, hierarchy and supplementarity" towards a more postmodern poetics that favours "a more plural and deprivileging concept of difference" (Hutcheon:1988, 65).

Furthermore, the use of narrators in both films not only underscores constructedness, but also a more dialogical approach for Fellini. In Simon Dentith's analysis of the epistolary form in Dostoevsky's short novels, one can make a clear connection between the impact of that form and the use of a narrator. He writes, "A characteristic feature of the letter (narrator)

is an acute awareness of the interlocutor, the addressee to whom it is directed. The letter (narrator), like a rejoinder in a dialogue,...address[es]...a specific person (audience), and it takes into account the other's possible reactions, the other's possible reply" (my parentheses, Dentith, 159). Fellini even remarked once how Dostoevsky "had stirred [him] for a long time" (Fellini:1976, 100). The use of narrators, plus the documentary form itself, emphasizes a new mode of telling rather than showing as Fellini did before through the psychic disturbances of Guido and Juliet. Despite the obvious mimetic character of the film genre, Fellini appears to now place greater significance on "diegesis rather than mimesis", and, as David Lodge argues, the "foregrounding of diegesis" may serve as a formal definition of postmodernism (Lodge, 27-8). One differentiation Lodge elucidates between postmodernist and modernist use of narrators is the former's "emphasis on narration as such...The narrators of post-modernist fiction are more likely to be explicit about the problems and processes involved in the act of narration" (41). The processes involved in narration are made obvious in *The Clowns*, and the problems the lawyer has in *Amarcord* are more than evidenced by the constant harassment he receives from those around him.

An "Ersatz" Carnival

However, as the narrators in *The Clowns* and *Amarcord* are unreliable, the potential dialogue becomes more like a monologue that attempts to enforce a single truth. Although all discourse is dialogical as any utterance is a response to previous utterances, discourses vary in the degree to which they "exploit and celebrate the inherently dialogic nature of language...or suppress and limit it" (Lodge, 98). Fellini fails to exploit and celebrate dialogism because, despite his apparent shift in approach, he continues to define the human condition in opposition to the "Bakhtinian trope of the 'nonfinalizability' of human character and meaning" (Stam, 89). Fellini's point is again that we are all grotesque. He deflates the power of difference inherent in polyphony and heteroglossia not only through such a universalization, but also by the fact that no voice or language is valid in the films. Even Fellini's parody, which seems to exemplify a postmodern poetics, serves as a levelling effect characteristic of his previous films.

In *The Clowns*, the parodic structure of the film provides a parallel between the circus acts, the villagers and the film crew. "In one sense, the villagers provide the norm of human conduct which the clowns parody. But in another sense the clowns are a norm by which we

recognize the grotesqueness of the villagers" (Free, 195). It is the same situation between the clowns being documented and Fellini's film crew. This parody may be another manifest expression of Fellini's distaste for labels and their intrinsic value-judgements, but it also forces a negative equivalency between the villagers, the clowns, the director, the crew and the film itself as *regrettably* grotesque. For Fellini, the alienation and isolation concomitant with our grotesqueness is deplorable as it often forces us to seek false meaning.

In *Amarcord*, adolescence and fascism become analogues for humanity's grotesque state. As Fellini once said in discussing the film, "I have the impression that fascism and adolescence continue to be, in a certain measure, permanent historical seasons of our lives: adolescence of our individual lives, fascism of our national life" (quoted by Bondanella:1978, 21). As paradoxical individuals we are similar to the adolescent who is neither adult nor child. The awkwardness and lack of definition is disturbing, and we try, like an adolescent, to turn to others to provide the answers - "at one time it's mother, then it's father, then it's the mayor, another time *Il Duce*, another time the Madonna" (21).

In discussing clowns, Fellini makes a differentiation between the Auguste clown and the white clown: "The white clown and the Auguste are teacher and child, mother and small son, even the angel with the flaming sword and the sinner. In other words they are two psychological aspects of man: one which aims upward, the other which aims downwards; two divided separated instincts" (Fellini:1976, 124). The director places "fascist officials and bigwigs", nuns, and mothers under the "white" category and the town idiot, Guidizio, and most people of Rimini, the poor, and children under the "Auguste" category. However, as the above quote suggests, everyone is both categories and all are clowns. As Bondanella writes of the fascists in *Amarcord* (though the case is the same for the fascists in *The Clowns*), "Instead of being sinister, perverted individuals, Fellini's fascists are first of all pathetic clowns, manifestations of the same arrested development within the individual that all the townspeople share" (Bondanella:1992, 38). Gradisca, Guidizio, Biscein, Titta, the teachers, and the visiting fascist *federale*, all share a common condition which makes them susceptible to the mystifying powers of national institutions which make claims to the truth, such as the cinema, "and those twin castrating authorities - fascism and the Catholic Church" (Fellini quoted by Muzzarelli, 15).

The choral nature of both films may no longer be viewed as a Rabelaisian attempt to celebrate the body of the people, but to show our lack of individuality and ability to reject

destructive mythologies. The spring festival on St Joseph's day, the fascist parade, the passing of the massive luxury-liner, "the Rex", and Gradisca's wedding banquet are all communal rituals that reinforce our common and helpless grotesque condition. As Fellini says of the characters in *Amarcord*, "It is only ritual that keeps them all together. Since no character has a real sense of individual responsibility, or has only petty dreams, no one has the strength not to take part in the ritual, to remain at home outside of it" (quoted by Bondanella:1978, 22). Our common grotesque condition makes us both Auguste and white and Fellini shows how detrimental this can be. Bondanella provides the example of the maths teacher in *Amarcord*:

> A figure such as the Professor of Mathematics seemed only comically grotesque in her classroom. But when she stands before a symbol of the regime's power, such as the *federale*, her grotesque nature takes on a more ominous tone and borders upon delirium, her personality magically transformed by her fascist uniform. (Bondanella:1992, 40)

The grotesque and the carnivalesque elements of these films then do not exploit their potential subversiveness. They, instead, serve what Bakhtin discerns as the "modernist form" of the grotesque in the twentieth-century, as opposed to the "realist grotesque", which he celebrates. The apparent use of grotesque realism by Fellini may be accounted for by his abandonment of psychic unity as those images support a more open and inconclusive approach. Indeed, individuation or the unification of the "two psychological aspects of man" is no longer possible for Fellini, as evidenced by the director's commentary on the finale of *The Clowns*. At the end of the film, the two figures of the Auguste and the white "embody a myth which lies in the depths of each one of us: the reconciliation of opposites, the unity of being" (Fellini:1976, 124). However, despite his apparent rejection of closure and acceptance of "(false) unity" (Bakhtin:1984, 48), the lack of unity equates, for Fellini, with a lack of meaning. Our alienation from a knowable world is the tragedy of modern humanity's universal condition, and for Fellini, all we can do is laugh.

The impetus behind the clown documentary is the idea that the great circuses and clowns of the past have disappeared because we are no longer able to laugh at them. Fellini, in discussing the film, "attributes the disappearance of the clown to the sense of absurdity and disorder which pervades modern life" (Free, 188). Such an idea is reminiscent of Kayser's commentary on the grotesque which suggests that one cannot laugh in the sinister face of a disordered world "totally different from the familiar one" (Kayser, 21). Fellini, like Kayser, negatively equates disorder with the grotesque. They believe that the comic, which

"innocuously annihilates greatness and dignity...by placing on us the secure level of reality", cannot exist amongst the grotesque which "totally destroys the order and deprives us of our foothold" (59). Fellini writes:

> The clown was always the caricature of a well-established, ordered peaceful society. But today all is temporary, disordered, grotesque. Who can still laugh at clowns? Hippies, politicians, the man in the street, all the world plays the clown, now. (quoted by Free, 188).

Although *Amarcord* appears to be steeped in grotesque realism and carnival laughter, Fellini describes the ultimate tone of the film as "one of isolation" (Bondanella:1992, 43). Our grotesque condition is, for Fellini, necessarily alienating, but we must accept it. We can no longer laugh at a clown so we must laugh at its mirror-image, ourselves. Fellini succeeds in laughing at himself. Near the end of the film, the director is asked by an interviewer what his message is in the film. Before he answers, a bucket falls on each of their heads. That is his answer. Any attempt at true documentation or sense of meaning, like Fellini's film or the critic's interpretation, becomes "the act of a clown" (Free, 196), and Fellini himself is then replaced in the film by an old clown narrator.

Although laughter seems to be a crucial part of Fellini's carnival, it is a laughter of accepted defeat not victory "over all that oppresses and restricts" (Stam, 86). In the work of Rabelais, "laughter becomes the form of a free and critical consciousness that mocks dogmatism and fanaticism" (87), but, for Fellini, it becomes the form of a collective consciousness that we are all potentially dogmatic and fanatic. It does not, as Bakhtin says, "free human consciousness, thought, and imagination for new potentialities" (Bakhtin:1984, 49). As Robert Stam argues, Bakhtinian categories, such as carnival, "display an intrinsic identification with difference and alterity, a built-in affinity for the oppressed and the marginal" (Stam, 21), but one cannot "equate carnival with the mere surface manifestations of carnival imagery and strategies" (226). "In Bakhtin's view,...carnival is more than a mere festivity; it is oppositional culture of the oppressed, the symbolic, anticipatory overthrow of oppressive social structures. Carnivalesque egalitarianism crowns and uncrowns, pulling grotesque monarchs off their thrones and installing comic lords of misrule in their place" (173). Fellini's carnival may unmask and ridicule the hypocrisies of mythologizing institutions, such as the church, the cinema and fascism, but the local priest, Fellini, and Mussolini are only revealed to be clowns like the rest of humanity. Hitler, according to Fellini, is "a white clown" (Fellini:1976, 130), and Guidizio, an Auguste, but, nevertheless

both are clowns, and an Auguste, as Fellini points out, can most easily become a white clown. In both *The Clowns* and *Amarcord*, the townspeople of Rimini, the clowns, and the other "comic lords of misrule" do not takeover as monarchs, but are negatively equated with them. For Bakhtin, the thematic impetus of carnival is social inversion and the "world turned upside down", not "the world flattened" as it seems to be for Fellini.

Parody and grotesque realism fail to be used subversively. Bakhtin, as Stam writes:

> portrays parodic 'carnivalization' as the privileged arm of the weak and dispossessed. Because parody appropriates an existing discourse for its own ends, it is particularly well suited to the needs of the powerless precisely because it *assumes* the force of the dominant discourse only to deploy that force, through a kind of artistic jujitsu, *against*, domination. Such an 'excorporation' steals elements of the dominant culture and redeploys them in the interests of the oppositional praxis. (Stam, 227-8)

Hutcheon also describes the power of postmodern parody which challenges both closure and single, centralized meaning (i.e. Fellini's claim of universal grotesqueness) so that the "centre no longer completely holds. And from the decentered perspective, the 'marginal' [or]...the 'ex-centric' (be it in class, race, gender, sexual orientation or ethnicity) take on new significance" (Hutcheon:1988, 12). How does Fellini's redeployment assist the marginalized when they are potentially as "white" as Hitler? Fellini may successfully collapse hierarchies, but unlike in postmodern parody, he also collapses difference and reinforces the modernist concept of single and alienated otherness. Postmodernism, like Bakhtin's carnival, "retains, and indeed celebrates differences...Difference suggests multiplicity, heterogeneity, plurality", rather than "otherness" which leads to binary opposition and exclusion (61). The knowledge of discursive manipulation and "critical consciousness" is not liberatory if the ex-centric and the center are the same. Fellini's images of grotesque realism, especially of the body and the life cycle, show continuation of humanity, but it is not a continuation to be celebrated as "fascism and adolescence continue to be...permanent historical seasons of our lives" (Fellini quoted by Bondanella:1978, 21). The province of *Amarcord*, with all its grotesque inhabitants who cling to collective mythology, "is one in which we are all recognizable, the director first of all" (20). As a result, Fellini's carnival is not the "communitarian festivity and adversary culture" of what Stam calls a "bottom up" carnival, but a top-down "'ersatz'" or "'degraded'" carnival, which annihilates difference and promotes acceptance rather than liberation (Stam, 225).

There is a certain postmodern social theory, discussed in the first chapter, which

seems to explain Fellini's "ersatz" carnival. This theory, supported by Fredric Jameson and Jean Baudrillard, "dismisses the possibility of meaningful social conflict, arguing that the traditional privileges of Western patriarchal culture have been annulled, that within the global village of transnational capitalism, all cultures are caught up in the meaningless whirl of mass-mediated simulacra" (Stam, 235). However, this theory is "painfully inadequate to the experience of the peripheralized. The neutralization of the radical difference of the marginalized...elides the fact that some groups cannot help seeing the world through their own irreducible marginality" (235). Fellini seems to play a part in the "hegemonism of possessing minorities" (235). His denial of the reality of marginalization is a luxury only he, who is not marginalized, can afford (235). As Stam and others (Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Nancy Hartsock, Nancy K. Miller) have pointed out, it is surely no coincidence that the proclamation of the death of the author, the death of the subject and the *fin de cinema* is made just when those from the periphery begin to contribute successfully to these subjects (235). For Bakhtin and Hutcheon the point is "not to erase the differences between center and margin but rather to dynamize and dialectize them" (236). Their theories support the existence of the author and the subject and "the interactive powers involved in the production and reception of texts" which allow for various and provisional meanings (77). Fellini's affinity with Jameson's and Baudrillard's theories is evident in his films of the seventies and becomes more pronounced with his later productions.

Frank Burke, in his article, "Federico Fellini: From Representation to Signification", applies Fellini's films to the continuum hypothesized by Jameson and Baudrillard which moves from reality to representation to signification. Burke explains the continuum:

> Traditional aesthetics has tended to place art and language in direct relation to the real, via concepts such as mimesis and representation. Traditional language theory, along with aesthetics, has posited a relationship based on reference, in which the word/artwork is the sign and the real its referent. Within a referential relationship, the word/artwork represents the real. In the past several decades, notions of the real and the referent have tended to recede, and the system of sign and referent has been replaced by a system based solely on the sign, now split into signifier and signified. Within this system, there is no way 'out' to the real. Consequently, art, language, and thought take place entirely within the domain of signification rather than representation. (Burke:1989, 34)

I agree with Burke's argument that Fellini's films may be viewed "along a reality/representation/signification continuum, moving from neorealism to modernist

questioning of representation...then to postmodern transformation of the real and the representable into pure sign system" (Burke:1989, 34). Although I disagree with the proposed definition of the postmodern transformation, which is more a development of the modernist stand, I do agree that Fellini succumbs to this incarcerating view.

In the sixties, self-representation is a prominent issue for Fellini, but the problems it poses seem to be surmountable as Guido and Juliet manage successfully to come to terms with the incongruous representations that haunt them. However, beginning with *Fellini Satyricon*, authorial voice, particularly Fellini's own, becomes increasingly problematic. At the end of *Fellini Satyricon*, "Encolpio's live image is transformed into a fresco, and his narrating voice stops speaking in mid-sentence" (Burke:1989, 36). Fellini's own voice is increasingly marked not only by his titles (*Fellini Satyricon*, *Fellini Roma*, *Il Casanova Di Federico Fellini* and Fellini's *Orchestra Rehearsal*), but by his own participation in the films (*A Director's Notebook*, *The Clowns*, *Fellini Roma*, *Amarcord*, *Intervista*). In "the final moments of both *The Clowns* and *Roma* Fellini himself, as main character, vanishes. He is replaced by an old clown narrator in the former and effaced by Anna Magnani and a motorcycle gang in the latter" (36). Fellini appears in the films "as maker of his own fiction" (Lodge, 41), which may reveal that "the author as a *voice* is only a function of his own fiction, a rhetorical construct" or signification without signifier (43). Other authorial voices inexplicably disappear as well, like the television crew at the end of Fellini's *The Orchestra Rehearsal*.

The emphasis on the mere mechanisms of representation is further supported in *Amarcord*, by the unreliable narrators, the assertion of the title "I remember" without providing an "I", and the character's dependency on ritual, sometimes negatively as with "fascism and the cultural imperialism of America (movies, the Rex)", for definition (Burke:1989, 36). The original title Fellini wanted to give *Amarcord* was *Il Borgo*, "in the sense of a medieval enclosure, a lack of information, a lack of contact with the unheard of, the new" (Fellini quoted by Bondanella:1978, 25). As Burke points out, the process of narrative self-enclosure becomes even more extreme in later films. For example, in *Casanova*, there is no history, no real Casanova. We only "have Fellini offering *his* representations of the autobiographical posturings of a flatterer. It is all surface, no depth, all pose. Put another way, it is maximum significance and minimum reference...In this respect, *Casanova* becomes a stunning example of Jean Baudrillard's simulacrum" (Burke:1989, 36). The representer in Fellini's later films is effaced, and the characters - the

clowns, the people of *Amarcord*, Casanova and the orchestra from *The Orchestra Rehearsal* - become products of cultural signification.

Instead of reading *City of Women* (1980) as the story of Snaporaz's growth from "a lecherous middle-aged adolescent, interested in women only for their bodies" to one that accepts women "as both 'real' and 'other'", the film may also be read as "a film about the *representation* of growth rather than its achievement, a film, in short, about male fantasies of self-development" (Burke:1989, 37). As Burke points out, the "film as dream is virtually all representation. Women do not exist outside Snaporaz's envisionment of them" (37). The women in the movie and Snaporaz's relationship to them become increasingly unrealistic, culminating in Cazzone's "world of representation" (37) where women are merely images in a huge pornographic gallery. In one interview with Gideon Bachmann, Fellini confirms this point. He says the film is about one man,

> a man who invents woman. She is his metaphor, his obscurity, the part of himself he doesn't know, and about which he feels a fatal necessity to create ever new hypotheses...But it is clear he knows nothing about women, he isn't able to create in his imagination/film a single outstanding real person, which is why the film has no real female protagonists. There are just thousands of faces, of mouths, of smiles, of looks, of voices (quoted by Bachmann:1980-1, 8).

Women appear doubly as representations when Snaporaz enters the "City of Women" through a uterine chute. He now relates to them as "*memories* within his *dream*" (Burke:1989, 37). The memories of the women from his life are culturally signified. There are the live performers who are dressed more for sado-masochism than motorcycling and the Hollywood blonde bombshells, such as Mae West. "It is she who triggers fanny fetishism, which leads finally to the whore with the enormous ass. By the end of this sequence women have become only the distortions of a repressive society - representations no longer of Snaporaz's paranoid imagination but of a culture in which women exist only through the conjunction of cinematic and psychological projection" (38).

At the end of *City of Women*, Snaporaz awakens from his dream to encounter "real" women, but decidedly returns to sleep and back to his own world of distorted representation. In this context, "the light at the end of the tunnel provided by Fellini as the credits conclude is not a hint of Snaporaz's growth, it is just another cultural representation - a tritely symbolic happy ending which substitutes for something more substantive" (Burke:1989, 38). Furthermore, the image of the train entering the tunnel not only returns us full-circle to where

the film began, but also analogously to Snaporaz's libidinous imaginings of women. In the film, women are equal to dream, which is equal to film: "women are projections just as movies and dreams are, and, in fact, all three are interchangeable" (38). Fellini is convinced that "all his films are basically about women" and *City of Women* is no exception (Tornabene, 114). As the director says:

> *City of Women* is really a film about the cinema seen as a woman...I think the cinema is a woman by virtue of its ritualistic nature. This uterus which is the theatre, the fetal darkness, the apparitions - all create a projected relationship, we project ourselves onto it, we become involved in a series of vicarious transpositions, and we make the screen assume the character of what we expect of it, just as we do with women, upon whom we impose ourselves. Woman being a series of projections invented by man (quoted by Bachmann:1980-1, 8).

No actual women may be represented as "they are merely one term within a chain of significations" (Burke:1989, 38).

Finally, the film is also "part of another signifying system: that of 'Marcello/Fellini films'" (Burke:1989, 38). During the beginning credits, a woman's giggling voice cuts in to say, "With Marcello again? Maestro, please...". The film is "ultimately about itself, its maker, and its star as signifiers of fictionality" (38). Burke expands upon this point:

> More precisely, Marcello exists not as a referent ('real' figure) nor even as a sign (referring to a 'real' Marcello). He functions purely as a signifier of his capacity to endlessly (re)signify - by appearing over and over again in Fellini films. In effect, there is an instantaneous collapse of referent into sign and signified into signifier. (Burke:1989, 38).

As in *8½* and *The Clowns*, *And the Ship Sails On*, has a movie-within-a-movie structure. Like *The Clowns* and *Amarcord*, it also utilizes an unreliable narrator, this time an absurd journalist. Both techniques foreground self-signification and the film's status as arbitrary narrative (Burke:1989, 38). Furthermore, the films, like *The Clowns*, *Amarcord*, and *And the Ship Sails On*, may no longer be compared to Hutcheon's category of "historiographic metafiction" as they are ultimately ahistorical. They may be "intensely self-reflexive" and "yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages", but those events and personages are completely effaced in the process. For example, in the end of *And The Ship Sails On*, the journalist fails to report on the most crucial event of the voyage (the sinking of the ship). The four possible scenarios he offers, as he drifts alone, cartoon-like, in a small boat with a rhinoceros, contributes to the film's general effacement

of politics and history, as Burke explains:

> The film's events mimic the assassination of archduke Ferdinand, the outbreak of World War I, and the sinking of the Lusitania. But the mimicry...is so absurd, the original in effect is denied. We have a process of substitution or doubling which destroys reference or at best presents it under erasure. (Burke:1989, 38)

As Fellini said in one interview:

> I think we have reached the point where what counts is not the event but the information about the event...We are waiting there in front of the TV screen, waiting for the reporter or journalist to supply us with what in fact is not even information in the true sense, because it replaces the reality of which it speaks. We no longer believe the things we see ourselves...We are waiting to see them represented in the terms and rhythms and styles of a spectacle, of an entertainment, in other words, of a form that robs them of their reality and us of the need to be responsible for our own creations. (Bachmann:1994, 11)

This situation serves as the foundation for Fellini's next film, *Ginger and Fred*.

In *Ginger and Fred*, Guilietta Masina and Marcello Mastroianni play Amelia and Pippo who once had a successful act of imitating Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire. They are asked to perform on a television spectacular of impersonators. "When Amelia arrives in Rome for the show, she finds it populated with 'lookalikes': (Clark Gable amongst others) and is herself mistaken for a 'Bette Davis' double. Many of the lookalikes ('Proust' and 'Kafka', for instance) are supposed to resemble people whom most of the film's television audience have probably never seen. The lookalikes thus serve as the originals" (Burke:1989, 38). The show is merely spectacle, only imitation without any original. The show and television itself both efface the real by turning it into sign system. Burke quotes Baudrillard: "It is no longer a question of imitation, nor of reduplication, nor even of parody. It is rather a question of substituting signs of the real for the real itself, that is, an operation to deter every real process by its operational double" (39). Television, then, and the characters on the TV spectacular "become the 'model' of the real, and 'simulation is no longer that of a referential being or substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal'" (39).

Amelia and Pippo, like many other characters in Fellini's later films, exist only as cultural definitions. In the end, they cannot succeed as lovers, only as performers. At their departure they are hounded by autograph seekers and "their farewell turns into a recreated piece of business from their televised Ginger and Fred routine: now an imitation of an

imitation of an imitation" (Burke:1989, 39).

Fellini's penultimate film, *Intervista* (1987), is consistent with his other later films in its focus on the signifying process. The film is about a Japanese film crew making a documentary about Fellini who is making a film based on Kafka's *Amerika* (Burke:1989, 39). Once again there is the film-within-a-film structure and the director's voice is effaced both by the documentary crew and within the film as when Marcello Mastroianni, "dressed as Mandrake the Magician" (39), mysteriously conjures up the Trevi fountain scene from *La Dolce Vita*. Consequently, Fellini, who has historically served as source of memory in his films, is in this aspect replaced by Mastroianni (39). Furthermore, the flashbacks to previous films and the nostalgia shared by Fellini, Mastroianni, and Ekberg who reunite in the film, suggest "that memory itself is no more than prior filmic projection, mechanically and socially produced" (39). The focus on previous films in *Intervista* reinforces Fellini's filmmaking as "now merely re-signification", and the fact that there is no subject in the title "again eliminates agency, and specifically Fellini, from the act of signifying" (39).

