Chapter 2

Shadow Dance (1966), Several Perceptions (1968) and Love (1971)

This chapter deals with the “little-known” novels of Carter - Shadow Dance (1966), Several Perceptions (1968) and Love (1971). These three novels have been referred to as “Bristol Trilogy” (25) by Marc O’Day. The simple reason of such a reference may be that these books were written in Bristol. The narratives are also a realist depiction of the “provincial bohemia” (25) of the 60s and share similar settings, themes, plot structures and narrative techniques. The plots and themes of these novels deal with “youthful death” and the ways in which women are perceived and treated in the society. Shadow Dance and Love have greater similarity as both deal with a love triangle involving a young woman and two young men and they end with the death of the woman. A direct bearing on Carter’s own experiences in Bristol seems to impart substantial poignancy and authenticity to the texts. The narratives deal with the dirty, scruffy, drunk and vile low life of the society which was an outgrowth of the counterculture of the sixties. The varied characters of the novels work on various short term jobs in factories; they are junk dealers or teachers, or students at a university, and in an art school or “comprehensive school” (Love 8). Basically the youth occupies the centre-
stage, yet one finds a middle aged psychiatrist (*Love* 55), an ageing prostitute (*Several Perceptions* 48) and parents (*Shadow Dance, Several Perceptions, Love*) who either make rare appearances or are found dwelling in the minds of their children, as part of these narratives. The background and locale of the novels are various private spaces like bedsits, flats and houses; public places such as cafes, bars, pubs, ballrooms, junk shops, auction rooms, museums, libraries, hospitals, zoo, Labour exchange; and open-air locations like streets and parks to complete the marvellously evoked provincial urban landscape of the early 1960s.

Angela Carter's first novel *Shadow Dance* was published in England by Heinemann in 1966 and in the United States of America by Simon and Schuster in 1967 under the name of *Honeybuzzard*. The publication of the book led Anthony Burges to admit that:

> I read the book with admiration, horror and other relevant emotions... Angela Carter has remarkable descriptive gifts, a powerful imagination, and.... a capacity for looking at the mess of contemporary life totally without flinching. (*Shadow*, back cover)

*Shadow Dance* is an atypical “Carterian” novel. If read as part of a continuum of Carter's work, one can fascinatingly see the gradual growth/development of the writer from a realist narrator to a magic realist. Some critics have referred to the book as a “beautifully written soap opera” which reached excellence in the sharply malicious novel *Love*. 
A number of themes introduced in *Shadow Dance* are worked upon to recur in the later fictions by the novelist. The writer's preoccupation with the destructive effect of patriarchy on either of the sexes is more evident in her early novels. *Shadow Dance* being her first work of fiction is most concerned with a consciousness of the violence and oppression which accompanies the feminine. At the surface level, the novel is primarily a character study of dreadfully vicious and sadistic people like Honeybuzzard and Ghislaine and a circle of pub companions and their families in a wretched provincial city of England. The story is a third person narrative, viewed and narrated through the eye of Honeybuzzard’s best friend - Morris, who is also his business partner. Both are antique dealers who make living by collecting antiques and kitschy items from ruins (condemned, decaying, crumbling, soon to be demolished houses) and selling them.

The novel begins when Morris encounters Ghislaine - recently discharged from the hospital, in the pub. The once beautiful girl “like moonlight and daisies” (*Shadow* 3) has suddenly turned into a “bride of Frankenstein” (4). She now carries an awful scar on her face which leaves her “dreadful” and “repulsive” (49). The official story is that a gang of teenagers raped her and inflicted that wound on her. The truth is that Honeybuzzard is the real perpetrator but Ghislaine’s love for him leaves him scot-free. Honeybuzzard who had been away returns with Emily, his new girlfriend from London who eventually gets pregnant with his child. The plot consists of various junk-hunting ventures of Honeybuzzard and
Morris and reaches its conclusion when Honeybuzzard takes Ghislaine to a derelict Victorian house and murders her in a “blasphemous ritual.”

The novel is a “modern day horror story” wherein the old and the new order uncomfortably persist side by side but slowly “the familiar old world becomes strange and uncanny in its phantasmagoric change” (Peng 102). Carter seems to side with the old and the disgusting. On one of their nocturnal scavenging raids, Honeybuzzard and Morris find a bundle of old clothes, with a piece of sticking-plaster in one pocket. “That’s poignant, isn’t it, a used bit of Elastoplast,” Morris says, but Honeybuzzard replies: “It’s too new to be poignant. It’s disgusting” (Shadow 131). Carter considers human beings to be the product of historical and cultural changes and circumstances. The characters are naive and guilty; righteous and corrupt; and powerful and feeble at the same time. These universal binaries and emotional extremities are so strongly imbued in human beings that readers can relate to the characters as they read about them. The identities people wear change constantly, as individuals reinvent themselves according to the prevailing situations. This aspect is visible in the character of Honeybuzzard who indulges in a similar kind of conscious shifting of identity. He seeks forgiveness from Morris pretending to be somebody else and not himself; lisping in a baby voice, he calls out: “Honey Thorry” (119). The following statement by Honeybuzzard makes his penchant for the conscious changing of identity more obvious:

I like - you know – to slip in and out of me. I would like to be somebody different every
morning. Me and not me. I would like to have a cupboard bulging with all different bodies and faces and choose a fresh one every morning. (78)

His playing in and out of various characters, symbolizes the radical rejection of the conventional view of identity. Honeybuzzard's changing identity in *Shadow Dance* is perceived as perilous because shifting of identity is acceptable in Carter's fiction on the condition that “when it is done with due recognition of the rights of others” (Day 18) and only when it does not exploit others or restrain their liberty.

*Shadow Dance* does not possess fantastic characters like Fewvers with wings as in the *Nights at the Circus* (1984) for this novel marks the beginning of Carter as a novelist and Magic Realism seems to be in its nascent stage. A close and deep study of the novel gives a broader perspective of the techniques employed by her. The novelist “confronts reality and tries to untangle it” but the medium she uses to depict reality is Magic Realism and Gothicism. The imagery used is Gothic but the description is fantastical and surreal. She makes an attempt to discover “the mysterious relationship between man and his circumstances.” The point to be marked here is how far Carter has succeeded in unravelling these mysteries. There are no vivid aspects of Magic Realism in the text though Carter has employed dreams and surrealist descriptions within her narrative which are characteristics of, and integral to magic realist fiction.

