

RESEARCH ARTICLE

I See Myself in Your Eyes: Good Enough Mother as a Nun or an Amazon¹

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Abstract:

This article aims to compare mother figures in three novels: *The Mysterious of Udolpho* (1794), *Villette* (1853), and *The Magic Toyshop* (1967) based on Winnicott's theory on mothers. These Gothic novels belong to three different centuries; therefore they reveal different types of mother figures in different times. Winnicott believes that the mother's role is crucial for the child's future, especially daughters, so the mother-child bond can help the child to create her true 'self'. As a result, this article seeks to answer the raised questions based on Winnicott's good-enough-mother in the girl's life: which century does introduce the best good enough mother? And in which century girls can reject the Gothic life? By making a proper environment for her daughter a good-enough-mother helps her daughter to make her true self. Besides, the Gothic novel exposes mother as a helper to daughter and her efforts to save daughter from the Gothic future. Studying Winnicott's theory reveals that various elements define a good-enough-mother such as helping her daughter to make her true self, aiding the girl to have progress, and erasing horror and terror from her future. Based on Winnicott's we found out the nineteenth-century *Villette* introduces the best example of a gothic good-enough-mother.

Keywords: Amazons, nuns, mother, daughter, family, gothic

1. Introduction and Literature Review

As Alex Haley mentioned, "in every conceivable manner, the family is linked to our past, bridge to our future" (Curran,1983, p.199), truthfully the parents' actions play a crucial role in children's future. Based on Winnicott's theories, mother has a substantial and essential role in the child's life rather than father. The first environment, both biologically and psychologically, that the baby will meet is mother. So as Abram mentioned mother's behavior and feeling about the baby can affect the baby's health for the rest of her life (1996, p.217) as a result "the behavior of the environment is part of the individual's own

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personal development” (Winnicott, 1971, p.72). Thereto, Winnicott coined the term ‘good enough mother’ to introduce a mother who is not perfect but devotes her life to her child to have a good future. Actually, the bond between a good enough mother and her child determines the child’s future; in other words, how a mother connects with her child is the path to a healthy future or, in Lacan’s words, into the bright Symbolic Order.

Incidentally, Winnicott introduced a new version of ‘the mirror stage’; he mentioned that in the mirror stage the mother’s eyes or her facial reaction act as a mirror rather than the physical mirror. Therefore Winnicott’s mirror stage “is straight-forward and full of promise” in this stage every individual calls their ‘true self’ and brings it “in the mirroring gaze of the good-enough mother”. Despite Winnicott, Lacan’s mirror stage is the harbinger of alienation. When the baby recognizes her image in the mirror, always hears these words “look that is you” and then “the life long course of searching outward instead of inward for identity”, our lives are captivated by “images of ourselves struggling for reassurance that we are more intact than we feel” (Luepnitz, 2011, p.5).

There is a specific bond between mothers and daughters. During centuries this bond between mothers and daughters has torn apart or become tighter than ever. In *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Ann Radcliffe, *Villette* by Charlotte Bronte, and *The Magic Toyshop* by Angela Carter, each heroine, Emily, Lucy and Melanie, meet a mother who is either good enough or bad enough. Each novel was written in different centuries so they give a perspective about the situation between mother and daughter. These novels show how the girls will turn into, as Wallace mentions in *Female Gothic Histories*, a ‘civilly dead’ person. As a result, these questions will raise: which century does introduce the best good enough mother? In which century girls can reject Gothic life?