Fellini's later films contribute support to a "generalized apocalyptic vision which collapses differences and rejects the possible creative and contestatory impulses within the postmodern" as describe by Hutcheon as well as the grotesque (Hutcheon:1988, 223). These later films are similar to the "modernist postmodern" texts which "tend to reduce individual agency to corporate agency and sociopolitical forces to chance and patterns of coincidence (Michael, 3-4). In describing those predominantly white male postmodern texts which have tended to limit the boundaries of the postmodern, Migali Michael writes, "By effectively disallowing (rather than problematizing) referentiality, these texts tend to sever language and representation from the material historical situation to such a degree that they disallow any exploration of the ways in which they are interrelated and are both functions of complex relations of power" (17). Furthermore, this esoteric approach, as Michael points out, requires an élite audience in order to be appreciated (17). This situation may account for the declining popularity of Fellini's last films though some critics (Kezich, Tornabene) attribute it to the films' apocalyptic tone and the director's "refusal to make his audience laugh" as he did before (Tornabene, 118). Fellini's new cynicism stifles his once humorous reaction to our grotesque condition, and his laments underscore the modernist view he has always maintained.

By producing films such as *Ginger and Fred*, which directly attack mass media,

Fellini appears to agree with Baudrillard's argument that "mass media has neutralized reality for us" and has finally destroyed meaning through simulacrum (Hutcheon:1988, 223). As the director writes:

> [W]e live in a world in which we can recognize ourselves only with great effort. It seems to me that so many things have lost their value, have been destroyed...Everywhere you find uniformity, monotony, and broad acceptance. Our lives are governed by stupid rituals whose content and rhythms are determined primarily by television and the media. (quoted by Tornabene, 119)

Fellini denies meaning within his later films and outside as well through interpretation, which he believes distorts film beyond recognition (Bachmann:1980-1, 9). Furthermore, the grotesque is used to reveal the alienation and isolation that results from that loss of meaning. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, "It is not that truth and reference have ceased to exist, as Baudrillard claims; it is that they have ceased to be unproblematic issues. We are not witnessing a degeneration into the hyperreal without origin or reality, but a questioning of what 'real' can mean and how we can *know* it" (Hutcheon:1988, 223). Simulacrum theories not only resolve the ongoing and unresolvable tensions, which for Hutcheon, should form the basis of any definition of postmodernism (223), but when applied, also ultimately resolve the tensions within grotesque imagery.

Fellini's use of the grotesque and parody exemplify the "modernist form" which allows "no room for the utopian element" (Bakhtin:1984, 48). Simulacrum theories, like the modernist form of the grotesque in the twentieth-century, deny the possibility of change and agency and support a concomitant sense of alienation. Thereby, they serve to legitimize the dominant ideology. Postmodernism and Bakhtinian grotesque are also ideological as both value the conflicting tension inherent in the paradoxical act of inscribing and contesting and in the "realist grotesque". However, the "paradoxes of postmodernism [and the grotesque] work to instruct us in the inadequacies of totalizing systems and of fixed institutionalized boundaries" (Hutcheon:1988, 224). They force the observer/reader to explore the sense of dissonance which, hopefully and continually, "leads to discovery" and empowerment. Fellini's resolution in the seventies to simply laugh at our common grotesque condition and alienation, is not only defeatist and supportive of the status quo, but neglectful of difference and the marginalized who still experience the oppression of life on the periphery. Furthermore, his nihilistic denial of meaning, confirmed in his films of the eighties, rejects the possibility of empowerment and change. When the grotesque and parody are used by the

marginalized, their subversive potential is much more likely to be positively and successfully manipulated as we will observe now in the works of Angela Carter.

CHAPTER THREE: ANGELA CARTER
CHANCE IS THE MOTHER OF INVENTION

"This is how *I* make potato soup"

> Ours is a highly individualized culture, with a great faith in the work of art as a unique one-off, and the artist as an original, a godlike and inspired creator of unique one-offs. But fairy tales are not like that, nor are their makers. Who first invented meatballs? In what country? Is there a definitive recipe for potato soup? Think in terms of the domestic arts. 'This is how *I* make potato soup.'...The chances are, the story was put together in the form we have it, more or less, out of all sorts of bits of other stories long ago and far away, and has been tinkered with, had bits added to it, lost other bits, got mixed up with other stories, until our informant herself has tailored the story personally, to suit an audience of, say, children, or drunks at a wedding, or bawdy old ladies, or mourners at a wake - or, simply, to suit herself. (*The Old Wives' Fairy Tale Book*, x)

Angela Carter's description of the fairy tale immediately recalls Bakhtin's theory of language. The fairy tale exemplifies language itself which is passed on and changed from generation to generation. As with the fairy tale, language is a social phenomenon and different meanings are made possible within different social groups and contexts, as well as by different accents, emphases and inflections. The speaker can manipulate meaning to convey intention, (just like the teller of the tale), and the listener, whether implied or not, may comprehend in various ways and may continue, enrich or contest the meaning in a future response. Carter, on the side of the marginalized, celebrates the fairy tale as part of "'unofficial' culture", the production of which has been historically though untenably attributed to women because of its unofficial and devalued status (*OWFB*, xi-xiv). However, Carter also lauds the fairy tale as it demonstrates formally the indeterminacy and what she calls the "mutability" of language as indicated above and previously in the theories of Volosinov and Bakhtin. For Carter, these characteristics provide the possibility of transgression, which is most crucial to her work.

As Bakhtin argues, the force behind linguistic change consists of the conflicts and contradictions that occur between the notion of a "national language" and the many social languages of heteroglossia. Since these conflicts are socially and politically marked, certain versions of the language are privileged over others. However, the indeterminacy of language and its openness to change ensure the infinite possibility of a linguistic coup where a different version of language may reign. As a feminist, Carter explores this possibility specifically for

women. Within Western patriarchal civilization, a language which serves to subordinate women has historically enjoyed prestige, and she seeks to change this situation. Carter writes:

> [I]t's so enormously important for women to write fiction as women. It is part of the slow process of decolonizing our language and our basic habits of thought. It is to do with the creation of a means of expression for an infinitely greater variety of experience than has been possible heretofore; to say things for which no language has previously existed. (quoted by Goldsworthy, 9)

Only by using language to make known the differences and multifarious experiences of women, historically limited and denied by male-centered definition, can a nonpatriarchal discourse compete with the dominant one. Carter dedicates her own writing to exploring the ideological manifestations of patriarchy in all cultural domains, religious, familial, political, economic, artistic, and social. She reveals them to be unfixed constructions (like the signs of language) and, thereby, *forever* open to "mutation" - to change, variation and reconstruction. The emphasis on the eternal quality of constructedness is important as it underscores the process of continual reevaluation that Carter deems necessary in negotiating constructions we experience (and create) through the arts as well as in everyday life. There is never one answer. All her works are consciously open to varied responses, and on principle, she "refuses authorial control over possible readings" (Jordan:1992b, 166). However, provisional answers are always possible.

Carter describes herself as being "in the demythologizing business" (quoted by Katsavos, 11). She means "myth" in the conventional sense, but "also in the sense that Roland Barthes uses it in *Mythologies* - ideas, images, stories that we tend to take on trust without thinking what they really mean" (12). Therefore, myths may be those ideological manifestations of patriarchy which have been falsely accepted as necessary by both men and women. Carter's project foregrounds Bakhtin's critical point that the idea of necessity, though always seemingly serious and indisputable in a culture, is actually "relative and variable" in the hopes of freeing people from mythological incarceration (Bakhtin:1984, 49). Although Carter considers myths to be "consolatory nonsenses" (*SW*, 5) which are "designed to make people unfree" (quoted by Jordan:1990, 23), Elaine Jordan is correct to point out that myths are not necessarily oppressive - "Whether a myth is liberatory or oppressive depends on the existing power relations, the company it keeps, the context of its use" (23). Carter, in fact, ultimately creates her own myths, based on her own ideology, simply through her responses to old ones. However, her work specifically contests patriarchal myths, and thereby, the

society that produced them. As she writes in *The Passion of New Eve*, "Our external symbols must always express the life within us with absolute precision" (*PNE*, 6), and therefore, "a critique of our symbols" will inevitably produce "a critique of our lives" (6). Carter attempts to ascertain what those symbols (which pervade our mythologies) "really stand for, what they mean, underneath the kind of semireligious coating that makes people not particularly want to interfere with them" (Katsavos, 12). By revealing and analysing the latent meanings of our mythologies, Carter scrutinizes their underlying sexism based on binaries, the latter's effects on material existence, and, thereby, empowers her readership with "constructive" knowledge. Ultimately, her "business" affects her style, which has been described as "open-ended" and "not without contradictions" (Jordan:1990, 22). It is understandable then that as Carter's work develops, her narratives are increasingly served by the use of the grotesque as its images oppose dichotomy, hierarchy, essentiality and finality.

This is reminiscent of Bakhtin's description of the *grottesche* designs in Nero's Domus Aurea: "[T]here was no longer the movement of finished forms, vegetable or animal, in a finished and stable world; instead the inner movement of being itself was expressed in the passing of one form into the other, in the ever incompleted character of being" (Bakhtin:1984, 32). For Carter, the indeterminate, incomplete and "mutable" character of the grotesque serves to underscore her own demythologizing project as well as provide the means to express "an infinitely greater variety of experience". These new experiences may be used in constructing or reconstructing our own subjectivities. Hence, we are all indeterminate, incomplete and mutable, or grotesque. Carter may, like Fellini, see us and our world as grotesque, but, for Carter, this condition is not meaningless nor does it collapse difference. It presents opportunities of change for both women and men. Our personal grotesqueness and that of the world "are not simply conditions of modernity, products of its wreckage, but have always existed and are characteristic of life itself" (Webb, 290). Carter does not see in this eternal condition "as many postmodernists do, a nihilistic loss of value; rather, an existential acceptance of the facts of life and death in which contradictions are a sign of hope, and difference has to be negotiated rather than fought over as if there were only one place of rightness, one correct way of living that must be identically produced the whole world over" (290). For Carter, our "ever incompleted character of being" becomes a continual source of agency which may lead to empowerment, especially for the marginalized, who often fall victim to oppressive determinacy.

As discussed in the first chapter, the female grotesque is necessarily doubly grotesque, and in her later works, Carter positively appropriates the female grotesque, often through literalization, and celebrates those qualities that have historically positioned women as the opposite and inferior Other to men. In these creative instances, the women have produced themselves as "women" (Warner, 248). Such an act does not, however, valorize the system that produces such exclusivity. Carter is quick to point out that this production "is often the result of *force majeure*, of using what you've got to get by" (248). She knows the limitation of carnival. She is well aware of the difference between fantasy and reality, between the carnival she puts on and the real material historical situation of women. Carter continually underscores the constructedness of representations, including her own, but she specifically reveals them as stemming from "relations of power and politics" (Altevers, 19) and illustrates the consequences of such constructions. Carter's grotesque females may revel in their Otherness, like the "freaks" of the sixties, in order to sustain "opposition to authority", yet at the same time the author shows "that the culture and society [they] inhabit is not of rigid demarcation, but has always been mixed-up and hybrid" (Webb, 282). If the latter were accepted, then carnival would no longer be necessary, and Carter is the first to say, "The carnival has to stop" (quoted by Warner, 254). In her writing, Carter cunningly nudges the reader, whom she presupposes to be female (Katsavos, 17), to contemplate how the power that her positive female images embody is accessible to any woman, "if she is willing to create her own opportunities to be a free souled spirit" (Blodgett, 53). Such an accession subverts "male-engendered expectations" (54) and disrupts systems of decorum. If those systems are social and historical constructions, then a woman has the ability to define herself in a more empowering way. Doing so may conflict with preconceived notions, but that is the necessary and grotesque process for change.

Carter's attempts at deconstruction and reconstruction and her application of the grotesque are indicative of her postmodern approach. Demythologizing is, in fact, a postmodern process as myth is just another term for the master narratives which postmodernism seeks to refute. Her "demythologizing" is equivalent to the "de-doxifying" Linda Hutcheon describes in *The Politics of Postmodernism* (Hutcheon:1989, 3). Barthes's "notion of the 'doxa' as public opinion or the 'Voice of Nature' and consensus" is a more general term which includes the mythologies he also discusses (3). Postmodernism "works to 'de-doxify' [or 'de-mythologize'] our cultural representations and their undeniable political

import" (3). As Hutcheon points out, "all cultural forms of representation...are ideologically grounded", and Carter uses postmodern strategies, aided by her application of the grotesque, to "de-naturalize" doxa or myth for her own political agenda (3). As Migali Michael argues, postmodernism, which espouses a disruption of "traditional notions of subjectivity, character development, representation, language, interpretation, narrative, history, and binary logic in general", suits Carter's feminist project (Michael, 5). The use of postmodern strategies "often gives thrust or power to feminist elements, so that the postmodern features become in themselves feminist. As an active oppositional politics, feminism transforms or translates the strategies it co-opts so as to satisfy its political aims" (6). Michael also notes that feminism and postmodernism significantly converge both in their connection to material cultural practices and in their "'insistence on the link between the textual and the social'" (7). Myths, as Carter says, are "more malleable than history", but they also have a strong impact on that history and, furthermore, may play a significant role in the representations through which we access it. The myths must be deconstructed, not only to foreground their constructedness and underlying ideologies, but, more importantly, to allow for new empowering reconstructions which are designed to make people free.

Although focused political engagement imbues postmodern strategies with subversive potential, that potential is further advanced by Carter's uniquely grotesque version of postmodernism. Carter inscribes cultural ideas or representations, often exaggerating them to the point of the grotesque, or evokes grotesque literalizations of them, not only to denaturalize them and show their constructedness, but to force the reader, as the grotesque does, to interpret them actively and make explicit the patriarchal ideology on which they are based. Her particular grotesque version of postmodernism serves her feminist cause as it unequivocally discloses the oppression concomitant with patriarchy's binary logic. Her application of the grotesque, as indicated before, serves to contest that logic, but also to provide strategic and provisional alternatives that allow for difference, multiplicity and agency.

Angela Carter first began publishing in the second half of the 1960s, a time when, according to Carter, "Mutability [was] having a field day" (quoted by O'Day). Although the experience of the sixties, particularly for women, is often underplayed, Carter believes there was "a brief period of philosophical awareness...when, truly it felt like year One" (quoted by Jordan:1992b, 159). It was in the summer of 1968, that she first questioned the nature of

her "reality as a *woman*. How that social fiction of [her] "'femininity'" was created, by means outside [her] control, and palmed off on [her] as the real thing" (quoted by Jordan, 159). In 1968 then, in an atmosphere of indeterminacy and mutability which ultimately pervades her work, Carter became conscious of 'femininity' as a created fiction that could be *rewritten*. However, her concern for gender issues appears throughout her oeuvre and even in her earliest (pre-1968) novels she utilizes the grotesque for her cause.

It is striking then that Carter is the first to point out "a most definite shift" in her work (quoted by Katsavos, 15). She acknowledges the discrete character of her collection of works, saying, "I've been publishing fiction since 1966, and I've changed a lot in the way I approach the world and in the way I organize the world" (quoted by Katsavos, 12). This confession, however, testifies to the indeterminacy and mutability of herself and her work. The author's "instructive lack of anxiety in acknowledging change" enabled her to return to one of her fictions, *Love*, in order to continue "the lives of its personae from her different perspective nearly two decades on" (Jordan:1990, 21). In her Afterword to *Love*, Carter describes her writing in the novel as an "almost sinister feat of male impersonation" (*Love*, 113). Although Carter's work has metamorphosed throughout the years, perhaps moving from "male impersonation" to female emancipation, it is possible to analyse the changes in relation to her handling of gender issues which appear in all her fictions.

Sometimes Carter may realistically depict the problems of gender as in her early works of social realism or she may deconstruct gender as in *The Passion of New Eve* or she may even suggest provisional strategic subjectivities as she does in *Nights at the Circus*. As she writes in "Notes from the Front Line", "I am all for putting new wine in old bottles, especially if the pressure of the new wine makes the old bottles explode" (quoted by Jordan:1990, 23). In all her works she addresses the sexism that is supported and perpetuated by historically privileged discourses and, thereby, contributes something new. However, she does it with increasing pressure in the hopes of ultimately "transforming actual fictional forms to both reflect and to precipitate changes in the way people feel about themselves" (quoted by Jordan, 23).

Carter's shifts in approach are significantly marked, as are Fellini's, by an increased application of the grotesque and postmodern strategies which contribute to that pressure. In this chapter, I will discuss together Carter's early works, those written in the sixties, in order to draw out important aspects of her application. However, I will concentrate on her last four

novels as they best illustrate the author's use of the grotesque and postmodernism to analyse, deconstruct, and more importantly, reconstruct gender and gender relations.

The Early Works

Carter's early works, *Shadow Dance* (1966), *The Magic Toyshop* (1967), *Several Perceptions* (1968), *Heroes and Villains* (1969) and *Love* (1971), are often separated into social realism and speculative fiction. *Shadow Dance*, *Several Perceptions* and *Love*, a collection critic Marc O'Day refers to as "the Bristol Trilogy", constitute the former category. Initially Carter thought of herself as "a social realist" (O'Day, 28) and in the trilogy she uses the grotesque to emphasize the problems of binary logic specifically within the "provincial Bohemia" of Bristol which she herself inhabited (quoted by O'Day, 25). O'Day specifies these novels as "sixties realism", a genre "saturated with domesticated gothic and psychological fantasy elements", but which fails to violate "the laws of everyday life" (24). The psychological fantasy elements in each of the novels are related to a consciousness of mutability characteristic of the sixties. The psychological focus, as well as its presentation within gothic atmospheres of gloom and doom, suggest a modernist approach similar to Fellini's in his early films. However, the Bristol Trilogy can be viewed in part as a response to and refutation of the continuum observed in Fellini's oeuvre.

Like Fellini, Carter uses the grotesque to emphasize the distress of characters who cannot come to terms with the indeterminacy and mutability of life. However, she sees their sense of alienation, disorder and loss of control as problematic. In contrast to Fellini, the grotesque world is not to be mourned, and Carter shows the unnecessary and often dangerous effects of such an attitude, particularly on women, throughout the trilogy. This revelation underscores the binaries and hierarchies which stem from the modernist concept of single and alienated otherness as well as the problematic denial of meaning and historical reality which mark Fellini's later films.

Morris (*Shadow Dance*) and Joseph (*Several Perceptions*) lament and fear the mutability of life and a world which is indeterminate. They share an apocalyptic view of the world as crumbling away, taking any possibility of meaning with it. Joseph, glimpsing "immense cracks in the structure of the real world", tries to keep a fact book and, like a logician, makes truth tables as "if they might help to shore up the crumbling dome of the world" (*SP*, 3). Morris, seeing a number of plastic gnomes at an auction, "wondered what

domestic catastrophe would make a man sell even the plaster gnomes from his garden. It was a horrid piece of evidence for mutability; Mutability, goddess of the auction room, dusty-fingered Mutability, the old-age-pensioner goddess" (*SD*, 25).

For Morris and Joseph, indeterminacy and mutability, the grotesqueness of the world, evokes what Kayser calls "a fear of life" and establishes a binary opposition between life and death. This evocation fails to acknowledge the regenerative aspect of the grotesque Bakhtin celebrates. Living in fear of life, the characters surround themselves with death. Morris "loved the smell of dirt, poverty and graveclothes" (*SD*, 23), and Joseph volunteers to work with "shit, old men dying, pus, and worst of all,...the sweet, blue gangrene. None of which featured in Jane Austen's moral universe nor could be stylized as a truth table" (*SP*, 4). These characters see a nihilistic loss of meaning in a world where people get injured or die, love ends and wars occur, and both contemplate suicide, although only Joseph actually attempts to kill himself. The characters experience a sense of alienation from a knowable world and this alienation separates them from the world and others. Binaries (such as self/world and self/other) seem to be established as Morris and Joseph place themselves above the world and others while at the same time detaching themselves from their impact on both. For them, mutability and indeterminacy mean an uncontrollable and perpetual decay until death, and under such perceived determinacy, they are unable to act, take charge of their lives, and accept responsibility for their actions (or lack of actions).

Binaries breed binaries and since Morris and Joseph have no control over the world, they see themselves as innocent victims. If they are innocent, the Other is guilty, and both try to enforce the distinction in their lives, though Joseph's attempt to sort the world into the two categories logically is more marked. For Joseph, Lyndon Johnson and his ex-girlfriend are guilty, but the badger at the zoo, with whom Joseph strongly identifies, and the monk who sets himself alight in the Vietnam War are innocent. Morris sees himself as innocent in his relationship with his wife, Edna, and in the case of Ghislaine's knifing and both women as guilty. However, Joseph is allied with his biblical namesake in that his grotesque dreams prophetically reflect the lesson he, as well as Morris, must learn. Life is too complex for such forced binaries, and trying to label all as "innocent" or "guilty" will only lead to torment. The grotesque dreams of both Joseph and Morris express their anxiety, but more importantly, they point out that the order the characters attempt to impose, is the source of their suffering.

Once Joseph begins to change his strict perceptions of the world, allowing for its indeterminacy and mutability, he is no longer fearful of life. He acknowledges his own guilt and his tortuous visions cease. He experiences, in the miraculous carnivalesque Christmas Eve party which ends the novel, "a paradigm crisis", as Harpham would say. At midnight, out on a parapet, Joseph is "suspended in crazy heavens between wings and bells" (*SP*, 135). In this liminal phase, it seems Joseph acknowledges that enough anomalies have emerged to discredit his binary thinking so that he can no longer adhere to it. He finally comes to terms with what he fears and erupts into the most cathartic and carnivalesque laugh: "Joseph, all at once surrendering to the inexplicable, swung back and forth with the door and laughed. He laughed so much he became weak and limp. He laughed so much [the others] caught the infection too..." (136). In this carnival atmosphere "hostile to all that was mortalized and completed" (Bakhtin:1984, 10), ideas are open to change and new possibilities exist so that all problems are solved, misconceptions are put right and even the crippled are cured. Most importantly, Joseph finally becomes "friends with time again" (146). As Carter writes, "There is no way out of time. We must learn to live in this world, to take it with sufficient seriousness, because it is the only world we will ever know" (*SW*, 110). Unfortunately, Morris never does learn to live in this world and ends up in "the shadowed regions of death" (*SD*, 181).

The alienation of Morris and Joseph seems to be taken one step further in the characters Honeybuzzard (*Shadow Dance*) and Annabel (*Love*) who exemplify the latent dangers of simulacra theories. If truth and reference have ceased to exist then reality becomes what one wishes, an ahistorical artifice based on appearance with no reference, and these characters narcissistically escape from responsibility through the creation of fantasy worlds. Annabel, belonging to the "cult of appearances" (*Love*, 25), can only experience life through her own mythology which is based on romantic notions of gender and gender relations manifested in novels of sensibility. As Patricia Smith points out "sensibility is often nothing more than a façade to disguise a refusal to accept responsibility, a means by which to 'check out' and feign ignorance of the cause-and-effect relationships that govern one's environment" (Smith, 28). However, I will focus on Honeybuzzard as he succinctly expresses the problems produced by a denial of historical reality and meaning.

