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THE COMPANY OF WOLVES:

the Sadeian Connection

by

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1. Introduction

The Company of Wolves, directed by Neil Jordan and released in 1984, is ostensibly based on a short story of the same name by Angela Carter, published in 1979 as one of a collection of allegorical fairy tales entitled *The Bloody Chamber*. It concerns the rites of passage of a young girl, Rosaleen, and explores the psychosexual under-currents of the classic "Little Red Riding Hood" fairy tale. The action takes place almost entirely in the troubled dreams of the menarcheic Rosaleen, and transports the viewer into an erotically charged realm of fantasy and myth. This British film transcends the generic boundaries by which mainstream Hollywood film is normally defined, and can be seen as a combination of many different *genres* — as horror, for example, as fantasy, coming of age, expressionism or *film noir*.

Among other things, *The Company of Wolves* is an exercise in structuralism and semiotics. It is highly "interpretative", and must be deconstructed both through the many signifiers that exist in its internal structure, and also through its potential meanings within the collective culture and individual contexts of its viewers. The multi-layered structure of the film is strongly influenced by Surrealism, a style in which both Carter and Jordan have engaged in other areas of their work, in their writings, novels and short stories.

The interpretative and surrealistic nature of *The Company of Wolves* ensures that it is difficult to gain access to any complete, logical or coherent meaning. Indeed it has been suggested that this is not a "rational" film at all, and it is *not* rational if we expect every little thread to unravel smoothly to yield up its individual and coherent significance. As in any Surrealistic work, each object or thread is partly dependent for its meaning on the objects or threads surrounding it, and in *The Company of Wolves* these are so numerous as to make the ultimate meaning virtually indecipherable. This thesis will argue, however, that the film becomes more rational as the level of understanding of its themes and *origins* increases; the whole can only makes sense if we examine the *totality* of the fabric.

Despite this interpretative approach, however, the over-determination of many of the scenes in *The Company of Wolves* leaves little doubt about the subject matter the authors want us to consider, and auteurial meaning comes through much more clearly in the film than it did in Carter's original text. The thickly-textured fabric of the narrative of *The Company of Wolves* contains many threads that pose questions about the Western European culture and civilisation of the late 1970s and early '80s.

There are grounds for asserting that Carter and Jordan decided during their collaboration that their agenda should be wider than simply the production of a straight adaptation of Carter's original short story. It will be argued in this thesis that the film is not singularly based on *The Company of Wolves* story as a separate entity, but on the whole body of Carter's work, including excerpts from other elements of *The Bloody Chamber*. Moreover, since Carter's story was itself a fictional illustration of concepts in her non-fiction work, *The Sadeian Woman*, it will be asserted that it was ultimately the "content" of *The Sadeian Women* that Carter and Jordan wished to promulgate.

It will be argued that *The Company of Wolves* is a demonstration of woman's historically negative and passive role in society, and a denunciation of the oppressive nature of the singular orthodoxy of patriarchal and/or colonial societies, as conceptualised in the term "monism". The film declares and establishes the Carter agenda of how these historical and social structures, with their inherent myths, have been seriously detrimental to the lives of women living within their "given" confines. Most importantly, however, it draws on Carter's ideas about the work of the Marquis de Sade, as outlined in *The Sadeian Woman*, showing the folly of either complete (feminine) virtue and submission on the one hand, or a (masculine) dominating, predatory nature on the other. It sets out to demonstrate that the "whole" character must consist of aspects of both extremes, feminine and masculine, and that only by uniting the two aspects will a full sense of oneself, and consequently a meaningful role in the world and a place in history, be achieved.

In arguing this, it is not intended to ignore the major contribution to the film by the director Neil Jordan, and it will be asserted that his role in expanding the scenes "just hinted at by Carter"(Taylor & Jenkins, 1984, p.266) has firmly established in the film the feminist content of Carter's considerable body of work.

In summary, it is suggested that the whole narrative of the film *The Company of Wolves* is neatly summed up, not in Angela Carter's original story, but in the words of Emma Goldman included as a postscript to *The Sadeian Woman*:

> History tells us that every oppressed class gained true liberation from its masters through its own efforts. It is necessary that woman learn that lesson, that she realise that her freedom will reach as far as her power to achieve her freedom reaches. It is therefore far more important for her to begin with her inner regeneration, to cut loose from the weight of prejudices, traditions, and customs. The demand for equal rights in every vocation in life is just and fair; but after all the most vital right is to love and be loved. Indeed, if partial emancipation is to become a complete and true emancipation of women, it will have to do away with the ridiculous notion that to be loved, to be a sweetheart and mother, is synonymous with being a slave or subordinate. It will have to do away with the absurd notion of the dualism of the sexes, or that man and woman represent two antagonistic worlds (Carter, 1979, p.151).

2. Angela Carter and the Sadeian Connection

2.1 *Thought Processes and Ideologies*

During the sexual revolution of the 1960s Angela Carter became aware, as she puts it herself, "How that *social fiction* of my 'femininity' was created, by means outside my control, and palmed off on me as the real thing"(sic) (Carter, 1997, 38). She also became acutely aware of other "myths" and "lies" (Carter, 1997, pp.38-41) that were the hallmark of a patriarchal society — a culture that automatically defined any*one* or any*thing* that was not male, white and Caucasian, as the *other*. She was opposed to any convergence towards a single orthodoxy in any sphere, but particularly in attitudes to women, and saw such orthodoxies, and the monistic institutions they spawned, as structures invented to serve the needs of man. Christianity, imperialism, the Hollywood scene, Modernism itself and even the concept of the omnipotent author/god, could, in Carter's view, all be seen as such.

Viewing life in these terms, Carter became determined to break down the myths that had evolved in the traditions of a history which had been written down and controlled by men and where women had been allowed to play no positive, contributory role for

which they could receive credit. She talked of freedom to "loot and rummage in an official past, specifically a literary past . . . and painting, sculptures, movies, folklore and heresies too" (Carter, 1997, p.41). "The past," she wrote, ". . . is a vast repository of outmoded lies, where you can check out what lies used to be à *la mode,* and find the old lies on which the new lies have been based"*(ibid).*

"This investigation of the social fictions that regulate our lives," Carter explains,[1] " . . . is what I've concerned myself with consciously since that time. I realise now, I must have always sensed that something was badly wrong with the versions of reality I was offered that took certain aspects of my being *as* a woman for granted" (Carter, 1997, p.38). Most of the rest of her life was devoted to redressing the balance of women's place and reputation within society, and to attempting to destroy the "myths" associated with womanhood, motherhood and femininity. Myths and magic, she maintained, are of our own contriving — our myths are in our own heads.[2]

2.2. *Carter the Writer*

Carter believed strongly that women's experience of the world was different from that of men's; she believed that women writers should write fiction in the hope of decolonialising" (sic) (Carter, 1997, p.42) the language, and so effect change by shifting ingrained ideas. She saw women writers as having the function of creating ". . . a means of expression for an infinitely greater variety of experience than has been possible heretofore, to say things for which no language previously existed" (Carter, 1997, p.42).

In her later writings, however, Carter reflected on a freer social structure with more autonomy for women, both economic and sexual, than had ever existed before. As she matured, she became happy to be living in the 20th century and in western European culture. She felt that she had virtually limitless freedom as a woman, as a "voluntarily sterile but sexually active being" (Carter, 1997, p.41). The possibility of writing fiction as a sexually active woman, she argued, would not have been possible for her in any other historical era because she would not have had the necessary control over her own

fertility to make this possible; she maintained that today's woman is "a new kind of being" (Carter, 1997, pp.40,41). She now described a pluralist society which held a strong belief in the individual.

The structure of Angela Carter's fiction is always complex and deliberately interpretative. She wholeheartedly believed in "the death of the author", believing that once a work was finished it was up to the reader to interpret it in his or her own way. In this she was greatly influenced by the ideas of Roland Barthes, who maintained that as soon as a "fact" is narrated it becomes intrinsically ambiguous, and susceptible to various interpretations (Barthes, 1981, pp.208 -213). Her work is also multi-voiced: the conveyor of the message changes continually as she speaks at times through the narrator, and then through one character after the other. And it always has a precise objective, and is meant to "work" — to convey a message (Carter, 1997, pp.35, 36, 37). In this it is almost theatrical, making her work particularly suitable for conversion to the film medium.

In 1977 Carter wrote *The Passion of New Eve,* an anti-mythic novel about the social creation of femininity. Two years later she published two related works which would use the misogynistic ideas of the 18th century pornographer, the Marquis de Sade, to further her cause. The first of these, a non-fiction work entitled *The Sadeian Women*, published in 1979, argued the case against the social and historical "given" of femininity. Later the same year she wrote *The Bloody Chamber* — a collection of short stories of which *The Company of Wolves* is one — exploring the same themes, exploding the same myths, and didactically pointing the way ahead.

2.3 *The Sadeian Influence*

Angela Carter saw de Sade as being "unusual in his period for claiming the rights of free sexuality for women, and in installing women as beings of power in his imaginary worlds" (Carter, 1979, 36). In *The Sadeian Woman* she says that women could read de Sade and "see themselves as they have been,"(Carter, 1979, p.36) as willing, powerless victims led to the slaughter, and could compare this with what they *might* be. "Sade," she says,

"remains a monstrous and daunting cultural edifice: yet I would like to think that he put pornography in the service of women, or, perhaps, allowed it to be invaded by an ideology not inimical to women" (Carter, 1979, p.37). And she goes on to quote de Sade: "Charming sex, you will be free: just as men are. You shall enjoy the pleasures that Nature makes your duty, do not withhold yourselves from one. Must the more divine half of mankind be kept in chains by the others? Ah, break those bonds: nature wills it"(*ibid*).

It could be argued, of course, that de Sade's comments about the freedom of women were prompted more by his own wish for the freedom to satisfy his own desires without the inconveniences of a woman's conscience or any resulting children, than by a desire for female "liberation". Carter, however, sees in his writings the beginnings of ideas which separate sexual pleasure from the chains of procreation. She shows, first of all, how de Sade, in the characters of Justine and Juliette, has constructed his female stereotypes entirely in the image of male fantasies: on the one hand he portrays the submissive woman whose nature was to serve man, and on the other the dominant, cruel female who likes to cause pain of the kind that sometimes seems to heighten sexual desire in men. Carter argues, paradoxically, that the liberated woman should be a synthesis of the two extremes.

Carter saw de Sade's Justine as the epitome of a female martyr, accepting what has been imposed upon her by a society whose institutions are organised by males. She blames the patriarchal Christian Church for inculcating such views in both men and women down through the ages, holding the Virgin Mary up as a role model, and continually comparing the actions of ordinary women with the actions of a goddess — one who is universally revered and placed in a position above the saints and next to God.