Crosby’s “Charlotte Brontë’s Haunted Text” (1984), based on Lacan’s theories, focuses on how Bronte’s protagonists searched for their own identity and their place in the world. Through Lacan’s Imaginary Order she explains the relationship between Lucy and the Nun. Also in “‘Mother Radcliffe’: Ann Radcliffe and the Female Gothic” (2009) Miles pays attention to *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and tries to have a psychological point of view to it. And Schanoes in *Fairy Tales, Myth, and Psychoanalytic Theory Feminism and Retelling the Tale* (2014) through the work of novelists such as Carter, scrutinizes the mother-daughter relationship based on feministic psychological points of view, especially Winnicottian theories. She reveals how mothers affect their daughters’ lives and how daughters follow their mothers’ footsteps. These works attempt to only heed to the specific century and only analyze the mother-daughter relationship in a specific time. The present inquiry, however, seeks to scrutinize the three works in different centuries to find out which century exposes a better mother-daughter relationship through Winnicott’s ideas on good enough mother.

2.1. Mothers’ Role

The whole world of the infant is her mother, the infant perceives the external world through the mother “this little boy or girl will be yours in the deepest possible sense, and you will be his or hers” (Winnicott, 1964, p.20). Accordingly, the bond between mother and child, especially girls, is playing a crucial role in the child’s future. Based on Winnicott the ‘good enough mother’ is not a super perfect

mother but she devotes her life to her children to give them the best and prepare them for the future. In fact, mothers are the bedrock of the children's healthy and bright future; because of the specific bond between mother and daughter, for the sake of her daughter's future, the mother must try to be good enough and create a healthy bond.

Since the beginning of the novels the biological mothers are silent, a phantom or a blurred memory. Emily's mother passed away at the beginning of the novel, Melanie's mother is far away from her children and then died without a single meeting with them and Lucy's mother has never shown till the news of her death. There is no conversation between biological mothers and daughters; thereby, the bond has been torn apart.

Meanwhile, Emily learns everything from her father not her mother "and it was now that she understood the full value of the education she had received from St.Aubert" (Radcliffe, 1980, p.99), and Melanie's mother has nothing to give her except an old wedding dress "But she saw in the mirror that it did not matter if the dress was too big" (Carter, 1982, p.16). It should be noted that both Emily and Melanie never have a good enough biological mother, their mothers stay silent and leave their daughters alone. They let Other teach and raises them and this Other is fathers who, based on Winnicott's, can only be good parents for a limited time. Actually, fathers must protect mother and child from the outside world. As a result, when mothers leave their duties fathers take responsibility and the result is the Gothic future.

However, for Melanie the Other is not only the father figure but also their servant Mrs. Randal "She looked after Melanie, Jonathon and Victoria while Mummy and Daddy were in America. Mummy was keeping Daddy company" (Carter, 1982, p.3), an old woman who never gets married but chooses Mrs. before her name to find respect in society:

Mrs. Rundle was fat, old and ugly and had never, in fact, been married. She adopted the married form by deed poll on her fiftieth birthday as her present to herself. She thought 'Mrs.' gave a woman a touch of personal dignity as she grew older. (Carter, 1982, p.3)

In fact she has no courage to accept herself as a single woman; her instructions for Melanie is to be a fake widower is much better than being a respectable single old woman. In other words, Emily and Melanie never had a proper childhood with good enough mothers; they have never been confronting a good enough mother since they live in their biological parents' house. And the result of not having a good enough mother is a Gothic castle or house.

Despite the biological mother, Emily and Melanie face two Other mothers, their aunts. Emily's aunt is a childless wicked woman, she has always blamed her brother for leaving his child as a burden on her shoulders "he was always more generous than provident, or he would not have left his daughter dependent on his relations" (Radcliffe, 1980, p.110). She has never taken care of Emily or taught her how to survive in the outside world "Madam Cheron, who was her only relative and ought to have been this friend, was either occupied by her own amusements, or so resentful of the reluctance" (Radcliffe, 1980, p.107). She even talks behind Emily's back and introduces her as an ungrateful brat.