Honeybuzzard is strikingly camp and physically androgynous with a theatrical personality. He carries lipstick in his pocket and has bustle and corset ads on his walls, but

he is outwardly heterosexual, though thoroughly misogynistic. He is a grotesque combination of a cherub with "honey hair" and "golden softness" (honey) and a carnivorous bird of prey (buzzard). Such an image underscores his own indeterminacy. However, grotesqueness, as stated previously, does not deny subjectivity, although Honey denies the material and historical reality of life by living in an abstracted state of continual metamorphosis. It is a fantasy world where "What you want to believe is the truth" (*SD*, 125) and there are no repercussions. He plays Ghislaine, Morris and Oscar as if they are his puppets without any remorse. He even believes his own lies about the knifing of Ghislaine, reprimanding the teenagers he blames for being "so violent, so vicious - they should be horsewhipped" (59). His subjectivity is mere appearance as he falls in and out of fallacious identities, habitually wearing dark glasses, "false noses, false ears and plastic vampire teeth" (16). Sometimes he's "a song-and-dance man" (88) and sometimes "a virgin schoolteacher" (124). If he had his way he "would like to be somebody different each morning" (78). He says to Morris, "I like - you know - to slip in and out of me" (78), although the "me" is hardly ever manifested since his notion of self is "based on images, surfaces, appearances" (O'Day, 36).

In *Shadow Dance* it is possible to see Ghislaine's knifing as a result of Morris's binary thinking combined with Honeybuzzard's detachment. Since Morris positions himself in a dominant position, the power Ghislaine has over him through her apathy or "heartlessness", infuriates him enough to ask Honeybuzzard to teach her a lesson, and since Honeybuzzard is detached from both subjectivity and historical reality he readily carries through with his partner's request (*SD*, 34). Therefore, both responses are connected not only to the oppression of women, but specifically to violence against women. Furthermore, although Ghislaine's masochism brings her back to Honeybuzzard, within his fantasy world, Honeybuzzard is able to perform the ultimate act of power and take her life, though this act leads to madness.

The grotesque figure of Ghislaine serves multiple purposes in *Shadow Dance*. Her horrific scar reminds Morris of his own guilt for his infidelity as well as his complicity in her knifing, but she also embodies the indeterminacy and mutability of life which Morris laments and fears. Ghislaine's scar signifies to Morris the disintegration of a former self, and any sign of decay or approaching death sickens him, like the Struldbrugs in the café or the newsagent with cancer. In his eyes, Ghislaine is "a disgusting symbol of the human condition" (*SD*, 20). Moreover, in his binary thinking, woman is the opposite and, inevitably, the inferior of man,

and he has definite ideas of what constitutes the former category. His wife, Edna, was "a real woman" who "was by nature a nest builder, a home maker, a creator of warm coziness...a fine woman (no matter how flat her breasts were)" (42-3). The wife does not need breasts or looks or sex appeal, but her binary opposite, the whore, does. That is why Morris cannot bear to see Ghislaine in her grotesque state. Where once she was ideally perceived as a girl from a fairy tale, a "white and golden girl...with "yellow milkmaid hair" and as "a ravishing automaton", she is now described in more horrific, grotesque imagery as "bride of Frankenstein" (4), "witch-woman" (6), "vampire woman" (39) and "fiend woman" (79). Ghislaine no longer fits the idea of woman to which she was once categorized. She is no longer "Woman", but the grotesque "horror-movie woman", and is rejected by all those who once enjoyed her "Womanliness". Ghislaine shares with other females in the trilogy, particularly Edna and Annabel (*Love*), the passive and inferior position exemplified by Justine, the central character in the Marquis de Sade's novel *Justine, or The Misfortunes of Virtue* (1791) which Carter discusses in *The Sadeian Woman*.

Annabel and Edna are both "Victorian girl[s]" whose virtue depends, not "exclusively on the state of [their] hymen", but on their reluctance to have sex (*SW*, 48). Like Justine, their denial of their own sexuality is what makes them important to themselves (48). When Lee makes sexual advances towards Annabel, she will simply "lay back compliantly" with a blank look on her face (*Love*, 24). Edna is also "docile and obedient" (*SD*, 46), but when Morris wants to have sex, "she would sigh and put on her martyred smile" (120). Clasping her hands together as in prayer, she would consent only "if he wanted her, very badly" (120).

Ghislaine, on the other hand, is subject to "the Monroe Syndrome" which is another aspect of Justine. She is the "Good Bad Girl" (*SW*, 66). She "has all the appearances of a tart and an air of continuous availability but, when the chips are down, she would never stoop to sell herself" (66). She "is a debased cultural idea of a woman, [and] is appreciated only for her decorative value...[M]en would rather have slept with her than sleep with her. She is most arousing as a memory or as a masturbatory fantasy" (70). That is why, after she loses her "decorative value", Morris's masturbatory memory of their encounter makes him feel "as though he had had an erection at a funeral" (*SD*, 5).

Furthermore, because the woman is beautiful, "she arouses concupiscence. Therefore she knows in her heart she must be bad. If she is bad, then it is right she should be punished. She is always ready for more suffering. She is always ready for more suffering because she

is always ready to please" (*SW*, 70). Despite Honeybuzzard's brutal treatment of Ghislaine, she describes her knifing as "a spiritual defloration" (*SD*, 132) and begs to have him back as her "master" (166). Even Edna blames herself when Morris tries to force Oscar onto her: "She blamed herself; she must, somehow, have tempted him" (47). Pain and victimization play a central role in the symbolic myths of femininity which contribute to the construction of sexual desire and gender (Palmer, 186). In *The Sadeian Woman*, Carter shows the cultural consequences of these myths:

> The whippings, the beatings, the gougings, the stabbings of erotic violence reawaken the memory of the social fiction of the female wound, the bleeding scar left by her castration, which is a psychic fiction as deeply at the heart of Western culture as the myth of Oedipus, to which it is related in the complex dialectic of imagination and reality that produces culture. Female castration is an imaginary fact that pervades the whole of men's attitude towards women and our attitude to ourselves, that transforms women from human beings into wounded creatures who were born to bleed. (*Sadeian Woman*, 23)

Playing the virtuous Justine only leads all three characters to their demise. Carter explains why this is so:

> Beauty, youth and innocence in women give them an artificial ascendency over a world that allots them love and admiration to precisely the extent a beautiful, young and innocent woman is deprived of the ability to act in the world. She is compensated for her defencelessness by a convention of respect which is largely false. Herself mystified by herself, narcissistically enamoured of the idea of herself as Blessed Virgin, she has no notion at all of who she is except in fantasy. To the extent that she has been made holy and thinks herself as such, so she is capable of being desecrated. Purity is always in danger. (*Sadeian Woman*, 73)

Edna ends up "a shadow of her former self" (*SD*, 123), and Annabel and Ghislaine both end tragically. As Carter concludes her chapter on Justine, "To be the *object* of desire is to be defined in the passive case. To exist in the passive case is to die in the passive case - that is, to be killed. This is the moral of the fairy tale about the perfect woman" (*SW*, 77).

In the speculative fictions, *Magic Toyshop* and *Heroes and Villains*, Carter shifts the perspective from male to female characters, and challenges the idea of woman as victim (prevalent in the Bristol Trilogy), but continues to show the misogyny behind the binaries that her characters face. The "psychological fantasy elements" of the realism that prevailed in her works of the sixties are gone as well as the fear of indeterminacy and mutability and the problematic denial of meaning, but the Gothic overtones remain. In the preface to *Heroes and Villains*, Carter quotes Leslie Fiedler: "The Gothic mode is essentially a form of parody, a

way of assailing clichés by exaggerating them to the limit of grotesqueness." Although the use of the grotesque is limited in these fictions, the extremity of the binaries in these Gothic fantasies makes the narratives verge on the grotesque. Through grotesque exaggeration and literalization of cultural ideas based on binaries, Carter uses and abuses the ideas in order to subvert them (Hutcheon:1988: 3). Her increased incorporation of intertexuality in these novels marks a more postmodern approach as well as foregrounds how pervasive misogyny is in Western culture.

In *The Magic Toyshop*, Melanie has the "beauty, youth and innocence" which she mistakenly believes entitles her to love and admiration, but which also deprives her "of the ability to act in the world" (*SW*, 73). She narcissistically mystifies herself in the fantastical male-inspired images of Woman. The reader first encounters Melanie staring at herself, naked, in the mirror of her wardrobe impersonating different cultural images of Woman. Sometimes she is an innocent "Pre-Raphaelite" or a smug "Cranach Venus". Sometimes she performs tableau vivants of Toulouse-Lautrec's works and, after reading *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, she puts forget-me-nots in her pubic hair. Her identity as a young woman is based on her desirability, which is founded on the ideas of desirability manifested in the art she imitates.

The need to be desirable leads Melanie to desperate acts. She sells her brother's books in order to buy false eyelashes and she fervently prays to God, despite her lack of belief, to let her get married or, at least, have sex (*MT*, 8). She also prematurely tries to "appropriate her mother's sexual rite of passage" by putting on her mother's wedding dress (Mulvey:1994, 234). Holding her mother's dress, which stained and crumpled at the slightest touch, she realizes "Virtue is fragile" (*MT*, 13), and she soon rips and stains the dress with her own blood out in the garden.

The Donne paraphrase which describes her new-found sexuality, "O, my America, my new found land", becomes painfully ironic when she discovers that the night she wears the dress is the same night her parents' plane crashes in America. This "uncanny and also punitive" coincidence, typical of folk stories, will inevitably take her to a new-found land (Mulvey:1994, 234). The narcissistic joy she once felt is replaced now by self-disgust. She smashes her mirror and paints "a formalized mask" on her face in order to hide from her parenticidal image of herself (*MT*, 27). For Melanie, it is a direct result of her actions that she and her siblings are banished to the mirrorless home of Uncle Philip. Contemplating the

dire conditions of her new circumstances, she says, "Eve must have felt like this on the way east out of Eden, And it was Eve's fault" (94). Eve, another cultural and mythological image of Woman, is banned from all that is good because she, like Melanie, discovers and acknowledges her own sexuality. Mythologies, found in art, literature (novels as well as folk stories), and religion, control Melanie as if she were a puppet, and this cliché is exaggerated to the point of becoming grotesque. The binary logic beginning with man/woman readily leads to other dichotomies - active/passive, master/servant, puppetmaster/puppet. Melanie is metaphorically, and at times literally, a puppet. Ideas of Woman and marriage pull her strings, manipulating how she sees and acts. Even despite the loss of the narcissistic image she once had of herself, myths continue to control her.

Melanie may no longer see herself as a "Pre-Raphaelite" or a "Cranach Venus", but her Uncle Philip sees her "as she had once seen herself" (*MT*, 141), and he tries to transform her into one of his marionettes. Uncle Philip sits with "patriarchal majesty" and drinks from a mug labelled "father" as he is the manifestation of patriarchal power. His "authority was stifling" (73), and "[e]verything was flattened to paper cut-outs by [his] personified gravity" (169). The power he possesses is embodied in the myths which patriarchy has produced, and Carter comments on many of these myths in her intertextual approach. She reworks motifs from the Edenic myth, mentioned above, but also from E.T.A. Hoffmann's Tale *The Sandman* and Freud's account of the psychic structures relating to the family unit in order to analyse and critique the cultural constructs of femininity and female subordination (Palmer, 183).

Pauline Palmer, in her article, "From 'Coded Mannequin' to Bird Woman: Angela Carter's Magical flight", describes Carter's reworking of Hoffmann and Freud:

> Freud, in his psychoanalytic analysis of [*The Sandman*], foregrounds male experience. He interprets it as symbolic of male fears of castration and marginalises the motif of the female puppet Olympia. Carter, on the contrary, makes the puppet central. She treats the relations between puppet-master and puppet as symbolic of the control exerted by a patriarchal culture on women and the roles available to them...In representing them, Carter pinpoints the ambiguities in woman's position. She foregrounds the contradiction between the romantic images of femininity reproduced in culture and art, and the facts of sexual violence. (Palmer, 184)

Violence is found at the heart of the conventional family structure. Margaret, who wears a collar like a dog, suffers intolerably as a traditional wife and is literally unable to talk back. Anyone who goes contravenes the father's wishes, such as Finn, is mercilessly beaten.

Furthermore, Finn, who in the end symbolically kills the father, is partly blind from a bee sting, which symbolically suggests castration, and the severed hand that Melanie imagines represents her deferent and disempowered position in the family unit. Sexuality itself is shown to play a large role in securing woman's subordination and heterosexual practice is revealed to be a key element in maintaining male supremacy (Palmer, 186). Carter de-romanticizes ideas of sex and marriage by contrasting "Melanie's romantic fantasies about 'the lover made up out of books and poems she had dreamed of all summer' and her predatory lover, Finn, his 'insolent, off-hand, terrifying maleness, filling the room with its reek'" (187). Their first kiss is not romantic, but "a sexual assault" (187). Melanie must resign herself to a life with Finn, so that despite Finn's defeat over Uncle Philip, she still seeks "refuge from one man in the arms of another" (187).

When Melanie literally becomes a puppet in Uncle Philip's production of *Leda and the Swan*, she is "wretched from her own personality" (*MT*, 166). She watches from afar as she had done previously, pretending to watch a melodramatic film of her reality instead of actually living it. Here, Carter shows how technologies, such as film, and other cultural artifacts, such as myth, produce and perpetuate the ideas of which Melanie is a victim. Carter makes a similar suggestion in *Love*, when Lee tries to describe Annabel's suicide attempt to his mistress Caroline. Everything he said "could not fail to breathe stale cliché for he had seen so many scenes of this nature in 'B' feature films" (*Love*, 50) and in *Shadow Dance*, Morris habitually responds: "Life imitating rotten art again" (*SD*, 6). In *The Magic Toyshop*, Carter also critiques the film-viewing process. As Melanie says, "Watching a film was like being a voyeur, living vicariously" (*MT*, 76). However, the power of the gaze, which is "a practical means for men to impose control on women, as well as a symbol of sexual domination" is no longer the privilege of men (Palmer, 185). When Melanie discovers that Finn has drilled a peephole in her wall, "she responds with indignation to the intrusion on her privacy and retaliates by using the peephole to spy on Finn back" (185). Furthermore, when she peeks through the peephole, Finn is walking on his hands. He is not only the object of the gaze, but "the freak and 'spectacle'" as well (185). Such a role reversal shows that "the roles adopted by men and women are, in fact, flexible. They are open to change" (185).

Change is possible once patriarchy and its myths are removed, which is symbolically achieved in Finn's destruction of the swan. This "temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order" prompts a carnivalesque celebration in the house

(Bakhtin:1984, 10). It is "a soap-sud carnival" where all the myths and binaries of the past are washed away with laughter (*MT*, 185). As in the best Medieval carnivals, here there is a "suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions" (Bakhtin:1984, 10). The family can now celebrate their ethnicity, drinking "Guinness to prove [they're] Irish" (*MT*, 192) and joyfully playing jigs and reels. Uncle Philip no longer rules, but it is the "King of Misrule", Finn, who, in a carnival turnover, occupies Uncle Philip's chair (183). Margaret is now free to "examine the possibility of her own tomorrow", and can now be open about her incestuous relationship with Francie which, outside the carnival world, is forbidden (184). The celebration of sexual life, food and drink, mark their carnival's connection to the material bodily principle central to Bakhtin's notion of grotesque realism. It is "a true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal...hostile to all that was mortalized and completed" as all the characters, though particularly Melanie and Finn, experience change, renewal and freedom from determinacy.

The murdering of the swan in "the pleasure garden", makes Finn feel as though he is dying, an experience Melanie herself undergoes in her own garden back home. Here Melanie and Finn themselves become images of grotesque realism as their shared experience was not a death, but a rebirth into a new person. They here embody a perpetual process and transformation of death and rebirth. Finn's "satyr's grin", which symbolized his predatory "quality of maleness", disappears forever into one of his paintings and the new Finn promises to respect Melanie's "youth and innocence". No longer a puppet, Melanie insists that indeed she will not be rushed. They do finally sleep together, but "in exhaustion and for the mutual solace they may offer each other. Sexual relation can be simply that, without the gothic excitement of rape" (Jordan:1990, 29). With binaries and hierarchies suspended, Melanie "learns for herself that sexual relations need not be a violent affair of aggression and submission, but a negotiation of mutual needs" (29). Their first child will be christened "Proximity" which expresses the kinship they share now that Melanie has overcome her own class prejudice. The carnival ends when Uncle Philip returns and burns down the house. However, the carnival is no longer necessary once all the old myths and ways of thinking have been razed to the ground. It is a new world where nothing is left but Melanie and Finn standing in the garden, a setting which suggests the possible creation of new myths.

Heroes and Villains, Carter's second speculative fiction, is set in a Gothic, post-apocalyptic world where the survivors of the last war are divided into separate population

groups - "the professors [and their workers], who preserve the form but not the spirit of civilization in rigidly structured enclaves; the Barbarians, savage nomads who raid the enclaves for food and women; and the Out People, those mutated by radiation beyond the pale humanity" (Landon, 67). Another distinction is made between a world of reason in which the professors and their workers live, and a world of chaos where the Others live. The divisive and categorical character of this world is purposefully underscored. One of the quotes Carter prefaces *Heroes and Villains* with is from Jean Luc Godard's film *Alphaville*: "There are times when reality becomes too complex for Oral Communication. But legend gives it form by which it pervades the whole world". In this novel, Carter shows us that the world is indeed too complex for such rigid divisions and categories; however, people, trained to think binarily and desirous of superiority, will create legends or myths to impose a false but consoling order by which to understand it. The main character, Marianne, is a professor's daughter who lives in the world of reason where everything is clearly explained, labelled, categorized and defined.

Like Melanie, Marianne leaves her home to enter a foreign world, in this case, the world of the Barbarians. However, when she enters this other world, she discovers that the professor's explanations, labels, categories, and definitions are not sufficient - "reality becomes too complex". Her own strict definitions turn out, in fact, to be mythical. She also discovers that although the Barbarian world seems chaotic in comparison to her life in the ivy towers, the Barbarians have imposed their own distinctions and categories which, when it comes to gender, are not completely unlike the Professor's.

Carter uses the grotesque in this novel, as she did in *The Magic Toyshop*, to assist her in parodying competing binaries. The binaries in this novel are embodied by Marianne and her Barbarian lover, Jewel. Marianne places reason and civility over emotion and savagery, and thereby positions herself above the Barbarians, and Jewel places man over woman, positioning himself as superior to Marianne. Neither the categories nor the hierarchies they impose are sustainable, and Carter again exaggerates the clichéd binaries "to the limit of grotesqueness" in order to demythologize as well as underscore the problems inherent in dichotomous thought itself.

As with Melanie, Marianne is in a better position socially than Jewel. "She is well-educated, controlled, articulate. However, the social and educational advantages she enjoys are almost entirely cancelled out by the disadvantages of gender" (Palmer, 187). Despite her

kindness to Jewel, and her knowledge, which enables their escape, Jewel's binary thinking positions Marianne as woman and therefore, as passive victim and hostage, regardless of the historical reality. As Pauline Palmer points out, "The ideology of male dominance and female submission, Carter implies, is strong enough to obscure the actual facts of the situation" (187), and although Marianne "had wanted to rescue him...[she] found she was accepting his offer to rescue her" (*HV*, 18). Marianne is a strong woman who maintains her own autonomy, telling Jewel, "If I come with you, remember I'm coming of my own free will" (24). However, she is still, like many of Carter's female characters, a victim of abuse and sexual violence. Jewel beats her as she drives the lorry away from the enclave, and once they reach the Barbarian village, he rapes her when she tries to escape.

Palmer explains the problems concomitant with making female heroes victims of sexual harassment or rape:

> [Carter] runs the risk of depriving the hero of sexual and intellectual autonomy, and reducing her to the state of helpless victim. She also runs the risk of tainting her fiction with the attitudes associated with popular genres which exploit the topic of sex and violence for the purpose of titillation, reproducing the chauvinistic cliché that female pleasure is dependent on submission and victimisation. Carter succeeds in surmounting both these risks. She achieves this by foregrounding the contradiction between the female hero's intellectual autonomy and independent spirit, and her vulnerability to physical attack, one which the male protagonist exploits. (Palmer, 188)

Carter seeks to show the possibility of autonomy, but while remaining connected to the historical reality she critiques. The sex and violence in her novels are not for titillation or to be passively consumed, but reflect a reality that is meant to shock and outrage, which is exactly the response of Marianne and Melanie. Carter's grotesque writing yokes together seemingly incompatible elements, like strong women and physical vulnerability, in order to galvanize the reader into active contemplation and interpretation (Jordan:1990, 24). Women may be autonomous, but as long as women and men are viewed binarily and positioned within relationships of power, then both sexes remain unfree, tied to ideas which incarcerate them or even violate them, as is often the case with women. Similar to her female characters, Carter's male characters are given subjectivities which break gender expectations, but the acts of violence they commit are not condoned in any way (Palmer, 188). Men are also victims of myth, being "trapped in codes of aggression and competition" (188).

As Carter writes in *The Sadeian Woman*, "sexual relations between men and women always render explicit the nature of social relations in the society in which they take place

and, if described explicitly, will form a critique of those relations" (*SW*, 20). These relations seem to be based on myths founded on "the *reductio ad absurdum* of bodily difference between men and women" - "[T]he prick is always presented erect, in an alert attitude of enquiry or curiosity or affirmation; it points upwards, it asserts. The hole is open, an inert space, like a mouth waiting to be filled" (4). Woman then becomes passive and Man becomes active, and the relationship between them becomes one of male domination. Masculine and feminine become terms which express the positions in this power relationship. Therefore, Jewel must dominate and Marianne must submit. However, though anatomy may well be destiny, anatomy "is only part of an infinitely complex organisation" of self, and by far not the most significant part (4). As a result, both Marianne and Jewel are complex characters and the explicit description of their relationship critiques social relations based on power, and the devastating effects of these.

Neither Marianne nor Jewel conform to each other's preconceived ideas. Marianne is not passive or submissive, but strong and independent, and Jewel is not ignorant and savage, but intelligent and civilized. Furthermore, in a parodic turnaround which addresses traditional gender associations, it is the woman in this novel who superficially embodies reason and civility and the man who represents primitiveness and wears his heart on his face (*HV*, 33). Marianne's and Jewel's enslavement to their own rigid definitions has dire consequences for both of them. Marianne, by "denying [Jewel] an existence outside the dual being" they made at night, ultimately turns Jewel into "a phantom" (88-9). Jewel not only rapes Marianne out of fear, but, in the hopes of regaining some status in relation to himself, he reduces her to a vessel for procreation. However, despite the consequences and the disparities, which serve to contradict their ideas, they continue ruthlessly to enforce them and deny themselves the joyful possibilities available through an openness to change and indeterminacy.

In the end, Jewel, a shadow of his former self, can no longer rule and is murdered, and although Marianne finally gives up the logic of the professors, she adopts Donally's mythology which is heavily based on myths of Western culture. Myths may be "consolatory nonsenses", but they are also about power, and Marianne, still positioning herself as superior to the Barbarians, would rather rule than be ruled. "Like Machiavelli's prince, she intends to save herself by ruling through fear, subjugating the Barbarians" (Jordan:1990, 31). She will not be Eve or Lilith, but "the tiger lady" who will "rule them with a rod of iron" (*HV*, 150). The myth may be altered, but the structures of power and oppression will remain.

