



A University of Sussex PhD thesis

Available online via Sussex Research Online:

<http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/>

This thesis is protected by copyright which belongs to the author.

This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the Author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the Author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Please visit Sussex Research Online for more information and further details

In Search of Marjorie Bowen

By

Anjanette Nicola Harry

Doctor of Philosophy English
Literature

University of Sussex

December 2017

This thesis is about the British writer Gabrielle Margaret Campbell Long (1885-1952) who wrote 150 novels from 1906-1952. She wrote historical romances, gothic fiction, plays, short stories and non-fiction books under various pseudonyms such as Marjorie Bowen, Joseph Shearing, George R. Preedy, Robert Paye and John Winch. Her work was extremely popular during her lifetime both in England and abroad. Several of the Joseph Shearing mystery thriller novels, novels based on true-crime events and the novels produced under the George Preedy pseudonym were adapted into films. She gained a great deal of critical acclaim and the reviews of her work were extremely positive. Her opinion was much sought after when she was alive and she regularly lectured on art, history and wrote various opinion pieces. Yet today, Marjorie Bowen, a late Romantic writer essentially, is largely forgotten and unrecognised by literary scholarship. The thesis, *In Search of Marjorie Bowen*, while exploring a carefully chosen selection of Marjorie Bowen's various works, examines and discusses why this author is worthy of study and modern critical attention, while also examining the reasons for her undeserved obscurity. Particular attention is paid to the historical, gothic and supernatural genres within a romantic framework. This thesis has four main aims in regards to the study of Marjorie Bowen's work: To discuss Bowen's abilities as a writer, including in comparison to other authors, to consider the vast extent of her imagination, to determine why she disappeared from our literary picture and to re-establish her as an important writer worthy of academic consideration and attention. This thesis seeks to revive interest in the work of an extraordinary writer.

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature:.....Anjanette Nicola Harry.....

Date:31st December 2017.....

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	1
Introduction	
Marjorie Bowen and Patent Obscurity	5
 Part One: The Historical	
1. Trials and Tribulations: Religion versus spirituality in <i>The Viper of Milan, The Cheats, The Triumphant Beast, God and The Wedding Dress</i> and <i>The Veil'd Delight</i>	21
2. Redefining Elegance: Marjorie Bowen's perspective on Regency and Nineteenth Century Dandyism in <i>The Rake's Progress</i>	46
3. Murdering Villain or Heroic Knight? A critical perspective on the Life of Richard III in Marjorie Bowen's <i>Dickon</i>	58
4. Une Sombre Histoire: Love, murder and betrayal during the French Revolutions in <i>The Third Estate</i> and <i>Forget-Me-Not</i>	71
5. The Opposing Forces of Otherness: The cultural and historical significance of being different in <i>General Crack, The Rocklitz</i> and <i>Because of These Things</i>	87
6. The Historical and Occultic Blend: The examination of Sorcery, Satanism and Witchcraft in <i>Black Magic</i> and <i>The Poisoners</i>	101
 Part Two: The Supernatural	
7. The Terrible Truth: The exploration of True Crime, the Supernatural and Gothicism in Joseph Shearing's <i>The Crime of Laura Sarelle</i>	115
8. Vengeful Ghosts and Haunting Traditions: A critical perspective on Marjorie Bowen's Ghost stories.....	146
 Part Three: The Historical Supernatural	
9. Communing with Spirits: Marjorie Bowen's contribution to the Alchemy tradition in <i>I Dwelt in High Places</i>	166
 Conclusion.....	186
<i>Bibliography</i>	196

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to my supervisor Professor Norman Vance at the University of Sussex for his relentless support, exceptional inspiration and encouragement. I wish also to thank the staff at the British Library and The London Library for having such an extensive collection of the Marjorie Bowen books, some of which have been difficult to locate elsewhere. I also owe a great deal of thanks to the Beinecke Library staff at Yale University for their assistance in helping me to acquire and examine the Marjorie Bowen research materials, all of which have been a valuable addition to my thesis.

Introduction

Marjorie Bowen, birth name Gabrielle Margaret Campbell Long, was born in Hayling Island, Hampshire, in 1885 and died in her London home in 1952. A possessor of four other pseudonyms, Joseph Shearing, George R. Preedy, John Winch and Robert Paye, with the mass of her work produced under the Marjorie Bowen pseudonym, she was extremely prolific in the first half of the twentieth century. Her works - novels, short stories, plays, biographies, essays, lectures and reviews - focused on the historical, the supernatural and the gothic and occultic genres, amounting to over 150 books published. Bowen had a life as interesting, disturbing and emotionally-fraught as her works and she once exposed every difficult circumstance in her autobiography *The Debate Continues*, speaking freely of her emotionally unstable mother, an alcoholic father who was eventually found dead on the street near their London home, a tyrannical invalid husband, her residences in England, Italy and France, childhood poverty, ghostly experiences and nocturnal fears.¹ This was an autobiography that was so poignant, touching and honest in its approach that it inspired various well-known peers of Bowen and fans of her work to write passionate and considerate letters in response as they empathised with her challenging existence which was affirmed by Jessica Amanda Salmonson in her online feature of Marjorie Bowen titled 'The Life of Marjorie Bowen, Mistress of The Macabre.'² While her fiction is not autobiographical it draws selectively on her own experience of nightmare and trauma.

Marjorie Bowen's historical romances, biographies, popular fiction and supernatural horror stories once captured the reading public, both in England and America with a firm grip. She captivated the literary critics from the age of twenty-one when her first novel, *The Viper of Milan*, was published. Several of her works were also adapted as films in the 1930s and Hugh Walpole,

¹ Marjorie Bowen, writing under her own name as Gabrielle Margaret Campbell Long, *The Debate Continues*, Surrey, The Windmill Press, 1939 p. 103, p.207

² <http://www.violetbooks.com/bowen.html>, last accessed September 2011

himself a leading novelist of the interwar period, once called her “the greatest historical novelist England had produced in a generation.”³ The leading novelist and critic Graham Greene paid repeated tribute to her work, which he had encountered in childhood, and he introduced the 1947 edition of *The Viper of Milan* as follows:

Imitation after imitation of Miss Bowen’s magnificent novel went into [my] exercise books – stories of sixteenth-century Italy or twelfth-century England marked with enormous brutality and a despairing romanticism...told with zest and cunning and an amazing pictorial sense...Goodness has only once found a perfect incarnation in a human body and never will again, but evil can always find a home there. Human nature is not black and white but black and grey. I read all that in *The Viper of Milan* and saw that it was so...But I think it was Miss Bowen’s apparent zest that made me want to write. One could not read her without believing that to write was to live and to enjoy.⁴

Marjorie Bowen and Graham Greene had several authorial interests in common. They both had a keen fascination for melodrama, psychic states, depression and the familiar versus the less familiar.

As mentioned previously, *The Viper of Milan* caused a stir within literary circles and in an article in *The New York Times* in 1906, it was claimed Marjorie Bowen had reinvented the historical novel with this first step into the publishing arena, “The historical novel had apparently died the final death, but Miss Bowen’s manner of approaching its difficulties would seem to promise a new era in its existence.”⁵ Yet despite the success and attention that Bowen’s work received in her lifetime, today Bowen is extremely neglected with very little literary criticism published on her works at all. She appears in a few anthologies, which is extremely limited when one considers the extent and breadth of her work during her lifetime. She appears in fairly brief reference-book entries in Jack Sullivan’s *The*

³ <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/3822799-twilight-and-other-supernatural-romances>

⁴ Marjorie Bowen, *The Viper of Milan*, London, Elliott & Thompson, 1906, p.8

⁵ *The New York Times*, ‘A Precocious Author, The Strange Old World Story Told By A Girl of Fifteen Years,’ November 17, 1906

Penguin Encyclopaedia of Horror and the Supernatural in 1986, Everett Bleiler's *The Checklist of Fantastic Literature* in 1948, Donald Tuck's *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy* in 1974, Neil Wilson's *Shadows in the Attic* in 2000, David Pringle's *St James' Guide to Horror* in 1998, Mike Ashley and William G. Contento's *The Supernatural Index; A Listing of Fantasy, Supernatural, Occult, Weird, and Horror Anthologies* in 1995, and Don D'Amassa's *Encyclopedia of Fantasy and Horror Fiction* in 2013. In *Gothic Novels of The Twentieth Century*, published in 1979, Elsa J. Radcliffe's opinion on Bowen's gothic novels was as follows, "Long has a certain style for historical-sentimental gothic that, for me, just doesn't come off. Maybe it's her lack of sympathy with any of her characters."⁶ This thesis will determine if this claim regarding Bowen's absence of compassion for her gothic characters is indeed accurate. It is clear from this list that much of the attention she has received is rather perfunctory. She also appears in Dorothy L. Sayers' *Great Short Stories of Detection Mystery and Horror* in 1951, Richard Dalby's *The Virago Book of Ghost Stories* in 2008 and Cynthia Asquith's anthology, *My Grimmest Nightmare* in 1935. Bowen merits a chapter in Professor Edward Wagenknecht's book, *Seven Masters of Supernatural Fiction*, which is one of the very few serious and nuanced critical studies of Bowen. Wagenknecht was an important and prolific critic in his day who specialised in nineteenth century literature and taught at various universities such as The University of Chicago, Boston University and Harvard University. This is evidence that she attracted serious critical notice in her own day and Wagenknecht's assessment of Bowen should be taken seriously.