After his first encounter with the scarred Ghislaine, Morris walks back home from the café under “a deep blue, secret and mysterious sky
with a low, white satin moon appliquéd on its bosom...” (*Shadow* 11). He begins to imagine himself to be “the last man left alive in the world.” His imagination becomes so powerful that it grows into a conviction and subsumes his immediate existence and reality:

> The fantasy grew into a conviction; the invisible cut healed up and vanished. The empty houses appeared to him like rocks or cliffs, the parked cars at the road-side abandoned shells of deep-sea creatures, pearly Argonauts or giant sea snails. (*Shadow* 11-12)

There are sections where dreams are described in detail and when the dreams, which are an expression of the unconscious mind, take hold of Morris they touch borders of Surrealism. Guilt is a part of both conscious and unconscious mind of Morris. He lives constantly “in a state of guilty fear, starting at sudden noises, frightened of shadows” (39) and is tormented by recurrent dreams of mutation of Ghislaine’s face. His guilt becomes a moment of reality and he has to shrug it off:

> But he was terribly weary; he ran out of himself at every pore... So he slept, but not for long, for he had bad dreams. He dreamed he was cutting her face with a jagged shard of broken glass and blood was running on her breasts not only from her but from himself, from his cut head... A voice repeated over and over: ‘There is too much blood.’ He realized, after a time, that it was his own voice. (18)

The surrealist pattern of *Shadow Dance* can be discerned in the portrayal of Ghislaine, in Honeybuzzard’s transgressive play, Morris’s transgressive dreams and imagination, and his surrealist perception of
reality. Ghislaine is suggestive of various surrealist portraits of mutilated women with combination of contradictory characteristics – beauty and ugliness, innocence and eroticism and the grotesque:

The whole cheek was a mass of corrugated white flesh, like a bowl of blancmange a child has played with and not eaten. Through this devastation ran a deep central trough that went right down her throat under the collar of her coat. . . . But the other half of the face was fresh and young and smooth and warm as fruit in the sunlight. The two sides of the moon juxtaposed. (Shadow 152–53)

Honeybuzzard’s bedroom is furnished like a surrealist collage where anything and everything is crammed in and juxtaposed: “The room was a crystallization of the personality Honeybuzzard presented to the world” (98).

In chapter 1, Morris narrates an episode where Honeybuzzard and Ghislaine had spent one whole afternoon working on some pornographic photographs of themselves. Ghislaine posed “contorted herself, spread herself wide, and arrayed herself in a bizarre variety of accessories” (17) like rhino whips, clanking spurs and stag’s head. Morris remarks that “the images of the two lovely, strong, young bodies had a certain strange and surreal beauty.” Within this description Carter also uses the term “Memento mori” (remember you must die). At yet another place, Carter mentions the name of Salvador Dali while describing Honeybuzzard’s “fine, curling moustaches” which were once charred by exploding cigarettes. This makes it evident that while Carter was writing Shadow
Dance, Magic Realism and Surrealism and the ideas related to them were beginning to take shape in her mind but it is only in the later novels that these techniques are elaborately worked upon.

Carter is not only a postmodern feminist writer but also a “Gothicist.” Most of the critics of the Carterian oeuvre tend to overlook the imperative writing tradition – the Gothic, which plays a very significant role in her provocative, subversive and controversial novels of sexual identity. The writer has used the Gothic all along, ever since her first novel Shadow Dance (1966), yet she is not exclusively a conventional writer of Gothic fiction. The Carterian Gothic tradition is greatly influenced by Hoffman and Poe. This is established by the following quote from the Afterword to Fireworks (1974):

Though it took me a long time to realize why I like them, I’d always been fond of Poe, and Hoffman.... The Gothic tradition in which Poe writes grandly ignores the value system of our institution; it deals entirely with the profane. Its great themes are incest and cannibalism.... Its style will tend to be ornate, unnatural - and thus operate against the perennial human desire to believe the word as fact... It retains a singular moral function - that of provoking unease. (133)

Angela Carter views Gothic Tradition as a provocative and invigorative form of writing and uses it mostly to “parody its theatrics of horror.” Her Gothic parody is in fact “a double play, a postmodern mimicking of Gothic horror which is itself theatrical” (Peng 101). In Shadow Dance, the Gothic horror and revulsion is very distinct. Behind
the tale of male camaraderie is a ghastly and grisly tale of transgressive murder and self-immolation. The novel explores the youth revolt of the sixties and examines the concept of grotesque. It deals with “nocturnal” characters that live in the shadow and dusk of their own “wasteland” and question their own reality. These creatures of the night are familiar and abhorrent at the same time; they exist in the debris of the decaying and disintegrating society.

The story unfolds in a bar, where Ghislaine “chinked” (Shadow 1) her way through the door and “rang a carillon on the green tiles”, similar to that caused by dropping of coins. Ghislaine was “a soft and dewy young girl” (2) similar to those “in a picture book.” She also possessed “soft baby cheeks”, “half open mouth”, “long, yellow, milkmaid hair” and “big brown eyes.” While describing the beautiful, “white and golden girl” Carter builds up an atmosphere of the upcoming horror by the use of horrible eerie images. She describes Ghislaine’s eyes with their dark lashes sweeping “over half her cheeks” by employing farfetched images like the following:

.....her eyes were so big and brown they seemed to gobble up her face, as those of a bush baby do. They were as big as the eyes of the dog with eyes as big as cartwheels in the fairy story; and as brown as wood or those painted on Egyptian mummy cases. (2)

Then against the foil of her beauty is presented the horror of her scarred face. Beauty transforms into a hideous deformity. The readers are given a
realistic description of the shattered loveliness which made Morris flinch away from her “in a sudden terror” (Shadow 1) and invoke protection against her:

The scar went all the way down her face, from the corner of her left eyebrow, down, down, past nose and mouth and chin until it disappeared below the collar of her shirt. The scar was all red and raw as if at the slightest exertion, it might open and bleed; and the flesh was marked with purple imprints from the stitches she had had in it. The scar had somehow puckered all the flesh around it, as if some clumsy amateur dressmaker had roughly cobbled up the seam and pushed her away, saying ‘I suppose it will do.’ The scar drew her whole face sideways and even in profile, with the hideous thing turned away, her face was horribly lop-sided, skin, features and all dragged away from the bone. (2)

The disfigured girl with the “revolting scar” on her face is the damsel in distress as well as the “monstrous feminine” of this novel – Gothic motifs employed by Carter. The scar also symbolizes the bodily harm and wound which is another Gothic element used by the author. She looms in the background of the novel as an ominous and menacing figure and haunts the textual world as well as the men of this world with her “bleeding sexuality.” She shouts outside the doors “let me in! Let me in!” (154) but being a monster - “a femme fatale, whose kiss is death” (117), she has to be shut out. Her presence gives rise to horror and terror which is yet another Gothic element employed by Carter. She comes back to Honeybuzzard despite being mutilated and abandoned by him: “I've
learned my lesson, I can’t live without you, you are my master, do what you like with me” (Shadow 166). Ghislaine represents the negative image of “sexual women” bound by the shackles of obedience and passivity that was prevalent in the original Gothic fiction. Like the “dehumanized creatures” and “madwoman in the attic” of the Gothic novels, Ghislaine had also lost her sanity and control over her passions and thus had to be silenced.