"a reciprocal pact of tenderness"

The end of *Heroes and Villains* illustrates the inimical by-products of myth - death and more myths - which will inevitably guarantee a future of oppression. Although binaries are ultimately maintained in the novel, an alternative is suggested. As Elaine Jordan points out, Marianne is "in touch with her anger; but not with her desire" (Jordan:1990, 31). She cannot break out from the confines of her logic, and whereas Finn becomes a companion for Melanie, Jewel remains an object for Marianne. He is the "The Unfortunate Lover" from the poem quoted at the beginning of the novel (31). The relationship is made impossible through narcissistic desire, and Marianne "embodies her estranged desire in the Barbarian Jewel" (Jordan:1992a, 121). It is a "self-preoccupied fantasy which interfere[s] in the possibility of relations[s] between people who are other in themselves, not just projections of each other's desires" (121). Furthermore, ideas of masculinity and femininity prevent Jewel from accepting Marianne. However, the behavioral modes of masculinity and femininity he sets credence by "are culturally defined variables [which have been] translated in the language of common usage to the status of universals" (*SW*, 6). They have become archetypes, and the moment a man and a woman are seduced by the "fantasy love-play of the archetypes", they lose their individuality (7). As Carter writes:

> The moment they succumb to this anonymity, they cease to be themselves, with their separate loves and desires; they cease to be the lovers who have met to assuage desire in a reciprocal pact of tenderness, and they engage at once in a spurious charade of maleness and femaleness. (*Sadeian Woman*, 8)

This passage, as Elaine Jordan points out, suggests that "a reciprocal pact of tenderness" seems to "exist naturally before social codes come into operation" (Jordan:1990, 20). For Carter, "Love is the positive term against which oppressive sexual relations are defined" (20). Although most of *The Sadeian Woman* is dedicated to examining these oppressive sexual relations, the conclusion comes back to love and its inherent freedom (20). In that work, Carter explores Sade's writing in order to analyse and expose feminine roles of victim and dominatrix (which are evidenced in myth), as well as to foreground Sade's espousal of sex for pleasure not procreation (20). However, Carter takes his work "as far as she can take it before turning on her precursor: the libertine is never free because his excitement depends not on his human object but on the existence of an authority to defy. He can never accept or enjoy free love" (20). Jordan quotes the last paragraph of *The Sadeian*

Woman:

> In his diabolic solitude, only the possibility of love could awake the libertine to perfect, immaculate terror. It is in this holy terror of love that we find, in both men and women themselves, the source of all opposition to the emancipation of women. (*The Sadeian Woman*, 150)

Typical of Angela Carter, this passage is open to multiple interpretations. As Jordan points out, "There is a flickering possibility, not that 'We are all terrified of love, and this is why women and men alike resist real emancipation', but that 'love is a holy terror' - something mischievous and perverse and intense, quasi-sacred, still exciting to the libertine - and *this* is the source of continued enthralment" (Jordan:1990, 20). Love is a deep, inscrutable, terrifyingly powerful passion and, as one Greek poet writes in his dedication to the goddess of love, "Our hearts through and through are wrung by its violence" (Ibykos quoted by Kinsley, 210). The fear of this mysterious force may be what motivates the imposition of power structures in false hopes of gaining some control, and, therefore, to love may be risky business. Carter, when asked, "What is the death defying somersault of love in *Nights of the Circus* and does it work?", she replies "No, it doesn't work. It has to do with risk taking and it doesn't work. It's risk taking at the highest level and it very often, and quite usually, leads to tears before bedtime, as my mother would have said" (quoted by Katsavos, 17). However, despite this disavowal of the "death defying somersault of love", throughout Carter's oeuvre, she provides the reader with glimpses of the positive possibilities of love.

In Carter's novel dedicated to the topic, reciprocal tenderness is suggested in a love scene between Annabel and Lee: "[He] gave her an honest and unpremeditated smile...and this never previously encountered smile enchanted her so much she kissed him of her own accord. She felt rather than saw his pleasure when she did so and this bewildered her even more for she was accustomed only to seeing" (*Love*, 34). An honest expression of love enables them to be and feel as indeterminate individuals and not as ideas; it prevents them from "succumbing to anonymity". In *Heroes and Villains*, rational Marianne cannot accept "the mystery of love and desire" (*HV*, 137), despite the fact that she feels "the magic source of attraction constituted by his brown flesh" was the most real thing (83). Jewel once says to her, "Come off your bough and teach me your vocabulary. Sooner or later, we might be able to converse" (54). However, neither is willing to treat the other as equal or allow for their differences, and love between them becomes impossible. Their adherence to socially

defined codes of class and sex is ultimately the source of their own demise:

> He raised his eyes and they looked at one another with marvelling suspicion, like heavily disguised members of a conspiracy who have never learned the signals which would reveal themselves to one another, for to neither did it seem possible, nor even desirable, that the evidence of their senses were correct and each capable of finding in the other some clue to survival in this inimical world. (*Heroes and Villains*, 148)

Carter's increasing focus on gender relations and the possibility of there being "a reciprocal pact of tenderness", evidenced in *The Passion of New Eve* and *Nights at the Circus*, seems to suggest that the first interpretation of her concluding paragraph in *The Sadeian Woman* is correct. Love is a possible solution as it allows for the "ever incompleted character of being" (Bakhtin:1984, 32). Nevertheless, it is not unproblematic. It could very well "lead to tears before bedtime".

War is hell, particularly for women.

The underlying binaries interrogated in the speculative fictions are again addressed in Carter's works of the seventies, but her use of the grotesque and postmodern strategies are markedly increased. *The Infernal Desire Machines of Dr Hoffman* indicates a notable change in approach for Carter, who wrote the novel in Japan, where she "learnt what it is to be a woman, and became radicalised" (quoted by Goldsworthy, 10).

In the seventies, Carter published *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* (1972), *The Passion of New Eve* (1977) and a collection of short works, *The Bloody Chamber* (1979). *Fireworks: Nine Profane Pieces* was published in 1984, but all the tales were written between 1970 and 1973. Although I will not be discussing her collections, they, like her novels, clearly fit in with her attempts to fill old form with new content. In both *Fireworks* and *The Bloody Chamber* Carter uses the tale form, which as shown in the beginning of this chapter, is open to mutability, to provide alternative applications and interpretations of the "system of imagery" at work in Western culture (*Fireworks*, 133).

In *Dr Hoffman* and *The Passion of New Eve*, as well as the two succeeding works, *Nights at the Circus* (1984), and *Wise Children* (1991), Carter chooses to utilize variations of the traditional journey form. In *Dr Hoffman* she uses the quest narrative, in *The Passion of New Eve*, the bildungsroman, and for her last two novels, the journeys of her characters' lives are explicated through biography and autobiography. The journey form, which tells or

retells of life experiences, readily allows for the incorporation, analysis and de-doxification of binaries, their effects and the mythical discourses which manifest and perpetuate them. In these novels, we can observe Carter's rejection of "realistic, psychologically complex 'characters'" (Rubenstein, 106) for more symbolic figures which serve to literalize and exaggerate cultural ideas based on binaries. The author's use of traditional journey forms, the dense intertextuality with which she imbues them, and her application of the grotesque enables Carter to critique from within to a much greater extent than previously possible, and ultimately to provide new content which may explode the form.

All four of Carter's last novels demonstrate a new dialogic style which places the narration in the hands of the main character and signifies the "foregrounding of diegesis" that Lodge attributes to postmodern works (Lodge, 28). For *Dr Hoffman* and *The Passion of New Eve*, the journeys are told through male protagonists, and the use of gendered address is necessary for Carter's purpose. In the latter novel, the author uses a male perspective in order to expose "patriarchal symbols of femininity" and the constructedness of gender through a literal reconstruction of the male character into a female. In the former novel, Desiderio's journey as a male becomes "a tour through the externalized collective unconscious of a hugely repressed society" (Bonca, 57), which is patriarchal and based on male dominance over women.

In *Dr Hoffman*, the Minister of Determination and Dr Hoffman represent a binary struggle that incorporates numerous cultural dichotomies. There are the mythical binaries; Dionysus vs. Apollo, Orc vs. Urizen, Eros vs. Civilization (Bonca, 57), the psychological; the id vs. the super-ego (Schmidt, 57), the artistic; surrealism vs. realism (Suleiman, 102), and, as Desiderio himself indicates, the literary; "a battle between an encyclopedia and a poet" (*IDM*, 24). Elaine Jordan, uneasy about summarizing the novel's significance, and "falling into the easy oppositions it subverts", suggests that the Minister represents "both conservative common sense, and Marxist claims to be scientific" and the Doctor "is both the surreal, liberatory opposition to both, and capitalist control of desire through the media" (Jordan:1990, 32). She also suggests that the Minister enforces an "obtusely masculine" city and Hoffman, "the father of fantasy", tries to feminize it, "but in fact he and the Minister are brothers really. Their war makes the world we live in" (32). In a patriarchal world based on relations of power, the Minister and the Doctor are different sides of the same coin, and no matter who wins the war, women will lose.

Carter, like E.T.A. Hoffmann, to whom she is indebted in the novel for a rich source of intertextuality, seeks to show the dangers of unrepressed fantasies and desires (Christensen, 65). However, as we have seen in *Heroes and Villains*, total reason may enforce an oppressive determinacy which will always fail to encompass our often indeterminate and paradoxical reality. Furthermore, to impose such rigid order may very well lead to madness as it does with the character, Dr Drosselmeier (an example of "the Hoffmann connection" in the novel), whose exposure "to an overdose of reality...had destroyed his reason" (*IDM*, 23). At first, the Doctor seems "attractive in his ability to think beyond binary oppositions, to read the world in ways not wholly dependent on a logic which would repress the unconscious in a hegemony of logocentrism" (Robinson, 99), but we discover early on through the Doctor's Ambassador that Dr Hoffman seeks "absolute authority to establish a regime of total liberation" (*IDM*, 38). The language here "foregrounds the idea that the Doctor's liberatory scheme is complicit in the same will to power that the Minister clings to" (Robinson, 99). As Sally Robinson argues, the two systems of the Minister (humanist) and the Doctor (posthumanist) are quickly revealed to share "the same ideological agenda: they both position Man as an imperialist subject whose desire gives free reign to exploitation and domination" (99).

Dr Hoffman, as Cornel Bonca points out, is about "masculine power,..masculine Eros and masculine Civilization", and when a society is based on sexual domination, there is no solution to the conflict represented by the Minister and the Doctor, only a dead end (Bonca, 61). Although the Minister and the Doctor each see their victories as liberatory for the people, it is not a carnivalesque liberation "from the prevailing truth and...established order" (Bakhtin:1984, 10). All "hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions" are not suspended, but, instead, reinforced as in the compulsory carnivals of Totalitarian regimes (10). Desire, as Carter points out in *The Sadeian Woman*, "does not just exist in an unspecified way, but is ideologically and historically constructed" (Lewallen, 156), and the desires of both the Minister and the Doctor are based on an ideology and history that defines and situates women in an inferior position. The desire of Desiderio is no different.

The various experiences of Desiderio, which are heavily based on male-centered discourses from Western culture, are "constructions of his desire" and in reading the novel we are forced to experience them along with him (Robinson, 100). As such, we are constantly made aware "that desire is, indeed, the 'motor force' of narrative, as Peter Brooks

would have it; and, further, that the "'engine'" behind the narrative, like the male "'erotoenergy'" Dr. Hoffman's revolution unleashes, is hostile to women. Desiderio's desire participates in the fantasy of colonization that, simultaneously marks the Doctor's and Minister's projects for 'liberation'" (100). In this novel, Carter specifically uses the grotesque, particularly the female grotesque to show how desire is complicit with domination. Grotesque images of women (the somnambulist Mary Anne, the female River People with phallocentric clitorises, the heavily tattooed female centaurs, the female freaks of the circus, the dehumanized automatons of the House of Anonymity, the female African warriors and Albertina in her many forms) serve to literalize masculine desires in a patriarchal society.

The images also serve to reveal those desires as underlying many of the discourses which provide the ideological structure of society. For example, the grotesque figure of the somnambulist Mary Anne literalizes the latent desires of the Sleeping Beauty tale and underscores romanticism's sadomasochistic underpinnings. The inscription of this tale, taken to grotesque extremes, ultimately enables Carter to reveal the necrophilia "at the bottom of this male fantasy about making love to a virgin and the attraction of a sleeping woman" (Schmidt, 57). Carter, by inscribing and raising the tale to grotesqueness, may better reveal the "sordid aspect of desire which is usually hidden under the beautiful roses of Sleeping Beauty" (57). The fairy tale, anthropology, religion, pornography, philosophy, imperialist discourses, psychoanalysis, and literature in general are all addressed, and this "hyperselfconscious mode of writing that insistently points to literary and cultural antecedents" is part of what makes this novel distinctly postmodern (Suleiman, 103). Carter exposes the underlying myths of male-centered discourses, even those which "invoke the excitement of lawlessness, chance, and liberation" (like those in her epigraph to the novel) in order to demystify them (Bonca, 59).

As stated previously, the tale follows the form of a traditional quest story, specifically an Oedipal quest, "which de Lauretis identifies...as paradigm in patriarchal culture" (Robinson, 101). Desiderio must seek and destroy the diabolical Doctor, who is a father figure, and after he kills the Doctor and his daughter, Albertina, who turns out to be even more diabolical, he returns a hero. "Like Oedipus, he has rid the city of its pollution and, also like Oedipus, must pay the price of his new knowledge: 'I knew I was condemned to disillusionment in perpetuity,' he reminisces. 'My punishment had been my crime'" (100). While Carter's deconstruction of culture's master narratives threatens their authority, "the

power within white capitalist patriarchy remain intact" (100). Desiderio's quest begins in the "thickly, obtusely masculine city" and ends at the Doctor's castle where his room is "chaste, masculine" and aptly contains issues of *Playboy*, *The New Yorker*, *Time*, and *Newsweek* (*IDM*, 199). Furthermore, as in a classic quest story, woman (or Albertina in this case),

> occupies a range of traditional object positions: she is fetish, a foil, the exotic/erotic object waiting at the end of his quest, but never a subject. She is, like Derrida's 'affirmative woman,' an object put into circulation according to the logic of male desire. As object of the male gaze, she is subject to regulation, exploitation and violence. (Robinson, 101)

Carter sees "the primacy of the Oedipus story in culture's master narratives" and its underlying erotic violence, and thereby would seem to "agree with Laura Mulvey's observation that 'sadism demands a story,' and perhaps vice versa" (101). *The Infernal Desire Machines of Dr Hoffman* reinscribes the Oedipal narrative in order to bring "to the surface the violent excesses of the transformation of women into Woman by exaggerating the complicities between desire and domination in Western culture's master narratives" (102). This deconstructive postmodern strategy is exercised through Carter's appropriation of a pornographic literary technique.

Carter writes in *The Sadeian Woman*:

> Many pornographic novels are written in the first person as if by a woman, or use a woman as the focus of the narrative; but this device only reinforces the male orientation of the fiction. John Cleland's *Fanny Hill* and the anonymous *The Story of O*, both classics of the genre, appear to describe a woman's mind through the fiction of her sexuality. This technique ensures that the gap left in the text is of just the right size for the reader to insert his prick into, the exact dimensions, in fact of Fanny's vagina or O's anus. Pornography engages the reader in a most intimate fashion before it leaves him to his own resources. (*The Sadeian Woman*, 15-6)

In *The Infernal Desire Machines of Dr Hoffman*, Carter specifically chooses a male-gendered subject for narration in order to show that the gap traditionally created in pornographic texts is actually an absence of women as subjects. As Robinson argues in her work on gender and representation:

> In *The Infernal Desire Machines of Dr Hoffman*, Carter appropriates a man's subjectivity to describe the fictions of his sexuality, but does so self-consciously; that is, the text foregrounds the problematics of gendered address by deliberately framing the female figures within the text, as well as the woman reader, as figments of a masculine imaginary. In containing women within a figure of Woman, Carter demonstrates how Woman is trapped *inside* gender. But, her strategic engagement with fictions of male subjectivity

> simultaneously demonstrates what it means to be *outside* hegemonic representations of gender, dismantling them from the margins. This text does, in fact, inscribe a 'hole' or gap; but it signifies an absence, rather than presence. While Woman is everywhere present in this novel, women are conspicuously absent. (Robinson, 103)

By using the format and techniques of a male-centered discourse, Carter does not, as some critics have suggested, reinscribe patriarchal attitudes (Clark:1987, Duncker:1984, Kappeler:1986). The sexual atrocities that are described at times with "detached curiosity", are not a product of "her cultural conditioning" as Paulina Palmer suggests (Palmer, 190). Carter uses postmodern parody to critically inscribe the patriarchal discourses only in order for them to be subverted. She has no choice but to inscribe them as "postmodernism knows it cannot escape implication in the economic (late capitalist) and ideological (liberal humanist) dominants of its time. There is no outside. All it can do is question from within" (Hutcheon:1988, xiii). Furthermore, disrupting representations of woman is a political necessity for feminists. In *The Infernal Desire Machines of Dr Hoffman*, Carter is demanding a critique of these representations, not identification or objectification. She presents the representations and reveals how they are created in order to educate her readers, to show them how the representations are politically motivated to obscure the fact that they are socially and discursively constituted. Her art is an example of that which, Linda Hutcheon says

> parodically inscribes the conventions of feminine representation, provokes our conditioned response and then subverts that response, making us aware of how it was induced in us. To work it must be complicitous with the values it challenges: we have to feel the seduction in order to question it and then to theorize the site of that contradiction. Such feminist uses of postmodern tactics politicize desire in their play with the revealed and the hidden, the offered and the deferred. (Hutcheon:1989, 154)

Carter makes explicit the "the complicities between desire and domination" and therefore, foregrounds "the text's enunciative apparatus" (Robinson, 104). Masculine hegemony over the places of enunciation is a strategy that has historically denied women self-representation and has aligned sexual difference with the subject/object dichotomy. Throughout the novel, Desiderio guarantees his subjectivity through the objectification of women (104).

In approaching a text that uses male-gendered address, a woman, as feminist theorists of narrative film have suggested, may find herself engaged in split identification (Robinson, 104). A woman, by virtue of her gender, may identify with the female or "feminine forces"

in the narrative, but because of various mechanisms, "such as first-person narration as the locus of desire", the text positions the woman to identify with the (male) protagonist (104). Due to the mechanisms of identification built into a first-person quest narrative, Carter's novel "seems to address its readers as male: as subjects who can enjoy, along with Desiderio, the triumphs of his desire" and his objectification of all the women he encounters (104). However, women reading Carter's novel cannot identify with either Desiderio or any of the women he imagines. Since the reader knows Desiderio is the creator of his own adventures, "a reader who identifies with him will uncomfortably share in his complicity", and the explicit portrayal of the "economies of male desire behind representations of women" makes identification difficult (105). "There is, quite simply, *no place* for a woman reader in this text; and that no place foregrounds the hom(m)osexual economy Carter is mimicking in it" (105). Furthermore, the novel demonstrates how those economies of male desire play out historically in narration itself (105). The ideology behind the representations and narratives is that of pornography which reinforces the paradigms of dominance and submission associated with the hierarchies of gender.

Carter, herself, is playing the role of moral pornographer by critiquing the social relations between men and women made explicit in their sexual relations. Although I agree with Palmer that Carter often "unthinkingly equates the term 'sex' with 'hetero sex'" (Palmer, 195), Carter's concern is foremost with the oppression of women. In order to reveal and scrutinize the binary thinking, which ultimately hierarchizes men over women and which expresses itself in the oppression of all women, she chooses to interrogate the hetero sex within which that dualism is most clearly evidenced. Her interrogation will often "produce *wincing*" as Elaine Jordan writes, but that is strategic. "Fascination and recoil are parts of the enticements of pornography", and Carter is not afraid, as many feminists are, of facing the fascination - "to spring forward *from* recoil, from wincing at an acknowledged desire" (Jordan:1992a, 124). As David Punter writes:

> [I]n her polemical book, *The Sadeian Woman*, Carter offended a good many feminists by suggesting that the structures she depicts, the structures of power and abuse, are not merely the constructs of a malignant masculine superego. They go, she suggests, far deeper than that and have their roots in a complex of control and submission which provides its own fantasy gratifications, not only for men but for women too. (Punter:1991, 148)

Carter's exaggeration and literalization of traditional conventions of first-person quest

narrative serves to:

> deconstruct the processes by which narrative engenders the subject as male through a violent negation of female subjectivity...this double strategy in Carter's text carries a sharp ideological critique that is not neutralized by the fact that the text does, in fact, represent Woman in all too traditional ways. On the contrary, it is through Carter's strategic engagement with various master narratives of Western culture that her critique of the politics of representation emerges. (Robinson, 117)

Instrumental to her critique is the use of the grotesque. Through grotesque literalization Carter reveals how desire is complicit with domination, and how the grotesque representations of Woman she offers are simply manifestations of the latent desires contained within and perpetuated by Western culture's master narratives. The female grotesques (Mary Anne, the women River People and Centaurs, the prostitutes, the African warriors, and Albertina) enable Carter to foreground the misogyny of fairy tales, primitive idylls, the vilification of women in religion, the dehumanization in pornography and in imperialist discourse and the idealization of Woman in the traditional quest story. These images make the novel difficult to enjoy; however,

> [while] this text presents many difficulties for a feminist reading, those difficulties foreground the stakes in pursuing such a reading. Carter is no idealist, not one to take a utopian leap beyond normative representations of Woman to some uncontaminated representation of women; rather, her text inscribes, in order to subvert, representations that produce women as Woman. (Robinson, 117)

Before leaving this novel, it is important to point out that this work, perhaps more than any other, utilizes a grotesque style which is evident from the beginning when Desiderio sets out his task. In attempting to retell his tale, Desiderio tries to impose order "on the mass of rebellious material" through memory; however, that order undercuts itself even as it is spoken (Manlove, 154). In his attempts at creating order, "the uncertainty that is Hoffman's trademark is simultaneously present" (154). Colin Manlove cites examples where expectations are undercut. For example, our ideas of war are confounded by the participation of "mirages", and Desiderio contradicts himself by offering four different reasons for why he is writing down his memoirs. Desiderio even undercuts how he plans to re-tell the history, and thus, the grotesque style helps make explicit not only the gap between signifier and signified, but "the problems and processes involved in the act of narration" (Lodge, 41).

The character's first expression of desire is also described in a strikingly grotesque

style, "in a language of changing signs he cannot yet read" (Schmidt, 57). In a dream, Desiderio is on an island in the middle of an immense lake, waiting and waiting for "the object of [his] vigil" to come (*IDM*, 30). Desiderio describes the moment when it finally does arrive: "As it drew near, I saw it was a swan. It was a black swan. I cannot tell you how ugly it was; nor yet how marvellous it was" (30). As Manlove writes, "We assume it is a white swan; it is black. We assume it is yet beautiful; it is ugly. But then we are told that it was both ugly and marvellous" (Manlove, 153). (Similar examples are found in succeeding works such as the "sumptuous carpet...fouled with dog turds" (*PNE*, 90) and the "skipping-rope of egg-shaped pearls" (*NC*, 11)). It is a grotesque bird, being described as both a swan and as "a snake about to strike", as well as "a woman...[who] issued from her throat a thrilling, erotic contralto" (*IDM*, 30-1). It turns out to be one of the many grotesque manifestations of the object of Desiderio's desire, Albertina.

Finally, Desiderio is "a man caught between two fathers, the Reason-freak Minister and a mad Dionysian genius" (Bonca, 60). As he says himself, "perhaps the whole history of my adventure could be titled 'Desiderio in search of a master'" (*IDM*, 190). Therefore, it makes sense that Desiderio's style is "an unsettling combination of English empirical exactitude...and a fevered high-brow Gothic decadence whirling with emotional tumult" (Bonca, 59-60). For example, Desiderio's description of Exhibit Four in the peepshow, "EVERYONE KNOWS WHAT THE NIGHT IS FOR", trains "the surgical lights and steely instruments of cold reason on the dark chthonic recesses of sexual desire" (60):

> Here, a wax figure of the headless body of a mutilated woman lay in a pool of painted blood...Her arms stuck out stiffly on either side of her and once again I noticed the loving care with which the craftsmen who manufactured her had simulated the growth of underarm hair. The right breast had been partially segmented and hung open to reveal two surfaces of meat as bright and false as the plaster sirloins which hang in toy butcher's shops while her belly was covered with some kind of paint that always contrived to look wet and, from the paint, emerged the handle of an enormous knife which was kept always a-quiver by action (probably) of a spring. (*Hoffman*, 45-6)

In discussing the exhibit's title, Cornel Bonca points out, "it's hard to tell what we're suppose to 'know' from it, ironically or otherwise" (60). She also suggests how the artificiality of the representation indicates "a gap in knowledge, a gaping wound, really, between horror and its representation. And this gap makes the tableau more horrible, not less" (60). It is as she describes a semiotic horror: "what incites a reader's revulsion and fear is precisely the opening that the description creates between signifier and signified. The reality of mutilation,

while calling up deep and ancient anxieties, is presented as unpresentable; and the viewer (or reader) experiences the fear of mutilation in deep solitude precisely because language and image can't seem to get at it" (60). This experience is endured in the other examples of grotesque style discussed above, though more as semiotic dismay than horror. When the reader cannot understand Desiderio's usage of the term "war" or when the idea of a swan is undermined and the swan itself defies definition, the gap between signifier and signified causes the reader despair.