Bowen was also discussed on a reviews of individual novels basis rather than more general critical appraisals in a number of journals such as *The New York Review of Science Fiction* established in 1989, the *George Herbert Journal* first published in 1977, *Clues: A Journal of Detection* in 2008 and the *Cimarron Review* established in 1961. Bowen is also mentioned in books such as *British Mystery Writers 1860 – 1919*, published in 1988, *Ghost Stories Volume 2* in 2000, *Tales From The Dead of*

⁶ Elsa J. Radcliffe, *Gothic Novels of The Twentieth Century; An Annotated Bibliography*, Metuchen, N.J., Scarecrow Press, 1979 (available online, last accessed 15th December 2017) p.130

Night in 2013, *The Mammoth Book of Modern Ghost Stories* in 2010, *Scare Tactics: Supernatural Ghosts by American Women* in 2009, *Ghosts in Popular Culture and Legend* in 2016, *Literary Ghosts: From Victorianism to Modernism*; *The Haunting Interval* in 2012, *The Oxford Book of English Ghost Stories* in 1989 and *Ghost Stories By British and American Women* in 2015. She is discussed in some detail online in Frances M. Malpezzi's critical piece on George Herbert titled 'The Parson Fictionalized: A Reprise' in 2005. Several websites dedicated to gothic literature mention her but with very little detail. I have yet to find an extended discussion of her historical novels in any critical book. There are also secondary texts that may be perceived at first to have some relevance to this thesis though they never actually mention Bowen. Part of Bowen's heyday is covered by *Forever England: Feminism, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars* by Alison Light, while some of Bowen's themes seem to be addressed in *Adventure, Mystery and Romance* by J.G. Cawelti, Peter Brooks's *The Melodramatic Imagination*, Roger Luckhurst's *The Invention of Telepathy 1870-1901* and *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and The Culture of The Modern* by Alex Owen. However, these studies have limited relevance to the thesis. Cawelti engaged with middlebrow literature and Alison Light looked at the themes of popular writing, the social *status quo* and what she calls 'conservative modernity', but the categories proposed do not really match or engage with the distinctiveness, the darkness and the underlying moral seriousness of Bowen's historical imagination. Peter Brooks claimed that 'excess', great tribulations, discord and conflict, were at the heart of romantic literature in the nineteenth century and this constituted what he described as the "melodramatic imagination."⁷ This takes us a little closer to Bowen, but the concept is perhaps more comprehensive than precise or useful.

This thesis will seek to examine and determine Marjorie Bowen's generic style, literary contributions, narrative conventions, subjects and contexts. Who is Marjorie Bowen? Is she purely a gothicist as indicated in a vast array of gothic and supernatural works or is she more of a historical

⁷ Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination – Balzac, Henry James Melodrama and The Mode of Excess*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1976, p. 81

pictorialist? As history is such a dominant feature within her thematic structures? Should she perhaps be considered as a technically inconspicuous, largely unknown and unacknowledged member of the modernist movement, considering she was so prolific during the early twentieth century?

While there has been little discussion of her work over the last fifty years, the original reviews of her novels are very positive. There were many reviews of her work (usually brief but appreciative) in countless publications both in Great Britain and in America, including *The New York Herald Tribune*, *The New York Times*, *The Birmingham Post*, *The New Yorker*, *The Daily Express*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Sphere*, *The Scotsman*, *The British Journal of Nursing*, *The Westminster Gazette*, *Morning Leader* and *The Daily Telegraph* to list just a few examples. Bowen was highly regarded in her own time, but she has had such little attention since then. Why this neglect?

Marjorie Bowen had a very credible and distinctive ability for dark storytelling as well as intriguing, creative and realistic perceptions of gender representations in her narratives. *The Independent* newspaper listed her as Number 22 in a compilation of 100 forgotten authors, published on 8th February 2009 in the culture section of the website and with an output of work totalling around 150 volumes it is extraordinary that a writer of such creative energy and dedication is so disregarded today while the gothic and historical fictions of many of her contemporaries remain as popular now as they were in the period in which they were writing. Perhaps her name simply became lost within the vast publishing arena?

Bowen had a great talent for transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary, the beautiful into the Burkean sublime, with all the unnerving associations of that term, and she was a masterful conveyor of human emotion, melancholy, pity and compassion. Her prose is lyrical, her narrative imbued with a rich fluidity, her dialogue realistic and effortless. She was admired and respected by her peers including Walter De La Mare, Mark Twain, Arthur Conan Doyle, Compton Mackenzie and

as previously mentioned, Hugh Walpole, amongst countless others who regularly praised her competence, her talent and unique dexterity. She inspired famous writers, including the previously mentioned Graham Greene, who wrote with passion regarding Bowen's influence on his work and mentions *The Viper of Milan* in his books *Travels with my Aunt*, published in 1969 and the 1951 essay *Lost Childhood*. Graham Greene was interested in this author and the literary scholarly world should be too. As well as inspiring Graham Greene, she was friendly with and regularly corresponded with Arthur Conan Doyle and Mark Twain. In addition to forming friendships with such well-known contemporaries, Bowen herself claimed she drew inspiration from Emily Brontë, the dark fantasies of E.T.A. Hoffmann which fascinated Freud as he theorised the uncanny, George Macdonald's *Phantastes*, Lewis Carroll and Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. The list of people who gave her creative stimulus is almost bewilderingly varied: it ranged from Marcus Aurelius to Marcel Proust. It also included Michael D. Montaigne, George Herbert, Samuel Richardson, Alfred Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, T.S. Eliot, James Joyce and Pablo Picasso. Such artistically important and highly literary influences can be perceived within her work.

Furthermore, Bowen was a well-known figure within the world of Journalism. Her book reviews were focused largely on books and themes from earlier days, including Gothic and historical texts. They were as varied as the 1824 *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* by James Hogg, *The Epochs of German History* in 1930 by J Haller, *Dumas, Father and Son* by Francis Gribble in 1930 and the 1794 *Caleb Williams* by William Goodwin. She wrote about Charles Maturin's *Melmoth The Wanderer* in a piece on 'Forgotten Bestsellers' which mentioned Lord Byron's *Manfred*, Don Juan's *The Wandering Jew*, Christopher Marlowe's *Faust*, Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, *The Monk* by Matthew Lewis, *Tristram Shandy* by Laurence Sterne and *The Cloister and The Heath – A Tale of The Middle Ages* by Charles Reade. Bowen's opinion pieces and essays include thought-provoking discussions, such as a consideration of the American historian of ideas Will Durant on superstition in the March 1932 edition of *The Occult Review* which also mentions Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*, an article entitled 'I Don't Believe in Shakespeare' which tied into the debate surrounding