The conflict between good and evil as depicted in the character of Morris is also a Gothic motif. Morris is Honeybuzzard’s “passive collaborator.” He is not only his partner in the antique business but also becomes his partner in crime. He is aware of the fact that Honeybuzzard, his alter-ego was behind the brutal and gruesome act. On one hand he is constantly overcome by fearful guilt but is too weak to take a stand against him, yet at another moment he justifies Honeybuzzard’s act saying he tried to “teach her a lesson” for her unguarded sexuality and promiscuity. Honeybuzzard dared to act out what Morris “had always wanted but never defined” (177). Ghislaine’s death at Honeybuzzard’s hand is viewed by Morris as “filling up her voracity once and for all by cramming with death the hungry mouth between her thighs” (178). Towards the end of the story, Morris slays his own conscience - surrenders and abandons his pursuit for justice. Morris is the youth dissatisfied as well as paralyzed with the decaying culture. The last line of the novel informs us that “Morris vanished into the shadows” (182). He returns back to the vicious and destructive world of Honeybuzzard, knowing well that it was the same
world that had messed up his life and proved fatal to Ghislaine and would ultimately destroy and ruin Honeybuzzard too. He feels incapable of deceiving the world which made up his past as well as his present; a world entirely overshadowed by Honeybuzzard.

Honeybuzzard as his name implies is “an irreconcilable combination of the sweet and predatory” (Gamble, Writing 52). He is the malignant, amoral, asexual, cruel and capricious anti-hero. He comes out as a monstrous figure and the vicious and brutal villain of the Gothic novels. He is the “fledgling figure” of Carter, who with an obsession for making Jumping Jacks, and fantasy of playing chess with men and women, will mature into the sexual predators and puppet masters of her later novels. In this book lie the premonition of Carter’s later novel The Magic Toyshop and the figure of the ominous Uncle Philip. Both of these characters are pure product of patriarchy and a culture which has been oppressive and tyrannical to women. He sees other human beings as mere objects and aesthetic pieces to manipulate and play with to liberate them of their “shadow” existence.

We also get a feel of Gothic eeriness when within the realist and the magical narration Carter gives the readers clichés of Gothic motifs like hooting of an “owl, hooded in a tree” (Shadow 12), “deserted cemetery”, “old churchyard” along with sinister suggestiveness of the “night” in various scenes of the book. Ghislaine haunts Morris’s imagination to the extent that he imagines her following him everywhere he goes:
The fresh green breath of the night moved and shivered around him and chilled him to the bone. He was afraid when he heard footsteps behind him; was she coming after him, like a fury...? (Shadow 12)

The Gothic revulsion and creepiness reaches its height towards the end of the story in chapter 12, when Morris accompanies Emily to one of the dilapidated and soon to be demolished houses, in order to locate Honeybuzzard. They crossed the roof of one house and made an entry into the second house through its “disordered attics” (175). Morris led Emily into the “hot darkness” where there was neither sound nor “glimmer of any light” but “as they crept cautiously down the next flight of stairs, he saw a yellow satin seeping round the edges of the door on the floor below...” (176). The room was glowing with lighted candles and the silence was so intense that it was almost audible. The darkness, the silence and stillness add to the Gothic atmosphere and provide a strong setting for the horrendous murder of Ghislaine. The scene of the murder is not only marked by Gothic eeriness but is also a display of eroticism and death brought together in a manner fundamental to Surrealism:

A collapsible trestle table had been assembled in the middle of the floor... On the table lay a mound, covered with a chequered tablecloth... Morris became painfully conscious of the beating of his heart... Naked, Ghislaine lay on her back with her hands crossed on her breasts, so that her nipples poked between her fingers like the muzzles of inquisitive white mice. Her eyes were shut down with pennies, two on each eyelid, and her mouth gaped open
a little. There were deep black fingermarks in her throat. With pity and tenderness, for the first time unmixed with any other feeling, Morris saw that her fingernails were bitten down to the quick and how shadows smoothed out the cratered surface of her cheek and how the chopped tufts of golden hair had grown no farther than an inch or so below her ears and how there was soft, blonde down on the motionless flesh of her stomach. (Shadow 176-177)

The description of the setting in which Ghislaine lay dead is followed by yet another horrific depiction of her slayer - Honeybuzzard who appears as a madman (another Gothic motif) holding a candle in his left hand and cradling something (a plaster Christ) in his right hand:

His hair trailed like mad Ophelia’s and his eyes were too large for his head. The angles and planes of the skull were showing through the flesh. What was familiar about him seemed pared away, the daytime flesh carved off his bones so that he appeared to them, finally, naked and elementary and unknowable in the integrity of his own skeleton, in the night. Under his breath, he sang a song they could not hear. (179)

Some of the recurrent Gothic motifs in Angela Carter’s writing are the automaton/android, the monstrous feminine, the haunted houses and the play of the double. David Punter’s observation that critics in the 1990s have found themselves “at a peculiar confluence between the major motifs of Gothic and a set of ways of thinking increasingly current in contemporary criticism and theory” (2), makes Carter’s association of the
Gothic and the postmodern more vivid. The points of convergence are the uncanny, phantoms, the spectres, the crypts and “bodily harm and the wound.” Punter further states that the convergence also divulges how contemporary theory is troubled by “the uncanny nature of knowledge itself” and “haunted, like Gothic, by the weight of a history, just behind its shoulder, which proves resistant not only to understanding but, more importantly to change” (3).

The decaying old houses where Honeybuzzard and Morris go to collect antique items, are a sign of cultural ruins and remains, as well as the Gothic image of a repulsive and oppressive domestic space. The ruins and junk of the novel symbolize old, outdated cultural values. The buildings, which were once a part of the old age charm, are now in a dilapidated state - decayed and shattered but the values they symbolize, still hold power and force to wreck contemporary life.

All the characters in the novel are strongly written except that of the “flamboyantly violent” Honeybuzzard, who appears to be an “androgynous” character with sadistic tendencies. Sarah Gambles remarks:

...you have to recognize that he alone belongs to two worlds, in gender terms and in terms just as vital to Carter the writer, the real (life) and the shadow (art). He is on the fault line, an early embodiment of the conviction that the fantastical and the actual can exist on the same plane. (17)
The novelist has not given any explanation for this potent tendency in this character or any substantiation as to what was the reason behind the mutilation of Ghislaine's face or other happenings in the novel; she leaves it entirely to the imagination of the readers to decipher and analyse. Perhaps, Carter was just trying to depict "the mess of contemporary life" as pointed out by Borges as well as trying to write in the way of Poe and Hoffman with the aim of "provoking unease" as she herself had stated once. Carter, like the counterculture of the sixties was trying to meditate a fictional world free from any kind of moral and traditional manacle in an attempt to capsize the belief system of the prevalent times.