Through Desiderio, Carter reveals both the erroneous belief of the minister ("no shadow between the word and the thing described"), as well as the grim physical reality which Hoffman denies (*IDM*, 101). Bonca writes that this style "is essentially pornographic" (Bonca, 60). Like the harsh white lights used in pornography, Carter "deliberately shows language in cruel relation to its subjects, allowing it to perform, in dark satiric fashion, the objectifying function it usually performs in social discourse" (60). Once again then, Carter uses and abuses pornographic conventions "for morally and ideologically instructive purposes" (60).

Carter shows the impossibility of total order, but without endorsing the chaos and disorder that Hoffman celebrates. There may be a gap between signifier and signified, but there is the possibility of meaning, and Carter uses the grotesque to show the gap. Harpham writes, "Grotesqueries both require and defeat definition: they are neither so regular and rhythmical that they settle easily into our categories, nor so unprecedented that we do not recognize them at all. They stand at a margin of consciousness between the known and the unknown, the perceived and the unperceived, calling into question the adequacy of our ways of organizing the world" (Harpham, 3). By using the grotesque within the paradoxical postmodern strategy of complicity and critique, Carter's novel, like the grotesque itself, "continually invites and undermines interpretation", and thereby, foregrounds the characteristic indeterminacy and mutability of reality which is continually open to interpretation and provisional meaning (Manlove, 157). Myths, in all their various forms, are inscribed to grotesque extremes to force the reader to see and question the conventions and underlying ideologies of the dominant cultural and social forces, and thus effectively subvert them. Carter forces her readers on to the margin where "[l]ooking at ourselves looking at the grotesque, we can observe our own projections, catching ourselves, as it were, in the act of perception" (Harpham, 43).

"One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman"

The Passion of New Eve, like *Dr Hoffman*, is a post-apocalyptic novel with a male narrator who travels on a mythical journey. As with Desiderio, the journey of Evelyn explores various myths of Western culture through the main character's eyes in order to foreground the underlying ideologies based on oppressive binaries, as well as the indeterminacy of the symbols they exploit, and thereby, underscore myth's constructedness. Now, however, the focus is on gender, not desire, although both make legible the binary and hierarchical structure of sexual difference. As in *Dr Hoffman*, certain phallocentric discourses are shown to perpetuate "gender mythology", and references are made again to the same male-centered discourses addressed previously, but now cinema receives greater attention.

Our "persistence of vision", which greatly assists Dr Hoffman in his diabolical plans, is again found to be complicit in giving false credibility to images we see. Since we visually experience the images cinema offers, we believe them to be accurate representations and not constructions built on theory, social conditioning or habit. It is the same with mirrors, which are found throughout the novel, often cracked and, thereby, "representing the distortions of image analogous to the mind's inevitable distortions of what is seen as well as what is imagined" (Rubenstein, 106). The narrative of this novel turns on "the unreliability of appearances, the mirroring, doubling, splitting, and dissolution of images of the gendered subject or object" (106).

As in Carter's previous novel, *The Passion of New Eve* has no "realistic, psychologically complex 'characters'" (Rubenstein, 106). Rather, Carter's "expressionistic psychodrama is patterned through the deliberate invocation - and, frequently, exaggeration and parody - of figures and symbols from Western cultural mythology" (106). The author's invocation of these figures and symbols to the point of grotesqueness results in a dissonance which forces the reader to contemplate, interpret, and hopefully gain new meanings. Similar to the metalinguistic contradiction of being inside and outside, through postmodern parody, Carter is both complicit and distanced in order to foreground Western mythologies and ultimately subvert them. She declares the book's rationale near the outset: "Our external symbols must always express the life within us with absolute precision; how could they do otherwise, since that life has generated them?...A critique of these symbols is a critique of our lives" (*PNE*, 6). The grotesque and postmodern parody assist her in exposing "our refusal of androgynous natures in favor of reductive gender roles that we generate the symbols to

perpetuate" (Blodgett, 50). (However, androgyny is not the only solution to the male/female binary as we will see in Carter's last two novels). The inscription of myths taken to grotesque extremes helps Carter in her project of deconstructing and mediating "the highly oppositional sex roles perpetuated in patriarchy...[and of representing] the damage inflicted on both men and women through their unconscious indenture to polarized gender scripts" (Rubenstein, 115).

Since it is impossible to return to or identify a pre-symbolic state, any gender image or ideal cannot reflect any original, but is in fact an illusion. As Judith Butler writes, a gender image, "precisely because it has a phantasm as its ideal, is bound to fail" (Butler, 55), and in *The Passion of New Eve*, Carter invokes literalizations of these images in order to make the phantasm most explicit. The novel opens with the image of the Hollywood icon, Tristessa de St Ange, "the most beautiful woman in the world" and the object of Evelyn's (the main character) sexual fantasies since adolescence (5). Tristessa, like Mary Anne (*IDM*) or Sleeping Beauty or De Sade's Justine, is "the very type of romantic dissolution, necrophilia incarnate" (7), and Evelyn loves her "because she was not of this world" (8). Tristessa is not of this world as she is a symbol, the very emblem of female suffering. Her "specialty had been suffering. Suffering was her vocation" (8). Similar to Desiderio and Sade, Evelyn finds this suffering sexually arousing; as an adolescent, it causes a "twitch in [his] budding groin" and as an adult it moves him to pay her "a little tribute of spermatozoa" (8,5). Even after Evelyn becomes Eve, he feels an "ecstasy of regret" that he can not indulge in her "invitation to necrophilia" (121).

The next image of woman the reader encounters is Leilah, the grotesque incarnation of woman as the savage, temptress and sexual object of prey (Schmidt, 62). She is "a fox" and exudes "hot, animal perfume" (21). She is "a siren", a "ghetto nymph, "a mermaid", a "succubus". Evelyn "regards his black lover as an object for the fulfilment of his own sexual desires and as a reflection or extension of himself: 'the nearest thing to myself I had ever met'" (Rubenstein, 108). Leilah's "sex palpitated under [his] fingers likes a wet, terrified cat yet she was voracious, insatiable, though coldly so, as if driven by a drier, more cerebral need than a sexual one" (*PNE*, 18). Evelyn describes this need as "a vindictiveness against herself, as though, each time she submitted herself, not to [him], but to a craving she despised, or else to a loathed but imperiously demanding ritual, as if this, this exorcism by sensuality, was what her sensuality needed to make it real" (18). In some ways, she is like

Ghislaine or the Good Bad Girl, who, because she arouses concupiscence, knows she is bad and must be punished. Evelyn certainly punishes her by leaving her tied to the iron bed all day (sometimes lying in her own excrement), beating "the wind-bells out of her" (28) and forcing her to have sex against her will. To Evelyn, Leilah seems "a born victim" (28). However, her "exorcism by sensuality" is more likely her vain attempt at feeling real, when she is, in actuality, just an image.

Evelyn adores watching Leilah dress in the mirror before she goes out at night to perform. He loves watching her become the thing he desires, which she invokes "with a gravity that recalled witchcraft" (*PNE*, 28). By conscious effort, Leilah brings into being "a Leilah who lived only in the not-world of the mirror and then became her own refection" (28). Together, Leilah and Evelyn "create a distorted, illusionary mirror world, the 'solipsistic world of the woman watching herself being watched in a mirror'" (Rubenstein, 108). The closer Leilah comes to achieving his ideal, the more sexually attractive she is, and Leilah's survival depends on her being attractive. She defines herself as the sexual object Evelyn and the men she performs for want her to be. As Ricarda Schmidt writes:

> The mirror which shows another Leilah symbolizes the male gaze that gives woman an image of herself which is, to begin with, not related to reality. The woman then tries to transform herself into that symbol of woman that the male gaze shows her. In this mirror episode, Carter transfers the 'mirroring stage' which Lacan described in relation to the development of the symbolic 'I' in children, to the symbol woman. The symbol into which Leilah transforms herself defines woman as object, as meat. (Schmidt, 62)

Once Evelyn has had his fill of meat he begins to grow bored with Leilah, and when he discovers Leilah is carrying his child, "any remaining desire for her vanished" (*PNE*, 32). That his used whore actually becomes pregnant is "an embarrassment", "a shocking inconvenience" (32).

The images of woman which Tristessa and Leilah manifest are ultimately revealed to be only phantasmic ideals of Evelyn who, in the novel, represents a patriarchal view that denies women a subjectivity outside of gender. At the end of the novel, Leilah is a guerilla leader, "fighting in a leftist alliance, in the general insurrection of those solipsistic American lifestyles" through which the story line passes (Jordan:1992b, 175). Leilah is no longer the image of Evelyn's desires; it's "YEAR ONE" and women are, this time, making the history that was previously denied them.

Tristessa is an even more striking example of gender constructedness, although she

is too much consumed in her ideal ever to re-enter history completely. Evelyn says of Tristessa, "She had been the dream itself made flesh" (*PNE*, 7), but the flesh he knows her in "was not flesh itself but only a moving picture of flesh, real but not substantial" (7-8). This beautiful symbol of suffering was "as beautiful as only things that don't exist can be" (6). In fact, "the most beautiful woman in the world" is actually a man. Tristessa is the "perfect man's woman" as he

> had made himself the shrine of his own desires, had made of himself the only woman he could have loved! If a woman is indeed beautiful only in so far as she incarnates most completely the secret aspirations of man, no wonder Tristessa had been able to become the most beautiful woman in the world. (*The Passion of New Eve*, 129)

Tristessa and Leilah are not the only cultural symbols that Carter inscribes in order to subvert. After Evelyn leaves Leilah and the chaos of the city for the rational clarity of the desert, he discovers the desert is as enigmatic as "the dark room, the mirror, [and] the woman" he tries to leave behind (*PNE*, 39). It is here that Evelyn meets Mother, another literalization of an ideal, but one which embodies both the phallocentric and the feminist matriarchal myth. Such a combination is possible as, like the Minister and the Doctor in *Dr Hoffman*, they are two sides of the same coin. Through Mother, Evelyn is transformed into Eve to experience for himself the pain of historically accepted gender constructions.

In the desert, Evelyn is captured and taken to Beulah, "a mysterious underground city inhabited by feminists who try to recreate matriarchal symbols of woman within a highly technological world" (Schmidt, 62). Through advanced technological wonders, the leader of Beulah has been reconstructed into the grotesque literalization of the Mother ideal, "a sacred monster. She was personified and self-fulfilling fertility" (*PNE*, 59). Her head is as big as "Marx's head in Highgate cemetery". She has a neck like a bull's and wears "a false beard of crisp, black curls" like Queen Hatsheput. She is "breasted like a sow...so that, in theory she could suckle four babies at one time", and her vagina is "like the crater of a volcano". She has gigantic limbs - "Her ponderous feet were heavy enough to serve as illustrations of gravity, her hands, the shape of giant fig leaves, lay at rest on the bolsters of her knees" - and her skin "rucked like a Greek peasant's goatskin bottle" (59). The exaggeration of the bodily form and the focus on the lower bodily stratum and regenerative qualities appear to make Mother an exemplary figure of grotesque realism. However, Bakhtin bases his concept on the utopian elements of carnival which suspend "hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and

prohibitions" (Bakhtin:1984, 10). In this novel, however, Mother is a grotesque literalization of an idea, and whether patriarchal or feminist, any idea of Woman is still an essentializing construction which maintains hierarchically organized binaries based on the nexus of gender and power, and therefore, all that carnival is supposed to suspend.

In *The Passion of New Eve*, Mother and Beulah serve as the grotesque literalization of both the phallocentric and feminist matriarchal myths; however, the literalization of these myths does not fulfill the desires on which they are based, but, in fact problematizes and parodies them. Carter, using postmodern strategy, inscribes these myths and their values, but through their grotesque literalization, their constructedness and the ultimate indeterminacy of their symbols is foregrounded, forcing us to question the ideology on which they are based. Both the idea of the healing, reconciling Mother and the idea of a Mother goddess prove to be complicit in denying women a place in history.

The name Beulah, "recalls Bunyon's country 'upon the borders of heaven' from which the pilgrims pass on to eternal life, and Blake's 'daughters of Beulah'" (Schmidt, 62). In both, the land of Beulah is "the imaginary place of ideal patriarchal marriage", and in Blake's work, "the daughters of Beulah exist only in relation to the male, for the male, and in the male's imagination" (62). For Carter, then, Beulah, becomes an appropriate term for that promised paradise of the maternal womb. Mother is for Evelyn the "figure of Mother buried (repressed) in the male psyche" (Rubenstein, 110), that figure, as Evelyn says, "who'd always been waiting for me, where I'd exiled her, down in the lowest room at the root of my brain" (*PNE*, 58), but this Mother is "a Freudian little boy's worst fantasy" (Jouve, 156). Now in Beulah, the "simulacrum of the womb" (*PNE*, 52), Evelyn finds himself "at the Oedipal 'place of transgression', the door to the garden of Eden, which is equated with re-entry into the Mother's womb. However, the entrance to Paradise becomes a *vagina dentata* as Evelyn is engulfed, raped, and expelled with dispatch by the omnipotent (but also grotesque and ludicrous) 'Castratrix of the Phallocentric Universe" (Rubenstein, 110). Although Mother's "arms were the paradigm of mothering, they offered [him] no refuge; that women are consolation is a man's dream" (*PNE*, 60), and this fantasy denies women a physical reality. Mother's breasts are only for nourishment, not comfort, and Evelyn painfully realizes he had lost all right of re-entry into the womb upon birth. The matriarchal myth fails Evelyn and eventually it also fails Mother.

It may seem strange that the priestesses of Beulah, who "train with nuclear hand-

weapons for the war of the sexes and aim at parricide and castration" would choose to name their home after a patriarchal paradise (Schmidt, 62). While Carter applies the name partly in order to relocate meaning and, thereby, "establish a semantic contradiction and multiply the symbolic associations" (Vallorani, 372), she also wishes to parody the fact that the feminist version of Beulah is just as destructive as the patriarchal one.

In some ways, Mother is like the mythical mother of Romulus who began Roman mythology, but she is creating a new mythology for her country based on the old cultural myths. She may be putting new wine in the old bottles, but she is using the same old grapes which keep the bottles intact. Mother is no better than Donally in *Heroes and Villains* as her new versions maintain the binaries that guarantee oppression. The invocation of these myths in both novels serves to underscore that the old myths as well as the new are ultimately oppressive as long as they are founded on binaries of power. The symbol of the Virgin Mother, for example, is being recycled with little alteration so that a denial of women's sexuality is also regenerated. Mother is also trying to create a new Eve to take over from old Adam, but her "self-constructed theology" is based on the Oedipal myth which has at its heart "the social fiction of the female wound, the bleeding scar left by her castration...[which] transforms women from human beings into wounded creatures who were born to bleed" (*SW*, 22). According to Mother, Oedipus was sensible to want to kill his father, "who dragged him from the womb in complicity with historicity" (*PNE*, 53). Mother thinks that by having Evelyn journey "back to the source", time may be killed and a new timeless myth created. However, it is revealed by Leilah (now Lilith), near the end of the novel, just how this matriarchal myth failed. She explains to Eve(lyn) that "Historicity [soon] rendered myth unnecessary" (173). Mother had "tried to take history into her own hands but it was too slippery for her to hold. Time has a way of running away with itself, though she had set all the symbols to work" (172-3). When Mother discovers she cannot make time stand still, she has a nervous breakdown and has to resign as god-head. All the Priestesses of Cybele, have to leave off "simulating miraculous births for a while" and become "storm-troopers" (173).

Despite Mother's advanced application of technology, which "made symbolism a concrete fact" (*PNE*, 58), Mother, Beulah and the new matriarchal, timeless mythology of which they are a part, are nevertheless revealed as constructions. Mother is the "hand-carved figurehead of her own, self-constructed theology" (58), and the work behind this self-

construction is made explicit in the novel: Mother "was her own mythological artefact; she had reconstructed her flesh painfully, with knives and needles, into a transcendental form as an emblem...and flung a patchwork quilt stitched from her daughters' breasts over the cathedral of her interior, the cave within the cave" (60). Beulah also, regardless of its "unimpeachable quality of realism", had a "curiously artificial quality...since its blueprint is a state of mind" (49). All the surfaces in Beulah were "unnatural, slippery, ersatz, treacherous, false-looking. In Beulah, myth is a made thing, not a found thing" (55-6). Mother, Beulah, and the mythologies they represent are constructions created to console. However, the aggrandizement of women as mothers only masks cultural contempt for them. As Carter writes in *The Sadeian Woman*,

> If women allow themselves to be consoled for their culturally determined lack of access to the modes of intellectual debate by the invocation of hypothetical great goddesses, they are simply flattering themselves into submission (a technique often used on them by men). All the mythic versions of women, from the myth of the redeeming purity of the virgin to that of the healing, reconciling mother, are consolatory nonsenses; and consolatory nonsense seems to me a fair definition of myth anyway. Mother goddesses are just as silly a notion as father gods. If a revival of the myths of these cults gives women emotional satisfaction, it does so at the price of obscuring the real conditions of life. This is why they were invented in the first place. (*Sadeian Woman*, 5)

Furthermore, "Beulah's zeal to eliminate all things male is wrong-headed to Carter, and its fascistic refusal of deviations is repulsive" (Blodgett, 50). The simple turnover of binaries is not a solution as a hierarchical, and ultimately oppressive, organization is maintained. Carter then agrees with Derrida that the "preferred term" needs to be displaced, but without instating the "marked term" in an authoritative position within a new binary of power. Like the carnival state, Carter objects to and denies all "notions of orthodoxy" (50), even though this sometimes gets her "into such trouble with the sisters" (Carter quoted by Blodgett, 50).

While in Beulah, Evelyn's "metaphysical dread" is not lessened by knowing it is "created with unscrupulous cunning by ingenious stage management" (*PNE*, 52), and he is crudely seduced "into a form of belief" (57) when Mother has him virtually experience a return to the womb. His dread is not lessened because Evelyn still believes in the myth, and belief is what maintains and perpetuates myths. (Before his operation he dreamed of "women with knives and, for some reason, blindness" (68)). Only when Evelyn is, in "mythic vengeance", transformed to Eve, when he himself becomes "what [he had] made", (50,71)

does he eventually suffer "a clarification of the world" and begin to "comprehend even a little the nature of the flesh" (50).

Mother also makes the mistake of believing in myths, and thinks that through an operation and psychological surgery Evelyn, the man, will readily become Eve, the woman. After being physically changed into a woman, Eve(lyn) "is obliged to view socially constructed images of the feminine as well as atrocities committed on women by men throughout time" (Rubenstein, 110). Besides numerous images of the Virgin and Child, many of the socially constructed images come from Hollywood films which provide Eve with "a new set of nursery rhymes" (*PNE*, 71). Most of these films feature Tristessa whose solitude and melancholy were exemplary and demonstrate for Eve "every kitsch excess of the mode of femininity" (71). Carter here demonstrates her agreement with Teresa de Lauretis that gender is the "product of various social technologies, such as cinema, and of institutionalized discourses, epistemologies, and critical practices, as well as practices of daily life" (de Lauretis:1987, 2). Gender forces us to be interpreted through, or perform in accordance with the dominant rules that govern the technologies, discourses, epistemologies and practices. Carter also seems to agree with Judith Butler that the repetitive quality of these technologies, discourses, epistemologies and practices is what enforces and perpetuates gender constructions:

> the rules that govern identity, rules that are partially structured along matrices of gender hierarchy and compulsory heterosexuality, operate through *repetition*...The subject is not *determined* by the rules through which it is generated because signification is *not a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition* that both conceals itself and enforces its rules precisely through the production of substantializing effects. (Butler, 145).

Therefore, a possible solution to "gender trouble" is to be found within the possibility of variation on that repetition: "If the rules governing signification not only restrict, but enable the assertion of alternative domains of cultural intelligibility, i.e., new possibilities for gender that contest the rigid codes of hierarchical binaries, then it is only *within* the practices of repetitive signifying that a subversion of identity becomes possible" (145). Carter's novel, itself a practice of "repetitive signifying", subverts "the rules that govern", by creating the trans-sexual Eve. This creation not only proves "useful to the political project to enlarge the scope of possible gender configurations", but also to reveal the historically accepted dual genders as constructions (Mulvey:1989, 16).

Mother thinks "a change in the appearance [would] restructure the essence" (*PNE*,

68), but Eve(lyn)'s essence does not readily change. In fact, there is no essential quality for his gender transformation to be based on. When Evelyn first sees himself as Eve in the mirror he says, "the cock in my head, still, twitched at the sight of myself" (75). However, the "change in appearance" does ultimately change Eve(lyn) as both Eve(lyn) and the reader, through Eve(lyn)'s adventures, come to see the contingency of gender construction. Similar to a bildungsroman, *The Passion of New Eve* shows the development of Eve(lyn) and his passage through various experiences. The spiritual crisis, characteristic of a bildungsroman, is in this novel an identity crisis which ultimately allows Eve(lyn) (and the reader) to recognize "the false universals of myth" (136) and, thereby, establish his own identity.

Recalling the sorrow Evelyn felt for Tristessa when he watched her films, the reader is struck by one of Eve's first discoveries - "how degrading it is to be the object of pity" - and despite his resentment of Mother's ministrations of pity, he can do nothing to prevent them as she is twice his size. As one critic writes, "the romantic image of suffering may be delightful as a cultural myth for men but proves appalling when, as a woman, Eve is obliged literally to experience it" (Blodgett, 50). After Eve successfully escapes from Beulah, she is captured by Zero the poet. This episode explores and makes explicit the oppression inherent in the binary that positions women below men as well as the complicity of both men and women in maintaining sexual domination.

It is interesting that Zero is a poet as Desiderio, in *Hoffman*, described the Great War as "a battle between an encyclopedia and a poet". Zero is then aligned with total freedom of desire, and as in *Hoffman*, this total freedom ultimately means the violent abuse and oppression of women. With Zero, Eve is only a sexual object. She is abused, raped repeatedly and treated like an animal. In fact, she is treated the same way Evelyn treated Leilah. The sadism of Zero and the masochism of his harem, make this episode as exemplary Sadeian tale, and Carter again utilizes literalization for her cause. Zero is "the macho man incarnate" and loved his guns and his dog "almost as much as he cherished misanthropy" (*PNE*, 85). He is a phallic king as his "weapon" was "of amazing size", even his dog has "balls the size of grapefruits" (90). Being phallocentric he vilifies women to maintain his supremacy. His hatred for women is expressed in his belief, literally based on the philosophy of his hero, Nietzsche, that "women were fashioned of a different soul substance from men, a more primitive, animal stuff, and so did not need the paraphernalia of civilised society such as cutlery, meat, soap, shoes, etc., though, of course, he did" (87). The dehumanization of

the women is epitomized in his violent acts of rape, and it is when being raped that Eve experiences this effacement and an awareness of himself as a former violator: "I felt myself to be, not myself, but he; and the experience of this cruel lack of self, which always brought with it a shock of introspection, forced me to know myself as a former violator at the moment of my violation" (102). The women serve as sex slaves, or sometimes, as erotic entertainment. Zero, if bored, has the women dress up and dance for him, often to the tune of "The Ride of the Valkyrie" (103), an event reminiscent of the "harem scene in Fellini's *8½*. The women of Zero's harem, like those of Guido's, are simply manifestations of masculine desire who are ultimately controlled by their creators.