Justine, being virtuous as was required of her, refused to satisfy men's desires because she aspired, Virgin-like, to being the "ideal woman". She has been taught, Carter tells us, that her virtue, sited in her sexuality, is the only positive part of her "self", and that she must refuse men what they desire or she will be lost. This "ideal woman" believes that if she is *forced* to submit her body, she will remain virtuous if she retains purity in her soul; for this reason she must never enjoy what she is forced to give, but must endure it without pleasure. In this way she can remain virginal and virtuous, and feel

superior to her persecutors. Virtue is therefore based on a negative, any positive enjoyment of her body being seen as wrong.

Justine implicitly accepts this analysis. She is poor, but refuses to rob or steal, and unable to see her worth in the market-place, refuses even to sell honestly what is in demand and what is hers to sell — herself. And as Carter points out: "In a world where women are commodities, a woman who refuses to sell herself will have the thing she refuses to sell taken away from her by force" (Carter, 1979, p.55). Moreover, because she is poor, Justine is not protected by society, and is therefore vulnerable to the needs and desires of the strong in that society — and almost everyone is stronger than Justine. "The piety, the gentleness, the honesty, the sensitivity, all the qualities she has learned to admire in herself, are invitations to violence; all her life she has been groomed for the slaughterhouse" (*ibid*).

As Carter saw it, in refusing pleasure to her*self*, Justine denies her 'subject' and therefore remains an "object". In denying her sense of "self" she denies the assimilation of the "I" with the "me". Justine's "self" is a negative; in accepting the "given" that her "virtue lies in her genitals" (Carter, 1979, p.47), she negates the validity of any other part of her "being". Her attitude of single-minded virtue allows her to occupy the moral high ground: "The victim is always morally superior to the master; that is the victim's ambivalent triumph"(Carter, 1979, p.56). But this moral high ground is barren; it never yields reward.

Carter, however, is equally harsh in her assessment of de Sade's other character — the dominant, cruel, *sadistic* Juliette, who is the very antithesis of the virtuous Justine. "Juliette," she writes, "never pretends to be blameless (Carter, 1979, 101). On the contrary, she glorifies her crimes, especially in their gratuitous nature, and eschews guilt as if it were her victims who should be guilty at their stupidity in falling into her clutches. "Since she specialises in *realpolitik*, it is not surprising that she is more like a real woman than Justine could ever be" (Carter, 1979, p.101).

Juliette is aware of her value in society, and has used the advantages nature has given her to climb the ladder of success. In a sense, as Carter puts it: "Juliette stands for the

good old virtues of self-reliance and self-help"(Carter, 1979, p.101). She is predatory, and "her sexual encounters are engaged in either for profit or fun. . . She is single-mindedly destructive and. . . plays to win . . . Her femininity is part of the armoury of self-interest" (Carter, 1979, pp.102,103). She is, as it were, an entrepreneur, who knows her value in the marketplace and sells herself to the highest bidder.

But Juliette commits unimaginably horrid crimes in order to please those who could be of advantage to her. She realises, as Carter puts it, that "In a country where the hangman rules, only the hangman escapes punishment" (Carter, 1979, p.99). Juliette has developed the tyrannical "masculine" side of her nature, negating her womanhood in every possible sense, even to the point of killing her babies (Carter, 1979, p. 105).

"The sisters" Carter says, "exist in a complex dialectic with one another; the experience of one makes plain the experience of the other . . . Justine is the holy virgin, Juliette the profane whore" (Carter, 1979, pp.101,103). She points out that neither extreme, Justine nor Juliette, is truly a "whole" woman. She sees these extremes as two potential sides of the same coin, and each individually as objects of de Sade's terrible imagination, portraying them as products of patriarchal societies. She advocates an amalgamation or synthesis of the two extremes as necessary for the development of a "whole", "unified", "positive" female individual. *Carter's* "ideal woman" has some attributes normally associated with the masculine character — she is rational, assertive, fearless, self-reliant, capable of being economically independent, and sexually active; but she does not deny the opposite, gentler, emotional, intuitive, "female" part of her "self" (Carter, 1979, *passim*).

Carter's second book of 1979, *The Bloody Chamber*, can be seen as continuing, in the fiction *genre*, her exploration of the Sadeian philosophies begun in *The Sadeian Woman*. In the story *The Company of Wolves* in particular, she sets out to highlight, and then demolish, the outrageous figments of de Sade's extreme imagination, especially the myth, the Sadeian image, of the martyred, saintly Justine. She also contradicts de Sade's notions of the absolutes of good and evil, where he insists that these are immutable values existing separately in different human beings (de Sade, 1996, pp.41-44; Carter, 1979, pp.128-129). Carter tries to show how good and evil can reside simultaneously in any individual, and as the narrative unfolds, we see the main female protagonist transformed from a

confused pubertal adolescent, contemplating both extremes of her nature, into the confident unified "self" of a mature young woman. As in other stories comprising *The Bloody Chamber* it is this synthesis of the "self", a unification of both sides of the "being" that Carter is preaching in this allegorical tale.

These Sadeian elements could be described as the central core of meaning in *The Company of Wolves* film, and de Sade's themes of domination, humiliation and destruction of the weak come out very strongly. Carter gave her fictional characters the Sadeian roles of either victims or predators — lambs or tigers, as it were.[3] She explored the weakness of virtue and the power of vice in the same way as de Sade had done in the case of Justine and Juliette, but by demonstrating the ultimate fate of each type of character she hoped to inculcate a sense of self-preservation and self-reliance into her female readers. "The strong abuse, exploit and meatify the weak," says Carter of de Sade's philosophy: "They must and will devour their natural prey. The primal condition of man cannot be modified in any way; it is eat or be eaten" (Carter,1979, p.140). Carter desperately wanted to teach the lambs to *run* with the tigers, rather than to lie down with them and be eaten.[4]

Carter's use of de Sade's writings, which preached a doctrine suited to his pornographic purposes, made her at the time the butt of severe criticism from her fellow feminists. She herself, however, believed that, as a woman writer, she was using the pornographer *against* himself and his beliefs, by using *his* characters as *her* allies in the deconstruction of mythical femininity (Carter, 1979, pp.16-37). She believed in *moral pornography* (Carter, 1979, p.19) — that which uses some of the techniques of pornography in order to demonstrate the subjugation of women — and by writing in this way she sought to highlight the socialization of young girls into the "negatives" of passive femininity and suffering motherhood, identifying these practices as the obscenities they were; by destroying them, she saw herself as demolishing the Sadeian philosophy.

A constant theme of Carter's, also, is her exploration of the plural and diverse origins of power — the notion that power in any situation does not emanate from one single monistic source, but from many individual sources, either successively or

simultaneously. In this context she liked to explore dualities — good *versus* evil, male *versus* female, etc. And it is in dualities of this kind that we perceive much of the tension apparent in *The Bloody Chamber* and in the film *The Company of Wolves*; both, it can be argued, are partly about the *mutability* that is inherent in nature, with destruction occurring in order that the cycle of new life, and therefore death, can recur.

3. Neil Jordan and the Collaborative Process

3.1 *The Work of Jordan*

One must assume that Jordan's approach to Carter to use her story as the basis for a film indicated considerable interest in the content of her work In contrast to Carter's agenda, however, Jordan's own work tends to highlight "realities" as they are differently experienced by each individual. He has frequently explored, in both his writings and his films, Lacanian philosophies, those of Freud and Kristeva, and their concepts of the "subject", "object" and "abject", through many scenes with psychoanalytical content. It could be said that most of his films and much of his writing focus on and highlight each person's thoughts and feelings in a way that isolates him or her from others; he seems interested in the loneliness and alienation of the human individual and the fact that we live this life ultimately on our own, even if surrounded by people. He goes so far at times as to imply that we each live our lives in our own heads, and frequently makes use of devices that play with reality and Surreality, involving memory and dreams which are eminently suitable for adaption to the medium he employs — the flickering, moving, ever-changing, illusory image on the screen.

Like Carter, Jordan gives the individual a constantly changing reality, both in terms of external social structures and the ever-changing, internal, emotional and physical reality of the "organism" of the individual himself. But whereas Carter would "use" a

character to construct an allegorical, didactic and moralistic tale to further the more general feminist agenda, Jordan sees *The Company of Wolves*, for example, as being about "the lyricism of a young girl's emotional life" (McIlroy, 1989, p.115). It is typical of their slightly differing approaches that while Carter is ready to analyse the *concept* of patriarchy, and to criticise the Church, imperialism, and even art and literature in general, Jordan seems mainly to look at the "effect" of those structures on the individual organism; he looks at the "human condition" itself, and how external structures affect the individual who tries to fit into his social and cultural environment.

Jordan, like Carter, frequently puts his characters in either "predatory" or "victim" roles, and also like Carter, shows them as either remaining "negative" by inaction or becoming "positive" by action. Suffering, virtuous, motherly females appear from time to time in Jordan's work, for example, and are portrayed almost always as sacrificial victims, having no sense of "self" and having been totally socialised into, and by, an authoritarian society; Mary, the suicidal woman at the farm in *Angel* (1982), for example, is such a woman. Like Mary, and similar characters portrayed by Carter, many of Jordan's females have lived their lives *compliantly* — for their men, through their men, and from within their men; they are totally passive, having never, one infers, performed a single action for themselves alone. In the past, they have been the pillars of the Catholic Church in Ireland, often perhaps, hereditary supporters of deValera and his isolationist policies, and as such, conditioned advocates of their own unfreedom and consequent intellectual and spiritual demise.

But if some of Jordan's females are passive and abused, some also, especially when they are of a sexually active age, are cold and hard, and ready to use their wiles to trap the male protagonist. And the female child or adolescent is often seen, in both Jordan's films and his writings, to be developing a coldness, a hardness, and to be acquiring the predatory devices she will use in adulthood; Mathilde, in the novella *The Dream of a Beast*, is a typical example, and Rosaleen, as we will see, is also developing these predatory traits.

Jordan also portrays men, like women, as having been socialised into behaving in particular ways, obliged to fit into a society that expects them not only to be strong, protective and good providers, but also — and confusingly — soft, sensitive individuals as well.[5] His writing style is lyrical and poetic, and, like Carter's, is interpretative, calling on the reader to play an active and collaborative role in the production of meaning. Indeed he manipulates the reader, as he does the viewer in his films, by the deliberate use of defamiliarising strategies. He may structure the narrative, for instance, so that it is ambiguous and he frequently indulges in what seems to be a deliberate overuse of the personal pronoun, forcing the reader back over text already read in order to understand the progress of a story. This latter technique is similar to the "layering" he uses in some of his films.