Accordingly, she is not a good enough mother for Emily because she never makes an environment for Emily to express her 'true self'. However, one of the duties of a good enough mother is to create "small failures of adaptation that allow the infant to tolerate the frustrations of reality" (VandenBos, 2015, p.466). Through small failures a good enough mother prepares her child for the future and teaches her that despite of all frustrations and failures she can have a better life. Also mother's abuse of her daughter is related to her role "in socializing the daughter into patriarchy" (Schanoes, 2014, p.25). Thereon Emily's aunt's small failures are never based on making Emily's life better; in contrast, all Madame Montoni's failures make Emily's life like a horror movie.

As soon as Melanie's Aunt Margaret, because of poverty, gets married to Uncle Philip, she becomes silent and acts like a dumb person "'not a word can she speak,' ... 'It is a terrible affliction; it came to her on her wedding day, like a curse. Her silence'" (Carter, 1982, p.37). She is a fragile mother because she cannot even take care of her brothers and do nothing to save them from Uncle Philip, also never attempts to reduce the anxiety and tension of the house "Aunt Margaret cowered in her chair, covering her eyes, awaiting the end" (Carter, 1982, p.130). Based on Winnicott a mother who brings anxiety to her child's life, cannot be a good enough mother. The lack of a good enough mother coerces both Melanie and Emily to choose a Gothic path; in fact, their Symbolic Order turns into a Gothic order and at the end, they are trapped in the Gothic Real Order. To be brief the girls have never found their true self to reject the fear which is lurking in the shadow of the future.

Because Emily and Melanie have never met a good enough mother, they have no choice except to replace mother with a 'transitional object'. For them this transitional object is a man. Now men take the responsibility of education and decide for their future, and this future which is pictured by men is a Gothic one, for the reason that in Gothic it is more common for the girl "to become ensnared in patriarchy's refusal to let them mature" (Armitt, 2016, p.61). The transitional object is a symbol of the relation between mother and child, if there is a good relationship between them this transitional object is a good object and not harmful. So because the relationship between Emily and Melanie, and their mothers is not proper, they never select proper transitional objects or men. Thus Melanie's lacks of ego boundaries "distinguish herself from the world around her, her desires and feelings from the events of that larger world." (Schanoes, 2014, p.43) is responsible for her Gothic future. By taking on her mother's wedding dress Melanie feels her desire of being a married woman is responsible for her mother's death "It is my fault because I wore her dress. If I hadn't spoiled her dress, everything would be all right." (Carter, 1982, p.24).

2.2. Amazons

Homer, in *Iliad*, describes Amazons as "antianeirai, a Greek word that means 'those who go to war like men'", Herodotus calls them "androktones which means 'killers of males'". The word Amazons comes from the "Greek word amazoi or 'breast-less'" (Sherman, 2008, p.16) because of a belief that Amazons cut or burn their right breasts to draw a bow easier. The Amazons of Asia Minor or Scythia "made a practice of breaking the arms and legs of all male infants to keep them subservient" (Coleman, 2007, p.55). Based on history Amazons are real, for example, Celtic women were fighting alongside men.

Due to Winnicott Amazons can be counted as good enough mothers. Therefore, based on the definition of Amazons, the women of *Villette* can be seen as Amazons.

Despite Emily and Melanie, Lucy lives among Amazons. When both Melanie and Emily ask for knowledge or freedom they only receive violence; in contrast, Lucy is coerced to gain knowledge. Besides every time she asks for more knowledge or freedom she has never faced violence because Lucy's Symbolic Order is controlled by good enough mothers. In *Villette*, the good enough mothers are in charge, so the fear which is the "metaphor for female Experience" (Smith, 2009, p.3) is wiped out. The first Amazon Lucy meets is her godmother, Mrs. Bretton, a self-governing widow who single-handedly not only raised her son to be a doctor but also teaches Lucy to confront the outside world fearlessly, "but so courageous a mother ... was well fitted to fight a good fight with the world," (Bronte, 1993, p.164).