William Shakespeare's true identity, 'The Value of Romance in Fiction,' 'Advice To Would Be Writers,' 'Neglected Modern Novelists,' 'Films From The Author's Point of View,' 'Historical and Romantic films,' and 'British Films and The Influences of Art On Life.' The opinion pieces on women included, 'Marriages and The Moderns,' 'Some Aspects of Modern Women,' 'Women In Politics,' 'Unconventional Women,' 'Should Wives Forgive,' 'Efficient Women,' 'Should Unmarried Women Have Male Friends,' 'Superfluous Women,' 'What Was The Best Period For Women,' 'Educated Girls And Marriage,' 'Marriages As An Ideal,' 'The Reaction Against Feminism,' 'Is Home Life Monotonous,' 'Women And Village Life,' 'The Modern Mother' and 'Women In Modern Fiction.' Some of the historical writings included 'Marie Antoinette Archduchess Of Austria Queen Of France 1755-1793,' 'The Story Of Marie Antoinette - Queen of France, Archduchess Of Austria, Daughter Of An Emperor, Sister of Another - One of The Most Dazzling Yet Tragic of Queens,' 'Little Poor Men Who Became Great Men,' 'The Amazing Story Of The Beautiful But Wicked Bianca Capello - Grand Duchess of Tuscany,' 'Men Who In Making Themselves Made History,' 'Luc De Clapiers - Marquis De Vauvenargues,' 'Emma Hart and Charles Greville,' 'Of The Apparition of Demons and Spectres and With What Courage Some Have Endured At The Sight Of Them,' 'William Hogarth,' 'Grace Endicott and James Hogg 1772-1835,' 'How Some Rogues Ruined A Queen – The Story of The Most Famous Scandal In Europe,' 'Of The Strange Ways By Which Murder Has Been Discovered,' 'Great Achievements,' 'Great British Queens A Tribute,' 'Charles Price 1430-1486,' 'Eleanor Of Aquitaine,' 'The Identity Of William Shakespeare – The Shakespeare Pictorial,' 'John Dee - Astrologer and Alchemist' and 'Some Famous Love Letters.' These are just a few notable examples of the type of articles and features that Marjorie Bowen produced and the above certainly signifies the strength and depth of Marjorie Bowen's researching capabilities. Much of the material found its way into her fiction. She was outspoken and radical in her opinions regarding gender relations, art, women, and the studies of the occult. This sets her apart from the 'conservative modernity' as Light calls it of many of the 'middle brow' and popular writers of the period, perhaps unwilling to alienate readers

by departing too far from established convention.⁸ Bowen's ideas were sought after for lectures, newspapers, journals and periodicals. The range of historical and literary knowledge demonstrated in the journalism indicates just how much serious background reading went into the fiction.

Marjorie Bowen's historical novels demonstrate a profound depth of knowledge regarding the past. As her miscellaneous journalism shows, she was extremely well-read, and her historical novels combine efficient and effective research and artistic vigour, as she tackled several different historical periods and famous historical figures and events. Marjorie Bowen's historical fiction is certainly of literary merit. This thesis will draw particular attention to her atmospheric evocation of mood, historical knowledge, talent for presenting dramatic intrigue, flair for characterization and the ability to translate all this into fiction that remains engaging and consistent throughout. There is much within her work to be discussed – the combination of the historical and gothic genres, gender roles, true crime and tragic romances. Her supernatural horror stories are also particularly effective and just as varied as her historical novels. Bowen learnt a lot about Gothic atmosphere from Radcliffe and Bowen's works continued the very best of these supernatural and gothic traditions. Her works too featured natural wildernesses and the Wordsworthian Romantic perception of the mysticism within nature, the disconcerting Burkean sublime, dreams, nightmares and their metaphorical representations as the gateway to hell, imaginatively similar to Dante's in its horror but without the intricate theological elaboration. Female victimisation is juxtaposed with dangerous and manipulative women, mental degeneration, eerie landscapes and dilapidated buildings. Bowen used the mysticism and the paranormal that lurked just beneath the surface of everyday life to examine human fears. While these traits come from the Gothic tradition and the Romantic movement she also uses a raw realism to help convey her insights into the mechanisms of human nature and human psychology. Bowen herself claimed in a private letter which was featured in the Wordsworth editions of the reprint of several of her short stories published in 2006, "I was a born storyteller and self-

⁸ Alison Light, *Forever England - Femininity, literature and conservatism between the wars*, Routledge, Oxon, 1991, p.10

educated. Neither of these facts was conducive to clear thinking. All that I read and heard I turned instinctively into narrative, suffused with a romantic temperament and coloured by dreams and sentiment.”⁹ This is the key of Bowen’s creativity and wide-ranging imagination but it modestly plays down her gifts of observation and psychological insight.

In this thesis, Marjorie Bowen’s understanding of the human psyche and how it was this understanding that enabled her to write such effective fiction will be discussed. In terms of the gothic, to understand Bowen’s understanding of human psychology and its capacity for fear, terror, horror, pain and its varying emotional responses to frightening situations in the period in which she was writing, I will be applying her work to gothic and psychoanalytic criticism that was written in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The crux of Sigmund Freud’s essay on ‘The Uncanny’ (1919) is the fact that Freud understood that a writer who had mastered the horror genre had important intuitive understanding of human psychology. Freud argued that the “uncanny” undoubtedly belongs to all that is terrible, to all that arouses creeping dread and horror, and this includes repetition, objects coming to life, childhood fears, superstition, recurrences, premonitions, the male and female psyche, repression, death, sorcery, evil intentions, the castration complex and madness to name a few of his examples. Although Freud relied heavily on *The Sandman* (1816), a story by the Prussian Romantic fantasist E.T.A. Hoffmann, to substantiate his argument, his example of the uncanny in narrative is the reader’s uncertainty regarding whether a character is human or otherwise. Marjorie Bowen’s short horror tale, *The Crown Derby Plate* in 1933 and her novel *Black Magic* in 1909 are perfect examples of this. The uncanny concepts of Sigmund Freud discussed in Nicholas Royle’s, *The Uncanny*¹⁰ greatly resemble those fictional ideas present in much of Bowen’s supernatural works. There is no way of knowing for sure whether the parallel with Freud is because Bowen read Freud or whether she intuitively developed a similar kind of insight.

⁹ Marjorie Bowen, *The Bishop of Hell and Other Stories*, Ware, Wordsworth Editions, 2006 p.8

¹⁰ Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2003, p.6

This thesis will examine Bowen's supernatural tales within the contexts of twentieth century Gothic, an area which I believe there is still much yet to be explored as Gothic studies have been dominated by the concepts that arose out of the 'original' Gothic of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This section on Gothic literature will also determine whether Bowen's macabre and eerie tales were born entirely out of the Gothic concept or if they are indeed explorations of the occult only.

With the ceaseless popularity of the gothic, supernatural and historical fiction genres throughout the Western culture, why is the work of Marjorie Bowen not more prominent and academically studied today? Avrom Fleishman in his historical fiction study, *The English Historical Novel*, published in 1971, argues historical fiction has been somewhat neglected to date: "It is the proliferation of popular sensationalism in historical guise that leads – then and now – to the exclusion of the form from sustained critical examination."¹¹ Although there are currently now more critical works available within this field than during Fleishman's time of writing in 1971, his claim that there was a distinct lack of critical discussion within the historical field and believing that the popular sensationalism in historical fiction ultimately led to this result may perhaps be one of the reasons for Bowen's obscurity today. Another reason for the obscurity may be because the Hungarian Marxist philosopher and critic Georg Lukács made such heavy weather of the historical novel and focused so heavily on Sir Walter Scott to the exclusion of later English writers. Is Bowen's historical work, so widely read during her lifetime, now dismissed as pure sensationalism? Was Bowen an accurate historical novelist or a popular sensationalist? With an extensive amount of Bowen's fiction published within the historical arena and validated by other famous authors, why are the names of Walter Scott, Baroness Orczy and Georgette Heyer more recognised today than Marjorie Bowen? Walter Scott is a well-known historical author and he is considered to have established historical

¹¹ Avrom Fleishman, *The English Historical Novel*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971 pp. xiv-xv

fiction to a degree, but there are obvious dissimilarities between Bowen and Scott, despite both writing within the same genre. Scott favoured British settings and his *Waverley* novels linked both the historical and the personal aspects of life. He focused more on, not just the important characters, but also those that were shaped by history. His novels often ended on a note of optimism after conflict, proposing themselves as historical fables indicating the looming possibility of reconciliation past, present and future in the face of harsh divisions. Bowen, however, with her exotic settings and important historical characters, purposefully tackled the darkness, the sinister and the evil within history. With such an adventurous authorial sense as this, one questions how and why Marjorie Bowen disappeared from our literary picture. This thesis has two main aims: to discuss Bowen's inherent literary ability and to re-establish her as both a popular and a literary writer worthy of academic consideration in the hope of reviving the work of this extraordinary writer and bringing her abilities to light once more. Given the practical impossibility of engaging with all 150 titles, this thesis will also attempt to select some of the best examples of the different aspects of her work and pay particular attention to the psychoanalytic approach to her characters.