Unlike Carter the writer, however, who is monomanically obsessed with getting her point across, Jordan the director appears to be motivated more by a deep need to create aesthetically beautiful films. His work is constructed out of a definite aesthetic, all his films being strong in sensuality, seductiveness, colour, and music. He does not appear to feel the need, as Carter does, to convey his own intellectual ideas; he is not didactic and, as such, perhaps, focuses meaning in the spectator more faithfully. All his energy is directed towards his aesthetic vision of the final film, and the story is just another element of his varied palette.

3.2 Influences on Jordan

Jordan's way of dealing with many of the issues raised in *The Company of Wolves* can be directly traced to filmic sources. Although the number of these sources are most likely to be legion, it may by interesting to look briefly at the work of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, the British director-writer team who worked together from about 1939 to 1956 (Thomas, 1991, p. 662).

First of all, the willingness of Jordan to collaborate in many of his films invites comparison with Powell and Pressburger. Both he and they frequently seemed to use a story simply as a means to an end, as part of a wider palette that included everything necessary for the making of a successful film. For this reason the conventional fairy-tale was a perfect vehicle for engagement in the larger issues being debated at the time.

In addition, the filmic structures of Powell and Pressburger (and later Powell alone) although essentially narrative in form, often fought against the contemporary tide of British "realism" by creating a world of fantasy, and by adopting surrealistic techniques (Thomas, 1990, p. 662). In *Black Narcissus* (1947) semi-madness or vacancy of mind is portrayed by Ayah, the caretaker, when she dances around the ancient, empty brothel/palace to discordant choral music, with the breeze blowing slowly but persistently through the building. Likewise, in *The Red Shoes* (1948), cinematic techniques are used to create illusions that are only possible in that medium. The scene, for example, where Vicky dances *The Red Shoes* ballet in the middle of that film has a dream-like quality; her pink shoes are transformed into red shoes in an instantaneously magical manner that could never be accomplished in the theatre or in ballet itself — only in the cinema. Similar techniques are used by Jordan, for whom reality is never a simple or straightforward matter, in *The Company of Wolves*. The portrayal of the wind, for example, which we subconsciously perceive as an active and uncontrollable force, evokes ominous feelings in us in the scenes where Rosaleen is dreaming in her bedroom, and is also symbolic of change when Rosaleen has climbed the big tree and has actively embraced the masculine side of her "self".

Black Narcissus, like *The Company of Wolves*, is difficult to place in any *genre,* but it could, perhaps, be best described as an expressionistic, fantasy film which deals with dualities. The directors try to resolve the problems created by the dichotomies of reason and irrationality, Christianity and paganism, religion and eroticism, knowledge and ignorance, predator and victim, all of which culminate in a final battle between good and evil (Thomas, 1990, p. 665). Sister Clodagh, being Sister Ruth's *alter ego,* can also be seen as analogous to the Sadeian themes of Justine and Juliette. Perhaps this is another source that may have suggested to Jordan, or confirmed him in, the worthwhile nature

of an examination of this theme through the sisters Alice and Rosaleen in *The Company of Wolves.*[6]

Both of these Powell and Pressburger films, and later Powell's *Peeping Tom* (1960), engaged in themes that included, among other things, discourses on the cinema itself, photography, and voyeurism. Indeed it could be asserted that *Peeping Tom* is another film that has strongly influenced Jordan's conscious handling of *The Company of Wolves*, notably the voyeuristic scenes. But perhaps the over-riding concern of the Powell and Pressburger films is gender, and the difficult choices that must be made by women between "career" and "love and marriage", one part of their essence always being negated by whichever choice they make. It seems possible that Jordan's frequent exploration and treatment of these themes was influenced by the older films.

Further echoes of Powell and Pressburger in Jordan's work are to be found in the sound-tracks of many of the latter's films. The strong and often discordant music[7] in *The Red Shoes* and *Black Narcissus*, seems to transcend the plot and the characters. Likewise, music is always a strong element in Jordan's films: *The Company of Wolves, Angel*, and later *The Crying Game* (1992) and *Interview with a Vampire* (1994) use music as a form of communication which, like the visuals, has an immediate effect on the senses of the audience.

The expressionistic use of strong, lush, sensual colour throughout all Jordan's work is also reminiscent of the Powell/Pressburger films, and arguably influenced by them. The theatrical lighting used in both *The Red Shoes* and *Black Narcissus,* which helps to create surrealistic sequences and sinister shadows, is very evident, and indeed brought to an extreme, in *The Company of Wolves*. We can see that the colour, line and lighting of the sky in the ballet sequence in *The Red Shoes* is almost identical to that of the scene through Rosaleen's bedroom in *The Company of Wolves,* for instance, and also to that through the window of Granny's house when Rosaleen stays the night. And to take another example, *Black Narcissus* is about nuns in white mantles, the colour being symbolic of virtuous virginity; in *The Company of Wolves* the red mantle is donned by Rosaleen as a symbol of her menarche and possibly of her sexual maturity.

3. 3 *The Collaborative Process*

Jordan says that he was drawn to Angela Carter's work because her writing was "iconoclastic, dramatic", "graphic", and "strong in terms of imagery" (Jenkins and Taylor, 1984, p.265-6). But the same, indeed, could be said of Jordan's own work: his novels and stories are rich in evocative *mises-en-scene*, described with a clarity that almost "directs" the reader towards his preconceived image. Moreover, Jordan's interpretative approach, with its many intertextual references, open questions, and multiplicity of signifiers, is so similar to Carter's that it is no surprise that he was drawn to her work and saw it as the basis for a film.

According to a Jordan interview in the September 1984 issue of *The Monthly Film Bulletin*, Carter and Jordan wrote the first script of the film, which he described as "quite a direct transposition of the story", in a relatively short period of about two or three weeks" (Jenkins and Taylor, 1984, p.265-6). They appear to have built up the film script in an "associative" way, echoing the psychoanalytical techniques of Freud. It would seem that although Carter's input dictated the *specific* content, Jordan made the necessary authorial decisions about what was, or was not, technically possible in film.

This emphasis on Carter's content, at first sight, might appear to support Catherine Neale's suggestion (Neale, 1996, p.99) that *The Company of Wolves* "remains" a mere adaption of Angela Carter's short story. This view, however, negates Neil Jordan's very considerable visual input, particularly his handling of the formal elements of the film, and there is ample evidence to assert that the film stands on its own as an artwork. Although a large body of meaning from Carter's original story is imported, we will see in the *textual analysis* of the film, that the use of Jordan's non-verbal signifiers or *visuals* which establish Carter's themes, the immediacy of the music and colour on the senses of the audience, the industrial nature of film production and the fact that the script was a collaboration, have all resulted in added meaning. *The Company of Wolves* transformed into a film has become an individual work with a new identity not least because the eleven-page story was expanded considerably, with, as Jordan put it

himself, ". . .the atmospheres and tiny bits of description and the references . . ." in Carter's work being extended to whole sequences in the film"(Taylor & Jenkins, 1984, p.266).

There are numerous individual, identifiable strands of source material present in the final filmic product. It is evident that some material has been taken directly from Carter's work, some (albeit very little) from Jordan's own stories, and some seems to have been created specifically for *The Company of Wolves* film. Thus, for example, the story of the werewolf marrying the village girl and leaving home on the wedding night, the sequence of the hunter trapping the wolf and cutting off its forepaws, and the episode of the pregnant woman at the wedding, are all present in the original Carter text. Some of the imagery, on the other hand, comes directly from Jordan's work: he tells us that the babies hatching out of the eggs in the nest at the top of the tree was a concept taken from *The Dream of a Beast*, his novella written in 1979 (Taylor & Jenkins, 1984, p.266). And finally, Alice's death and funeral, together with all the church scenes and the walks in the forest, were additional material which seems to have been created specifically for the film. Carter and Jordan agreed in collaboration, that the story of the girl dreaming would be used as a "portmanteau" device to contain the narrative, and this is also new in the film, having no precedent in any texts of either author (*ibid*).

Jordan says he intended the meaning in *The Company of Wolves* to emerge from the pleasure of following the many associations within the film, rather than being contained in a straight-forward narrative. Each set was intended to be familiar, in the sense that fairy tales are quickly recognisable, but simultaneously unfamiliar in the way that dreams invariably are strange. He wanted the audience to be able to take sensual pleasure in just watching, citing the scene of Rosaleen running through the forest as one where the audience could "just sit back and eat it up." "With a lot of the sequences," he says, "we were just trying to wring the sensual pleasure out of them" (Taylor & Jenkins, 1984, p.266). And again: "I wanted to play games with the audience in the sense that you are led through one sequence, and think you are home, and then someone tells a story and you go into another world, and so on. I wanted it to be like a puzzle which people would enjoy in the way that they enjoy unravelling a thriller" (*ibid*).

4. The Sadeian Content of *The Company of Wolves*

4.1 *Introducing the Characters*

Rosaleen, the main female protagonist, and her sister Alice, are portrayed as two sides of the Sadeian dichotomy Justine and Juliette, and as such will be discussed more fully later. However, an understanding of the other individual characters in the film, and the stereotypical groups to which many of them belong, is crucial to the establishment of meaning in *The Company of Wolves*.

The wolves, like Rosaleen and Alice, are 'Sadeian' characterisations, and are equally complex and interesting. They are outsiders, and are alienated from, and by, a civilisation which repels Nature in the need to curb the desires of its own citizens — their "ids" or "beasts within". In such societies, any individual who does not abide by the *status quo*, who will not curb his "beast", is considered to be a danger to the rest and is mythologised as a monster.[8] The wolves are such monsters in *The Company of Wolves*. They are, moreover, the epitome of the predatory, tyrannical and evil Sadeian libertines, described by Carter in *The Sadeian Woman* — individuals who, in furtherance of their own gratification, refuse to obey the laws of civilisation. The wolf-libertines, "carnivores incarnate", according to Carter (Carter, 1996, p.212), devour their flesh in a frenzy and eat at the same table, but their ". . . pleasure is an entirely inward experience" (Carter, 1979, p.144-6). She tells us "The libertine's sovereign orgasm is not shared with his fellow libertines; it simply occurs at the same time" (Carter, 1979, p.144). Although they are seen to hunt in packs, their companions are not friends: they are ". . .fellow-conspirators" whose togetherness ". . . does not alleviate the solitude of the libertine; rather, it enhances it" (Carter, 1979, p.144).