The second Amazon is Madame Beck who "did not wear a woman's aspect, but rather a man's. Power of a particular kind strongly limned itself in all her trait" (Bronte, 1993, p.69). It was Madame Beck who asks Lucy to start teaching and encourage her to have progression in her life. If she never asks Lucy to begin teaching, she did not have a chance to be close to her lover Paul Emanuel, the professor at Madame Beck's school, and has been educated by him and in the end, has an independent life, "he reminded me, of trying to be independent and keeping a little school of my own" (Bronte, 1993, p.452). Madame Beck gives Lucy a chance for independence and never keeps her behind the doors of a Gothic castle or Bluebeard house.

To be specific Lucy's relation with the good enough mothers is a healthy one because her 'transitional object' has never pushed her back to the Real Order in disguise of the Imaginary Order or Garden of Eden, like Emily, or guides her to the horrible silent life or fearful Real Order, like Melanie. As a result, *Villette* divulges that this is the good enough mother who can save the girl from the fearful future and stops the culture of murdering mothers, as Irigaray mentions "the whole of our western culture is based upon the murder of the mother" (1991, p.47). A good enough mother can bring hope to her daughter's life as Lucy's pessimistic view is changed, "Oh, my childhood! I had feelings: passive as I lived, little as I spoke, cold as I looked, when I thought of past days, I could feel. About the present, it was better to be stoical; about the future - such future as mine - to be dead" (Bronte, 1993, p.99) to the optimistic one "afterwards Miss. Lucy must trust God, and herself" (Bronte, 1993, p.456).

2.3. Nuns

The Female Gothic, since Radcliffe, is about searching for the lost mothers in the dungeons beneath the patriarchal castles. In *Udolpho* and *Villette*, Emily and Lucy directly confront Nuns, "it looks very black, I think it looks - not human" (Bronte, 1993, p.439); the Nuns can be seen as the symbols of the lost mothers. However, Emily spent a lot of time with Nuns and in the Nunnery, the Nuns are not like Amazons of *Villette*, strong and active in the Symbolic Order, instead they are the deputies or symbols of the Imaginary Order, "It was in the orphanage with all the nuns, after my mother died. I expect that's why I dreamed of going to heaven" (Carter, 1982, p.178). Miles describes the convent "as a place of refuge it sustains the heroine's genius" and "as a final destination, it is the cemetery of the living, a patriarchal Bastille where females are shorn of their expressive properties" (Carter, 1982, p.51).

Thereupon, a good enough mother cannot live in “the cemetery of the living” and be ‘civilly dead’. In Nunnery there is no chance to know the real world and its advantages and disadvantages, therefore Nuns cannot prepare a child for the future. In this regard, as soon as the girls, like Emily and Blanche, leave Nunnery they immediately get married because they should stay inferior and dependent on a man. Blanche’s necklace is her husband’s miniature, she wears her husband’s miniature like a cross “a master in his family hath all the offices of Christ, for he must rule, and teach, and pray; rule like a king, and teach like a prophet, and pray like a priest” (Sinfield, 2000, p.816). Truthfully Nuns are living in the Garden of Eden and know nothing of the Symbolic Order and its fears. In contrast to them, Amazons like women of Villette, are queens of the Symbolic Order. Due to Amazon’s knowledge about the real world, they bring small failures to push the child forward, also create a suitable environment for her to find capacity, talents and in the end the true self. The crux of not being a good enough mother, for Nuns, is the patriarchy. Nuns are the Amazons who only worship God not men “there went a tradition that Madam Beck’s house had in old days been a convent” (Bronte, 1993, p.96) but were buried alive by patriarchy not to be a good enough mother. Actually, in both *Villette* and *Udolpho* Nuns are counted “as a figure of sexual repression or transgression” (Milbank, 2009, p.91).