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The novel *Several Perceptions* which is signed "March - December 1967" by Carter, won the Somerset Maugham Award when first published in 1968. This book is the most vivid and vibrant assessment of the 60s by the novelist. The myth of "the flower power generation" with its essentials like spontaneity, open emotion, sexual liberation and visceral engagement is skilfully perpetuated in this book. A group of this generation was also engaged with the civil rights movement and the anti-war movement. The narrative also shows Carter's growing fascination with Freud and her progression towards perfection as a writer and a story-teller. As a "social realist" she is also seen to be getting influenced with the power of the fantastical but has yet to explore completely the realm of the magical.
Joseph Harker is the protagonist of Several Perceptions. He is a twenty two years old – “self-styled nihilist”, a profligate and a “disoriented rebel” without any aspiration. He seems to be in quest for meaning of life and existence. Partially dejected on being abandoned by his girlfriend Charlotte and partially by the war and violence prevalent in his times, he decides to take his own life, believing that “a dead lover is in the strongest position of all since the remorse of grief will make a stone throb like a heart” (Several 19) and thus he would also escape from the “world of paralogic and irrationality” (20). His preferred mode of suicide and bidding farewell to “earth’s dubious bliss” (19) is the lethal coal gas. A point to be noticed is that unlike Shadow Dance and Love, in this novel, not a woman but a young man is haunted by death and the suicide attempt is made in the first chapter and not towards the end of the novel. The chosen method of committing suicide is gas in all these three novels. Morris also considers a similar mode of committing suicide - “always one way out” (Shadow 14) in the opening chapter of Shadow Dance.

Fortunately, Joseph is saved by a girl called Anne Blossom living on the floor below his flat. She was the first to discover him “charred and unconscious” (Several 24).

Joseph like most of the flower power generation, leads a life without direction. The beginning of the novel notifies that he works in a mortuary “cleaning and laying out the dead” (7) but later he is shown to be “subsisting upon unemployment benefit” (22). His disillusionment arises largely from his sense of worthlessness; his lack of confidence in not
knowing where he fits into the sphere of things; in fact what he should resent and protest against. There is plenty to choose from, with hostilities in Vietnam being on the top of his list, however there is no “real sense of involvement” (Several 64) in him to alleviate those sufferings and miseries through a genuine means like taking up voluntary service or joining organised protest. That Joseph had taken “this dreadful tragedy of war as a symbolic event” (Several 64) is pointed out by Ransom - the psychiatrist thus:

“... you draw a simple melodramatic conclusion from this complex tragedy - you use it as a symbol for your rejection of a world to which you cannot relate, perhaps because of your immaturity.” (64)

Instead of undertaking any radical action, he frees a badger from the local zoo, conceives a bizarre joke and sends a turd airmail to Lyndon Johnson (the then President of the United States) and falls in love with Mrs Boulder “the neighbourhood love-machine” (23) who is also his best friend Viv’s mother. His Christmas celebrations commence with “a bewildering state of sexual discovery” with Mrs Boulder (a woman fit to be his mother) and culminate with the dancing at a “Dionysiac” (11) revel.

At this stage of Carter’s writing career Magic Realism was still in its nascent phase. As a technique it had yet to evolve to become the modus operandi in the novels to come. In this book, the magic realistic elements are few and minor. As discussed in chapter 1, dreams are one of the primary constituents of Magic Realism; they occupy a very significant
place in the Carterian compositions. Dreams are a language of imagery which range from the normal, the fantastical to the surreal. Forms of dream, include the frightening or upsetting nightmare, erotic dreams with sexual images and nocturnal emission. Joseph, the anti-hero like many of the central characters in Carter's novels is tormented by dreams. "Every minute of the lonely nights was filled with dreams of fires quenched with blood and bloody beaks of birds of prey and bombs blossoming like roses with bloody petals over the Mekong Delta" (*Several* 4-5) He was baffled to find himself and "his wary, sallow, ill-looking ferociously private face" (5) dominating most of his dreams:

This was one of his dreams. It was spring and he was walking in a formal garden. Tulips and children's heads were arranged like apples on a shelf in a store, in neat rows. The tulips swayed and the children smiled with red mouths. Innocent sunlight shone on everything. Along came a man in heavy boots and trampled down the flower bed, both tulips and children; juicy stalks and fragile bones went snap. Blood and sap spurted on all sides. Joseph flung himself on the man and tried to choke him or gouge out his eyes but his hands made no impression for his body was, in the dream, insubstantial as smoke. When the last child's head was irrevocably smashed, the murderer turned his face to Joseph and Joseph realized he was looking at his own face. Then he woke up and broke his mirror so it would never tell the truth again, if it had ever told the truth before. (3)

It is in these dream sequences that the imaginative ingenuity of the writer surfaces. Carter gives expression to flights of fancy and uninhibited
and unbridled imagination. Surrealism takes hold of Carter’s mind in these dream sequences through ingenious expressions; concurrence of seemingly incongruous images following the logic of free association. The incongruity of “tulips” and “children’s head” arranged in a garden cannot go unnoticed. There is another episode where Joseph narrates to the psychiatrist one of his dreams of being on an anvil and being made into guns, knives and iron crosses. At another place Joseph’s “waking dream” is compressed into that second in which his eyes meet and communicate with that of Mrs Boulder in a cafe:

... he dived straight through these windows open on the virgin forests of her mind as if falling through a fantastic country of late medieval blues and greens, coming at last to rest a lawn beside a fountain where a young girl in a white dress trimmed with pearls cradled in her lap the horned head of a lascivious unicorn without knowing what he represented. (Several 73)

Next in the series of his hallucinations is Mrs Boulder in his ice-cream bowl and he scooping up “greedy fistfuls” of her rich and creamy “delicious viscera” (76). These dreams remind us of Freud’s theory of struggle between ego and id leading to oddity and inconsistency in dreams. A constant war between ego and id is taking place in Joseph’s mind and finally his primal desire - the id over-powers his ego and forces him into a wanton and salacious stint with Mrs Boulder, towards the end of the novel. Carter’s interest in Surrealism and its technique of assembling different forms to create a collage - a new whole becomes
clearly apparent in the novel. There is a segment which describes the wall in Joseph’s room being covered with photographs from different periods of his life:

There were some pictures tacked to the wall. Lee Harvey Oswald, handcuffed between policemen, about to be shot, wild as a badger. A colour photograph, from Paris Match, of a square of elegant houses and within these pleasant boundaries, a living sunset, a Buddhist monk whose saffron robes turned red as he burned alive. Also a calendar of the previous year advertising a brand of soft drinks by means of a picture of a laughing girl in a white, sleeveless, polo-neck sweater sucking this soft drink through a straw. And a huge dewy pin-up of Marilyn Monroe. (Several 15)

A predominantly complex magic realist aspect and mode of expression is the “carnivalesque” which is also present in this novel. Beverley Kyte (one of the characters in the novel) organises a “Dionysiac” (11) revel on Christmas Eve in his shabby mansion where he lived with his mother among the “theatrical relics” (11). The revel with its merriment is a manifestation of a carnival and overshadows the realism of the earlier chapters. The house “blazed with lanterns” and fairy lights; “rang with music” and carol singers; and roared with “talk and laughter”. The guests were dressed in “gipsyish clothes” of multi-coloured hues. Sunny is the Carterian madman, fool or clown who amuses those around him, playing tunes on his fiddle and violin. He plays like a “real maestro” and his “sweet, rich melody strung out upon the air like motes of honey or drops of gold” (141) and leave the listeners dumbstruck. The last scene of the
novel is highly theatrical and performance oriented. This carnivalesque like festivity anticipates the brilliance of lights, action and show of theatre which will be centre stage in Carter’s last novel *Wise Children* (1991).