These characteristics are demonstrated in several scenes in the film. They are evident, for example, in the scene where Alice succumbs in the woods to her inevitable fate, in that which shows the wolves keeping vigil outside the house in Granny's "village wedding" story, and near the end of the film when we see Rosaleen as potential prey for the huntsman-werewolf.

Libertines see Nature as cruel and so justify their acts as natural (De Sade, 1996, p.44). Their carnivorous love of flesh — a Sadeian synonym for sex [9] — sees them continually on the hunt for new victims who, once trapped, are subjugated, pitifully tortured, and humiliated. Libertines both *need* pain, and *cause* pain, as a necessary stimulus for orgasm, and they become increasingly masochistic in their hunt for it. They will not allow any pleasure in their partners, since any pleasure given, they feel, reduces the pleasure they retain.

The achievement of his quest becomes, for the libertine, more and more difficult each time, and eventually imprisons him. Instead of being a freedom, his sexuality becomes, as Carter sees it, "a cage that traps him"(Carter, 1979, p.149). The beginning of this process is shown graphically in *The Company of Wolves* when the "son of the priest" in Granny's churchyard story accepts the metaphorical "ointment" from the devil, who advises him to "waste not, want not".[10] The ointment immediately makes him 'wolf-like' and he is trapped; the pain of entrapment, and the realisation of it, are both evident as he howls and screams to free himself from the symbolic bind-weed that ties him to his inevitable fate. He is condemned, as a wolf-libertine, to a life of subservience to his own nature which will never be completely satisfied.

There are several other moments in the film which point to this masochistic need for pain to achieve orgasm. We see it, for example, when the werewolf husband, having stood on the prickly hedgehog, leaves his wife on their wedding night, propelled by his response to pain to answer what he ambiguously terms "the call of nature"; we see it when the huntsman grabs the hot poker wielded by Granny and is stimulated to eventual gratification; and it is also evident at the end, when, shot by Rosaleen, the huntsman shows that he now needs an extremely painful stimulus indeed before he can achieve the level of pain necessary for his lonely and violent, orgasmic convulsion.

The other individual characters in the film all contribute to meaning as the tale unfolds. Granny, the *old wife*, for example, signifies both the superstitious and the moralistic side of society and demonstrates the acceptance of the *status quo* in a system run both by and for men. Her stories show that she preaches sexual abstinence outside marriage, and within marriage the traditional norm of a woman's primary duty to her husband and

her family. She demonstrates the oral tradition in action, the way in which women have been educated into compliant acceptance of their lowly position in society. But Granny's values are later shown to be of no substance when the wolf chops off her head, and it is seen, significantly, to be made of hollow porcelain. This contrasts with, in the same scene, the huntsman-wolf, the pioneer of sexual freedom, who *is* shown to be of substance, being composed of flesh and blood.

In contrast to the wolves-libertines, the father of the family is a typical "civilised" male who has been socialised to believe that he, as the possessor of Reason, is the centre of the universe. He is proud of his rationality, which is confined to humans and which, therefore, elevates him above all "others". He regards it, moreover, as very much a *masculine* trait. Females, by contrast, he sees as having a capacity only for emotion, which is perceived in his society as being rooted in parts of the anatomy other than the logical mind — the heart for example. Women, therefore, cannot by his reckoning be possessors of Reason, and consequently cannot be thought of as fully rational beings.[11]

We see later that Rosaleen does not accept her father's masculine definition of rationality. When he comes back from the hunt after having shot what he thought was the wolf and discovered his mistake, he declares: "When I killed it, it was a wolf, it turned into a man — seeing is believing." Rosaleen replies, "Is it? What about touching?" Here she implies that masculine logic does not, of itself, add up to true Reason; total "enlightenment" and rationality require that one also possess an inner sight that is born partly of emotion — a traditionally feminine trait. Rosaleen's views are further emphasised when later, on the path, the wolf-huntsman shows her his compass and while describing its unusual properties says: "Seeing is believing!" "I don't believe it even though I see it," she replies.

The mother is the least "acted" of all the supporting characters.[12] She is a woman who *has* insight, and is trying her best to straddle the gap between the old society and the new. She wants her daughter to be able to fit into the community into which she was born, but conscious of her own lack of fulfilment, does not want Rosaleen to cling to the past. She sees the inequalities in the social structure of their society, and, wanting more for Rosaleen, tries to give her a "modern", independent approach to life; if she is not to

be a "lamb, a "victim", Rosaleen must cultivate aspects of a masculine, predatory nature — she must be able to eat "Sadeian meat". The mother *sees* more clearly than the bespectacled Granny (whose glasses have been shown to be opaque at times), and tries to minimise the effect of Granny's reactionary teaching [13] by giving her daughter the weaponry, symbolised by the knife, that will help her to cope with the wicked ways of a very dangerous world.

4.2 *The Emerging SadeianThemes and Their Signifiers*

The opening sequence of a film, whether classic Hollywood narrative, or British as in the case of *The Company of Wolves*, often defines for the viewer what sort of film he or she is about to watch. In this work, the synthetic, unearthly music in the dismal, threatening woods, the baby doll lying, forgotten, beside the tree stump, the many fairy-tale symbols in the shape of birds and animals, and the fantastic gates of the house, all announce that this will be a surrealistic film where generic and other boundaries will be pushed to the limit. We are immediately aware that this will be a work of nightmarish fantasy, and there are strong signals to indicate that gender matters will play a very important part. Above all, perhaps, the multiplicity of symbols, each vying for dominance of meaning, makes it clear that the film intends to be "interpretative", focusing the attention on the viewer in true Barthesian style.

The first thing we become aware of is the central phallic symbol in the opening scenes. The disembodied phallus stands erect and assertive, incongruous at the centre of the forest which it dominates by its very presence. The phallus is attached to a deep, dark void which is round in shape and which we hardly notice at this point because of its passive quality. Later the entire "erection" is used as a central point in the village, as if it were a monument, and the female cavity is now seen to be, in fact, a man-made well.[14]

The monument is mechanically driven, and in its extreme simplicity of "form" resembles pornographic graffiti — a three-dimensional variation, as it were, of the

two-dimensional form of pornography that Carter has discussed at length in *The Sadeian Woman*. Indeed, Carter has stressed the fact that form in pornography — that of the "fringed hole" in graffiti, or the "two-dimensional story-line" in writing (the simple narrative whose *raison d'être* is a vehicle for the greatest possible number of sexual encounters) — reduces a woman to the simplest possible elements of her "being", that of a Sadeian sexual machine. The authors demonstrate this simplicity by deliberately introducing the Sadeian pseudo-pornographic icon which, paradoxically, when contrasted with the complex, multi-dimensional structure of *The Company of Wolves*, will help to establish the strongly *anti*-pornographic content of the film.

This *mise en scene* is rich in symbolism and metaphor. The "self" has been reduced to its basic elemental form, and the existence of any part of the human other than its sex is virtually denied. The difference in treatment of the male and female sexual iconography, however, reflects the difference in their social positions. There is a strong positive statement about the male gender, portrayed as assertive and upright, his active presence towering over all, proud of his position as the overlord. The female, on the other hand, is portrayed very negatively, being reduced, quite literally, to a round "zero",[15] a 'nothing', a hole in the ground whose existence is dependent on the earthen banks that form its sides and on the man-made structures around its opening. The whole *mise en scene* graphically suggests Carter's recurrent thesis about the normally accepted "absence" of the feminine "self" — the female's traditional subservience to, dependence on, and loyalty to, her man, with which Carter believed women to have been historically compliant.

Here, at the beginning of the film, the camera brings us down from a height to the eye-level of the dog — who looks like a wolf. Sometimes we run with the beast, and at other times we are already ahead, waiting for it to catch up; we may look down from above, or across at wolf level as though one of the others in the pack. At all times, however, we retain a sense of control and power over those we are watching: we are powerful and, like God, we are everywhere at once. The spectator is put knowingly in possession of the camera's eye, which is never "innocent", and becomes immediately involved in the hideous activities about to take place

This technique of drawing attention to the camera's naturally voyeuristic "eye", and focusing on the scopophilic pleasure of film, highlights the viewer's voyeuristic nature, and is one that Jordan often used later. It was evident, for example, in *Interview with the Vampire* where he very carefully drew the analogy between the reaction of the watching audience in the Theatre of the Vampires and *our* reaction, as viewers in an audience, to the scene where Lestat (Tom Cruise) tortures the girl. Here, in *The Company of Wolves*, it cleverly establishes the "Carter content" straight away, and is a major contribution to meaning in the film.

Once inside the house, we follow the dog up to the bedroom in which Rosaleen dreams her troubled dreams. We enter her room as she is sleeping and watch her through the camera lens (angled downwards), as uninvited guests with many of the qualities of peeping-Toms. This deliberate objectification of Rosaleen, highlighting the vulnerability of the sleeping girl, draws our subconscious attention to the pornographic potential of the camera, and its use in cinema for the objectification of women as "screen goddesses".[16] The camera has become the eye of the spectator; it is also patently male, conveying a sense of power, and in clearly demonstrating the "male gaze"[17] we are led to question our own voyeuristic natures.

We not only intrude into the privacy of Rosaleen's bedroom, looking around at all her childhood treasures, but also invade her current menarcheic state, and read Freudian significance into the childhood toys we see upon the shelves. As if that were not enough, we follow the camera right into her head, and invade her dreams and fantasies. We go — in an almost literal sense — "where no man has gone before"; we *rape* the child's privacy, and willingly watch and probe her "being" while she lies sleeping, troubled and helpless. The child is a passive "object", a lamb — vulnerable and easy meat, as it were, for the carnivorous and predatory creatures that we are. Our voyeuristic intrusion breaks the taboo on the sexuality of the child who is tacitly assumed to be sexually inactive.

Despite all this, we stay, and by doing so allow the film to provoke questions within ourselves. Yes, the spectator has the power to look at Rosaleen, and can observe and judge the behaviour of the wolves — but is he any different? The spectator has bought

a ticket to enter this dream-world, and by doing has he not afforded himself, to use Carter's words of the reader of de Sade's pornographic writings, "the opportunity to purchase the flesh of others as if it were meat" (Carter, 1979, p.14). It could be argued that here we have a challenge to the male gazer: can you look with the "un-innocent eye" of the camera upon the be-lipsticked, pubescent, Rosaleen, the woman-child protected by taboo, and not feel power and sexual stimulation?