It was the writer Angela Carter who famously claimed, "We live in Gothic times" in 1974.¹² Carter may have been referring to the continuing taste for the Gothic, the existence of the monstrous, the grotesque, the demonic and the uncanny in public life and international relations. We are living in an Anglo-American culture that greatly admires the gothic genre and the literature of the occult. The constant proliferation of vampirism, the supernatural, the paranormal and various tales of human evil on our cinema screens and in our literary world resonates strongly amongst us, determining the horror genre is still as strong today as it was of old. In any examination of gothic literature and popular literary culture in the twentieth century, Marjorie Bowen should and must be mentioned. She was an Edwardian successor to Victorian Gothic writers. Many famous works arose out of the Romantic and Gothic periods in England and America and in order to comprehend how

¹² Jerrold E.W. Hogle, *The Cambridge Companion To The Gothic*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p.285

Bowen modernised the gothic genre in England, it is important to determine how she used the classically old and turned it into the terrifying new for the twentieth century. The Gothic Novel first began in England with Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* in 1764, but it was Ann Radcliffe who made the gothic a socially acceptable genre in the 1790s and from this point onwards, the popularity of the Gothic Novel grew astronomically and produced notable works such as *Wuthering Heights* in 1847, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in 1890 and *Dracula* in 1897. The genre continues to steadily progress today with its literary branches of horror, occult, thriller and science-fiction thrown into the publishing mix. Andrew Smith observed that gothic literature is abundant with ambivalence and transgression as indicated by a variety of critical approaches such as psychoanalytical, historicist, feminist and post-colonial and he claims that "Despite the national, formal and generic mutations of the Gothic, it is possible to identify certain persistent features which constitute a distinctive aesthetic. Representations of ruins, castles, monasteries, monstrosity, images of insanity, transgression, the supernatural and excess, all typically characterise the form."¹³ The occult can be understood as esoteric knowledge of the supernatural realms. Alex Owen, in her book *The Place of Enchantment, British Occultism and The Culture of The Modern*, claims there was an insurgence of a belief in mysticism in the 1890s and this increase in occultic practices and beliefs determined a new spiritual age which included animism, philosophy, esoteric knowledge, Christian and non-Christian mysticism, learning, the divine, the meaning of life and the various dimensions within the universe, psychical research and in depth psychological studies.¹⁴ Owen, whose own book discusses the period from 1880 – 1914, also argues that this resurgence in occultic beliefs was sustained well into the twentieth century with occultic publishing companies, books, journals and famous writers who had dedicated themselves to writing about the occult.¹⁵ Bowen herself was writing about the occult during this period. She is not mentioned in Owen's book and her excursions into the occult are

¹³ Andrew Smith, *Gothic Literature*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2007 (available online, last accessed 3rd February 2012) p. 4

¹⁴ Alex Owen, *The Place of Enchantment, British Occultism and The Culture of The Modern*, London, The University of Chicago Press Ltd, 2004, p. 4

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 5-6

distinctive. They are more an imaginative extension of her Gothic romanticism rather than an alternative theology. Therefore, an examination of Marjorie Bowen's work against a few famous writers of the gothic and occult genres from the 1760s to the 1950s is necessary, not only in an effort to place her firmly within the category of the most popular writers but to discuss her fall into obscurity. I intend to examine and compare her work and literary reception to Algernon Blackwood and M.R. James amongst others. I also intend to compare her work to that of historical authors such as Baroness Orczy – the author of *The Scarlet Pimpernel* - and the Regency novels of Georgette Heyer. Particularly important in Bowen's work is the theme of gender alongside historical fiction. This thesis will draw upon the ideas of feminism and gender both within Bowen's own period and in the past.

As mentioned previously, there are very few critical sources available on Bowen, but it is crucial to mention here the argument presented by Robert Hadji in *The Penguin Encyclopaedia of Horror and The Supernatural*. Hadji praises several of Bowen's gothic works but does not register the full range of Bowen's works. This may possibly be due to the content constraints of an encyclopaedic volume. His short section discusses only a few select novels from Bowen's range but continues to assert her short stories are fundamentally better than her novels.¹⁶ This claim needs to be critically examined.

There is a strong sense of ambiguity in Bowen's work which sets her apart from many of the popular writers of her day. There is an open-endedness, a refusal to come to a judgement and this is because she had an awareness of complexity within society and gender relations. She wrote about interesting female characters who are strong women, but she also constructed strong male characters. Bowen was concerned to operate strictly within the limitations of the historical period which she was writing about. It is extremely hard to appropriate Bowen because her work is openended, even evasive regarding certain issues. The open-endedness having the effect of

¹⁶ Jack Sullivan, ed. *The Penguin Encyclopedia of Horror and the Supernatural*, New York, Viking Press, 1986, p. 50

accommodating and satisfying readers with all kinds of different sympathies and so helping to retain a large popular readership. Different characters in Bowen's narrative world made use of different historical contexts. Ambiguity is a key theme for discussion in the consideration of Bowen's work. There is a link here between ambiguity and mass readership and popularity as ambiguity may have appealed to a large and diverse audience.

Marjorie Bowen was a successful and popular author in her day. She regularly received fan mail from readers and peers alike, was invited to lecture, wrote regularly for newspapers, journals and magazines and published extensive biographies on famous figures throughout history. She was regularly reviewed and praised for the work that she created. This thesis is not concerned with her former popularity so much as with her distinctive contribution to English Literature specifically in relation to the gothic and romantic traditions. She wrote so many different pieces of work under so many different pseudonyms, that drastic choices have had to be made within this thesis. Her success with *The Viper of Milan*, her best-known work, at the age of twenty-one, was the starting point of the literary combination of romanticism, historical fiction, the supernatural and Gothicism that she was going to adhere to for a large part of her literary career until 1952. This imaginative consistency and the largely unchanging core concerns of her work make any attempt to chart development over time difficult and unhelpful. The same themes arise repeatedly within her work, despite the varying literary genres and period contexts she applied her to writing. So this thesis has adopted a thematic approach rather than a chronological one. The main themes to be explored are romanticism, the gothic, and the supernatural, together with ambiguity as a central strategy and effect. I will also discuss and draw upon Bowen's relation to some of the new departures in the literature of the day now loosely characterised as 'modernism.' A perceptive psychologist interested in consciousness, Bowen found ways of exploring issues that were contemporary and the psychological impact this had on her characters while leaving the new 'stream of consciousness' technique and conspicuously experimental writing to others.

I have concentrated on the novels that clearly define and are best placed to examine Bowen's contribution to the romantic, supernatural and gothic forms and genres. These novels also indicate the sheer range of Bowen's work. As previously stated, a thematic methodological approach in this case was preferred to a chronological study as there is no evidence of a neat narrative of development from rudimentary early work to refined later work or vice versa. Marjorie Bowen had an excellent beginning to her career with *The Viper of Milan* and she remained consistent until the end, although it seems fair to point out that she juggled too many pieces of work at the same time. Bowen was intuitively aware of the same modes of thought as the modernists, such as psychoanalysis for example, but she chose to examine such newly-formulated concerns in other ways that were not modernist which surely helps to account for the unwarranted neglect by literary critics and the academic establishment that has occurred since her death. Consequently, the thesis offers comparisons between Bowen and other better-known authors to attempt to understand the ways in which she differed from her peers and how she approached established literary genres in comparison to many other writers. There are also detailed accounts of the plots in Bowen's novels within this thesis as many of Bowen's novels are unfamiliar to a contemporary reading public.

The present discussion has been divided into three sections - the historical, the supernatural and the historical supernatural - in an attempt to categorise and define Bowen's creative interests. Part one explores Bowen's historical novels and seeks to determine her literary ability and stylistic technique within this genre. There are explorations of her historical and romantic fiction compared to the famous novels written by other better-known historical writers. The end of this section will contain a discussion of how Bowen's historical work incorporated a subtle gothic evocation of mood and melancholy as a precursor to the next section.

Part two examines Bowen's occult and supernatural fiction and discusses whether her work fits into the previous nineteenth century Gothic category or the Gothic Modernism category if at all and its place within the Freudian paradigm of the Uncanny. This will also include her use of the True

Crime genre within her occult/gothic/mystery fiction and comparisons of her work with that of both male and female authors. The section will end with a discussion of how Bowen used the roles of both men and women in her supernatural fiction and her authorial representations of gender, women and feminist ideas within the gothic framework as a whole. Bowen's fascination for gothic scenarios and realism, such as sanity being a farrago of alternate realities and the sense of a possible story created into a real one is apparent here.

Part three explores Bowen's historical gothic and the use of gender once again within this genre by using actual historical figures set within the backdrop of the ancient themes of magic, witchcraft, wizardry, angels, demons and mediumship. It delves into how Bowen was able to adapt to any genre within history and use it to her creative advantage. Even regarding such ancient themes, Bowen's use of gender, the role of the female within society and domesticity will help to determine whether Bowen herself was a feminist and whether her works fit into the category of Middlebrow and Feminine Middlebrow fiction.