In fact fathers build Nunneries to be the only rulers of the Symbolic Order, but according to Winnicott the child, especially a girl, needs a good enough mother to find her true self “only the true self can be creative and only the true self can feel real” (Winnicott, 1970, p.148). Therefore the girls are incapable of creating ‘true self’ because there is no good enough mother around to help them, fathers send all the good enough mothers to the convent. For this reason, the Nun “is metaphorically representative of” the girls’ “fragmented self” (Crosby, 1984, p.705), or “the narcissistic Lacanian Imaginary Other” (Wein, 1999, p.735). The truth is that Nuns are like a mirror for the girls and reflect both past and future, the past of joy and safety of the Garden of Eden, the future of strong women whom patriarchal society has never accepted so confined them in Nunnery.

2.4. Under the Surveillance of Good Enough Mother

In the Symbolic Order, despite the king, the queen should fight and keep her power through surveillance. Both mind and body become tractable and controllable by surveillance. In *Discipline and Punish the Birth of the Prison* (1975) Foucault declares that minds are controlled through knowledge and surveillance by Power. Thereby he introduces a plough town where people should stay in their houses and Power keeps them under its surveillance. He takes the idea from Jeremy Bentham’s ‘Panopticon’, it is a prison where all inmates have always been under the surveillance, “the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so” (1975, p.193). In this regard, Shuttleworth sees Villette as a place which “is dominated by the practice of surveillance” (2004, p.219). Lucy is always under the surveillance of everyone especially mothers who “glide ghost-like through the house, watching and spying everywhere, peering through every key-hole, listening behind every door” (Bronte, 1993, p.65). Based on Winnicott a good enough mother helps her child to find her ‘true self’; by her absence, the mother aids the child to create a ‘potential space’ and as Winnicott mentions a potential space is “filled with the products of the baby’s own creative imagination” (Winnicott, 1971, p.137).

Meanwhile, through surveillance women of Villett attempt to keep the child safe from the danger of the outside world and with a 'potential space' help her to find her talents. In this regard, the good enough mother never "interfere with the infant's spontaneous development" (Ogden, 2013, p.51). Consequently, she never makes a cage for her child she only uses surveillance for protection. Emily, Melanie and Lucy are under surveillance in different ways, the surveillance of Emily and Melanie is based on keeping them in the darkness, so as soon as they try to reach knowledge and find their true self they would be stopped:

Emily, however, was spared the pain she must have received from it by the suspicious policy of Madame Montoni, who had ordered, that all letters, addressed to her niece, should be delivered to herself, and who, after having perused this and indulged the expressions of resentment, which Valancourt's mention of Montoni provoked, had consigned it to the flames. (Radcliffe, 1980, p.149)

But Lucy's surveillance is no obstacle for her; she flourishes under the surveillance and has never been pushed back to the shadow. Thus, Lucy's future is brighter and without Gothic events, in contrast, Emily and Melanie are trapped in the shadow of Gothic life and surveillance of Gothic parents "All the time, someone was watching her... They had not even let her keep her own loneliness" (Carter, 1982, p.109).

2.5. Mirror

The creation of human subjectivity is mostly based on mirroring and mothering and mirrors are always used as the symbol of self-discovery. In Winnicott's mirror stage mother's face is the child's mirror. As he mentions there is a compound between mother and child, this compound exposes when Melanie tries to "incorporate her absent mother in herself" by putting on "her mother's wedding dress, she is putting on her mother" (Schanoes, 2014, p.42). As Winnicott declares "when the average girl studies her face in the mirror she is reassuring herself that the mother-image is there and that the mother can see her and that the mother is en rapport with her" (1971, p.157). After Melanie looks at herself in the mirror she thinks the reflection is herself, but it is not true "Absently she dabbed stale Chanel behind her ears and at once smelled so like her mother that she glanced at herself in the mirror to make sure she was still Melanie" (Carter, 1982, p.14).