It is noteworthy that none of these scenes form part of the original story by Carter, but yet they are very much in keeping with Carter's original Sadeian content. The same is true of Alice's ordeal in the woods, which we will look at later, when the eye of the camera runs at wolf level as part of the pack and we find ourselves caught up in the hunt, watching and waiting our turn as part of the horror which unfolds before our eyes. Throughout all these early shots in *The Company of Wolves,* Jordan successfully establishes this Carter content as the tenor of the camerawork for the entire film. He makes our role as voyeurs immediately obvious to us, and reminds us of our status at various points throughout the film — watching, waiting and invading. We will spend most of our time in Rosaleen's dream, and as we wait and watch events, from behind the bushes, or as uninvited guests in her dream-house, we are often aware that the camera is, in fact, ourselves.

It could be argued that Jordan, as a man and as director of the film, subconsciously objectifies Rosaleen from his *male* perspective. If one accepts the Carter anti-Sadeian content of *The Company of Wolves*, however, we may see Jordan's use of the camera in a different and more positive light. One is reminded again of Carter's comment about de Sade: "He put pornography in the service of women, or, perhaps, allowed it to be invaded by an ideology not inimical to women" (Carter, 1979, p.37). We may recall also, Carter's description of the "moral pornographer", who as an artist and a friend to women, ". . .might use pornography as a critique of current relations between the sexes"(Carter, 1979, p.19). This artist ". . .might begin to penetrate to the heart of the contempt for women that distorts our culture even as he entered the realms of true obscenity as he describes it"(Carter, 1979, p. 20).

Jordan's voyeuristic scenes in Rosaleen's bedroom can be seen to have a number of objectives. Firstly the film needs an early establishment of the "lambness" of Rosaleen, of the passivity and helplessness of her nature, so that her character can be seen to develop during the film. Secondly, it needs to give the initial "gaze" to the male viewer, to confront him with his motives for watching, and thereafter deny him this pleasure until Rosaleen is ready, as we shall see, to take pleasure in his glance. And thirdly, and more subtly, the camera work provokes other thoughts in the audience: the question of who can judge others is raised, as also is Carter's contention that power emanates from everywhere, not least from the spectator who is the 'consumer' of the film.

As the film progresses further, it becomes established that *The Company of Wolves* is a dream-like fantasy, and as such virtually timeless. Many general signifiers, however, such as costume and frequent references to a strong belief in Reason, point to the setting of the main story as having a connection with the late 18th century. This, of course, is the time of de Sade. It was a time of tyranny and turbulence in human relationships, when man's belief in himself and his reason was at its height, when woman was thought to be irrational and incapable of reason, and when de Sade, as Carter tells us, dwelt upon the cruel, evil customs of the day and fictionalised them in his monstrous works (Carter, 1979, p.35).

4.3 *Alice in the Woods*

Early in *The Company of Wolves*, before we enter a dream-world, we see the supposedly "real" parents of Alice and Rosaleen take the shopping into their house, and we see that this family, also, has two girls — sisters, like Justine and Juliette. We quickly discern that they have been brought up in the way that society expects. Alice, a decorative "object", dressed in her virginal, lamb-like, white dress, shows every sign of playing the role expected of her. But we are not yet sure about the enigmatic Rosaleen, who at that moment is asleep in bed — dreaming.

The Sadeian analogy very soon becomes apparent. It is evident that Alice, Justine-like, has been "socialised" into the accepted negative ideas of the "feminine" being. As a

character in Rosaleen's dream, she goes off into the woods, the Sadeian place of rape and danger, running through the night forest, decorative and ultra-feminine, an "object" to be looked at, a typical helpless "good" Justine. The *mise en scene* is dark — a metaphor for Alice's state of knowledge of the world. We are presented with a "lamb led to the slaughter"(Carter, 1979, p.138), who has been inculcated by parents, Church and community with the romantic mythology of the "virtuous" woman. Her manner and stylish dress tell us that Alice has fully accepted this myth of passive womanhood; she is on that mythical "goddess" pedestal, believing that she is incapable of looking after herself, and that the men who placed her there will protect her. Like Justine, she has learnt self-pity and dependence, instead of resourcefulness and self-preservation.

Instead of trying to help herself, Alice, like the Sadeian Justine, tries to flee the danger, and also like Justine, she is doomed to die, "an emotional, if not physical, virgin" (Carter, 1979, p.56). She runs from one horror to the next, her womanhood threatened on all sides by dangers she is ill-equipped to deal with because of her undeveloped sense of "self". Like a martyr, she will go "straight to heaven" — as Granny tells Rosaleen later — because she is too good to live in this real world. De Sade, according to Carter, correctly identified the dilemma of such women — those who accept what is prescribed for them, who do not exercise any control over their situations, who suffer on in ". . .a kind of self-regarding female masochism, a woman with no place in the world, no status, the core of whose existence has been eaten away by self-pity" (Carter, 1979, p.57).

The wolves wait in the forest and begin to run and hunt as a pack. When, finally, they catch up with Alice, the classic Sadeian roles of predators (carnivores) and victim (lambs) are clearly portrayed and emphasised. And as Alice's fate becomes obvious, the pan pipes in the sound-track force out organ-like sounds of the impending doom of a pure, white, sacrificial lamb, creating intertextual references to both the Hammer horror movie and the Christian Church. In true surrealistic manner, the multiplicity of props in the scene, each affecting the meaning of the others, also creates a Freudian intertext that further affects meaning. Despite this strongly interpretative approach, however, the authors' intentional Sadeian meaning comes through very strongly for those aware of Carter's work.

At this point, Alice faints[18] — a very "feminine" and Justine-like thing to do, and one which has obviously been helpful in the past in more secure surroundings. This time however, the fainting just renders Alice even more helpless than before, and we can see that her fear and lack of "fight" have ensured that she is totally lost. The moral to which the viewer's attention is drawn is that she ran *from,* not *with,* the wolves.[19]

Later, in the funeral scene, Alice's character is further established by Jordan as the archetypal "good" girl is laid to rest in her coffin. She is laid out like a saint, hands joined in prayerful position —"locked forever in the fortress of her flesh"(Carter, 1979, p.128) — and yet her saintliness has been her downfall; her purity of mind and her virginity are sanctified, but she is dead. Goodness and helplessness are punished, and we see — and more importantly, Rosaleen, given a rare "point of view" shot, also sees — that the fruits of virtue are annihilation. The expression on Rosaleen's face tells us that she will learn by Alice's experience.

Also in this funeral scene, de Sade's philosophies come out loud and strong from the mouth of the priest as he reads the adult version of the funeral service from the 1928 Book of Common Prayer (which quotes, significantly, from The Book of Job — the name of Job being synonymous with patient suffering). The service reinforces de Sade's views that death is natural to life and is a direct consequence of the sin of Eve — a woman: "Man that is born of woman has but a short time to live and is full of misery. He cometh up and is cut down like a flower. In the midst of life we are in death . . ." (Bible)

4.4 *Rosaleen's Rite of Passage*

With Alice dead, the focus of the film shifts to Rosaleen. Initially, Rosaleen displays a potential for both sides of the Sadeian dichotomy in her make-up, and clearly has many of the characteristics of de Sade's Justine. Like her sister, in the opening scenes she is passive and "feminine", and is presented, like Alice, as young, "virtuous womankind"

personified. She is still a child, in the process of being educated in traditional subservient ways and shown her inherited and intended place in society.

In the funeral scene, we see the mother take the crucifix and chain from around Alice's neck and place it optimistically on Rosaleen, who will now, hopefully, accept the Church's teaching and carry on the cultural tradition of the mythological virtuous woman. But we do not yet know which path Rosaleen herself will choose in the future — whether it will be that of the feminine Justine, becoming therefore like Alice, a natural victim, or the more "masculine", self-serving, predatory Juliette.

The process of Rosaleen's socialisation is portrayed as Granny gives the child as much advice as she can: "Never stray from the path, whatever the temptation, never eat a windfall, and never trust a man whose eyebrows meet." She stresses the virtue of "lambishness" and on the way back from the funeral Granny's tone of voice is half sympathy, half respect, for the dead Alice: "Poor little lamb, your only sister, all alone in the forest and not a soul to help her." "Why couldn't she help herself?" asks the bright and inquisitive Rosaleen who has learned from her sister's experience. Jordan chooses to construct the *mise-en-scene* inside Granny's house as a Dutch *genre* scene familiar from many paintings, and we recall the moral implications of these pictures, with their attention to detail, their adherence to the Bible, and their many other features consolidating a maintenance of the *status quo*.

The mythological nature of the stories told by Granny is significant in the context of the kind of upbringing that has produced the passive "lambs" of the world, and which has reduced women to being seen, and to seeing themselves, as "objects". She tells all the stories she has committed to memory as they were told to her when she was a child by her own mother or grandmother. She sometimes calls Rosaleen "princess" — a role that Carter depicts in her writings as nothing more than a rich but passive sex slave to a prince. Granny personifies the oral tradition that inculcated generations of disappointed women who had no active place or say in the running of society while they were alive and with no place in history after their deaths. She is a storyteller, a yarn-spinner, and a moraliser, providing the traditional upbringing full of old wives' tales and superstition, by means of which a young girl is taught to be good and virtuous.

Granny tells Rosaleen that some wolves, the worst of them, are hairy on the inside as well as on the outside — to illustrate that while most men are bad, some men are worse than others, and that Rosaleen should be careful in her choice of partner. She will not be allowed to enjoy her sexuality outside of the institution of marriage, and once inside marriage she will not be able to control her fertility. By the norms of society, once she has made her choice she must live with the consequences, a life of servitude to her lord and master which we see well illustrated in the relatively comfortable home life of Rosaleen's mother, whose role is that of a woman, unfulfilled, in a warm but patriarchal household. According to Granny, the best Rosaleen can hope for from the ordinary wolves — those not hairy on the inside, the village men — is that they will put her on a pedestal and make her a goddess; in the worst scenario she will be abused and humiliated — just like the woman in the story — by the strong and cruel men with their lupine beasts within.

In her story of the village wedding of the girl to the werewolf, Granny offers a parable to Rosaleen. She tells her about a young couple who marry, and how, on the wedding night the bridegroom, having stood on a prickly hedgehog, leaves the house to answer "the call of nature". *We* do not assume, however, as Granny does, that this "call of nature" is of the kind normally meant by this expression, but perceive it as a sign of a physical and sexual urge, in response to pain, to copulate with those of his own kind — the other wolves who have been keeping vigil and whom he goes to join.

On his return years later, the wolf seeing that his bride has remarried, is angry, not with a jealous passion of the heart, but with anger at his "ownership rights" over her having been infringed. His rage deepens when he learns that she has had children by her second marriage, which would not be to his advantage as they would eventually inherit his property. His fury sources his violence, and the woman, "lamb-like" and helpless with fear, struggles ineffectually as he metamorphosises into a wolf and attacks her. Her second husband arrives home and chops the wolf's head off. On seeing that the disembodied head, now in peace, has changed back into the young man she married, the wife is consumed with pity — upon which the second husband becomes jealous and beats her. The moral of this story is that it made no difference to the woman which of

the men won the fight since both of them were violent towards her. The struggle between the men was about the economic ownership of property, herself included.