Random sampling of Bowen's work could damage attempts to rebuild her reputation as an historical novelist. However, this thesis argues that despite the rather uneven quality of her vast output due to her financial constraints, continuous exhaustion and fatigue, troubling emotional difficulties and unusual circumstances within her life, she did in fact produce a substantial amount of admirable work. There are a great many strings to Bowen's authorial bow. She took key literary movements and historical moments and revived them for the modern age and she frequently engaged in literary and cultural debates. The novels and short stories to be investigated here, together with a couple of Bowen's biographies, are some of the best and most representative examples of Bowen's abilities.

Bowen merits the same kind of attention as the medieval and early modern writers who fascinated Professor Derek Brewer: "What kind of person wrote the poem, the play, the novel, the

essay? What forces acted upon them as they wrote? What was the historical, the political, the philosophical, the economic, the cultural background? Was the writer accepting or rejecting the literary conventions of the time or developing them or creating entirely new kinds of literary expression? Are there interactions between literature and the art, music, or architecture of its period? Was the writer affected by contemporaries or isolated?"¹⁷ These are important considerations.

Several of Bowen's novels were reprinted in the 1970s and they were popular for the cheap reprint paperback market. However, there is much more to be said about these novels. Her work was more profound than most popular fiction, arguably a durable contribution to English Literature.

¹⁷ Derek Brewer, *English Gothic Literature*, London, Macmillan Press Ltd, 1983, p. xi

Trials and Tribulations: Religion versus spirituality in *The Viper of Milan*, *The Cheats*, *The Triumphant Beast*, *God and The Wedding Dress* and *The Veil'd Delight*

This chapter introduces the gothic form as a mode of literary analysis within Bowen's work. It is important to begin with the gothic at the beginning of this thesis as the gothic was an established and continuing literary form that Bowen consistently and tirelessly contributed to throughout her career and reworked through varying fictional formats, whether it was the short story or the novel form. This chapter will also examine the religious ideas within Bowen's historical fiction while also touching upon the importance of romanticism and spirituality. Marjorie Bowen was not a religious novelist, unlike G.K. Chesterton whose career in fiction overlapped with her own, but she was extremely conscious of religion as a major factor in many people's lives. A writing career that began over a century ago, before the religious disenchantments caused by the first world war, would have been marked by awareness of religion as a consistent literary theme throughout the ages and the period in which Bowen was writing would certainly have been more religious than the twenty-first century. In Bowen's fiction, the links between romantic mystery, religion and certain aspects within our world not being quite as they seem are set within the framework of timeless impenetrable evil. Religious experience and romantic preoccupations of the historical novel appear to be at the forefront of Bowen's novels. Like her predecessor, Walter Scott, Bowen also pursues the sense of mystery embedded in folk tradition. Novels with a strong religious theme provide a solid introduction to a discussion of Bowen's imagination more generally as she was an avid writer of romantic considerations.

The exploration of Bowenesque themes here in relation to religion, spirituality, late romanticism, violence and cruelty also pertains once again to the gothic form and shows that the gothic in Bowen's work is an important mode of analysis and this thesis seeks to explore Bowen's contribution to this literary form as it will continuously refer to not only her contribution to such a

literary tradition but also how she reworked such genres and adapted them to her own personal sense of stylistic convention. Sigmund Freud, theorist of the uncanny and the unconscious, and Edmund Burke, theorist of the disconcerting sublime, are introductions to the study of Bowen and as such they have been used rather extensively within this thesis to examine the ways in Bowen used the gothic form but they do not specifically limit and define what she says. Burke's sublime is particularly useful in the analysis of visual culture but one of the aspects that limits the relevance to Bowen is that her imagination is more dramatic than visual. Also, Freud himself did not invent the uncanny, he theorized it. Bowen is operating in the older tradition of haunted consciousness which goes back well before Freud. Her Gothicism and romanticism have their roots in a pre-formulated and untheorized uncanny and subsisted in an ancient evil, a romanticism regarding a long-forgotten past.

Five novels will be discussed in this chapter as each novel adds an important ingredient to the literary perceptions and explorations of religion in Bowen's work. The novels that will be discussed in this chapter are, *The Viper of Milan*, *The Cheats*, *The Veil'd Delight*, *The Triumphant Beast* and *God and The Wedding Dress*.

The Viper of Milan was published in 1906. On the surface, the novel is an adventure story but there is a more profound meaning at its core. This tale of good and evil, love and death, tyrannical rule and uncontrollable power has a succinct yet extremely intense sense of evil, wrong-doing and ultimately, judgement and retribution imagined from a theological perspective. The novel is set in early Renaissance Italy and the story focuses primarily on Gian Visconti, the Duke of Milan. He is a cold, cruel and manipulative man and his greed and thirst for power and wealth propel the story. At the outset of the novel, Visconti has acquired the lands ruled by his enemy Della Scala, has kidnapped Della Scala's wife, Isotta D'Este, and is holding her captive in his castle. Della Scala, thought at the beginning of the novel to be dead, is actually alive and plots to destroy and kill Visconti. Due to betrayal, bad luck, various ill omens and unfortunate circumstances, Della Scala is

defeated and Visconti is victor but only for a short period of time as God's swift judgement is finally dealt towards the end of the novel and Visconti dies at the hands of one of his own men.

Gian Visconti is a destructive force, a wicked tormentor, and at times his insanity and the incessant battle with his inner demons is dramatically acute. The novel offers a rich array of characters and the scenes of Italy are atmospheric and descriptively written with a tangible passion. The representation and consideration of human nature is an avid exploration of Bowen's interest in the human psyche. This novel is essentially where Bowen's varied literary interests all began. In *The Viper of Milan* Bowen wrote,

The blackness seemed to whirl with faces and clutching, tearing fingers; he knew not where he was - he could see nothing – blackness and space – seemingly unbounded. Another flash revealed to him that he had drawn near that inner door – in the instant it was visible; it seemed to open and shut – quickly. Visconti fell back against the wall, and wrestled with his terrors as if they were some living thing, and again with savage teeth he bit into his flesh. But the floor was opening beneath him, opening into gulfs deep and still deeper, bottomless.¹⁸

Visconti's madness has a primitive tenor and the stormy lightning depicted here is aligned with his own nature. Violent flashes of white light and the dark pits scene is almost otherworldly, as if the very pits of hell are opening up to receive that which should never have been unleashed – Visconti himself. The "tearing fingers" seem to represent demonic souls clutching at his black heart and even darker mind. The animalistic nature of Visconti at times appears to shade off into a figure who is half man, half demon, characteristic of and anticipating some of the special effects of horror films. *The Viper of Milan* scrutinises the dominion, authority and the power of such excessive evil and the consequences of God's wrath and judgement on such an evil. The oppression, agonizing suffering and death that the other characters must suffer at the hands of a single tormentor, is a grim portrayal of the consequences that stem from the cruel misuse of extreme power.

¹⁸ Bowen, *The Viper of Milan*, p. 185

The Cheats, published in 1920, relates the story of an illegitimate son of King Charles II who might or might not have existed. This novel does not contain a preface, perhaps because Bowen and other historians are not sure if this son of Charles II really existed. It is possible that she conflated two stories within this novel regarding this man. Bowen normally gave some account of her sources for her historical novels but in this novel, there is not an explanation which was possibly deliberate due to the subject. Both the names Jacques Stewart and James De La Clough have two separate accounts of their possible existences and both are used here within this novel. They are names Bowen has given to characters who might or might not have existed which is associated with vague stories which she has made use of here in this novel. Many places in the county of Sussex even have associations with Charles' escape to France through Shoreham and there are various rumours of royal bastards left behind, rumours and debates which Bowen was keenly aware of.

Jacques Stewart, previously discerning himself to be of plebeian birth, upon discovering the truth surrounding his royal heritage, immediately becomes an important pawn subject to the wishes, desires, plots, irrationalities and bad behaviour of others. Jacques is sent by Charles II to Italy to train as a Roman priest and become an essential part of the Jesuits Order, so that he may come back to England after his training and acquire the post of Charles II's confessor. This is offered to Jacques with the promise of Charles' eventual public recognition of Jacques as his first-born son. Jacques unwillingly accepts this offer and ultimately his life and everything he used to hold dear before he discovered the truth surrounding his parentage becomes forfeit. Jacques is controlled by all in the novel, by the English Royalty, the Italian Jesuits, Eleanor Coningsby – the woman he thought he loved but whose ugliness, selfishness and greed harshly arose from her experience of becoming a courtier - her female innocence finally lost within a myriad of betrayal, boredom, frustration and disregard. Jacques is a pawn in the traitorous games played by royalty and courtiers and the novel is a reflective journey of his unhappiness, deep discontentment, the loss of his innocence and youth and the overwhelming pursuit of a sense of belonging and the elusive search for fulfilment and peace.