The locale of the festivity is “a great Georgian palace friable with worm and rot” (11). It was a mausoleum, Kay’s dying mother had created for herself. She had bought the “dilapidated mansion” and turned it into a set for the major starring role never offered to her in the actual theatre. This mausoleum is a quintessential Gothic setting with “stately tall rooms”, “elegant hall where a languorously curved staircase rose up to monumental first-floor drawing room” (*Several* 127) suitable for dances and musicals and tangles of attics, lofts and cupboards and “doorways that led nowhere.” The mansion had rooms built in “grandiose style” influenced by Tzarist St Peters burg. The deteriorated floorboards, cracked ceilings, broken sash cords of windows, furled down wallpapers, the groaning, shaking and trembling staircase, rain coming into attics, the single lavatory that often refused to function - all this was a “surrounding of faked luxury and rampant neglect” (128). Everything - the massive photographs, the curtains, urns and the Egyptian and Chinese vases were “fly speckled and dusty.” The place was decaying and disintegrating and the grandeur was “slowly and inexorably falling down” (127).

It is this festivity which liberates Anne from her limp which is termed by Kay as a “hysterical paralysis” (145). Her limp was essentially her guilt of giving away her baby boy born out of wedlock. She perceived it to be a punishment “for giving herself away.” The spirit of the party which
is based on the ideals of flower power of the hippie-culture - love, peace, happiness and forgiveness wash away her guilt and she “continued to run up and down” filled with a new lease of life and “rippling with laughter like a quiet brook” (145). She throws away her ring in the fire and plans to burn the lock of her baby’s hair she had preserved. Kay pitches his father’s photograph in the fire and thus breaks all bonds with the past. Sunny who was considered as a tramp playing imaginary violin, plays the violin competently and thus proves that he had once been a talented and successful violinist. Mrs Boulder finds love with an African man who was going to carry her off to the romantic Ivory Coast as if she was the White Queen from Alice in Wonderland.

Carter in this novel visualizes a world which has broken up with the paternalistic order. This is the novelist’s first experimentation with a subject which will recur in some of her subsequent works. The discussion Joseph has with Mrs Boulder in chapter 6 (after their sexual encounter) about Viv’s father enlightens him thus:

‘Who was Viv’s father? I’ve often wondered, Viv is so unnaturally happy. He must have a good hereditary.’

‘I’ll never know for certain,’ she said collectedly. ‘Infact, it’s in bad taste for you to ask.’

‘Come off it,’ said Joseph . . .

‘Anyway, what does it matter?’ she said. ‘father is only a word at best of times but mother is a fact.’
'You mean, Father is only a hypothesis?' suggested Joseph.

'It was hard going at first but my boy, my Vivvy, made it all worth while.'

'You mean, father is a kind of wishful thinking,' pursued Joseph. 'Screw you, Ransome, my father figure.' (Several 116-117)

Joseph, born in a culture determined by the stereotypes of father figure, ultimately rejects that figure referring to it as "only an emanation, a sooth-me" (Several 147). Joseph – the dreamer, undergoes a metamorphosis, is "friends with time again" (146), learns to think and feel with his senses and decides to throw away his "book of facts." His dreams which were once ruled by complexity and incongruity become simple. He becomes a citizen of "Kay's floating world" (128) which is synonymous to that of the counterculture of the 60s. Joseph’s despair and desolation was the consequence of his own thoughts born out of his lack of perspective in life and his self-imposed isolation but is ultimately substituted by happiness and sunshine. The story ends on the Christmas morning when his cat gives birth to five kittens “all as white as snow and beautiful as stars.” (148) Along with these life-affirming symbols of regeneration and new beginning, Joseph felt “like a diver about to launch himself into eternity” (147).

The last chapter is an appropriate finale for a novel beginning with David Hume’s epigraph:

The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their
appearance, pass, re-pass, glide away and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations.

The closing section of the novel reads like a play in a theatre and appears analogous to Shakespearean comedies where the “psychological drama” of the first three acts paves way for the comic spirit and a happy ending. No perception or impression of the mind is stable and resolute and similarly as Hume states: “pain and pleasure, grief and joy, passions and sensations succeed each other, and never exist at the same time.”

x x x

Love - Angela Carter’s fifth novel was written in 1969 and published in 1971. She captures the “waning” of the decade and bids adieu to the sixties through this novel. In her Afterword to the revised 1987 edition of the book, Angela Carter divulges the vague and obscure source of inspiration for this bohemian love story. She states:

I first got the idea for Love, from Benjamin Constant’s early nineteenth-century novel of sensibility, Adolphe; I was seized with the desire to write a modern day, demotic version of Adolphe, although I doubt anybody could spot the resemblance after I’d macerated the whole thing in triple-distilled essence of English provincial life. (Love 113)

This novel in sync with Carter’s earlier novel Shadow Dance depicts the smoke filled venues and the sexual license - the sex and drugs culture - prevalent in the sixties. Patricia Juliana Smith in her essay All You Need Is ‘Love’: Angela Carter’s Novel of Sixties, Sex and Sensibility refers to this
sex and drugs culture as “elements of a greater phenomenon, the youth culture's valorization of total freedom (or, more precisely, license), of boundless physical and mental sensation....” Lee Collins (one of the protagonists of the novel) discovers Annabel at a typical 60s rock and roll New Year party - completely insentient and unconscious under the influence of drugs:

On New Year’s morning, he woke up on a strange floor to find an unknown young girl in his arms. She opened her eyes and some kind of hunger, some kind of despair in her narrow face caught at Lee’s very tender heart. The room was full of darkness, silence and stale air. On a sofa a young man and a girl twined together under a Paisley shawl. (Love 15)

In this convoluted and complicated novel, Carter encapsulates a contemporary love story. It is a “disquieting but compelling” tale of a destructive emotional war between a “fragile young woman” - Annabel, her narcissist husband Lee and his troublesome, wild and unruly half-brother Buzz as they move through a labyrinth of vices - infidelity, estrangement, and lost associations. There is only a physical connection between these characters and that too is frangible, dithering and unstable. Love as the name implies is not centred on the romantic and sublime idea of love but deals with the facet of love which is violent and damaging. Carter in this book explores the idea of identity and ambiguity in relationships which is not guided by reason and the extent of limits and liberties of the individuals upon one another. As Patricia Juliana Smith
puts it, “through the medium of the ménage à trois [Love] takes stock of our cherished and reviled conventional gender roles and to what extent they have, while changing drastically, nonetheless stubbornly remained the same.” Emotionality, physicality and sensibility are taken to their limits to reveal their ominous and vicious dimensions.