However, "Carter subverts the Nietzschean and Sadeian dichotomy of weak and strong by showing Zero as physically handicapped and mentally deranged" (Schmidt, 63). As Carter writes in *The Sadeian Woman*, the mark of zero is the iconography used in graffiti to designate woman as negative, "the sign for nothing" (*SW*, 4). It turns out that "Masculinity incarnate" is actually a "nothing", though the problems of gender turn him into the symbol of a male messiah. The phallic king is, like Jewel in *Heroes and Villains*, "king of a rainy country, powerful yet impotent, since his power depended on his dependents" (*PNE*, 102). Zero is a cowardly rapist but has power "only because his seven wives, trapped by their own demeaning fantasies, have chosen to deify his sexuality as their defense from death" (Blodgett, 51). Their "common passion for the one-eyed, one-legged monomaniac predicated their conviction in his myth...[and] his myth depended on their conviction" (*PNE*, 99). As Jordan suggests, "The point of this section is to be aggravating: why don't they do him in, or at least run away" (Jordan:1990, 36). The women are as aggravating as Ghislaine was in Carter's first novel. Like Ghislaine, the women of the harem give freely because "they knew they must be wicked and so deserve to be inflicted with such pain" (*PNE*, 95). Here again, as in *Dr Hoffman*, Carter is making the reader wince at complicity and an acknowledged desire, but with the hope that this recoiling will ultimately enable the reader to spring forward.

The grotesque in *The Passion of New Eve* literalizes gender myths and their supporting discourses and reveals the rigid gender codes to be false constructions which only serve to limit and oppress people. Both Eve and Tristessa show that femininity is a masquerade, which is produced as a commodity, by "technologies of gender", like cinema, and that subjectivity is much more complex and mutable than that allowed for in a binary and hierarchical

structure of sexual difference. Carter's grotesque postmodernism "parodies those characters, such as Mother and Zero, who impose a myopic perspective on the constitution of gender identity, while challenging traditional perspectives on gender and its boundaries" (Johnson, 48). Heather Johnson also suggests that the grotesque in the novel is used to show a shift in the value of the term. In the process of Evelyn becoming Eve, the character's attitude toward the grotesque changes from a Kayserian one, reflective of the romantic grotesque, to a more Bakhtinian one which celebrates, not fears, difference.

Johnson writes that "Carter uses the figure of Mother to disrupt patriarchal conceptions of the female body, as the grotesque body irrupts into the conventional presentation of that body. The description of Mother is filtered through the male sensibility of Evelyn as narrator and as such enacts a parody of the conventional maternal image through physical exaggeration, excess, and distortion" (Johnson, 44). Therefore, the male narrator is used for parodic purposes as it was in *Hoffman*. Carter again uses postmodern parody to critically inscribe the patriarchal (and even feminist) mythologies in order to provoke our conditioned response and then, subvert that response, "making us aware of how it was induced in us" (Hutcheon:1989, 154). However, the author's characteristically grotesque version of this strategy greatly intensifies this process and like the grotesque itself, may prompt a "paradigm crisis" and hopefully new meanings.

Evelyn's interpretation of Mother's body "as disgusting rather than life-affirming" is similar to his first reactions to his own transformation (44). Eve finds herself "as mythic and monstrous as Mother herself" (*PNE*, 44). As Johnson points out, these reactions neatly illustrate Mary Russo's criticism of Bakhtin's theory. In his writing on the bodily grotesque, Bakhtin "fails to acknowledge or incorporate the social relations of gender in his semiotic model of the body politic" (Russo, 219). If women do not conform to the systems of decorum, they are dismissed as Other, and the body "which is female and grotesque must be recovered from a place of double exile" (Johnson, 44). Zero and his harem treat Tristessa "as a grotesque because of her dual nature", though Eve is at that point more sympathetic (45). The grotesque in these situations has infinities with Kristeva's category of the abject.

The abject is "what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (Kristeva quoted by Johnson, 45). However, "what disturbs identity" does not have to be abject as purported in Kayser's romantic grotesque, and there is no better example than the joyful hermaphroditic love-

making of Eve and Tristessa. Though the hermaphrodite seems to be "an emblem of the negative grotesque" (47), as well as a symbol that secures patriarchal power (Rubenstein, 115), it is in this case a celebration of humanity's "chimerical nature" and "the transgression of gender boundaries" (Johnson, 47). Like the grottesche designs Bakhtin describes, Eve and Tristessa show "the inner movement of being...in the passing of one form into the other" (Bakhtin:1984, 32). Furthermore, as Johnson suggests, the scene can be read as an image of grotesque realism which embodies a perpetual process and the unfinished transformation of death and rebirth. Johnson writes, "As Eve begins to grow into her newly grafted identity and Tristessa enters into the final hours of his life, they share this climactic dissolution of identity" (Johnson, 48). At this point in the novel, enough anomalies have emerged to discredit Eve's old paradigm, which positions women and men in rigid categorical binaries, to make it impossible for him to continue adhering to it. In her "reciprocal pact of tenderness" with Tristessa, Eve, for the first time in her life, experiences herself in full diversity and free from the limitations of gender. The final scene of the novel suggests that Eve, with a newly found identity, may now sail off and enter history, rewriting it this time with herself in it (Jordan:1990, 37).

The Confidence Trick

As one critic writes, the chimerical Fevvers in *Nights at the Circus* may very well be Eve's daughter, "the contribution to evolution Eve expected her child to be" (Schmidt, 67). She is like the "archaeopteryx", the "miraculous, seminal, intermediate being whose nature [Eve] grasped in the desert" and who is "composed of the contradictory elements of air and earth" (*PNE*, 185). However, in defiance of human biology, Fevvers was not born of a woman. She "never docked via what you might call the *normal channels*, sir, oh, dear me, no; but, just like Helen of Troy, was hatched" (*NC*, 7). Fevvers is a woman with wings, a bird-woman, who is perhaps Carter's own version of Sade's character, Juliette, Justine's sister. Carter writes in *The Sadeian Woman*, "Juliette, represents the woman whose advent he [Sade] anticipated, a figure of whom minds have as yet no conception, who is rising out of mankind, and will have wings and who will renew the world" (*SW*, 79). However, unlike Sade's Juliette, Fevvers does not work within Sade's "manicheistic dualism" (129). In fact, this grotesque woman with wings is used to depict and critique the binaries and underlying hierarchies which have historically dominated Western thought. Through Fevvers and other

grotesque characters, as well as the carnivalization of her characters' exploits and settings, Carter reveals how arbitrary and artificial society's rigid distinctions and definitions are and that the lives of both men and women are enriched through a critical consciousness as well as a rejection of them. Furthermore, this novel marks a new shift in the author's oeuvre. Not only does Carter deconstruct the false dichotomies, particularly those based on sexual difference, but she positively appropriates the female grotesque in order to offer new reconstructions as provisional possibilities. These new identities are not fixed or determinate as subjecthood is emphatically shown to be a continuous process, but they allow for a new form of feminist fiction which, as one critic puts it, "might shatter those old androcentric bottles" (Boehm, 48).

The main character, Sophie, better known as Fevvers, is an exemplary figure of grotesque realism. She is like "a dray mare" with a face as "broad and oval as a meat dish", a face which "had been thrown on a common wheel out of coarse clay" (*NC*, 12). She is a towering figure - 6 feet 2 - with ample bosom, large and vulgar gestures...and a generous heart" (Blodgett, 52). She unashamedly lets "ripping fart(s) ring round the room", tops off her slurps and gulps of food with loud burps, and goes through a case of champagne in one night. When she yawns, it is "with prodigious energy, opening up a crimson maw the size of that of a basking shark, taking in enough air to lift a Montgolfier", and she has a "voice that clanged like dustbin lids" (*NC*, 7). When she stretches in her dressing room, Fevvers seems to "fill up all the mirror, all the room with her bulk" (52), and her immensity nearly causes the journalist, who has come to interview her, to faint. This journalist, Jack Walser, has decided to do a series of interviews tentatively entitled, "Great Humbugs of the World" (11). Fevvers is "the most famous aerialiste of the day", and "Fevvermania" has, in fact, taken over her home town, London, land of "the music hall and the confidence trick" (8). She is billed as the "Cockney Venus", or in France, "*l'Ange Anglaise*, the English Angel", and the hysteria is over her unbelievable ability to defy gravity via her wings, the existence of which, of course, is another subject of intrigue. Walser is here to get to the bottom of her interrogative slogan, "Is she fact or is she fiction?" (7).

Given the tentative title of Walser's series, it is no surprise that he is out to expose Fevvers as a fake. However, "do not think the revelation that she is a hoax will finish her on the halls; far from it. If she isn't suspect, where's the controversy? What's the news?" (*NC*, 11), and Fevvers knows more than anyone else that it is controversy that brings in the

money she loves. Walser, however, is shocked to undergo a momentary, but "absolute suspension of disbelief" (17) when he watches Fevvers perform (interestingly, to "The Ride of the Valkyrie") and realizes the paradox that "in a secular age, an authentic miracle must purport to be a hoax, in order to gain credit in the world" (17). If Fevvers were a fact, if she was "a genuine bird-woman", she would be indeterminate, a freak, and that would be unacceptable. She must be one or the other; she must be woman or bird, fact or fiction. Walser thinks it is her "human duty" to remain a woman for if she was an anomaly, "the entire representational system, based on binary sexual difference, that Walser needs to make sense of the world", would be put into question (Robinson, 123). Fevver's "indeterminate identity and her insistence on preserving its mystery threaten the dichotomy between reality and fiction" which Walser wishes to uphold (Michael, 175). He is here to find out *what* Fevvers is, not *who* she is (Gass, 72). He is there "to observe, to objectify, to subject Fevvers to his scrutiny, to define her. Jack is part of a system that defines others by labelling, naming, and describing *what* they are - a 'hoax' or a humbug, perhaps, but never an individual human being" (72). Walser's disbelief quickly returns as he recalls "his flutter of conviction that seeing was believing" (*NC*, 17). According to his logic, if she were hatched, she could not have a belly button. If he could *see* her belly, he would know the truth. However, by the time Walser does see her belly, whether Fevvers is fact or fiction does not matter any more.

Fevvers "defies Walser's attempt to prove her a fake not by refusing to answer his questions but by taking command of her own self-definition as she tells him her story and thereby assumes a position of authority" (Michael, 174). As Carter writes in *The Sadeian Woman*, women are not "the slaves of history...[but] its makers" (*SW*, 3), and in this novel, unlike Carter's previous ones, women are writing their own histories. Fevvers, assisted by her surrogate mother, Lizzie, tells her tale as well as those of other marginalized and eccentric figures who would otherwise not be heard. Since the tales she and Lizzie tell exist "on the margins between the fantastic and the real" (Boehm, 40), they not only challenge "the traditional appropriation of women's lives and histories endemic of Western male-centered culture", but also undermine both cultural definitions of women and "notions of identity, truth, and reality" (Michael, 175).

In the interview, which is ultimately a biography, Fevvers appropriates the power of the gaze traditionally given men. She looks at Walser, "as if to dare him: 'Believe it or not!'"

(*NC*, 7). She fixes him "with a piercing, judging regard" (35), and gives him "the touch of an eye like sudden blue steel" (78). Lizzie also fixes "Walser with her glittering eye and seize[s] the narrative between her teeth" (32). Walser "wilt[s] in the blast of [Fevvers'] full attention" (78) and eventually becomes "a prisoner of her voice" (43) so that his hand "no longer felt as if it belonged to him" (78). Since Fevvers "takes up a traditionally masculine role by asserting herself as the author of her own actions and words" as well as herself, Walser questions her sexuality (Michael, 176). As master of her own creation, Fevvers forces Walser, who throws "all questions of identity, authenticity, and origins onto the axis of gender" (Russo, 170), to ask himself, "Is she really a man?" (*NC*, 35). Though Fevvers is, in fact, a fiction of Carter's, just like the fantastical fin de siècle novel she stars in, both Fevvers and the novel are very much grounded in contemporary issues, which, in the case of women, show a depressing consistency in the last hundred years. An example of life imitating art will underscore this situation.

In April 1996, CNN's *Showbiz Today* featured a story on the latest act from The Barnum and Bailey Circus. The latest contribution to the greatest show on earth, was "Ariana, the Human Arrow". Little was mentioned of the act itself as the main story was the controversy surrounding it. The big question was the same as Walser's, "Is she really a man?". Gender boundaries are just as solidly in place now as they were a hundred years ago, and any transgression causes controversy. Ariana may very well have started the rumour herself, playing the system for what it is worth, as Fevvers does, but, nevertheless, the question itself underscores the polarity of gender norms and the norms themselves.

Although Fevvers strikes Walser as masculine, she does not position herself as such. She delights in a masquerade of femininity and unashamedly bats her eyelashes at Walser while narcissistically looking in the mirror. The narrative also creates neologisms which foreground her femininity. Her dressing room is described as a "mistresspiece of exquisitely feminine squalor" (*NC*, 9) and her bonhomie is more accurately her "bonnefemmerie" (11). Once again her indeterminacy undermines the strict hierarchal opposition between masculine and feminine. Her self-conscious indeterminacy also enables her to project and create herself as she chooses. Fevvers is very much like Mae West and even uses her classic line "Suckers", from *I'm No Angel* (1933), before going out to perform (180). Carter, in *The Sadeian Woman*, writes of West: "the dramatised version of herself she presented to the world was based on the one she both invented and lived for herself" (*SW*, 61). With Fevvers,

"you did not think of calculation when you saw her, so finely judged was her performance" (*NC*, 12). As Sally Robinson argues, this performativity, this conscious creation of self-representation, is what enables Fevvers (and Mae West) to be "both spectacle and spectator" (Robinson, 122).

Mary Ann Doane's strategy of masquerade, which is similar to Irigaray's deconstructive concept of mimicry, is a "self-conscious re-enactment, by women, of the place traditionally assigned to Woman within narrative and other discourse" (Robinson, 118). Since within a patriarchal society femininity is culturally constructed as a masquerade, then, a self-conscious imitation of femininity would refute the notion of it being natural (119). Mary Russo adds that for the transvestite, femininity as a mask "is a take-it-or-leave-it proposition; for a woman, a similar flaunting of the feminine is a take-it-*and*-leave-it *possibility*. To put on femininity with a vengeance suggests the power of taking it off" (Russo quoted by Robinson, 120). As Robinson explains, "if one can both take it and leave it, then gender becomes a performance rather than an essence" (120), and Fevvers can take off her femininity as easily as she rips "the six inches of false lash" from her eyelids (*NC*, 7). Robinson suggests that the answer to the question of what the masquerade is hiding is "*nothing*" (Robinson, 121). There is "no-thing" that exists prior to the performance of gender (121). A feminine being exists only in performances through masquerade or any "(self)representational strategy" (121). Robinson takes Doane's concern for the gaze as indicative of subjectivity, and applies it to her concept of masquerade. She suggests that in the masquerade, "the woman is appropriating the masculine position by actively turning the gaze on herself in a reversal of gender positions that leads to the displacement of gender ontologies" (122). It is in this way that Fevvers is both spectacle and spectator in *Nights at the Circus* (122). She not only turns the gaze onto Walser, but also on to herself.

Fevvers actively turns the gaze of others on herself as part of her subjectivity. The audience in the circus, whose eyes are wide with wonder, confirm her controversial identity as a flying bird-woman. However, when she falls in love with Walser, she specifically needs his gaze to substantiate the subjectivity she has created for herself. The "both/and logic which marks Fevver's self-representation" (123), displaces gender opposition without denying sexual difference as does androgyny. Migali Michael points out that:

> Although Fevvers objectifies herself, she remains a subject by constructing her own objectified image. By destabilizing and yet retaining the conventional opposition between subject and object, the novel moves toward non-hierarchal

> and non-binary notions of subjectivity while simultaneously engaging and highlighting issues of power relations. (Michael, 177)

Fevvers wants to engineer herself as spectacle in order to resist exploitation and victimization. However, Fevver's Mae West figure is foiled by the Marilyn Monroe figure of Mignon (Robinson, 125), who "assumed a woman's place" (*NC*, 150). Unlike Mignon, she will not be "reduced to an 'idea of woman'" (Robinson, 125), though she has served her apprenticeship in *being looked at* - at being the object of the eye of the beholder" (*NC*, 23). As a young girl in the brothel, she posed as "little Cupid" and after puberty she became "Winged Victory", the same figure to which the boys in Fellini's *Amarcord* masturbate. However, in contrast to *Amarcord* where images of women and women in general are shown to be only objects of desire, in both tableau vivants, the construction of the image is made clear; a bow is created or a toy sword bought in order to get the desired effect. It is similar to her performance as aerialiste. In the nineteenth-century, female figures who stage a transcendence of their bodies, such as dancers and circus acrobats, were often idealized by men as their transcendence hid their "inert carnality" (Bernheimer, 71). The performance of the women and their costumes turned them into cultural inventions that enabled men to forget temporarily their abominable "fleshy naturalism" (71). However, Fevver's flesh-colored leotard and tights imply nudity, and unlike other aerialists, Fevvers performs in slow motion so that the audience can enjoy watching "every tense muscle straining in her Rubenesque form" (*NC*, 17). As Mary Russo points out, Fevvers reveals what dancers and circus stars normally conceal: "*labor* and its bodily effects in the midst of simulated play and the creation of illusion" (Russo, 177). The reader is reminded that Fevvers had to learn how to fly; it took time and much effort. The act, then, is "a reminder that the spectacle which conceals work is itself produced, and revamping spectacle shows up and diverts this cultural production" (177). Most significantly, Fevvers is the creator of her performances and has "control over how much she will allow herself to be consumed by her viewers" (177). Fevvers says , "Look at me!", but "Hands off!" (*NC*, 15).

As in previous works, whenever Carter uses cultural images, in this case, Cupid, Winged Victory, Angel of the House, or Helen of Troy, she does so consciously to draw attention to historical representations, particularly of women. Linda Hutcheon uses *Nights at the Circus* as an example of a novel which challenges "the concealed or unacknowledged politics and evasions of aesthetic representation by using parody as a means to connect the

present to the past without positing the transparency of representation, verbal or visual" (Hutcheon:1989, 98). Hutcheon argues that the novel performs a feminist parody of Leda and the Swan (98), which is depicted in a painting in the whorehouse. She also writes,

> The novel's parodic echoes of *Pericles*, *Hamlet*, and *Gulliver's Travels*, all function as do those of Yeats's poetry when describing a whorehouse full of bizarre women as 'this lumber room of femininity, this rag-and-bone shop of the heart' (69): they are all ironic feminizations of traditional or canonic male representations of the so-called generic human - 'Man.' This is the kind of politics of representation that parody calls to our attention. (Hutcheon:1989, 98)

Russo writes how there are "dozens of other examples of intertexts from high and low culture...and not all of them by any means as central to the European canon as Shakespeare, Swift, or Yeats" (Russo, 161). She mentions Andrei Bely, Freud, Poe, Bakhtin and Sade as examples (161). Although *Nights at the Circus* serves as a good example of postmodern parody, "traditional or canonic male representations", as we have seen, are detectable and parodied throughout Carter's work. She takes representations from all disciplines, from philosophy, anthropology, classical mythology, psychology, art, etc., in order to underscore the ubiquitous misogyny entrenched in Western thought and, as Hutcheon indicates, as part of her postmodern strategy of subversion from within.

Similar to postmodernism which "works within the very systems it attempts to subvert" (Hutcheon:1988, 4), women's experience, according to Teresa de Lauretis, is a process "through which one places oneself and is placed in discursive and social systems" (Robinson, 14). Self-representation is, then, "contingent upon social context", but experience is not reduced to "a fictional guarantee of subjective integrity or authenticity" (14). The subject-gendered female must negotiate between authoritative discourses and self-representation in order to resist being unwillingly objectified or "trapped like a bird in a gilded cage". Although Fevvers is a speaking subject in control of her own subjectivity, she must nevertheless "operate against the discourse systems that work to negate any female subjectivity" and contain her within Woman (Robinson, 16).

During a desperate time in Fevvers's life, she is persuaded to join Madame Schreck's Museum of Woman Monsters where she is forced to become a "virgin whore" and play the Angel of Death. She becomes a prisoner in "the abyss" of Madame Schreck's cellar along with other "prodigies of nature": "Dear old Fanny Four-Eyes; and the Sleeping Beauty; and the Wiltshire Wonder, who was not three foot high; and Albert/Albertina who was bipartite,

that is to say, half and half and neither of either, and the girl we called Cobwebs" (*NC*, 61-2). This episode "reinforces the notion that pornography is a representation of male domination" (Michael, 186). Men come to the museum to view and consume the women; they "hired the use of the idea of [the women]" (*NC*, 70). This episode also shows the painful reality of being different. For the Wiltshire Wonder, this "house of shame" is a better alternative than the "real" world. She says to Fevvers, "I'd rather show myself to one man at a time than to an entire theatre-full of the horrid, nasty, hairy things, and, here, I'm well protected from the dark, foul throng of the world, in which I suffered so much. Amongst the monsters, I am well hidden" (65). However, Fevvers puts to question what is monstrous. She asks Walser, "For what is 'natural' and 'unnatural', sir?" (61). The men who come to the Museum are much more monstrous, "for there was no terror in the house [the] customers did not bring with them" (62).

Fevvers manages to escape Madame Schreck's only to be objectified by Christian Rosencreutz, a name which links him to the Judeo-Christian tradition and Rosicrucianism. He would come to the Museum every Sunday to worship his fetish, "the only fully feathered intacta in the entire history of the world" (*NC*, 71), but also to confirm that "the abyss" of women "was as 'orrible as he'd always thought" (77). He is like Baudelaire, "who loved whores not for the pleasure of it but, as he perceived it, the *horror* of it" (38). The medallion he wears embodies "the elementary iconography" of graffiti from which "may be derived the whole metaphysics of sexual differences" (*SW*, 4) - "the penis, represented by itself, aspires upwards, represented by the wings, but is dragged downwards, represented by the twining stem, by the female part, represented by the rose" (*NC*, 77). In his "religion", just like in the Creation myth, women are responsible for the demise of men, yet, in "some kind of heretical possibly Manichean version of neo-Platonic Rosicrucianism", he hopes that by sacrificing the "Angel of Death", on the threshold of spring, he would cheat death itself (77). Fevvers is more than willing to clench her teeth and think of England in order to get an enormous sum of money from the man, but when she discovers he intends to do more than bust "a scrap of cartilage" (80), she must use her sword against him to escape. Fevvers tells us that many years later, Mr Rosencreutz became an activist against giving women the vote, and he uses, like Zero, Nietzschean philosophy to support his views.

Fevvers's greed gets her into another terrible situation with the Russian Duke who wishes to turn her into one of his exotic toys. This time she is deprived of the phallic power

of her sword, but "a deep instinct for self-preservation made her let his rooster out of the hen-coop for him and ruffle up his feathers" (*NC*, 191). She "makes her escape at the moment 'the Grand Duke ejaculated'" (Michael, 179). Both the Count and Rosencreutz episodes emphasize "the violence that is part of male domination and that is tied to the realm of sexuality" (178). Furthermore, these episodes underscore the continual threat to subjectivity made by others. Fevvers gets "a shivering sensation" whenever "mages, wizards, impresarios came to take away her singularity as though it were their invention, as though they believed she depended on their imaginations in order to be herself" (*NC*, 289). Even Walser, with whom she is falling in love, threatens her. His gaze eventually makes her feel that she was "turning, willy nilly, from a woman into an idea" (189). However, this situation will change and ultimately Fevvers remains in control of her subjectivity.