Subsequently, his religious belief is dim and obscure due to the engrained selfish misconduct he perceives within others and at times within himself.

The novel's subtitle as a romantic fantasy is indeed accurate as Bowen has woven the story around a tragic figure who has been dismissed by historians as a falsehood due to the fact King Charles II would have been just fourteen when he fathered this child, yet Bowen has kept the story alive surrounded by the backdrop of real historical figures. Jacques is an interesting character. He embodies romantic and existentialist perceptions and consequently, he is on a spiritual quest in the novel. His existential crisis is a reflection of his circumstances and the continuous questions that arise from his frustrating lack of knowledge surrounding his heritage and his maternal nexus. His search for love, fulfilment, religious truth and peace is thwarted at every turn in the novel by those around him and also by himself. His loneliness and his isolation are severe. Bowen wrote,

Dead indeed where the Virgilian glories, as one with the dust, as the bones of the great poet himself, resting in the magic castle by the sea. No dryad looked from the branches of the dark pines, no faun's footstep caused a rustling in the dry grass, no wan form of nymph ever broke the flashing waters of the bay – only in the lonely winds that blew from the channels of shining sea, between the islands and the mainland, did he sometimes catch what seemed like the last faint echoes of the dirge of Pan.¹⁹

Jacques despises the undertakings of people using religion to suit their selfish acts and exploitations and he has a detached critical view of religion because he is outside of it which is similar to that of the bastard Edmund in Shakespeare's *King Lear*. Jacques is like an author surrogate as he consistently perceives the unremitting duplicity that is around him. He refers to everyone in the novel as a cheat because they all use religion to suit their own needs; his for revenge and to advance socially, his father's because it suited him to have his son in his life without having to publicly acknowledge his paternal link and the Queen of Sweden for pride and personal ambition.

¹⁹ Marjorie Bowen, *The Cheats*, London, W. Collins Sons & Co Ltd, 1920, p. 272

Conversely, once Jacques truly accepts God into his heart and is finally open to receive his true-life purpose, his faith in the divine is restored. Certainly there were hints of this conviction and belief in the novel prior to this recognition, for example, his contentment inspired by natural surroundings and his appreciation of nature's beauty. This is similar to the portrayal of the poet George Herbert in Marjorie Bowen's short story *Holy Mr Herbert*. The perception that it is contentment and peace in nature a palpable tranquillity that ensures one's link with the divine, is fundamentally linked to spirituality and romanticism. In *Holy Mr Herbert*, published in *Harper's Monthly Magazine* in May 1910, and republished by *The George Herbert Journal* in the autumn of 2004 and the spring of 2005, Bowen wrote:

It seemeth to me that the month of June hath in it something of an unearthly beauty, as if God His Mercy did disclose unto us a little of the delights of Paradise. Truly, a space of green, set with tall and excellent flowers, a fresh hedge beyond grown with tender white blossoms, a group of slender trees with leaves uplifted to the pearly heavens, hath in it as much of the divine as is vouchsafed to us.²⁰

Jacques often feels at peace surrounded by nature in the novel, his habitual contemplations are only comforting and serene when he is in a natural landscape. This is similar to, and anticipates, the fugitive vision of peace in Ford Maddox Ford's novel *Parade's End* (1924-1928). *Parade's End* and Bowen's *Holy Mr Herbert* both combine representations of a peaceful parish. The romanticism is earnestly delved into here and contains aspects of both Wordsworthian romanticism and John Henry Newman's religious ideas that God speaks to his creations through nature and that it is only nature that can inspire such a transcendent state of idyllic peace. The concept of a solitary Rambler searching for emotional and spiritual fulfilment is featured strongly within many of Bowen's novels.

²⁰ Marjorie Bowen, 'Holy Mr Herbert,' *George Herbert Journal*, vol.28, no.1, 2004, p. 77

It is the exploration of one searching for spiritual truth and certainty which Jacques firmly and finally manages to attain at the end of the novel. In the chapter 'The "Sense of Presence" as A Mode of Mystical Experience in The Mystographical Poems of George Herbert (1593-1633) An Interdisciplinary Approach' in *British Literature & Spirituality, Theoretical Approaches & Transdisciplinary Readings*, Franz K. Wohrer asserts, "Herbert's spiritual journey...like that of any other Christian contemplative is characterised by repeated fluctuations between awe-inspiring as well as delightful moments of "God's presence" and agonizing periods of his (apparent) "Absence" in which any sense of God's indwelling in the heart is suspended. Repeated vacillations between the felt presence and (apparent) absence are, as the ... in Christian "negative theology" insists, indispensable to spiritual growth."²¹²² Certainly Jacques needed his difficult circumstances to lead him to be the priest he is meant to be. Bowen composed, "The pendulum of his life, after swinging so uneasily to and fro without purpose or rhythm, came with a shock to its appointed place from which it would never move again...A priest...how was it that he had not always known that this is what he must be? He felt radiantly happy, as a man must when he discovered his true vocation."²³ Jacques' journey is also similar to George Herbert's poem *Denial* as his questioning faith and waning belief in God pervades the novel.

Before exploring the ideas in *The Veil'd Delight*, it is necessary to mention the distinction between religious experience and religious doctrine or dogma versus the sense of the divine which was a late nineteenth century concern. The divine is often perceived within the everyday world by the romantics and the spirituality inherited from the romantics describes imaginative experience and leanings differentiating from religious propositions. Rudolph Otto, a German Romantic philosopher, investigated such ideas in his work *The Idea of The Holy* published in 1923. Otto sought to explain the inner sense of mystery and otherness within humanity placed alongside the sense of the infinite and

²¹ Franz Karl Wohrer, 'The "Sense of Presence" as A Mode of Mystical Experience in The Mystographical Poems of George Herbert (1593-
²²) An Interdisciplinary Approach,' eds. Franz Karl Wohrer and John. S Bak, *British Literature & Spirituality, Theoretical Approaches & Transdisciplinary Readings*, Münster, LIT, 2013, p.3

²³ Bowen, *The Cheats*, p.278

the divine. He also discussed the imaginative capacity to register immortality and otherness.²⁴ The *Veil'd Delight* novel is akin to a quasi-religious experience and it is not an examination of religious dogma and consequently, Otto's term numinous which definitively refers to the presence of the divine or deity presiding over an occurrence or phenomenon is acutely revealed in the main characters of Henry Darrell and Harriet Brodie.

The Veil'd Delight (1933) has a conclusively spiritual approach rather than containing explicit religious connotations and discernments. Consequently, it is necessary to delineate spirituality prior to the discussion of this text. In *British Literature & Spirituality, Theoretical Approaches & Transdisciplinary Readings*, Wohrer summarised, "The experience of being related to the ultimate source of Being, becoming manifest in rare moments of epiphany or mystical revelation such mystical events may...advance significantly his/her spiritual ascent towards "perfection" (i.e. a life in perfect conformity with the Divine."²⁵ In *The Veil'd Delight* it is the relationship, two humans connecting at the soul source that represents divine perfection. Divinity pervades their relationship, though not in a strictly religious sense, but more within an intuitive, mystical and romantic framework. The definition of spirituality according to Wohrer and Bak is, "In English, the term "spirituality" is now understood to refer to man's spiritual quest for the Sacred (when with established religious traditions or without)...Breath and spirit are the source of life and animation, originality in God as the primary giver of life; "spirituality" is thus concerned with a person's belief in, and deliberate endeavour to enter into a loving relationship with the Divine spirit is conceived within the framework of his/her religion, or else, non-religious belief system."²⁶

Religion as such is not referenced in *The Veil'd Delight* but the notions of intuition, spiritual awareness and an unfathomable romantic connection depicted within a compelling and effective spiritual composition is the epitome of this novel's storyline. It reveals the true story of Henry

²⁴ https://archive.org/stream/theideaoftheholyy00ottouoft/theideaoftheholyy00ottouoft_djvu.txt, last accessed 8th December 2017

²⁵ Wohrer, Bak, 'The "Sense of Presence" as A Mode of Mystical Experience in The Mystographical Poems of George Herbert (1593-1633) An Interdisciplinary Approach' p. xvi