A summary of the novel will make its understanding and analysis easier. Honeybuzzard of Carter’s first novel is resurrected in this novel again but as two different entities. Lee is the replica of Honeybuzzard’s beauty and Buzz is an embodiment of his dark, blasphemous brutality. Lee Collins was a university student who becomes a schoolteacher and works in a “comprehensive school” (Love 8). His father died when he was an infant, and his mother became a prostitute. Buzz was fathered by an American serviceman whom he thinks as an Indian and claimed his straight, coarse, sooty hair, high cheekbones and sallow complexion as proof of the fact. In due course of time, he develops psychotic propensities and becomes a voyeuristic photographer. When Lee was about eleven years of age their mother goes insane and their aunt - a radical woman adopted them, giving Lee his new name instead of Leon (his original). After their aunt’s death, Lee struggles through university while Buzz drifts through life and “steadfastly refused to learn anything useful” (12). The third significant character of the book is Annabel - a middle-class girl and an art-school student who lives in her own world of fantasy and hallucinations. Two months before Lee met her, she had tried committing suicide by taking an overdose of sleeping tablets but was rescued in time.
Lee comes across Annabel at a party while Buzz was away in North Africa. He takes her home and they start living together. When Annabel's parents discover them, they are more or less forced into marriage.

Buzz eventually returns and moves himself in. He and Annabel form a strange association, for both of them share a common attribute that is the inability to engage with the real. They "became in a sense, accomplices" and "left Lee out of their plotting for he understood neither of them, although he loved them both" (Love 6). Lee is simply "an oblique character that glues the threesome together." In the course of the narrative it is disclosed that in the early days of his relationship with Annabel, Lee was sleeping with the wife of his philosophy teacher. Again after his marriage with Annabel he enters into an affair with a woman called Carolyn. Carolyn had come over to Lee's flat to attend a party organized by Buzz. Physically drawn towards each other they make love, after which Lee accompanies her home. This incident drives Annabel once again to attempt suicide. She slashes her wrist and thus ends up enjoying an extended stay in the National Health Service psychiatric hospital. The psychiatrist at the hospital explains to Lee that it was damaging for the unstable Annabel to stay with Buzz:

There is a condition of shared or, rather, mutually stimulated psychotic disorder known as "folie a deux". Your brother and your wife would appear excellent candidates for it. (60)

Lee banishes Buzz from his life who had been "a necessary attribute, an inevitable condition of life" (64) for him. He brings Annabel
home from the hospital who punishes Lee by "branding" him with a tattoo. It is not long before another predicament drives Annabel once again to attempt suicide – this time successfully. The book ends on a note of dejection where the brothers "squabble drearily as to which of them was most to blame" for Annabel's death, "for nothing but death is irreparable" (Love 112).

The novel also includes an Afterword which Carter wrote twenty years after it was initially written. It is an attempt by the novelist to revise and update the text and describe the advancement of the surviving characters into the anguish and distress of middle age. The relevance and significance of the Afterword is from the feminist point of view. It performs a didactic function and defines the "transformative power of the women's movement" which brought "both women and men out of an irrational chamber of horrors" (Day 64).

The narrative begins in winter. The sheet of cold white across the canvas helps build the novels dark mood and "the penetrating aroma of unhappiness" (Love 113). The opening lines of the novel not only introduce the setting and the central female character of the novel - Annabel but at the same time successfully build up an atmosphere of terror and the impending "ambiguities" (1). It gives an early hint that the cosmic powers will play their part in shaping the lives of the protagonists. The setting is mundane without unequivocal fantastical elements but the strangeness of the ordinary yet bizarre characters, coupled with the heightened narration add to the magical feel of the story.
Smith considers *Love* similar to the “novel of sensibility and its literary first cousin, the gothic novel: the collision between the orderly, cool rationality of Augustan neoclassicism and pleasurable terrors of the imagination lurking at the heart of Romanticism.” We witness heightened or excess of sensibility which renders Annabel inoperative and disables her perception of reality at the commencement of the novel and again at the end, before she commits suicide:

She was troubled by the over acuteness of the senses and wondered why they shouted so loudly upstairs or the cars outside made, today, such tigerish roarings. She was irritated rather than disturbed to sense occasionally the almost inarticulate breathings and the infinitely subtle movements of the figures on the wall and her sudden excess of sensibility made the paper between her fingers coarser than sandpaper. (*Love* 103)

The disturbance and commotion in Annabel's mind can be associated with her “excess of sensibility”, with her fondness for Gothicism and Romanticism and also with the aesthetic philosophy of Dadaism and Surrealism. It is the surrealist quality of Annabel’s sensibility which is accountable for her profound alienation and estrangement from the mundane world:

One day, Annabel saw the sun and moon in the sky at the same time. The sight filled her with a terror which entirely consumed her and did not leave her until the night closed in catastrophe for she had no instinct for self-preservation if she was confronted by ambiguities. (2)
Surrealist descriptions form an integral part of Magic Realist writings. The opposite polarities captured here, create a magical effect. Surrealism is marked by unnatural and irrational combination of images which would not be normally found together. With this description of “two contrary states at once” (*Love* 4) - the sun and the moon - day and night in the sky together which leaves Annabel appalled, Carter exhibits surrealist tendencies. The novelist further explains that “there was nothing in her mythology to help her resolve this conflict” (5). “Mythology” here refers to the “collective unconscious” shared by humanity at large - which also held fascination for the surrealists. We are also told about Annabel’s dreams and nightmares wherein her husband Lee emerges “in many hideous dream disguises.” Angela Carter’s surrealist tenor is highlighted in the following paragraph. We are given an insight into the inexplicability of Annabel’s personality and the thoughts, images and dreams which inhabited her mind:

Sometimes, during the day, she stopped, startled, before some familiar object because it seemed to have just changed its form back to the one she remembered after a brief, private period impersonating something quite strange, for she had the capacity for changing the appearance of the real world which is the price paid by those who take too subjective a view of it. All she apprehended through her senses she took only as objects for interpretation in the expressionist style and she saw, in everyday things, a world of mythic, fearful shapes of whose existence she was convinced although she never spoke of it to anyone; nor had she
ever suspected that everyday, sensuous human practice might shape the real world. *(Love 3-4)*

We are also informed that Annabel’s “favourite painter was Max Ernst” (31) - an advocate of Dadaism and later of Surrealism and whose forte was collage making. Lee’s pristine white walled room takes on the appearance of a surrealist painting/canvas after Annabel’s arrival. Her grotesque drawings cover the walls and the rest of the house too become littered and cluttered with an unusual muddle of things, so much so that “one had to move around the room very carefully for fear of tripping over things” **(Love 7)*. The cluttered, messy and claustrophobic world that Annabel creates around herself “seemed to throb with a mute, inscrutable, symbolic life; everything Annabel gathered around her evoked correspondences in her mind so all these were the palpable evidence of her own secrets...” *(7)*. The space around Annabel begins to function as a mirror reflecting her subjective desires and “unspoken perversity” *(Soon Ng 437)*.