Besides grotesque figures, Carter utilizes carnivalized spaces within the novel, the whorehouse, the circus, and Siberia. These spaces, like the figures, enable her to make the postmodern parodic process more explicit. The grotesque figures and the carnivalized spaces serve to advance the postmodern strategy of inscribing in order to subvert the dominant cultural and social forces. They continually invite and undermine interpretation, foregrounding the characteristic indeterminacy of reality which is forever open to interpretation and provisional meaning. Michael argues that Carter's "postmodern version of carnivalization" specifically serves as "a vehicle for its more subversive feminist aims" (Michael, 182). It is political as only literary carnivals, which foreground footlights, can be. Michael writes, "By constructing the whorehouse,...the circus, and Siberia as versions of carnival, the novel disrupts and challenges traditional Western notions of reality" and, thereby, nurtures a critical consciousness in its readers. Furthermore, the carnivalized spaces provide "an aesthetic vocabulary for delineating possibilities of change" and suggest the agency inherent in the indeterminacy characteristic of carnival (183).

The whorehouse is "a surrogate carnival" where the Madame is a cross-dresser, father time is stopped at noon or midnight ("the time of change or revolution") and the high and low are brought together (Russo, 170). As Michael points out, the place is described as "having an 'air of rectitude and propriety' and as being 'a place of privilege,' in which 'rational desires might be rationally gratified'" (Michael, 183), but the place also celebrates the lower bodily stratum with a staircase that resembled "a whore's bum" and a drawing room that was "snug as a groin". Furthermore, ideas of prostitution and marriage are turned

on their heads. After finding out that Fevvers was raised by whores, Walser says, "I myself have known some pretty decent whores, some damn' fine women, indeed, whom any man might have been proud to marry" (*NC*, 21). Fevvers responds to his dichotomizing of good woman (wife) and bad woman (whore), saying, "What is marriage but prostitution to one man instead of many?...Do you think a decent whore'd be proud to marry *you*, young man?" (21). Prostitutes are positive feminist figures in this novel who are decent and hard-working. They are not nymphomaniacs as some assume; they are "poor girls earning a living" (39). Fevver undermines this myth of sexual deviancy by saying, "though some of the customers would swear that whores do it for pleasure, that is only to ease their own consciences, so that they will feel less foolish when they fork out hard cash for pleasure that had no real existence unless given freely...we knew we only sold the *simulacra*" (39). As Michael writes, "the prostitute comes out ahead in the novel, precisely because she is more aware of her position within an economic system in which all women participate" (Michael, 181). Carter challenges binary thinking, good woman/bad woman and wife/whore, but also the "reduction of women to their bodily orifices" (181). As Fevvers asks Walser, "Wherein does a woman's honour reside, old chap? In her vagina or in her spirit?" (*NC*, 230).

In the circus, "the hierarchical opposition between civilized humans and primitive animals" is undermined (Michael, 194). The paying customers leave their furs in the cloakroom "as though there one left behind the skin of one's own beastliness so as not to embarrass the beasts with it" (*NC*, 105). Also within the tent there was an "intermingling of French perfume and the essence of steppe and jungle in which musk and civet revealed themselves as common elements" (*NC*, 105). While the Professor and the chimps are busy studying the anatomy of Walser ("grappling with Darwin's theory from the other end"), the Strong man is next to them trying to reach orgasm with Mignon "in a torrent of brutish shrieks" (111). To make the scene even more ironic, Walser, with "dizzy uncertainty about what was human and what was not", begins to quote Hamlet ("What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty!") in order to demonstrate speech to the intellectual chimps (110-11). The tigers and elephants are also anthropomorphized to parody human behavior and express emotions of hope, jealousy, compassion and love. However, the circus also serves to challenge the ideas of identity which the novel focuses on, particularly through the clowns.

When Walser joins the circus to follow Fevvers, he becomes a clown and tastes for

the first time "the freedom that lies behind the mask...the freedom to juggle with being" (*NC*, 103). As Michael writes, the "clown's mask unsettles *Being* by calling into question notions of origin and selfhood" (Michael, 195). The clowns, the "whore[s] of mirth", are also similar to the prostitutes and Fevvers, whose "chosen means of economic survival entail giving pleasure to others; they are subjects who consciously make themselves into objects" (196). When Buffo, "the Lord of Misrule", goes mad and actually tries to kill Walser during an act, Carter obscures the difference between illusion and reality as she does throughout the novel - the luxury of the brothel "had been nothing but illusion created by the candles of midnight" (*NC*, 49), the lugubrious illusion of Madame Schreck's which "was all so much show" (58), St. Petersburg acquires "the elaboration of artifice...an imaginary city" (97), and of course the illusion of Fevvers. However, the scene also underscores the real violence of humanity that the clowns parody. Buffo "specialises in violent slapstick", and he likes to burn other clowns alive or subject them to "the most extravagant humiliations" (117). Furthermore, Buffo's illness may very well be the result of his realization that he has become the mask he created; he can no longer "take-it-or-leave-it". He has lost control of making his own meaning, and questions his identity: "[W]hat am I without my Buffo's face? Why, nobody at all. Take away my make-up and underneath is merely not-Buffo. An absence. A vacancy" (122). The clowns in this novel are like those in Fellini's films. They are nihilistic representations of chaos and disintegration, repeating in unison King Lear's "Nothing will come of nothing!" (123). Carnival is not necessarily radical, indeed sometimes, as in the case of the circus, it commodifies difference. However, Carter does not agree that meaning is impossible. There may be no essence under the mask, but there is sufficient space to construct subjectivities and continually negotiate new ones.

As Rory Turner suggests, the clowns are part of "a Burkean structure of scapegoating and sacrifice" (Turner, 48). According to Turner, the clowns are forms of the romantic grotesque which lack the regenerative quality of grotesque realism (49). When the clowns go into their "dance of death" and vanish, Carter is then, "freeing the grotesque from its modern interpretation" (51). I also think that the clowns are a scapegoat for contemporary thinkers who refuse the possibility of meaning in the postmodern world, and perhaps, all discourses of "the past historic" (*NC*, 240) which have denied women and other marginalized groups meaning outside of limited definitions. They are sacrificed in order to enable meaning and to "open up a space for reinterpretation, and a reorientation of human nature and human

relationships" (Turner, 52-3).

Siberia, the last stop for the circus, is "an open space that dissolves the very notion of limits and boundaries that structure Western thought" (Michael, 200). It is a "blank sheet of fresh paper" (*NC*, 218) upon which new constructions are possible. Turner describes this section of the novel as "the liminal stage", where, according to Harpham, "opposing processes and assumptions co-exist" (Harpham, 14). It is, as Turner says, "a period between states, where a great deal of malleability of identity takes place. Neither this nor that, the characters are in the midst of their individual transformations" (Turner, 53). Walser undergoes the greatest transformation.

Before, Walser had "something a little unfinished about him...He had not experienced his experience as experience" (*NC*, 10). After the train wreck he gets amnesia, "the ultimate sign of the pregnancy of possibility", and becomes the protégé of a local Shaman (Turner, 53). The Shaman, and the people of the region, are similar to Fevvers in that they "made no categorical distinction between seeing and believing...there existed no difference between a fact and a fiction" (*NC*, 260). Furthermore, like Fevvers, the Shaman is "the supreme form of the confidence trick - others had confidence in him because of his own utter confidence in his own integrity" (263). What Walser undergoes during this "liminal stage" is a "paradigm crisis" similar to those experienced by Joseph and Eve. Enough anomalies have emerged at this point for Walser to discredit his old explanatory paradigm based on binaries, (Harpham, 17). The liminal phase, as Harpham suggests, has the potential of giving birth to new concepts, ideas, and ways of seeing the world. From within the paradoxes he experiences, Walser is able to discover new meaning. As one critic writes, "it is in the context of this world of 'hard, if illusory, facts' that the ex-journalist...comes to understand that he has been asking the wrong questions all the time" (Boehm, 45). When he is finally reunited with Fevvers, Walser no longer asks if she's fact or fiction, but, "What is your name? Have you a soul? Can you love?" (*NC*, 291). Walser has become a "New Man", but Fevvers has also become a "New Woman".

Fevvers is growing up, leaving the nest, falling in love with Walser, and her individuality is threatened. Her mother, Lizzie, a Marxist feminist who has served as an indicator of the material and historical realities throughout the book, is the first to point out to Fevvers the illusions of love and marriage and the reality of economic dependency. However, the indeterminate being she has created for herself is not threatened by the re-

constructed Walser. In fact, she needs "the eyes that told her who she was" (*NC*, 290). As indicated previously, Fevver's existence as a subject "is dependent on both her own self-construction and the acknowledgement of that construction as read in the eyes of others, which indicates that subjecthood is a continuous process rather than a static position" (Michael, 204). Walser no longer needs for her to be one way or the other. They now share a love, which is "released from culturally imposed prescriptions and from oppressive relations of power" (205), a love which has also freed other characters in the novel, like the Strong Man and Mignon. It enables "a reciprocal pact of tenderness" and allows Fevvers to remain a "new symbol of femininity" in the novel, as well as for the reader. Her "faith in herself and her knowledge of her own desires" make her a truly autonomous being who may have sexual relations with her "new man" that render explicit possible new and more equitable social relations within society (Blodgett, 52). She may be a fiction, just as "Woman" is, and a confidence trick, but she is doing the tricking and she may inspire others to tear off their "mind-forg'd manacles" and create their "own opportunities to be a free souled spirit" (53). Women have to learn to fly just as Fevvers did.

By the end of the novel, all the contained carnival worlds, all the cages, are destroyed so that the subversive impulses of the carnivalesque may infect everything. It is Fevvers's carnivalesque laughter which seems to be the promulgating force as it reaches "everything that lived and breathed, everywhere" (*NC*, 295). However, the carnivalesque laugh is ambivalent; "It asserts and denies, it buries and revives" (Bakhtin:1984, 12). Her laugh celebrates her confidence and hope for a new age, but it also acknowledges the material reality (indicated throughout the novel) against which her confidence and hope are a defense. Though fictionally "the old world has turned on its axle so that the new dawn can dawn" and Fevvers embodies the inspiring idea of the New Woman, there are, as Lizzie insists "storms ahead" for the New Woman of the twentieth century. It is not the first time Lizzie "undercuts the high-flying rhetoric of the new age woman" (Russo, 178). As the wise woman points out previously in the text, "It's not the human 'soul' that must be forged on the anvil of history but the anvil itself must be changed in order to change humanity" (*NC*, 240). Maybe individual self-reconstruction and love are not cures for the world's problems, but they could very well be a start.

Chance Versus Hazard

In Carter's last novel, *Wise Children*, it is the central figure, Dora Chance, who writes down her own history, not with a phallic pen, but on a word processor, (although Dora is wise enough to know the difference between a pen and a penis) (Webb, 300). She is writing her own autobiography, but she does not try to enforce reason and order as Desiderio does in his recapitulation of his quest. Dora goes off on tangents, makes guesses and estimations, and always questions the authenticity of her memories as she knows "the deceptions of memory" (*WC*, 192). Carter underscores the dialogic nature of language with the first-person narration of Dora who "speaks to her reader as if she expected him or her to reply: 'There I go again! Can't keep a story going in a straight line, can I?'" (Webb, 294). She is telling a tale and endlessly draws attention to herself as author of her construction (295). Authorship and the constructedness of representations are as important in this novel as they were in *Nights at the Circus*.

Dora and her twin sister, Nora, born at the beginning of the twentieth-century, seem to be living proof of the New Woman Fevvers represented symbolically. Similar to Fevvers, Dora and Nora were born and raised on the "wrong-side" of town. They are also lewd, honest and kind-hearted like Fevvers, and have worked as song and dance girls since a very young age. More importantly, they too are free from any "mind forg'd manacles". As in *Nights at the Circus*, Carter positively appropriates these female grotesques who defy definition and their otherness in order to challenge society's patriarchal norms, definitions, and notions of identity. "Through rupturing the strict definition of woman, Carter opens up a surplus of space in which women can find and create new definitions of self (Hardin, 77).

It also appears that the carnivalesque laughter of Fevvers, which ended *Nights at the Circus*, has transformed and continued on into this novel via a "whooping and banging" wind, "the kind of wind that blows everything topsy-turvy" (*WC*, 3). There is a carnivalesque tone throughout this novel, which Carter uses, as she did in *Nights at the Circus*, to maximum effect to "destabilize distinctions and boundaries" (Russo, 62). As Russo writes of carnival:

> The masks and voices of carnival resist, exaggerate, and destabilize the distinctions and boundaries that mark and maintain high culture and organized society...In its multivalent oppositional play, carnival refuses to surrender the critical and cultural tools of the dominant class, and in this sense, carnival can be seen, above all, as a site of insurgency, and not merely withdrawal. (Russo, 62)

However, Carter is the first to acknowledge the limitations of carnival since it only exists precisely in response to those distinctions and boundaries.

As Michael Hardin points out, Dora and Nora are removed from "the defining domain of the patriarchal structure" by being identical twins and by not conforming traditionally to the standard roles and stereotypes associated with women, particularly marriage and motherhood (Hardin, 77). Being identical twins makes differentiation, and, thereby, identity based on otherness, difficult. However, Dora and Nora are well aware of their individuality. As with Fevvers, "their identity is their power" (77). Hardin writes, "By veiling their differences, both between themselves and between themselves and others, they assume the power to direct and initiate events" (77). *Wise Children*, like *Nights at the Circus*, challenges "the very notion of true or final identity", but without denying identity (77). In responding to Robert Clark's criticism of Carter, Jordan writes, "The 'historical and organic being' of women is true enough, as true and real as anything ever is, but it is not fixed as a necessary identity that must be referred to. We are speaking or writing subjects, in discourses that precede us and go on; we participate in them and can produce new ones. Some of these discourses produce 'selves'" which is exactly what happens in *Wise Children* (Dora and Nora) and *Nights at the Circus* (Fevvers) (Jordan:1990, 27).

Dora and Nora are well aware that identity is a construction as they were raised by a woman who had "invented herself" (*WC*, 28). In a very carnivalesque manner, Grandma would spit out "her famous vowels like cherrystones" when she felt it necessary, then "she'd give a big belch in the street afterwards" (59). She even invented the family they grew up in; "She put it together out of whatever came to hand - a stray pair of orphaned babes, a ragamuffin in a flat cap" (35). Dora and Nora discover early on that neither was very special on their own, "but put [them] together, [they] turned heads" (63), so they create identities which work together to their mutual benefit. They ritualistically cut their hair, paint their faces, and dress in a similar fashion in order to gain the most from their subjectivities. Unlike with Leilah in *The Passion of New Eve*, their constructions are not detached from who they are, nor are they a fulfilment of some masculine ideal. Dora and Nora "never saw what other people saw" (95), but would look to each other, like Fevvers and Walser, to confirm their identities. As Dora notes, "I would look at Nora, faithful as my looking glass, and see a suave sophisticate with geranium lips and that *faux*-naïve Dutch hairdo which had become our trademark" (95). As Hardin argues, there is no Platonic ideal here as their identities exist in the reflections of each other (Hardin, 79). As a result, they cannot be defined according to the patriarchal paradigm and positioned in an inferior position (79). The women do allow for

some distinguishing features - Nora wears Shalimar and Dora wears Mitsouko, and sometimes they wear different colored ribbons. But, ribbons can be removed and perfume exchanged so that they can readily switch identities, "giving them complete control over who can know them" (Hardin, 78). It is their control over identity which enables each to enjoy her first sexual experience.

While Nora makes love for the first time against a wall in a back alley with a married man, Dora detects "a jealous madness" in the man's wife. In order to save her sister, Dora "took the bull by the horns and started off the masquerade" by answering to the name of Nora and keeping out of the same places as herself, until Nora comes back (*WC*, 81). All it takes for Dora to enjoy her first time with Nora's boyfriend is a switch of perfume. Once she puts on Shalimar, she "felt voluptuous" and finds she can "kiss the boys and hug the principals with gay abandon because all that came quite naturally to [Nora]" (84). Carter here not only underscores the constructedness of identity, but also undermines cultural conceptions of romance. As Dora points out, "Don't run away with the idea that it was a squalid, furtive, miserable thing, to make love for the first time on a cold night in a back alley with a married man with strong drink on his breath. He was the one she wanted" (81), and it is being Nora, "who was afraid of nothing provided it was a man" (85), which enables Dora to be fearless and delight herself in the joys of her first love-making.

Besides identity, Dora and Nora challenge societal norms for women. Not only as young girls do they manage to make a living, but the living they choose is considered by some to be improper for women. As one critic writes, they are "illegitimate twice over: by birth,...and by profession, where, as a novelty act, they dance the boards in music hall, appear briefly as extras in an ill-fated Hollywood musical, and finally undress (though never beyond the G-string) in seedy postwar strip shows like 'Nudes Ahoy! and 'Nudes of the World!'" (Webb, 280). They do not mind that the number of empty gin bottles they have in their wastepaper baskets and condoms in the toilet would shock certain guests (*WC*, 182). Even as septuagenarians, they still go to the local every night for a drink and often sing and dance, whether they are asked to or not. For Melchior's centennial birthday, which is also their birthday, they dress in shiny stockings with silver stars, "little short tight skirts in shiny silver stuff to match", lycra and feathered boob tubes and gold stilettos (191). Furthermore, they break gender expectations by never marrying or giving birth. That does not mean they do not become mothers. In fact, at the birthday party, their gift from Peregrine is the

illegitimate twins of Gareth Hazard.

Dora and Nora put to question gender norms as well as cultural definitions of terms like mother and father, for at seventy-five they are, as Nora says, "both of us mothers and both of us fathers" (*WC*, 23). Walking home with their babies, full of joy and singing out loud, Dora and Nora remind me in some ways of Bakhtin's exemplary image of grotesque realism, the laughing, senile, pregnant old hags. They are certainly an ambivalent combination of life and death, but, unlike Bakhtin, we know why they are laughing. They are not restrained by social mores regarding age, gender, and behavior, or by societal ideas of what constitutes a mother or father. They are going to "Eat the peach" even though they know tomorrow will indeed come (125). They can be both mothers and both fathers. Their "both/and" logic, like Fevvers's, undermines binary oppositions which are fostered and exploited in culture "in order to justify the domination and exclusion of others" (Webb, 280), and this alternative logic is what promises the twins will "be wise children" (*WC*, 230). Definitions and distinctions, such as mother, father, legitimacy, illegitimacy, low culture, and high culture are completely destabilized in the topsy-turvy carnivalesque world of the novel.

As Kate Webb writes, "The double-faced Hazard/Chance family is served up to the reader as a model for Britain and Britishness, obsessively dividing itself into upper and working class, high and low culture" (Webb, 280). The Hazards are upper class, high culture and legitimate, while the Chances are working class, low culture, and illegitimate. However, these distinctions are completely undermined in the novel. Dora and Nora may be illegitimate, but the reader discovers, no more so than the Hazard family. The disruption of traditional family lineage questions notions of legitimacy as well as family and identity.

Dora and Nora's mother, whom they call Grandma, is the woman, of no relation, who happened to own the boarding house in which they were born. Their mother died after giving birth, though it is suggested later on that Grandma could have been their actual mother. Their surrogate father is Peregrine Hazard, the twin brother of their biological father, Melchior Hazard, who refuses to acknowledge paternity. Both Peregrine and Melchior were not fathered by their father, Ranulph Hazard, but by Cassius Booth who once acted with Ranulph and his wife, Estella. Melchior's legitimate children, Saskia and Imogen, also twins, are actually fathered by Peregrine, and their mother becomes part of Dora and Nora's family once she has been rejected by the Hazards. The paternity of Melchior's second set of twins, Tristram and Gareth, is in question. What is legitimacy, family and identity when they can

be so readily altered?

Ranulph believes it is his religious and patriotic duty to spread the word of Shakespeare around the world, and Melchior hopes that a Shakespearian takeover of Hollywood will make up for Britain's loss in the Revolutionary War. The "Hazard family is a patriarchal institution, but its father figures find their authority deriving not from God, but from a Shakespeare who has come to seem omnipotent in the hegemony of British culture, to embody not only artistic feeling but religious and national spirit too" (Webb, 283). Their attempts at cultural hegemony, connected to British imperialism, ultimately fail along with the Empire. However, Shakespeare's plays remain examples of high culture when ironically, they were considered low culture during the time of the Bard. In fact, as Webb points out, "Shakespeare may have become the very symbol of legitimate culture, but his work is characterised by bastardy, multiplicity and incest; the Hazard dynasty may represent propriety and tradition, but they, too, are an endlessly orphaned, errant, and promiscuous bunch" (282).

Carter has chosen to structure the histories of both the Chances and the Hazards as a Shakespearian five-act comedy (Boehm, 86). By parodying this comic form, particularly *Twelfth Night* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Carter can undermine the distinctions represented by both families and provide a carnival ending of reconciliation similar to those in *Magic Toyshop* and *Several Perceptions*, though much more *dramatic*. Of course, there is a carnivalesque focus on the lower bodily stratum throughout the "play": the lewd comics of Gorgeous George, Lady A. asking the grocer "for anything in the shape of a cucumber" (*WC*, 7), Dora pissing herself, Saskia's girlfriend marrying her father, she becoming the lover of her half-brother Tristram, the sexual innuendos between Grandma and Peregrine, the orgiastic revelries in Melchior's blazing mansion, the cat turd in Shakespeare's bust, Daisy Duck leaving "lipstick on every pair of underpants" in Hollywood, Khan and Titania "making the beast with two backs" (143), the transvestite poultry, choo-choo train love making, and Melchior's "not wholly well-functioning jockstrap that boded ill for marital bliss" (137).

Melchior's hundredth birthday party is a consummately carnivalesque conclusion to the novel. With cathartic tears, Melchior finally acknowledges Dora and Nora as his children, Peregrine returns from the dead in a flutter of butterflies to confess his paternal ties to Saskia and Imogen, and the latter are finally reconciled with their mother. Tiffany is also resurrected from the dead as this Ophelia will not die for love, and after, all the verbal reconciliations,

everyone begins to dance together, except for Dora and Peregrine. Instead, they go upstairs to make "raucous, chandelier-shaking love" (Boehm, 88). For one moment, Nora thought they

> would bring down that chandelier and all its candles, smash, bang, clatter, and the swagged ceiling, too; bring the house down, fuck the house down, come ('cum'?) all over the posh frocks and the monkey jackets and the poisoned cake and the lovers, mothers, sisters, shatter the lenses that turned our lives into peepshows, scatter little candle-flames like an epiphany on every head, cover over all the family, the friends, the camera crews, with plaster dust and come and fire. (*Wise Children*, 220)

Dora too thinks anything was possible when she was making love to Peregrine. As she says, "everything seemed possible when I was doing it, but as soon as I stopped, not, as if fucking itself were the origin of illusion" (222). Peregrine thinks, "Life's a carnival" (222), but Dora knows "there are limits to the power of laughter" (220). You cannot ignore "the materiality of the moment" (Webb, 291) or, in this case, fuck down the house of one's history. Although Dora quotes, "Let other pens dwell on guilt and misery", and refuses "point blank to play in a tragedy" (*WC*, 154), she knows "wars are facts we cannot fuck away...nor laugh away" (221) and untimely deaths, like those of Grandma, Cyn and Irish, are a tragedy that cannot be denied. Dora (and Carter) are quick to point out false illusions beyond those we may experience during sex.

Dora exposes the fact that the film you enjoy on Saturday night is the product of hard labor. Making *The Dream*, nearly broke Nora and Dora. As the latter writes, "Our sweated labour = your bit of fun" (*WC*, 142). Like Fevvers, they show the labor behind the performance. When they were Mexican jumping beans, they "jumped away with low fevers and septic throats and influenza and the curse, jump, jump, jump, carrying on smiling, smilin' thru'" (76). The spectacle you may believe (if seeing is believing) is an artificial and laborious construction.