²⁶ Ibid p. xvi

Darrell, a destitute scholar, who accepts a post as tutor to two young siblings, Harriet and Harry Brodie, in the country. He falls in love with Harriet Brodie, the young adult in his charge, yet their love is not an earthly love or even purely a romantic love. Their telepathic ties, soulmate gravitations and psychic awareness and abilities foretell of a more profound love than is usually perceived within romantic fiction. Their inexplicable love is inevitably thwarted by the mechanisms of the cold and callous outside world, the earthly world, mostly in the name of Fleur Brodie, Harriet's half-sister. Fleur is a rich heiress of considerable spite and malice who retains all the power in the household due to a careless, aging and slightly unhinged father of considerable ill-health. Harriet's impending arranged marriage to the young esquire Daniel Steele is another obstacle. Harriet's own ethereal nature and inherent fragility also play a part in the difficulty of such a union but such complications are inevitably unable to keep them apart and their eventual union expresses a powerful embodiment of sacred love and divine peace. This is in a similar vein to Dante's *Paradiso* in his poem *Divine Comedy*, where in God's will lies our peace and that humans must surrender to the will of God. The love shared between Henry and Harriet is also similar to the love explored between Catherine and Heathcliff in Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* as all four characters do not just simply love each other but they have connected at the soul level where the almost irrational sexual attraction and unexplainable force of such powerful love is present and both Henry Darrell, Heathcliff and even Visconti have an aura about them that cannot be rationally explained.

Bowen acknowledges the mystery surrounding such an event as this in the 1800s and comprehends the story she has created may be regarded with incredulity, but she asks the reader to remember such advances that have been made within telepathy and science in order to understand that such an occurrence can happen between two people. When regarded within a modern-day context such as the twenty-first century with the varying modes of thought and advances surrounding religion, spirituality and science, the story is completely conceivable. Bowen wrote,

This novel is founded (the characters being given an obviously needful change of names) on an episode in the history of a family well-known in the North of England. In its day it was considered so startling and sensational that it was for many years suppressed...A strong belief in sorcery even then lingered in the more remote parts of England, and the unexplained was still ascribed by the ignorant to devilment. The modern reader, however, though perhaps inclined to be more sceptical as to much in this odd and moving tale, will recall what marvels we accept in wireless and television, and will remember the sanction which science has given to telepathy and the recent discoveries as to the extent of the scope of hypnotism, magnetism, and other powers of the mind completely unguessed at nearly two hundred years ago.²⁷

The novel is an exploration of a profound spiritual connection between, not only two humans, but two souls and two kindred spirits who are able to communicate with their minds rather than through spoken word. In *The Invention of Telepathy 1870-1901* by Roger Luckhurst, Luckhurst defines telepathy as,

What telepathy names – that is, forms of occult relation or communication between people at a distance – is an ancient belief common to many cultures. The reasons for why, when and where this relation was conceptualized as telepathy, an oxymoronic distant (tele-) intimacy or touch (pathos) are located in the overlapping contexts of late Victorian culture.²⁸

Luckhurst claims this term telepathy was coined by the Society for Psychical Research and that telepathy is a key component within gothic and science fiction texts and is still highly researched in contemporary times.²⁹ The Society for Psychical Research was founded in 1882. Luckhurst claims that telepathy was often approached by writers as if it was a possible phenomenon and portrayed it as such by putting figures that were predisposed to it with all their cognitive functions as normal and rational.³⁰ Bowen shows this in *The Veil'd Delight* as both of the characters who are experiencing telepathy with each other are completely sane, albeit they do exhibit ethereal qualities. Therefore,

²⁷ Marjorie Bowen, *The Veil'd Delight*, London, Oldhams Press Limited, 1933, p.6

²⁸ Roger Luckhurst, *The Invention of Telepathy 1870-1901*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 1

²⁹ Ibid, p. 1-2

³⁰ Ibid, p. 1-2

telepathy is portrayed as a type of sixth sense, a psychic connection between two people, and not as result of a mental illness.

The reference to the *Old Ballad* in the beginning of the *The Veil'd Delight*; "O, where have you been, my long-lost love, these seven years past, and more? O, I am come to mind you the vows, You swore to me before,"³¹ exemplifies the sense of déjà vu, possible reincarnation and the psychic power that permeates the novel which is perceived instantly from the outset. The veiled and mysterious female figure in Henry's antique mirror before he has physically met Harriet Brodie suggests the formidable extent of his extrasensory powers. In portraying such an atmosphere, there is a sense of returning to humanity's true nature such as love, harmony, intuition, instinct and sensory and extrasensory perceptions as opposed to logic, practicality and reason which can drive certain human egos. Miss Flora Brodie, Harriet's uncontrollable and temperamental sister represents this ego and the misuse and abuse of power that she exerts over Harriet, Henry, Harry and the Brodie household is akin to Gian Visconti in *The Viper of Milan*. Flora lacks empathy and sensitivity. She thinks and acts from a place of cold logic which in turn enhances her manipulative nature. Even her confessed love for Henry Darrell does not seem at all heartfelt but appears to represent the attitude that Henry is a new toy, a plaything used for her own callous entertainment. Contrasted against this is her sister Harriet who is quiet, sensitive, imaginative and docile and as a consequence she is considered to be mentally unhinged by Flora, due to her innate sensitivity. Harriet exists simply from a place of spiritual consciousness.

Henry's regular consultation of his beloved mirror indicates a certain psychic ritual, "He looked now into the greenish depths of the ancient glass and saw his own thin, comely face with the grey eyes and dark hair and the clean threadbare neckcloth reflected as in water. He had seen many things in the old mirror besides his own face, and lately in his long hours of enforced idleness...he

³¹ Marjorie Bowen, *The Veil'd Delight*, London, Oldhams Press Limited, 1933, p.7

had felt that he had the decisive power to draw into the mirror any picture that he might wish to see. Common sense had impatiently dismissed this fancy, yet some instinct of spiritual hope had clung to it; yes, and there was one vision that came unbidden..." For Henry, the mirror is a guide and an instrument to confirm his own insights and clairvoyant ability. The mirror is a divination tool and frequently sends him memories of his past, omens, signs and even becomes a form of communication between himself and others. This form of psychic phenomena using a mirror is known as captromancy and the link Bowen makes to water when mentioning the mirror in her text is illustrative of divination practices in Ancient Greece.

In addition to Divination practices, there are instances in the novel that hint at events that may in such contemporary times as the twenty-first century be perceived and referred to today as astral projection. The belief that souls are free to wander outside the limits of bodily constraints by leaving their human form is suggested in the novel, "The young man's head sank forward on his breast. He, too, seemed to be absorbed into some strange and distant world as if her spirit had beckoned his away to dim playgrounds and left his body empty in his chamber and hers empty in her bed with the green curtains."³² It is only when Henry finally accepts his true disposition towards the novel's conclusion, in spite of the obstacles, and uses his psychic powers to his full extent that he knows happiness, peace and contentment; all emotions that have been denied and suppressed up to that point in time. With the use of such spiritual notions, *The Veil'd Delight* has meticulous romantic undertones. In the *Romanticism* chapter in *The Oxford Handbook of Literature and Theology*, Scott Masson claims, "It is pre-eminently in the Romantic period that we note the return to the ancient pagan notion that the poet is divinely inspired...It is in adherence to a theodicy of origins that we should understand William Wordsworth's affinity for...the closeness to nature... and it is there that we find a sanctification of human love that will actually even present itself in defiance of the

³² Bowen, *The Veil'd Delight*, p. 115

community, not as an act of participation in it.”³³ The love between Harriet and Henry represents this. Their love is in defiance, not only to the community around them but to the comprehension of the scientific mechanisms of the human mind. Their love defies reason as it is symbolic of the power of genuinely intuitive qualities.

The Triumphant Beast, published in 1934, relates the extraordinary life of the famous Italian philosopher and scientist Giordano Bruno (1548-1600). He was a philosopher, mathematician, poet and Dominican Friar living in Europe in the fifteenth century who was sentenced to death by the Catholic Church for his beliefs and theories regarding religion and science. Bowen included the extracts of Giordano Bruno’s works translated into English in her novel and the translations of his books and writings are widely available due to his much sought-after opinions regarding pantheism, cosmology and philosophy centuries after his death. Bruno is a wandering scholar in the novel, unaccepted and regarded with suspicion and derision due to his unique beliefs as Bruno greatly condemned the classic reasoning and logic of Aristotle and praised instead the theories of Copernicus which was considered immensely radical for his time. He is constantly destitute, poverty-stricken and hungry as he travels from Italy to England, to France and Germany. The novel contains what could be perceived to be Rousseauesque romantic concepts, Wordsworthian beliefs and pertains to Romantic idealism and spiritual awareness within Giordano Bruno’s character as created by Bowen. It is not surprising that a figure of such romantic, spiritual and scientific thought would have attracted Bowen as she favoured Romantic thought above Enlightenment ideals. James Joyce and Oscar Wilde also both mention Bruno in their works.