By way of explanation the mirror not only for Melanie but also for Emily and Lucy, is the Mirror of Matsuyama, a mirror "in which a young girl saw the face of her dead mother" (Coleman, 2007, p.703). Every time they look at themselves in the mirror they see their dead mothers. In most of the Christian superstitions, mirrors have a connection with death and there is a belief that "mirrors trap the souls of the living or detain the souls of the dead on their journey" (Walker, 1983, p.660) and "in fairy tales, the land of souls often appeared as a hall of mirror" (Walker, 1983, p.661). By the way, in Gothic novels mother "is also aligned with death. She gives life, the infant enters the world from her womb, and in her role as Mother Earth she takes life back" (Creed, 2005, p.16). Therefore, in the story which the mother is dead, the girl's development is bound to the separation from the grief of the lost mother. For example, Melanie by shattering the mirrors tries to release herself from this grief and because after the death of her mother there is no eye of a good enough mother she is not capable to gather her fragmented self and making her ego, "She was disappointed; she wanted to see her mirror, still, and the room reflected in the mirror, still,

but herself gone, smashed” (Carter, 1982, p.25). Furthermore, mirrors are capable of alienating and estranging women from themselves “She met herself in the mirror, white face, black hair. The girl who killed her mother” (Carter, 1982, p.24), and turning them into objects on display. The word ‘reflection’ perfectly captures that dual state, as it means not only “an image or counterpart thus produced [by the action of a mirror or other polished surface]” but also “the action of turning (back) or fixing the thoughts on some subject; meditation, deep or serious consideration” (Schanoes, 2014, p.85); not only outer appearance but also inner thoughts.

In fact, most of the European cultures are surrounded by mirrors and reflections; also mirrors can predict the future or steal someone’s soul. The external mirror is aggressive and hustles to the girls but the mother’s eyes are friendly and show female fantasy, desire and transformation, accordingly they foretell the future. The mirrors never reflect the girls as active beings or united selves; so mirrors estrange the girls from themselves but the mother’s eyes encourage them to know their true self. The mirror is a book which narrates the girls’ stories with expurgate,

Caustic creature! You never have a kind word for me; but in spite of you, and all other envious detractors, I know I am beautiful: I feel it, I see it – for there is a great looking-glass in the dressing-room where I can view my shape from head to foot. (Bronte, 1993, p.132)

Now mothers’ faces and eyes are mirrors, mothers are whispering girls’ true story. Besides books and mirrors are linked together, what men search in books women find in mirrors. Besides for Emily and Lucy mirrors turn into books, “to unpack her books, and to try to charm her mind by reading” (Radcliffe, 1980, p.121) and then we see how books are stolen from Emily and the lack of them lead her to the Gothic life.

Additionally, “when women turn to books, they acquire similar kinds of knowledge as they do when consulting a mirror” (Schanoes, 2014, p.97) as a result there are no books and mirrors in Uncle Philip’s house “I haven’t seen a single book in the house, not one” (Carter, 1982, p.77). On the other hand “the temporality of the mirror is based in the remembered past, a fantasy insofar as it continues to exist only in the mind, and the fantasy of the future” (Schanoes, 2014, p.99). Therefore based on this aspect of fantasy when women “look in mirrors, apprehend things that are not literally present. They can see a future ... or a past” (La Belle, 1988, p.76). Thereby mirrors reflect the girls’ “fantasies, experiences, and desires under conditions often hostile to their expression”, along these lines, “mirrors are not *only* stories. They are specifically stories of female fantasy, desire, and transformation” (Schanoes, 2014, p.100).