Dora is also sure to show the illusion behind preconceived ideas. Both Daisy and Irish have an idea of life which always fails to meet reality. Dora writes of them, "It's the American tragedy in a nutshell. They look around the world and think: 'There must be something better!' But there isn't. Sorry, chum. This is it. What you see is what you get. Only the here and now" (*WC*, 144). Cinematic images, the song and dance performance, the American Dream, legitimacy, illegitimacy, low culture, high culture, family, mother, father and identity itself, are all, in some way, illusions. They are not determinate, but are

constructions based on binaries that repress the relations of power on which they are founded. As binaries render these relations of power invisible, their hierarchal organization seems natural. Dora knows this and is thereby saved, as Webb suggests, from the "Freudian nightmare" within the novel (Webb, 292).

Webb writes that Dora's name is not accidental. "Carter's Dora, unlike her Freudian namesake, suffers very little psychic damage from lusting after her father (she 'fell in love the first time she saw him') or her uncle, or a string of father substitutes (men old enough to be) with whom she has affairs" (Webb, 293). Nor is it problematic that she finds the nape of Saskia's neck and Nora's jiggling bottom erotic (293). She celebrates the joys of life and does not waste her time on self-hatred or adhering to society's systems of decorum. Saskia, on the other hand, becomes hysterical upon discovering her best friend's relationship with her father. She takes revenge by repeatedly trying to poison Melchior and by seducing Tristram, one of the sons he eventually has with the Lady Margarine (293).

It should be mentioned here that this Freudian rewrite is just one of many parodies in the novel that calls our attention to the politics of representation. Shakespeare plays a central part, but as Webb points out, there are other writers: "Milton, Sterne, Wordsworth ('If the child is father of the man...then who is the mother of the woman?'), Dickens, Lewis Carroll making an appearance as a purveyor of 'kiddiporn', Samuel Butler, Shaw, Dostoevsky ('My crime is my punishment'), Henry James, and Tennessee Williams ('They lived on room service and the kindness of strangers') are just a random selection" (Webb, 295). And, as Webb indicates, almost for each writer referred to there is a generic corollary in Carter's eclectic style which reflects, for example, expressionism, realism, surrealism, romanticism, magic realism, and autobiography. Carter also uses the lives of Hollywood stars to support her intertextuality: "Charlie Chaplin 'hung like a horse', Judy Garland (Ranulph's wife is known as Estella 'A star Danced' Hazard, and was 'born in a trunk'), Busby Berkeley, Fred Astaire and his wife Adele, Astaire and Ginger Rogers, Ruby Keeler, Jessie Matthews, Josephine Baker, Jack Warner, W. C. Fields, Gloria Swanson, Paul Robeson, Orson Welles ('old buffers in...vintage port and miniature cigar commercials'), Clark Gable" (296) and the list goes on. Webb suggests that Daisy's lines are similar to those of Mae West, Puck's face is that of Mickey Rooney's, and Dora's German teacher, who says, "fuck the bourgeoisie", is a representation of Bertolt Brecht (296). These references serve to show the constructedness of representations as well as "the many ways of seeing [which] is part of the

modern condition" (298).

Carter foregrounds "the many ways of seeing" and the multiplicity that is characteristic of this world in order to undermine the rigid demarcations which serve to falsely enforce binaries and hierarchies. "By showing Shakespeare at the heart of English culture, as the 'author of our being', father to both the Hazards and the Chances..., Carter is arguing that plurality and hybridity are not simply conditions of modernity, products of its wreckage, but have always existed and are characteristic of life itself" (Webb, 290). As said before, this "plurality and hybridity" does not deny meaning. Its acceptance is "an existential acceptance of the facts of life and death in which contradictions are a sign of hope, and difference has to be negotiated rather than fought over as if there were only one place of rightness, one correct way of living that must be identically reproduced the whole world over" (290). Both Dora and Nora accept plurality and hybridity. They are not imprisoned by ideas. They are not victim to ideas of "female sexuality or the multitude of images of femininity" that surround them (291). Their identities are created by and dependent upon each other regardless of what the Hazards or society may think. Carter, quoting Lawrence Millman, writes, "Chance is the mother of invention...Invention is also the mother of invention" (*The Old Wives' Fairy Tale Book*, xii). Mrs Chance (Grandma) adopted that surname when she decided to make "a new start in a new place, [in] a new century" (*WC*, 26). Out of the indeterminacy of chance she could invent and reinvent herself. Just like Grandma, Dora and Nora, continually find "in the *chance* of [their] wrong-sidedness neither shame nor restraint, but opportunity" (291). They are wise enough to know that to do otherwise could prove to be a *hazard*.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION
A CHANGE IN DIALOGUE

> Those like Bakhtin who espouse the cause of the low speak of 'grotesque realism'; those like Kayser who stand with the status quo speak of grotesque nightmares. (Harpham, 74)

Certainly, grotesque nightmares are a central feature of Fellini films from the sixties, like *8½* and *Juliet of the Spirits*. The "clash of incompatibles" which Guido and Juliet must face are depicted, in a Kayserian way, as frightening and sinister. Although Fellini acknowledges all the ambiguities, mysteries and paradoxes of life, he attempts, like other modernist artists, to impose order, in this case, through the metanarrative of Jungian psychology. Through individuation one achieves psychic unity and gains acceptance of one's alienation from a knowable world so that the grotesque is no longer frightening and sinister. The alienation, for Fellini, is lamentable, but his solution, as expressed in films like *Amarcord* and *The Clowns*, is simply to laugh. However, regardless of the concomitant grotesque realism, this laughter is not carnival laughter which expresses victory "over all that oppresses and restricts", but instead is defeatist. There are no more grotesque nightmares in his later films, but, then again, there are no more differences to be afraid of. Fellini's "ersatz carnival" does not retain and celebrate difference, which suggests "multiplicity, heterogeneity, plurality", but depicts solitary "otherness" which leads to binary opposition and exclusion (Hutcheon:1988, 61). Not only does such binary thinking deny the utopian element of carnival, but, it also precludes the material historical reality. The continuum of Fellini's thinking ultimately leads to the inescapable and meaningless quagmire of simulacra which neutralizes "the radical difference of the marginalized" (Stam, 235). As a result, the grotesque and carnival, which may "act as a catalyst and site of symbolic struggle" (Stallybrass and White, 14), become as meaningless as everything else, and even Fellini, as evidenced by his later films, cannot laugh in the sinister face of a disordered world "totally different from the familiar one" (Kayser, 21). Although Fellini may focus on the low and marginalized, he denies them the possibility of change and agency inherent in the indeterminacy of the grotesque, and, thereby, inevitably supports, like Kayser, the status quo.

Angela Carter, like Bakhtin, espouses the cause of the low, and her use of the grotesque, like the Renaissance grotesque Bakhtin praises, provides an emancipatory function which destroys rigid binaries and celebrates the regenerative aspects of life, specifically the

creation of new possibilities. Carter initially applies the grotesque to her social realism which seems to refute Fellini's usage, but her application shifts when she successfully combines it with postmodern strategies. For Carter, unlike for Fellini, indeterminacy does not necessitate a state of meaninglessness and alienation from a knowable world, but, in fact, allows for the possibility of new constructions which will enable both women and men "not so much [to] make sense of the world as to survive it" (Punter:1991, 147). Carter agrees that "reality is always already represented, which does not so much deny the value of representation as situate representation within its particular historical, geopolitical, and sociocultural context" (Michael, 211-12).

Through her unique combination of the grotesque and postmodern parody Carter undermines Western binary logic which is at the root of oppressive hierarchies, without doing away with notions of difference:

> The construction of new versions of the subject [are possible] independent of the traditional male centered hierarchical oppositions between subject and object, self and other, man and woman, male and female, masculine and feminine. Through a continual process of difference and deferral, this new subject is both and neither subject and object, self and other; it is always in process of becoming other than itself [and has the agency to guide this process]. (Michael, 211)

She does not, as does Bakhtin, idealize the grotesque or the upside-down world of carnival. Carter utilizes the possibilities within the utopian element of each, but without denying the material historical reality to which the grotesque and carnival respond. As Migali Michael writes of Carter's *Nights at the Circus*:

> The various realist depictions of women's lived oppression imbedded within the narrative indicate...that feminist politics ground the novel in the ordinary physical world. Yet the novel's postmodern strategies [and use of the grotesque] also serve feminist aims by creating a space and providing an artistic vocabulary for delineating possible changes or transformations. Carter posits a feminism that is both potentially liberating and still anchored in the material situation. (Michael, 216)

As discussed previously, Michael argues that there is a direct relationship between a postmodernism that is constructive and remains connected to the ordinary material world, (as opposed to one which focuses on the collapse of Western culture), and the level of focused political engagement that anchors it. It is the "specificity of feminist commitment", which directly engages postmodern aesthetic strategies, that makes them "potentially more effective in transforming the reader's consciousness than...the more detached politics of much (white

male) postmodern fiction" (218). It is Carter's high level of focused political engagement which also leads her to advance postmodern strategies through the use of the grotesque. Her "feminist commitment" drives her to use both in order to challenge the status quo and investigate the possibilities and agency inherent in indeterminacy, while simultaneously refuting a loss of meaning in the world; values still exist, but they are temporary, contingent and subject to change (218-20). Her later works contribute provisional solutions which reject binary logic and relations of power and which allow for a better quality of life for both women and men. The grotesque and postmodern parody provide feminist discourses with disruptive strategies that effect "the continual challenge which collective values need if they are to remain dynamic rather than become fixed dogma" (220). Carter's later fiction "signals a move toward new forms of feminist aesthetics, ones that would be rigorously critical as well as radically constructive, creative, celebratory, and perhaps toward changes in aesthetics in general" (221).

Works by both Fellini and Carter have enjoyed popularity in the mainstream though it is only Fellini's early films and Carter's later fictions which have achieved this acclaim. As discussed in chapter two, Fellini's later films, effectively disallow, rather than problematize, referentiality (Michael, 17). They "tend to sever language and representation from the material historical situation to such a degree that they disallow any exploration of the ways in which they are interrelated and are both functions of complex relations of power" (17). Fellini's decline in popularity, as suggested previously, could be accounted for by the fact that these later films presuppose a highly educated audience. Their attempts at disrupting the status quo, therefore, are appreciated by a very small élite (17). However, as we have seen, these films ultimately support the status quo they purport to disrupt as they deny difference and agency for those who stand against it. Carter's later works, on the other hand, enjoy popularity not only because they provide possible agency and utilize a colloquial and accessible language, but also because their celebratory character is now conceivable and desirable. Today there exists "a wide constituency of potential readers who satisfy the minimum requirement of having an awareness that feminism challenges sexist constructions", and these readers can enjoy Carter's humor which necessitates taking a position outside phallocentric culture, at least temporarily (Makinen, 6). Undoubtedly, exuberant material is more likely to achieve popularity, but I agree with Ricarda Schmidt that it "is the increased self-confidence of women...and their deeper theoretical understanding of patriarchy and the

constitution of the subject that have made this light-heartedness and humour possible" (Schmidt, 74). A critical consciousness, to which all of Carter's works have contributed, has developed and now women must enjoy "the freedom that lies behind the mask, within dissimulation, the freedom to juggle with being, and indeed, with the language which is vital to our being" (*NC*, 103).

Carter is well aware that film, which addresses a larger audience than literature and has the additional benefit of visual impact (seeing is believing), is a more powerful technology of "repetitive signifying" (Butler, 145). That is why Fellini's denial of agency as well as his confirmation of "Mulvey's model of the representation of Woman in narrative cinema" is problematic (de Lauretis:1994, 59). Carter addresses cinema in many of her novels, and, in fact, creates the figure of Tristessa "in order to say some quite specific things about the cultural production of femininity...of femininity as a commodity, of Hollywood reproducing illusions as tangible commodities" (Carter quoted by Rubenstein, 115), but she does not believe film is an inherently negative signifying process. As she writes in her introduction to *The Virago Book of Fairy Tales*: "Now we have machines to do our dreaming for us. But within that 'video gadgetry' might lie the source of continuation, even a transformation of story-telling and story performance" (quoted by Mulvey:1994, 240). In fact, two of Carter's works have been made into films, *The Magic Toyshop* and *The Company of Wolves*. Both films not only provide alternatives to mainstrean cinema through their feminist focus, but utilize filmic techniques in order to disrupt patriarchal oppression. For example, in discussing *The Magic Toyshop*, Laura Mulvey writes, "From one point of view, the cinema seems to be compromised and placed on the side of Uncle Philip and his fetishism, but from another the cinema has a different role to play in the film. It sweeps into the cold house that lives in fear as dream and escape" (236). The cinema's ability to shift from one world "to another without verbal explanation", enables Melanie's brother to escape Uncle Philip and provides opportunities for Melanie and Finn to understand each other better (239). As Mulvey writes, "It is as though the cinema's power to dream participates in the character's assertion of their own desires and, at the same time, materialises them magically on the screen" (237).

Fellini has argued, the cinema itself is grotesque, but whether or not its inherent powers are utilized depends, like the use of the grotesque in all genres, on authorial intention. As we have seen in the works of Fellini and Carter, the grotesque may be used only to show

humanity's alienation from a knowable world, or, more productively, to show the possibilities of an ultimately new one. The use of the grotesque in the works of Fellini and Carter is a response to previous responses, of their own and others, like Bakhtin or Kayser, or as far back as Vitruvius or Horace. Their utterances are competing languages, socially and politically marked, within heteroglossia, and the popularity of Carter's later texts suggests that her version, which foregrounds the indeterminacy and regenerative quality characteristic of language in general, may be starting to enjoy prestige. The dialogue is beginning to change, with women now participating and "say[ing] things for which no language has previously existed" (Carter quoted by Goldsworthy, 9).

Filmography

FILMS DIRECTED BY FELLINI

1950 LUCI DEL VARIETA (*Variety Lights*); co-director with Alberto Lattuada; story by Fellini; screenplay, Fellini, Tullio Pinelli, Ennio Flaiano, Alberto Lattuada; photography, Otello Martelli; set design, Aldo Buzzi; music, Felice Lattuada. Cooperative production, Capitolium Film.

1952 LO SCEICCO BIANCO (*The White Sheik*); story by Fellini and Tullio Pinelli, from suggestion by Michelangelo Antonioni; screenplay, Fellini, Pinelli, Ennio Flaiano; photography, Arturo Gallea; music, Nino Rota; set design, Raffaello Tolfo; producer, Luigi Rovere.

1953 I VITELLONI (*The Vitelloni*); story by Fellini, Ennio Flaiano, Tullio Pinelli, from a Pinelli idea; screenplay, Fellini, Flaiano; photography, Otello Martelli, Luciano Trasatti, Carlo Carlini; Music, Nino Rota; set design, Mario Chiari; produced by Peg Film (Rome)/Cité Films (Paris).

1953 UN'AGENZIA MATRIMONIALE (*A Matrimonial Agency*) - episode IV of L'AMORE IN CITTA; story and screenplay, Fellini, Tullio Pinelli; photography, Gianni Di Venanzo; music, Mario Nascimbene; produced by Cesare Zavattini for Faro Films.

1954 LA STRADA; story and screenplay, Fellini, Tullio Pinelli; collaborator on screenplay, Ennio Flaiano; artistic advisor, Brunello Rondi; music, Nino Rota; photography, Otello Martelli; art direction, Mario Ravasco; costume design, Margherita Marinaru; produced by Dino De Laurentiis, Carlo Ponti.

1955 IL BIDONE; story and screenplay, Fellini, Ennio Flaiano, Tullio Pinelli; collaborator, Brunello Rondi; music, Nino Rota; photography, Otello Martelli; set and costume design, Dario Cecchi; production, Titanus (Rome)/S.G.C. (Paris).

1957 LE NOTTI DI CABIRIA (*The Nights of Cabiria*); story and screenplay, Fellini, Ennio Flaiano, Tullio Pinelli, from a Fellini idea; script consultant, Brunello Rondi; additional dialogue, Pier Paolo Pasolini; music, Nino Rota; photography, Aldo Tonti; sets and costumes, Piero Gheradi; production, Dino De Laurentiis (Rome)/Les Films Marceau (Paris); distribution, Paramount.

1960 LA DOLCE VITA; story and screenplay, Fellini, Ennio Flaiano, Tullio Pinelli; script collaborator, Brunello Rondi; music, Nino Rota; photography, Otello Martelli; sets and costumes, Piero Gheradi; produced by Angelo Rizzoli and Giuseppe Amato; a production of Riama Film (Rome)/Pathé Consortium Cinéma (Paris).

1962 LE TENTAZIONI DEL DOTTOR ANTONIO (*The Temptations of Doctor Antonio*) - Part II of four-part film, BOCCACCIO '70, conceived by Cesare Zavattini; story and

screenplay, Fellini, Ennio Flaiano, Tullio Pinelli, with collaborators Brunello Rondi and Goffredo Parise; photography, Otello Martelli; music, Nino Rota; settings, Piero Zuffi. Producer, Carlo Ponti.

1963 OTTO E MEZZO (8½); story, Fellini, Ennio Flaiano; screenplay, Fellini, Ennio Flaiano, Tullio Pinelli, Brunello Rondi; music, Nino Rota; photography, Gianni di Venanzo. Sets and costumes, Piero Gheradi; make-up, Otello Fava. Produced by Angelo Rizzoli for Cineriz (Rome)/Francinex (Paris).

1965 GIULIETTA DEGLI SPIRITI (*Juliet of the Spirits*); story, Fellini, Tullio Pinelli, from Fellini's idea; screenplay, Fellini, Ennio Flaiano, Pinelli, Brunello Rondi; photography, Gianni di Venanzo; music, Nino Rota; sets and costumes, Piero Gheradi; make-up, Otello Fava; interior decoration, Vita Anzalone; hairdressers, Renata Magnanti, Marisa Fraticelli. Produced by Angelo Rizzoli. A Federiz Film.

1968 TOBY DAMMIT (Episode III in *Tre Passi nel delirio*; other episodes, *William Wilson*, directed by Louis Malle, and *Metzengerstein*, directed by Roger Vadim); story and screenplay, Fellini, Bernardino Zapponi, loosely based on Edgar Allen Poe short story, "Never Bet the Devil Your Head"; music, Nino Rota; photography, Guiseppe Rotunno; sets and costumes, Piero Tosi; special effects, Joseph Nathanson. Produced by Alberto Grimaldi for P.E.A. (Rome)/Les Films Marceau and Cocinor (Paris).

1968 BLOCK-NOTES DI UN REGISTA (*A Director's Notebook*); script, Fellini, Bernardino Zapponi; photography, Pasquale De Santis; music, Nino Rota; English Dialogue, Eugene Walter; Producer, Peter Goldfarb, for NBC Productions International.

1969 FELLINI SATYRICON; story and screenplay, Fellini, Bernardino Zapponi, freely adapted from the *Satyricon* of Petronius Arbiter; photography, Guiseppe Rotunno; music, Nino Rota with collaborators Ilhan Mimaroglu, Tod Dockstader, Andrew Rubin; sets and costumes, Danilo Donati; make-up, Rino Carboni, Pierino Tosi; hairdresser, Luciano Vito; special effects, Adriano Pischiutta. Produced by Alberto Grimaldi for P.E.A. (Rome)/Les Productions Artistes Associés (Paris).

1970 I CLOWNS (*The Clowns*); story and screenplay, Fellini, Bernardino Zapponi; music, Nino Rota; photography, Dario di Palma; costumes, Danilo Donati; make-up, Rino Carboni; sets, Renzo Gronchi; producers, Elio Scardamaglia, Ugo Guerra. A co-production: R.A.I. (Rome)/O.R.T. (Paris)/Bavari Film (Munich)/Compagnia Leone Cinematografica (Rome).

1972 FELLINI ROMA; story and screenplay, Fellini, Bernardino Zapponi; music, Nino Rota; photography, Guiseppe Rotunno; scenery and costumes, Danilo Donati; interiors, Andrea Fantacci; make-up, Rino Carboni; frescoes and portraits, Rinaldo Antonello, Giuliano Geleng; producers, Danilo Marciani, Lamberto Pippia, for Ultra Film (Rome)/Les Productions Artistes Associés (Paris).

1973 AMARCORD; story and screenplay, Fellini Tonino Guerra; music, Nino Rota; photography, Guiseppe Rotunno; scenery and costumes, Danilo Donati; make-up, Rino Carboni; special effects, Adriano Pischiutta; interiors, Andrea Fantacci; producer, Franco Cristaldi. A co-production of F.C. Productions (Rome)/P.E.C.F. (Paris).

1976 IL CASANOVA DI FEDERICO FELLINI (*Casanova*); screenplay, Fellini, Bernardino Zapponi, loosely based on Giacomo Casanova's *The Story of My Life*; music, Nino Rota; photography, Guiseppe Rotunno; sets and costumes, Danilo Donati; scenic style conceived by Fellini; frescoes, Mario Fallani; magic lantern designer, Roland Topor; set decorator, Emilio D'Andria; sculptures, Giovanni Gianese; make-up, Rino Carboni, Gianetto de Rossi, Fabrizio Storza; hairstyles, Gabriella Borzelli; choreography, Gino Landi; dialogue consultant, Anthony Burgess. Produced by Alberto Grimaldi for P.E.A. (Rome).

1979 PROVO D'ORCHESTRA (*Orchestra Rehearsal*); story, Fellini; screenplay, Fellini, with Brunello Rondi; photography, Guiseppe Rotunno; music, Nino Rota; set design, Dante Ferretti; musical consultant, Carlo Savina; produced by RAI-TV (Rome)/Albatros Produktion G.M.B.H. (Monaco).

1980 LA CITTA DELLE DONNE (*City of Women*); story and screenplay, Fellini, Bernardino Zapponi, with Brunello Rondi; photography, Guiseppe Rotunno; music, Luis Bacalov; set conceptions, Fellini; designed by Dante Ferretti; paintings and frescoes, Rinaldo and Guiliano Geleng; costumes, Gabriella Pescucci; special effects, Adriano Pischiutta; executive producer, Franco Rosellini, for Opera Film Produzione (Rome)/Gaumont (Paris).

1984 E LA NAVE VA (*And the Ship Sails On*); idea and screenplay, Fellini, Tonino Guerra; photography, Guiseppe Rotunno; art director, Dante Ferretti; costume designer, Maurizio Millenotti; music, Gianfranco Plenizio; lyrics, Andrea Zanbotto; produced by Franco Cristaldi for R.A.I./Vides Produzione (Italy)/Gaumont (France).

1986 GINGER AND FRED; story, Fellini, Tonino Guerra; screenplay, Fellini, Guerra, Tullio Pinelli; photography, Tonino Delli Colli, Ennio Guarnieri; music, Nicola Piovani; production designer, Dante Ferretti; costume designer, Danilo Donati; make-up, Rino Carboni; choreography, Tony Ventura; produced by Alberto Grimaldi; a co-production of P.E.A. (Rome)/Revcom Films, Les Films Arianne, FR3 Films (Paris), with R.A.I. Uno.

1990 LA VOCE DELLA LUNA (*The Voice of the Moon*); screenplay, Fellini, Tullio Pinelli, Ermanno Cavazzoni, loosely based on novel by Ermanno Cavazzoni, *Il Poema dei Lunatici*; music, Nicola Piovani; scenery, Dante Ferretti; costumes, Maurizio Millenotti; produced by Mario and Vittorio Cecchi; a co-production C.G. Group Tiger, with R.A.I. (Rome).

FILMS BASED ON CARTER'S WORK

1984 THE COMPANY OF WOLVES; directed by Neil Jordan; screenplay, Angela Carter, Neil Jordan; photography, Bryan Loftus; music, George Fenton; editing, Rodney Holland; Art direction, Anton Furst; producer, Chris Brown; production, ITC/Palace.

1986 THE MAGIC TOYSHOP; directed by David Wheatley; photography, Ken Morgan; music, Bill Connor; editing, Anthony Ham; production designer, Steven Fineren; producer, Steve Morrison; production, Granada.

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