There is another reference to the “workings of random chance so much prized by the surrealist” *(Love 34)* in an incident where both Lee and Annabel roll over the pastel crayons scattered on the sheets and her back was dappled with patches and blotches of all the colours of the rainbow and Lee was also marked everywhere with brilliant dusts and darkly spotted with blood, each like “a canvas involuntarily patterned” *(34)*. The images in Annabel’s mind lacked continuity/connection and conscious control of reason. This reminds us of the Dadaist anarchist
negation of sense and order and of the surrealist principle of subverting coherent and logical thought by allowing the unconscious to prevail and express itself:

As for Annabel, she was like a child who reconstructs the world according to its whims and so she chose to populate her home with imaginary animals because she preferred them to the drab fauna of reality. She quickly interpreted him into her mythology but if, first, he was a herbivorous lion, later he became a unicorn devouring raw meat and she never saw him the same twice, nor did these pictures have any continuity except for the constant romanticism of the imagery. She had no control over them, once they existed. And, as she drew him, so she saw him; he existed for her intermittently. (Love 34-35)

Theatre has been an important element to be incorporated in Magical Realist works. The narrative in the novel, strategically though obliquely summons the stage motif with the two most important locales - the park and the flat. Andrew Hock Soon Ng in the article Subjecting Spaces: Angela Carter's Love, draws a similarity between the park gate and the door to Lee's flat which "were never either open or closed" but "always a little ajar" (2) by comparing them to the stage door. One likeness that the three important characters in the novel share is an inclination toward theatrics and artificiality of behaviour which establish them as personalities lacking in depth/profundity. Lee has a different smile for different occasions "to smooth his passage through life" (19) and cries easily; Annabel, is in the habit of "performing symbolic actions" (101)
such as eating her wedding ring and tattooing her husband and Buzz, who lives behind his camera: “as if he could not trust his own eyes and had to check his vision by means of a third lens all the time so in the end he saw everything at second hand, without depths”(25). All the three characters are actors who at times are seen to be analysing their own actions and performance. After Annabel’s suicide attempt at the party, the happenings detailed are like a camera zooming from one scene to the other:

Afterwards, the events of the night seemed, to all who participated in them, like disparate sets of images shuffled together anyhow. A draped form on a stretcher; candles blown out by a strong wind; a knife; an operating theatre; blood; and bandages. In time the principle actors (the wife, the brothers, the mistress) assembled as coherent narrative from these images but each interpreted them differently and drew their own conclusions which were all quite dissimilar for each told himself the story as if he were the hero except for Lee who, by common choice, found himself the villain. (Love 43)

Annabel’s surrealist drawings, her fetishness for bizarre objects, her faking of her husband’s smile are all nothing but a glimpse of her acting skills. Exploiting this ability “she decides to embark upon a new career of deceit and she knew, if she were clever, she could behave exactly as she wished without censure or reprimand, almost as if she were invisible” (75). Before the curtains of the stage come down, Annabel “lay in her ultimate, shocking transformation; now she was a painted doll, bluish at the extremities” (112). Her triumph as an actor is established
with her performance in this final scene. At the same time, her death proves her defeat at the hands of patriarchy; her inability to connect with reality and the destruction of her “mythological edifice” led by a chain of events - Lee’s adultery, Buzz’s unfathomable mystery, her futile copulation with Buzz and their (Annabel’s and Lee’s) “mutual rape” by each other.

Ruins are an integral aspect of Gothic convention. This significant and pivotal Gothic feature finds place on the first page of the novel and the reader is introduced to a conventional eerie Gothic background. Annabel finds herself in an eighteenth century park surrounding “a mansion which had been pulled down long ago” (Love 6). The once “harmonious artificial wilderness” now stands “dishevelled by time” (1) with “spread[ing] green tangles.” “The stable built on the lines of a miniature Parthenon, housing for Houyhnhnms rather than natural horses” and “the pillared portico” all stood bare and lonesome and silent. The serenity and the Mediterranean characteristic of the park held no appeal for Annabel, who was more attracted towards the “magic strangeness” and “curious silence” of the Gothic north.

Apart from these decaying ruins the central principle of decay in the novel is the growing madness that takes place in Annabel’s mind. This insanity affects her physically as well as mentally. Annabel speedily decays into a ghost-like spectre “ghostly woman white as a winding sheet and shrouded in hair.... her hands... looked like dried flowers, nothing but veins and transparency” (62). Annabel had gone through her first breakdown (attempted suicide) before meeting Lee. Her relationship with
Lee seems to stabilize her for a while but her mental decay is supported and aggravated again by Buzz's (an accomplice and associate to her bizarre ways of viewing the internal and external world) return and by Lee's infidelity. Lee's deception again moves her to suicide. Buzz is another manifestation of mental decay which is underlined by his voyeurism. He clicked pictures of Annabel and Lee in bed and even while Annabel was bleeding to death. Her suicide attempt as well as her death create a new divide between the brothers and hasten the decay of their brotherly relations.