Moreover, Girls can explore and express their identity, self and experience in the mirror. Mirroring, based on Winnicott, is “deeply related to creative acts such as reading and writing” (1971, p.123) because of not being creative, Other steals mirrors from the girls to keep them passive. For Emily and Melanie there are no good enough mother’s eyes to act as a mirror and reflex them. Therefore, Melanie has no choice except to use Finn’s eyes as a mirror and glances at her own reflection “She could see her own face reflected in little in the black pupils of his subaqueous eyes” and thinks that she has not changed at all. Unfortunately, she passes her mirror stage through a man’s eye, not a good enough mother’s eye “watched herself in his eyes. It was a comfort to see herself as she thought she looked (Carter, 1982, p.105). As a result, she easily will be manipulated by men and be ‘civilly dead’ without a true self. One

of the reasons that in Gothic stories mirrors covered with veils is that women should be only “a subject sex or nothing at all” they should never discover their true self and it is all because of that women should stay inferior, as Beard mentions:

By marriage, the husband and the wife are one person in law; that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband; under whose wing, protection and cover, she performs everything. (1987, p.78)

In this regard, the lack of good enough mothers push the girls, like Emily and Melanie, to a Gothic life and very soon they will be counted as ‘civilly dead’, as Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, predicts their future:

Men are so unconscionable and cruel against us, as they endeavor to bar us of all sorts and kinds of liberty, so as not to suffer us freely to associate amongst our own sex, but would fain bury us in their houses or beds, as in a grave; the truth is, we live like bats or owls, labour like beasts, and die like worms. (2003, p.248)

In contrast to them, Lucy is surrounded by good enough mothers who borrow their eyes to her, so she can see her reflection and search for her true self; also she sees both her past and future and stops the Gothic life and initiates a new bright life.

Besides If we want to be recognized as a being, our existence ought to be seen and understood by someone (Winnicott, 1990, p.61). Our being is bound to a good enough mother and mothers are the bedrock of Gothic stories. The lack of a mother causes the Gothic house or family to trap the girls in a domestic life and makes them be an Angle or Monster of the house. As we see the future of Emily and Melanie is to be an Angle for a Bluebeard or a feminized man, who is the harbinger of Gothic future or premature death. In essence, Gothic novels are mostly based on a ‘femicidal plot’. In *Villette*, Lucy releases herself from this plot, which is besieged her future, by using the good enough mothers’ help or Villette’s Amazons, saves herself from the Gothic future and its femicidal plot. Despite Lucy, Emily and Melanie have never met a good enough mother therefore they are not capable of running away from the femicidal plot.

3. Conclusion

Gothic is begun as soon as the girls enter a house or a castle, or even a foreign city. Actually, the female Gothic shows how the girls are confined in the web of patriarchy by omitting the good enough mother who is the only person to make an appropriate environment for the girls to find their ‘true self’. The girls, like Emily and Melanie, have no choices except to accept the ‘false self’ to protect themselves from chaos and psychotic outbreak. In fact, the ‘false self’ based on Dethiville’s view is an act of ‘psychic survival’ and all are because of the lack of a good enough mother. There are no good enough mothers’ eyes to predict their Gothic future and help them to release themselves from the chain of Gothic life, in

fact, the physical mirror which is introduced by fathers, is a liar and manipulator. For Emily and Melanie, the false self is a kind of safe house for their true self to be protected from annihilation. In this regard, the false self is what the fathers want to see and it is a result of interdependence and lacking care of a good enough mother, the false self is an alienated self and it only responds to the world's demands, rather than discovering itself in the outside world.

Nineteenth-century writers, like Charlotte Bronte, introduce the strongest heroines rather than the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. The point is that there are not many differences between Emily and Melanie, both of them are entombed in a Gothic place and at the end confine themselves in another Gothic place with another Gothic man. However Carter tries to make the novel feministic, she is not very successful because Melanie, despite Lucy, never strains to save herself, her volition is only losing her virginity. Being a virgin in both the eighteenth and twentieth centuries is an unforgivable sin, being virgin means you are a single woman without a man. Conversely, Lucy was never ashamed of her virginity or being a lonely girl without a man. She has always tried to keep her freedom and stands on her own feet. Though Paul has acted like a savior, Lucy is still capable of managing her life by herself. The fact of the matter is that patriarchy has always found a way to make women 'civilly dead' no matter if modernity is around or not.

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