In this story, Granny presents the men of the village as the natural leaders of society who because of their superior rationality and physical strength must be deferred to, served and followed. She also implies that this is the traditional, correct and natural order. In the violent "kitchen scene" the camera stays at eye level with the cowering female, encouraging viewer identification with her but it looks up to the "second husband" when he comes through the door, emphasising the dependent nature of the wife on her husband. He is shown to be able to solve the problem but he also uses violence, and he rescues her, while she is shown to be totally helpless and dependent upon him. Granny preaches hopelessness and predestination to Rosaleen, painting a picture of her impending doom in adult womanhood as passive, powerless and unfulfilling.

But Rosaleen, as it turns out, is more resilient and questioning than her sister Alice was, and is capable of learning from the experience of others. There are many occasions in the film when we become aware that she is considering the paths she may take. We hear her asking questions about the choices open to her as an adult: At the end of the story she asks her Granny: "When the real wolves mate, do the dogs beat the bitches afterwards?" When her Granny answers "Animals, all animals", Rosaleen replies "I'd never let a man hit me like that". Shortly after this we see Rosaleen considering the moth in the spider's web at her window. She first looks at the moth, parcelled up in the spider's larder all ready to be eaten, and then considers the spider itself, whose crime is not only unpunished but rewarded by the meal of the flesh of its victim. The spider has freedom; as always, the predator has won and the victim has lost. Rosaleen gently touches the spider, and we realise that she is thinking about survival, concluding, we assume, that "Who dares, wins!".

Rosaleen tests people to assess her power, manipulating those around her in the best way she can. Often when she addresses her father, for instance, she puts on a special voice for pleading, as if trying to make herself seem smaller and more vulnerable than she really is. Indeed she uses this trapping mechanism on both her father ("I want to go with mummy") and Granny ("Oh, go on Gran tell me, *please* Gran"). Rosaleen's father

calls her "pet", as in "There, there, pet," responding to the "virtuous little lamb" in her nature. Parents, we are reminded, like to see their children as repositories of innocence.

It can be argued that in noting and assessing the extent of her power, Rosaleen is beginning, as it were, to develop the Juliette side of her nature. She sees, and carefully notes, for example, her father "looking at her" at the dinner-table. Then in the church she smiles provocatively at the village boy and encourages his interest. Later when the boy shows an amorous interest in her, Rosaleen encourages him and practices her power over him by first making him come to her, and then by throwing a bucket of water over him and chanting "wolfie, wolfie, you can't catch me". Later again, on the walk, after allowing herself to be kissed, Rosaleen runs away from the boy, and watches him searching for her. She has, by now, become the active and powerful one in the scene, climbing and reaching the top of the tree from where the significant eagle flies its nest. In embracing her masculine side, she has taken control, and looking down on the boy from above, defines for herself, symbolically, their relative positions.

This episode in the forest — her walk with the village boy — is arguably one of the most important episodes in the film for it is here that Rosaleen begins to realise fully her power over men, and finally makes the choice that she will not be a passive creature, a born victim, but an active winner in life. The colour is expressive here as Rosaleen, cloaked in red to signify menstruation and the coming of adulthood, strides confidently through the forest. As she climbs the tree the music is triumphant, spelling out her achievement. We are still unsure, however, if she will go too far and become a Juliette character as the signifiers in *the mise en scene* are multiple and the significance is not immediately clear. We, as viewers are forced, to be "interpretative" and to live in the fantasy and enjoy the sensuous colour and wonderful music.

On reaching the eagle's nest Rosaleen finds, not birds' eggs, but hatching human eggs, one of which she takes home to her mother where we see the little image weeping as if knowing its ultimate Sadeian fate — that of being condemned to death by virtue of its birth. It could be argued that her acceptance of the hatched eggs diminishes the possibility of the totally balanced and unified Rosaleen. As Carter tells us, it is in the acceptance of the principle that "motherhood" is the whole aim of her life that sites a

young girl's sense of worth in her reproductive function alone, ignoring the other parts of her character. In these happenings, therefore, we can still see a possible return to "lambhood" for Rosleen. Our first visual clue that this is not about to happen, however, comes when Rosaleen applies her lipstick and considers her 'self' in the hand-mirror thus uniting "subject" and "object". The viewer gets a strong impression at this point, that momentarily and almost imperceptibly, she looks back at him through the mirror, challenging him in a defiant and knowing manner. She knows she is being watched.[16]

After she returns to the village and the men go out on the wolf-hunt, we see Rosaleen in the house with her mother, with whom she chats intimately. After having patiently endured her mother's bathing of her — the expression on her face showed she patently disliked this ritual — she asserts her newly found confidence by telling her mother a story. Both the story itself, and the fact that she tells it, *establish* the idea of Rosaleen as a survivor — a liberated and independent being, fast approaching maturity.[20]

Rosaleen's story is about a typical "Juliette" character who has been rejected by an aristocrat, and who takes her revenge for this rejection by arriving at his wedding and turning all those present into wolves. The woman, although pregnant, displays obvious masculine traits, bowing to the servants at the end of the scene in a masculine way, for example, instead of curtseying in a female manner. Moreover, Rosaleen tells her mother at the end of her story that the Juliette character made the wolves come and sing to her every night thereafter; when questioned by her mother as to where the pleasure lay in that, Rosaleen replies: "The pleasure would come from knowing the power she had". As this last comment is made we see the "Juliette" of Rosaleen's story high up in a tree, with her baby in a cradle hanging from a bough, humming the well known nursery lullaby "Hush-a-bye-baby on the tree top. . ." The discordant music once again establishes the content: the message is that the baby is in danger, and we recall that Carter said of Juliette: "She has exchanged motherhood for domination"(Carter, 1979, p.113).

It is interesting to contrast the treatment of the "new" Rosaleen depicted in this scene with the voyeuristic character of the opening shots of *The Company of Wolves* previously discussed (Section 4.2). It could be argued here too, that Jordan's camerawork encourages the "submission fantasy" of most men "objectifying" Rosaleen for himself

and for the male viewer. A deeper reading connecting it with Carter's aims, however, reveals this not to be the case. It is evident now from Rosaleen's story and her confident attitude that she is no longer a helpless "object", and will never be a screen goddess in the traditional Hollywood sense — a martyr to the viewing public. She has embraced the "predatory" side of her nature which empowers her and we see that she has truly realised her*self*, appearing womanly and not childlike.

Indeed, this whole *mise-en-scene* exudes an equality of the sexes: we realise that Rosaleen, both as herself in the role and as the actress (Sarah Patterson), *knows* about voyeurism and the male gaze. She tosses her hair seductively while walking slowly across the room with the air of one who is proud of her appearance and who knows she is being watched. There is a tension created here by the fact that even though Rosaleen does not look directly into the camera, she seems well aware of it. Now female viewers have a positive role model, a self-assured, free woman and one who refuses to be used by the camera except in so far as it pleases her. Neither the actress playing Rosaleen, nor Rosaleen the character, denies her femininity, but *celebrates* it with her towel around her, exposing her shoulders, and exhibiting what she *wants* to exhibit. This is shown to be healthy; the exhibition takes place in front of Rosaleen's mother, and the "Dutch genre" *mise-en-scene* with its soft lighting spells out morality. The male viewer, at this point, sees a beautiful woman, but one who is in control of her situation, and as such he is not allowed to indulge in voyeurism which demands the "helplessness" of its victim.[17]

Final evidence of the emergence of Rosaleen's "masculine" side comes at the end of the film when she has asserted herself and shot the huntsman. She has refused to be afraid: ". . .she knew she was nobody's meat" (Carter, 1996, p.219) and has therefore gained advantage over the libertine wolf. In the face of her fearlessness,[21] we see that he is the one who is "objectified", being semi-naked and without any control over his situation.[22] This loss of control is visually emphasised in a sexual manner.[23] As he writhes and thrusts in orgasmic pain and ecstasy, existing within himself alone, only part of his body is shown, in close-up: he is reduced to the abstract normally associated with the main female protagonist. His objectification is filmically enhanced by denying him a three-dimensional space in which to exist. We see him through our own eyes — the camera

— but also, only for the second time in the film, we see him through Rosaleen's eyes in several point-of-view shots as the camera points downward at him as he undresses and metamorphoses.[24] Rosaleen is now in complete control and has unified her*self*; she is therefore both "subject" and "object", a union portrayed by the different vantage points. Once again this fact is underlined, so to speak, by her telling of a story.

Thus we see that Rosaleen has faced the challenge of the Sadeian dichotomy. The two extremes of her choices as to which direction she should go in life are precisely those that are stereotyped by de Sade's Justine and Juliette. In their case neither character managed, by uniting both sides of their natures, to embrace and unify them*selves* as whole persons; thus they both remained negative (objects), either passive, martyred, feminine (Justine) or active, predatory, masculine (Juliette). But in the case of Rosaleen, shown to be aware of the *potential* for both extremes in her nature, it becomes evident that she will consciously choose a path between the two.

4.5 *A Tale of Two Endings*

The Company of Wolves clearly has two quite separate endings — the end of Rosaleen's dream, which corresponds with the end of the original Carter story, and the end of the film itself. And just as the Carter/Sadeian theme dominates the beginning of the film, so it does the closing scenes, helping to make sense of the myriad of contradictory signifiers and multiple ambiguities.

In the last few scenes of the dream, the moral of the allegory is clarified. We observe Rosaleen now as a complete person in whom both sides of her character, those of Justine and Juliette, are wholly united. We see, for example, that after she has shot the wolf she immediately feels sorrow for the wounded creature, and cries. In these two contrasting actions, she shows that she is in touch with both sides of her nature, and in being so, is a mature woman. As a mature woman she is ready for a sexual relationship — which although not spelt out in the film, is implied by intimacy: Rosaleen nuzzles up

to the wolf, for example, strokes his hair, and grooms the creature with obvious pleasure before her own metamorphosis.

That Rosaleen is now a sexually free and independent adult woman is visualised by the fact that she — as a metamorphosed wolf — is different from the rest of the village folk; she has moved on, so to speak, having not only *lain down* with the wolves but learned to *run* with them also. Members of the old regime, in their traditional costumes, see the sexually free woman — signified by Rosaleen's new costume of lupine hair — as a "monster", as a threat to their society and patriarchal structures. Her father, indeed, acting on what he sees with his eyes — as he did earlier after the wolf-hunt, saying later "seeing is believing" — raises his gun to shoot her in an impulsive and almost uncontrollable need to eliminate this "other".