The Gothic heroines were embodiments of "physical and mental frailty" and "passive victimage" predisposed to weeping, fainting fits and dementia (madness). Annabel with her madness, her "other worldliness" (Love 7) and her fondness for "baroque harpsichord music" (17) is a postmodern reincarnation of the Gothic damsel in distress. Appalled and terrorized to see "two contrary states" (2) of the heavens, Annabel took the path through the long grass. She breathlessly "lurched and zigzagged" with erratic steps "at the whim of the roaring winds" (3) like a Gothic heroine "plastered in fear and trembling" breathlessly running away from the source of her distress (ghost, phantom, villain). Outwardly she appears very feeble and feminine - with "huge grey luminous eyes" (17) and very long hair. She was a strange and bizarre character "trampling in graves" to "catch her death" (7) and an "apparent indifference to the world outside her own immediate perception" (8). Even her husband Lee, felt
“like a lone explorer in an unknown country without a map to guide him”

(Love 9) when he was with her:

He was attracted to her because he was unsure of his effect upon her and became increasingly attached to her because of her strangeness which seemed to him qualitatively different but quantitatively akin to the strangeness he himself felt as though both could say to the world: ‘We are strangers here.’... He felt a sense of unspoken contact with her, like, that of two people from different countries who do not speak one another’s language thrust together in a third whose language neither understands. (Love 17)

Annabel’s strangeness of character is such that Carter is forced to remark in the Afterword that “even the women’s movement would have been of no help to her and alternative psychiatry would have only made things, if possible, worse” (113). Her mental illness also posits the premise of imprisonment which is central to Gothic Tradition. She is the prisoner of her own madness and her own strange and uncanny thoughts. Before meeting Annabel, Lee had been “perfectly free” (9). His freedom was reflected in his bedroom which was “always extraordinarily tidy, white as a tent” (14). It was furnished entirely by light and shade” free of any furniture except for a bed. Annabel’s entry into his life curbs his freedom. She imprisons him within the confines of her own world of dark and sinister green jungle, filled with “the dreary paraphernalia of romanticism” (7) and mythological brutes. For Lee, possessions and relationships were symbolic of responsibilities and restrictions. His
imprisonment at Annabel’s hand becomes stronger after her suicide attempt, owing to a greater sense of responsibility for her and guilt for what has happened.

There are instances in the novel where Annabel’s interactions with Lee and Buzz betray her feminine traits and reveal her as a “quasi-masculine” figure. On one hand she could move Lee with her feminine tears “pouring down” and on the other hand she could device a “baroque humiliation” (Love 69) and brand him with a tattoo. To castigate him she imprisons him with a tattoo where her name is written “indelibly in Gothic script... circle[d] with a heart” (69) which thus became “a certificate of possession which gave him the status of any other object in her collection”(70). The beautifully written tattoo scene is symbolic of her relationship with Lee which is guided by subjugation and control. Annabel also contrives a physical union with Buzz as yet another torment for Lee. Thus, the psychological connection between Annabel and Buzz ends in physical propinquity but this union also fails to attain inner fulfilment. Annabel “felt herself handled as unceremoniously as a fish on a slab, reduced only to anonymous flesh” (94). Lee guided by jealousy attempts to violate her, culminating in a “mutual rape” (97) that leads to his own depersonalization and the death of his wife.

Finally, it is Annabel who succeeds in engaging the two brothers in the battle of her own death, leaving them defeated and emasculated. Her inability to relate to the world of reality becomes her hamartia and leads to her suicide. The death of Annabel also highlights the Gothic motif of
flight in this narrative. The flights of escape from an interfering, brutal and oppressive father or a vicious villain of conventional Gothic novels is reworked by Carter to fit her narrative. Annabel’s suicide is her flight. Her suicide becomes a means of escape not only from the agonies of internal (imaginative) and external (real) world which liberates her from the shackles of patriarchy but also becomes a vehicle of revenge.

Buzz with his diabolic appearance - heavily lidded, dark, gleaming eyes and long thin hands (as if designed particularly for picking and stealing) is the Gothic desperado. He had “a disconcertingly sharp intelligence and a merciless self-absorption” (Love 12) and lived “at a conscious pitch of melodrama.” His exceedingly vicious and brutal disposition, his disconcerting ways, his deficient – sporadic and erratic verbal ability, and his complete lack of refinement and civility make him the modern re-embodiment of the Gothic villain. Though both Lee and Buzz are half brothers, there is an obvious spirit of antagonism in Buzz which compels him to draw Annabel to himself. Guided by this spirit of rivalry, Buzz “seethed with jealous fury” (24) night after night hearing the sounds and movements the lovers made and imagining their “unimaginable privacy” and union. He cursed them indignantly and obsessed himself with the idea of stabbing Lee and Annabel as they slept together; he obtained relief by taking voyeuristic photographs of their naked bodies.

In the first section of the story we are given a clue of Buzz being homosexual, when Lee informs Annabel of Buzz acquiring gonorrhea in
South Africa. Later we are informed that “he’s always been funny with girls” (98). In the Afterword, we are told about “homoerotic desire” (Soon Ng 415) of Buzz for his brother: “if there is one thing he [Buzz] would like to do before he dies, it is to fuck him [Lee]” (Love 117). This desire leaves us wondering, if the sexual tension encompassing the household was purely heterosexual or homosexual or both at the same time and as to who among Annabel and Lee was the real “object of desire” for Buzz.

The ambiguities of the Gothic boundaries of the ordinary and mysterious are set through the “collision between the orderly cool rationality” and Annabel’s “terror of the imagination” (Smith). The fundamental boundary in the novel is between sanity and madness. The Collins brothers’ first rendezvous with insanity was in childhood when their mother went absolutely mad in public. Lee is aware of the fact that Annabel is weird, skewed, unbalanced and unhinged; nonetheless he is still attracted to her “because of her strangeness which seemed to him qualitatively different” (Love 17). Love also draws attention to the boundaries between social classes. Annabel is from a rich middle-class background whereas Lee and Buzz are from working-class backgrounds. Annabel’s parents accept Lee partially because he is a university graduate and a teacher, and Buzz because they deem him a future artist – the new working class. The class division is highlighted again when Lee identifies that his university lecturer’s middle class wife (his mistress) romanticized him as a working-class “thug” (22). The characters of the Collins half-brothers, Buzz and Lee also symbolise boundaries of two diverse worlds.
Although they shared the same mother and were brought up by an aunt, they are foreign to each other through their fathers. Their appearance and behaviour speak of this difference of boundary.

The three novels analyzed in this chapter introduce the readers to Carter's ingenious and imaginative mind. As mentioned earlier, Carter's oeuvre needs to be read in continuum to realize the writer's development from a realist to a magic realist writer. *Shadow Dance*, *Several Perceptions* and *Love* provide the groundwork for Carter's later works. The novels deal with issues confronting a society which was undergoing a radical and sweeping change of values in face of the industrial and sexual revolution and present a detailed description of the England of 1960s. Carter unerringly represents the social, political, economic, moral and spiritual life of her times.

In these early novels Carter's fascination for Gothic Tradition and Surrealism is very evident but Magic Realism which was to become her forte was still in its early stage of development. The novels abound in Gothic imagery and are "littered" with surrealist descriptions which also occupy central place in Magic Realist narratives. An important aspect to take cognition in these novels is that these techniques gain in significance because of Angela Carter's use of language and style adopted along with the arising situations and background settings. Contents and themes are consistent but variety and multitudinous of description rests on her style and expression.
Notes

1. Carnival refers to cultural manifestations that take place in diverse related forms in the Americas, Europe, and the Caribbean; including particular language, dress, dance, music, theatre as well as the presence of a madman, fool, or clown. For a better understanding of carnival, see Danow.
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