Rosaleen's metamorphosis to a lupine state is significant and virtually repeats the end scene in *The Tiger's Bride*, another story by Carter in *The Bloody Chamber*. Having changed into a wolf, she is *free*; she is removed from her human species, and consequently from the necessity of being economically dependent on either her father or her future husband. This makes her immeasurably different from the other women of her village. As a wolf she can reject marriage and deny men ownership of her. She has chosen her own lover, and by doing so denies men the opportunity of treating her as a chattel. Her emancipation is shown by the fact that she jumps through the window and, unlike her sister Alice, runs *with* the wolves. She is Carter's ideal woman - "A new kind of being unburdened with a past" (Carter, 1997, pp.40,41).

Unlike Rosaleen's father, her mother *sees* through the outward appearances and recognises, not a wolf, but an emancipated and sexually mature daughter. Although the mother is visibly shocked, she sees Rosaleen, complete with the symbolic and metaphorical cross and chain[25] around her neck, as no threat to society, and possibly, even, as its ultimate redeemer. Rosaleen has obviously not completely abandoned the saintly side of her nature: Although she looks like a wolf; she is patently a mature and sexually free adult of an entirely new species of women — those who are manifestly in touch with their whole beings. Rosaleen is, as such, an example of liberation to her future children.

We are already aware from a previous scene, that the old regime of Granny's *grand narrative* is coming to an end. Her ideals have been shown to be hollow and of no substance by the fact that her head, having been chopped of by the wolf was shown to be empty and made of hollow porcelain. Rosaleen, by her symbolic metamorphosis, shows that she has refused to abide by the rules of the old patriarchal order and, as a wolf, represents the beginning of a new era of equal status for women.

Finally, the wolves bound in a pack towards the house, and enter by crashing through the painting which occupies a high position on the wall, thereby destroying the old portrait of the mythical, virtuous woman. In this *new age* reality at the end of Rosaleen's dream, it is impossible to gauge the gender of the individual wolves, and so any differences between them are diminished; male and female unite in a Utopian ideal of equality, and the victorious outcome is echoed in the loud, powerful and triumphant music. Rosaleen has done precisely what de Sade had urged her kind to do — ". . . Ah, break those bonds: nature wills it"(Carter 1979, p.37). But here the breaking of the bonds is not to de Sade's advantage; it is to that of womankind. Rosaleen is shown to have achieved a complete unity; an assertive 'self' that is not afraid to use her female insight and emotion. Justine and Juliette in Rosaleen are one, and in her development to maturity as an autonomous and sexually active woman, Rosaleen has become the perfect role model for the female viewer.

As with the entire narrative of *The Company of Wolves*, the "real" ending is intentionally ambiguous and having multiple signifiers, can be read in many different ways. It could be argued simplistically as a young girl waking up from a nightmare. Or one could argue as Paul Taylor does in his interview with Jordan in *The Monthly Film Bulletin* (Taylor & Jenkins , 1984, 265) that it is an ". . . awakening. To desire; and its dangers. To knowledge; and its powers". Or one could take Jordan's explanation that, "the final scream and the poem. . . with the girl's voice to strengthen the ambiguity" is a "liberation in a way" (Taylor & Jenkins , 1984, p.266) — a triumph of liberation over repression.

Once again, however, being mindful of the Carter/Sadeian content of the film helps us to clarify the meaning. It is asserted that despite Jordan's wishes to the contrary,[26] the film proper ends on a pessimistic note. Utopia proves to be a short-lived state. A wolf

breaks through the glass window shattering Rosaleen's dream, just as the title of the book on her pillow (*The Shattered Dream*) had foretold to us would happen. She screams in terror, and in "real" life seems very much afraid, unlike the "ideal" self she has left behind her in her dreams.

We can assume that Rosaleen's "fear" once again identifies her as a "lamb", and will be her downfall unless she learns quickly (a parable to us all). The "real" Rosaleen, it seems, has much to learn; the road to maturity is all before her still, as is the coalescence of Justine and Juliette in her "real" character. In seeing herself as a free woman in her dream, Rosaleen has envisaged herself in the way the villagers did, as something of a monster. In returning to reality, she screams at this 'monstrous' picture of herself, and we realise that she is not yet, as it were, out of the woods. The significant gloom of the house itself, which is overgrown and covered in symbolic bindweed, as if it existed in the thick of a forest, visually emphasises this fact.

Finally, we hear the Charles Perrault poem that Jordan says he always wanted to use:

> *Little Girls, this seems to say,*
> *Never stop along the way.*
> *Never trust a stranger friend;*
> *No one knows how it will end.*
> *As you're pretty, so be wise,*
> *Wolves may lurk in every guise;*
> *Now, as then, 'tis simple truth:*
> *The sweetest tongue, has sharpest tooth.*

With this poem, the film ends on a signifier. It can justify almost *any* theory on the meaning of the film, from the notion that it is a simple fairy-tale to the ideas asserted in this thesis that it is a work of significant meaning when deconstructed in the Sadeian context. The words *Now, as then* appear to be the most significant in the passage; they make us aware that the need to be vigilant is still with us, and the final line implies that the emerging liberation and emancipation of women may find enemies in places it would least expect. Perhaps, even, as in Rosaleen's dream, they may assume the guise of our grandmothers, who often still espouse the old order.

5. Conclusion

This thesis has asserted that the content of *The Company of Wolves* film is based, not simply on the short story of the same name by Angela Carter, but on the entire body of her early work, both fiction and non-fiction. We have seen that Carter was, in her own words, a "demythologiser". She was of the view that the subservient position of women in the modern world could be traced to a large extent to "myths" — such as "suffering" motherhood, the "virtuous" woman, and the placing of the female, as a goddess on a pedestal — and she saw these myths as harmful and imprisoning, constructed by a patriarchal society whose institutions had both instigated them and kept them alive for the benefit of the male. She was of the view that these institutions — the Christian Church, or the Hollywood studio system, for example — promulgated such myths by claiming them as immutable facts. They gained the trust and compliance of women, who in accepting all they were told by these monistic institutions, helped in their own enslavement.

We have seen that many of Carter's writings were concerned with the philosophies of the Marquis de Sade, with whose ideas Carter often found herself in unexpected agreement. She explored ways of using de Sade's philosophies, obviously not for his own intended pornographic purposes of subjugating women, but in furtherance of her own mission in life — the liberation and emancipation of women and the destruction of the myths by which they were imprisoned.

We have noted also that a willingness to collaborate has been a constant feature of Neil Jordan's career as a film director, despite the fact that he himself is a talented writer. We have concluded that in his film-making the story-line, as such, is ultimately less important to Jordan than it is to many other directors, being just one element of a very wide palette, including camera-work, lighting, costume, settings, colour and music, which he draws on to fulfil his total vision of the film as a complete work. It has been argued that Jordan is more concerned with realising this vision than with getting across his own message on the screen, and this has strengthened our conviction that the content of *The Company of Wolves* is primarily that of Angela Carter's. We have further argued that this content largely reflects Carter's own obsession with de Sade's ideas,

and became an important element in her personal crusade against the subjugation of women and their negative role in history.

We have noted that the film is a demonstration, and a criticism, of the hierarchical structure of society which places women in a subservient position to men, and both subject to the Church and its moralistic teachings which occupies the very top position. Or as de Sade has put it: "When the strong wished to enslave the weak, they persuaded them that a god had sanctified the chains with which they overwhelmed them; and the oppressed victims, stupefied by their distress, believed everything their masters wished to tell them" (De Sade, 1996, p. 41). *The Company of Wolves* exploits these Sadeian concepts of the domination of the weak by the strong, using the metaphors of carnivores and herbivores, wolves and lambs, predators and victims, and uses de Sade's idea of good and evil being immutable and existing separately in each individual.

Against this background, we see the character of Alice as the archetypal lamb. It has been argued, however, that at various stages in the development of the adolescent Rosaleen, qualities of *both* de Sade's archetypal characters can be seen — the passive, lamb-like virtuous victim-martyr Justine, and the ruthless predatory, almost masculine Juliette. We have seen that Carter argues in the film that good and evil *can* exist together in the same person, and that it is in their synthesis that Rosaleen's survival, as a whole woman, must lie. We see Rosaleen consider both extremes of the Sadeian dichotomy and eventually choose the middle way, becoming a fully emancipated and free woman. Carter argues that the "lamb" can only survive, and be free, if it learns to *run* with the wolves rather than *submit* to them and be eaten.

We have seen also that many other issues are addressed in *The Company of Wolves*. It highlights voyeurism in its efforts to provoke thought in the audience, creating a tension between the camera — the eye of the spectator — and Rosaleen herself, in her awareness of the camera at various stages of maturity. The film has been deliberately and skillfully structured by Jordan in such a way as to establish the Carter content and to make it a denunciation of pornography. The multi-dimensional, multi-layered, interpretative approach defies the customary two-dimensional portrayal of the screen

female who is normally reduced to that of a negative "object", just a shadow of the more usual male hero.

We see that the leading role in this film is played by a female. Rosaleen is neither a virtuous and romantic girl who lives for the ideal of love according to the traditional Hollywood portrayal, nor yet a *femme fatale* who, as Carter has said, is incapable of love (Carter, 1997, p.351). Indeed, we have noted that there is no gratuitous use of women in the film at all; it is a cerebral exercise, aimed at being the antithesis of Hollywood, and it is, unusually, the biological clock and considered choices of the main female protagonist that move the story on, giving the female spectator, something positive she can identify with, and so allowing her to indulge her "subject".

The Company of Wolves, therefore, can be seen as a denunciation of the subjugation of women and of the monistic institutions that sought to force them in to submission. It tries, in a didactic manner, to encourage women to empower themselves by becoming aware of, and embracing, both extremes of their nature — masculine and feminine. It hopes to encourage them to *see through* the traditional myths handed down to them through the ages by both the men who created the myths and the women who were deceived into believing them. It also — although this has not been argued strongly in this thesis — promulgates the message that men also have been socialised into believing these myths, and that they, too, should embrace both sides of their natures. It is only when this has been accomplished by both sexes that a truly egalitarian society can be achieved.

The Company of Wolves hopes to inculcate a feeling of self worth in women. As Angela Carter herself has put it:

> If women allow themselves to be consoled for their culturally determined lack of access to the modes of intellectual debate by the invocation of hypothetical great goddesses, they are simply flattering themselves into submission (a technique often used on them by men). All the mythic versions of women, from the myth of the redeeming purity of the virgin to that of the healing, reconciling mother, are consolatory nonsenses; and consolatory nonsense seems to me a fair definition of myth, anyway. Mother goddesses are just as silly a notion as father gods. If a revival of the myths of these cults gives women emotional satisfaction, it does so at the price of obscuring the real conditions of life. This is why they were invented in the first place. Myth deals in false universals, to dull the pain of particular circumstances. In no area is this more true than that of relations between the sexes (Carter, 1979, pp.5, 6).

END

ENDNOTES

1 Carter said of herself: "I am in the *demythologizing business.*" (Carter, 1997, p.38).

2 The "myth" of motherhood was one that Carter hoped to destroy, since she believed it to be repressive. "Mother is in herself a concrete denial of the idea of sexual pleasure since her sexuality has been placed at the service of the reproductive function alone. She is the perpetually violated passive principle"(Carter, 1979, pp.123,124). Carter was influenced in this by the fact that she saw her own mother as being repressed in this way (See e.g. Carter, 1997, pp. 9,23,25,26,).

De Sade also wanted to dispel the myth of motherhood but, we assume, for his own very private reasons (Carter, 1979, pp.121, 76).

3 Examples of Carter using the terms "herbivores" and "lambs", and the opposites, "carnivores" and "wolves" or "tigers", and explaining the principle behind these terms, can be found throughout her works, e.g. in her autobiographical writings (Carter, 1997, pp.306, 453) and in (Carter, 1979, *passim* e.g. pp. 22,139,).

4 See Margaret Atwood's essay "Running with the Tigers" (Sage, 1994, p.117).

5 We can see an effective exploration by Jordan of this theme in his later film *Interview with the Vampire* (1994), where the problem comes to a head in the person of Louis.

6 It is interesting to note that the sister Alice — an embodiment in *The Company of Wolves* film of the virtuous Justine — did not feature in the original Carter story, which showed the Sadeian dichotomy in Rosaleen alone. This strengthens the possibility that Jordan may have been influenced to include her by filmic sources.

7 "Nothing matters but the music," comments Kraster in *The Red Shoes,* the sound track of which is expressive of the fantastic nature of the film.

8 ". . .it seems to be true that there are some human beings whom nature destines to live under the same conditions as wild beasts. Living hidden in their retreats, flying from men like the animals, what difference remains between man and beast?" (De Sade, 1996, p.34)

The mythologies surrounding "lycanthropes" may have come about in this way. Similarly, the "free woman" in a civilisation controlled by men was seen as a danger to the structure of society and so thought of as a "monster". Mary Magdalene in the Bible was a prime example.

See also Freud's essay, "Civilised Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness", (Freud, 1991, p.33).

9 "Carnal knowledge is the infernal knowledge of the flesh as meat," says Carter in *The Sadeian Woman* (p.141).

10 "Waste not want not" is a subtle and deliberately ambiguous phrase playing on the word "waste" and refers to the practice of eating faeces known as "coprophagia" (Carter, 1979, pp. 87, 140,). This practice, described in de Sade's writings, is used by the libertines as a means of controlling and subjugating women. It is exciting to them to them at first, then becomes addictive, and the more extreme their behaviour, the more extreme they need to become to achieve orgasm. Hence the phrase "Use it wisely".

11 The discussion of Reason which permeates the film is a further connection with de Sade, whose work, Carter tells us, is a comment on the culture of his time: "It is of this world of reason that Sade produces a critique in the guise of pornographic vision; his heroine, the terrible Juliette, can say, as a hero of Voltaire might: 'I have no light to guide me but my reason.' Yet rationality without humanism founders on itself." (Carter,1979, p.35)

Carter, as a female, resented being thought of as "irrational" (Carter, 1997, pp.38, 39). "I am indeed allowed to speak but only of things that male society does not take seriously. I can hint at dreams, I can even personify the imagination; but that is only because I am not rational enough to cope with reality." (Carter, 1979, p.5)

12 The film is set and acted as a theatrical drama, and the sets by Anton Furst are Surrealistic and fantastic (in the literal sense). The costume, and the exaggerated delivery of the lines by the characters, both suggest that they are purposely overacting their parts as they would in pantomime. For instance, the huntsman (Micha Bergese), when talking to Rosaleen on the path while circling her as if stalking a prey, over-plays surprise in both facial and vocal expression when she asks:

"You must know that the worst wolves are hairy on the inside?"

"Old wives tales," he answers, "peasant superstition. What! A bright young girl, a pretty, intelligent, young girl like you, believing in old wives tales?"

Carter was of the view that de Sade reduced his characters to sexual puppets. She also believed that there was a way of using pornography to further the cause of women; this she called "moral pornography". In this film, the authors echo de Sade by reproducing a theatrical setting and by emphasising the two-dimensionality of the characters, who are not played as "real" people. The authors are assuming the role of "moral pornographer", using pornographic reductionalist "form" to provoke questions in the spectator, and by so doing, hope to further the emancipation of women (See Carter, 1979, pp.6,18,19,20).

"Since all pornography derives directly from myth, it follows that its heroes and heroines, from the most gross to the most sophisticated, are mythic abstractions. . . Any glimpse of a real man or a real woman is absent from these representations of the archetypal male and female." (See Carter, 1979, p.6)

13 "You pay too much attention to your Granny. She knows a lot but she doesn't know everything," the mother tells Rosaleen.

14 We subconsciously recall the nature of a well. We remember that people take their refreshment from a well, the water of life, but never give anything back to it.

15 See the discussion on the reductional nature of pornography in Carter, 1979, (pp.3-27) and footnote 12.

16 Carter felt strongly that the "image" of women on the screen was that of the "sacrificial lamb". Her novel *The Passion of New Eve* is almost wholly concerned with this subject. Again, in *The Sadeian Woman,* she discussed the "suffering martyrdom" of the screen goddess, Marilyn Monroe and described the cinema thus: "In the celluloid brothel of the cinema, where the merchandise may be eyed endlessly but never purchased, the tension between the beauty of women, which is admirable, and the denial of the sexuality which is the source of that beauty but is also immoral reaches a perfect impasse. That is why St. Justine became the patroness of the screen heroine" (Carter, 1979, p. 60). "She sells a perpetually unfulfilled promise. . . she is raped by a thousand eyes nightly." (Carter, 1979, p.67)

In both *The Passion of New Eve* and *The Sadeian Woman* Carter writes of the tension between the adult sexuality of the screen goddess and her child-like vulnerability. In *The Company of Wolves* this is demonstrated by the "objectification" of Rosaleen, and the intentional confusion it causes in the male spectator.

17 In her attack on de Sade, Carter asserts that "voyeurism" is closely connected to pornography. "Voyeurism" and "objectification" are also inextricably linked in *The Company of Wolves*, being highlighted in several ways, not least by the treatment of the image of Rosaleen, as discussed in the body of this text. Both Laura Mulvey in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (Mulvey, 1985, p.803) and Ann Kaplan in "Is the Gaze Male?" (Kaplan, 1983, pp.23-35) have addressed the issues of "scopophilia", "voyeurism" and the "male gaze" in the cinema.

18 It is interesting to relate Alice's losing consciousness to Carter's comments on the incestuous and diabolical treatment of the "mother" by the daughter Eugenie in de Sade's novel *Philosophy in the Boudoir*. The mother's inability to help herself out of the situation, nor yet to allow herself, by reason of her virtue, to take pleasure in it, is similar to Alice's predicament: ". . . Madame de Mistival must deny responsibility even for her own responses. She will experience sexuality like a theft from herself." and "She cannot be corrupted into the experience of sexual pleasure and so set free." (See Carter, 1979, p.128)

19 That one should "run with the wolves" is the overwhelming point of Carter's allegorical work *The Bloody Chamber* and it echoes de Sade's analysis of the "realistic" way to encounter life which he expounded in *Justine or the Misfortunes of Virtue* (de Sade, 1996, pp.41-45). Margaret Atwood supports this assertion in her essay "Running with the Tigers" (Sage, 1994, p.117).

We can see that the authors highlight the Christian Church's endorsement of the patriarchal dominance of metaphorical carnivores over herbivores, or men over women. Later in the film, the sermon in the church — a reading from Isaiah Ch.11, 6-8 — advocates that "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb".

20 We note that only adult females tell stories in *The Company of Wolves*, and also that de Sade's Juliette tells stories. Carter writes about this story-telling function in *The Sadeian Woman,* and draws our attention to *The Hundred and Twenty Days of Sodom*, a pornographic tale in which four prostitutes — Juliette included — are taken to Paris by four libertines for a holiday. They are imprisoned in Castle Silling, and only survive the experience because they each tell a story: " . . .they know how to utilise the power of the word, of narrative, to save their lives. The continuity of their narratives protects them from the discontinuity of death." (Carter, 1979, p.81) The function of Rosaleen's story-telling at this point, therefore, is to establish her firstly as a mature adult female, and secondly as a survivor.

21 At several points in the film we are made aware of Rosaleen's fearlessness. She takes the knife with her on her journey through the woods, for example, and rejects protection from the village boy; "I've got this to protect me" she says, holding up the knife which was symbolically bigger than his. The knife is seen as her own symbolic penis.

22 More frequently, it is the woman on a film who is in this situation. The male viewer here has no positive model with whom to identify

23 His metamorphosis is visually symbolic of an erection, with his body tissue expanding into a phallic wolf-like form.

24 The first point-of-view shot occurred when Rosaleen "looked" at her dead sister in the coffin. There, Alice is dead and totally passive and negative — an object, a body without a soul; the live Rosaleen could not possibly be less active than the dead Alice. As the film has progressed Rosaleen has empowered herself and refused to be a victim, even a screen martyr. The camera deserts the male spectator's usual privileged position in this scene, as it looks *up* at Rosaleen in the werewolf's point-of-view shot, and *down* at him in Rosaleen's. This is symbolic of Rosaleen's power in the scene — a power she has grasped by being unafraid. The female spectator, at last, has a positive role model.

25 The cross and chain, on this occasion, signifies the "new woman" — the sexually free and mature woman that was born of the 1960s sexual revolution. Carter described 1968 as "year one" (Carter, 1997, p. 37), and here draws an analogy with Christ, the Redeemer, who was born in what we now call AD 1. Rosaleen's *metamorphosis* provides a further metaphor with Christ and his redeeming function; the core of Catholic doctrine is the belief in *transubstantiation* and its redeeming property.

By her emphasis on metamorphosis in *The Company of Wolves*, Carter challenges the eternal and the unchanging: can women not fulfil themselves, she asks, and at the same time pose no threat to civilised society?

26 "I didn't want the film to end with the girl under threat; it's a liberation in a way." (Taylor & Jenkins , 1984, p. 266)

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