Bruno’s love for God is represented by more romantic perceptions than inherently Roman Catholic and biblical associations. He firmly believes in God, hell and heaven but he maintains heaven and hell to be within our own selves as opposed to separate dimensions and existences outside of

³³ Scott Masson, ‘Romanticism’ in Andrew Hass, David Jasper, Elisabeth Jay, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of English Literature and Theology*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, p.120-121

earth. He believed in a religion set apart from the corruption of the church and the religious credence in a god who punishes and the sinful sent to eternal hell and damnation to him were fallacies. Heaven and hell are simply within our own selves and the divine is perceived to be within the universe, within nature, "There is no everlasting punishment and no eternal beatitude, save what we find in ourselves... How can the soul which dares to contemplate infinity, imagine a pit of material flame where poor corruptible flesh shall burn? Where, in such a paltry thought, is the beauty, the wisdom and the mercy of God, who hath created the dove on the wing, the breaking waves, the flower in the bud?"³⁴ Bruno is a passionate and sentimental figure with great integrity, and his reference to himself as "a child of Nature and of the sun,"³⁵ embodies this. Bruno's convictions contain similarities to William Wordsworth's preface to *Lyrical Ballads*. Both operate from a place of love, universal truth, the beauty of nature and the importance of thought and feeling.

Giordano Bruno is a monk and a scholar often accused of heresy by both his peers and the pupils he tries to teach in France, England and Germany and he has to constantly flee due to his teachings. He feels the harshness of men's savage cruelty towards him but it is his belief in the soul's immortality and oneness with the divine being the essence of human nature that ensures his continuous strength. He is thoroughly against the superstitious mentalities and inaccurate teachings of the Church which consequently provokes and inspires the scientifically ill-informed viewpoints, barbarity and viciousness of mankind.

In *The Romanticism Handbook*, Chaplin and Faflak wrote, "Even Wordsworth, who throughout his life professed a staunch Anglicanism, manifests in some of his work a spirituality that approaches mysticism or even pantheism...Certainly, what is evident in Romantic writings is a validation of – indeed often an insistence upon – the priority of subjective spiritual experience over

³⁴ Marjorie Bowen, *The Triumphant Beast, A Tribute, A Confession, An Apology*, London, John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd, 1934, p.83

³⁵ Ibid p.105

the organized, dogmatic expression of religious belief. Religious discourses in the Romantic era thus express the movement's broad emphasis upon individualism and the creative freedom of the Imagination."³⁶ It is said of Bruno by James H. Birx in 'Giordano Bruno,' in *The Harbinger*, Mobile, AL, 11 November 1997,

To me, Bruno is the supreme martyr for both free thought and critical inquiry... Bruno's critical writings, which pointed out the hypocrisy and bigotry within the Church, along with his tempestuous personality and undisciplined behaviour easily made him a victim of the religious and philosophical intolerance of the 16th century. Bruno was excommunicated by the Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist Churches for his heretical beliefs. The Catholic hierarchy found him guilty of infidelity and many errors, as well as serious crimes of heresy... Bruno was burned to death at the stake for his pantheistic stance and cosmic perspective.³⁷

It is quite possible that as a descendant of the Romantic tradition in the twentieth century, Bowen may have been attempting to revive Romantic thought and sentiment, instead of conventional religion, as a way of dealing with the increasingly violent period in which she and her contemporaries lived. However, in exploring such a key literary movement which is thought to have begun with the American and French Revolutions, William Wordsworth and Samuel Coleridge, she may have been attempting to pay homage to the tradition, not from the known and widely accepted origin, but from a much earlier and pre-Romantic past. Bruno was a proto-Romantic figure, a heroic and exiled man who appealed to James Joyce and others because he was a modern figure before his time.

Bruno discusses love, the idea of a human union blessed by the divine, the spiritual embodiment of a soul mate and true love between two souls. This true love transcends the lower and base attraction that can exist between two people, the result of physical desire and lust. This is love with spiritual and romantic embodiments and is represented by the love that is resolutely

³⁶ Sue Chaplin, Joel Faflak, eds. *The Romanticism Handbook*, London, Continuum, 2011 p.49

³⁷ H. James Birx, Giordano Bruno, <http://www.theharbinger.org/xvi/971111/birx.html>, last accessed 08th December 2017

explored within *The Veil'd Delight*. "Heroic love, without which man can scarcely live – he had not that. They called him a man of loose life, they who lived like pigs – the students, foppish, or voluptuous, the teachers, vicious or craven – they who did not know the meaning of love. Love, the source of good and evil, the lower love of transient things, and the higher love of divine and eternal things, this was the theme of his sonnet – the union of God, divine love; union with another human being, human love; they could be welded in ecstasy."³⁸ The genuine and authentic romantic love which, portrayed by Bowen, can only be justly understood by those sensitive enough to understand such spiritual unions; ultimately the soul's journey and the completion with the other half to create one blessed whole. He acknowledges the passions of the body and believes that it is to let carnal pleasures be as they are and for love to be as that is.

Bruno's belief, "The soul...is not in the body locally but has its intrinsic form and extrinsic mould so that which makes the members makes the soul...The soul is the mind, the intelligence either is from God or is in God, so by its essence it is God...Deus in Rebus – God in everything. Believe that - doubt everything else...Not the paradise imagined by the churchman. That is only fiction, a pretty story, the other is true – the immensity of God's domain, the immortality of the soul."³⁹ This belief as Bowen references it leads others to perceive Bruno as a blasphemer, a heretic and a conjuror but he feels and acts from a place of love more than any other character in the novel who pertains traditional catholic beliefs. Those who are inspired to listen to him are afraid of him and his teachings and those who hate him endeavour to destroy him. He is shunned by all and Bruno's isolation is complete, yet to him, the suffering in this lifetime is the path to death, which is the key to freedom. Death is the release for the soul and ultimately mortality leads to immortality. He almost appears to embody some of the teachings of Jean Jacques Rousseau, the idea of going back to nature and being at one with the universe, though not in a primitive sense but from a sacred romanticist standpoint. He is characterised as a wanderer unable to find his place within society and his isolation

³⁸ Bowen, *The Triumphant Beast*, p.126

³⁹ Bowen, *The Triumphant Beast*, p.120

is the necessary burden of his fate. He appears to signify a transcendental being who was sent to earth for a brief period, by the divine, to instil his teachings.

The Triumphant Beast touches upon the looming shadow of modernity, the lack of honesty among people, the desire and greed for monetary gain, the growth of consumerism and capitalism, all of which has haunted sensitive minds throughout the centuries,

The loneliness of despair, the urge of a hopeless quest pursued every thinking man. Only the brutes who could fill their bellies and swill their wines until they were insensible, only those who were content with bought love and purchased honours, were happy...Atheist, they called him, he who had considered the world and everything in the world down to the tiniest leaf, to be the image and likeness of God. They had called him a "materialist," he who had demanded freedom of spirit and soul, he who believed in the reality of the unseen and the existence of the unknown. Because he said that the earth moved around the sun, one of a system of countless orbs, they said that he was a blasphemer. Did not, on the contrary, such a belief tend to the infinite glory of God?⁴⁰

This is the crux of Bruno's ideology and as a result, he is plagued and hounded by those around him. He suffers acutely at the hands of others in power. This ideology demonstrates that the fear of humanity is ultimately to be afraid of the unfamiliar and the unknown. In this novel, the world is a world of waste and woe showing mankind in all its ignorance, weakness, immoral judgements, distress and trepidations. It is an ample representation of how humans seek to destroy the unfamiliar and the different due to the biblical teachings that have been implanted.

The treachery and the hypocrisy of the church and the disregard for human life if one is friendless and powerless is at the crux of this novel and this is demonstrated by the Church's behaviour towards him, "The Doge of Venice, Pasquale Cicoga...signed the decree which handed over Felipe Bruno to the Tribunal of the Inquisition at Rome. He and the Senate had decided to relinquish the monk because it was the easiest thing to do. Why not, they argued, please the Pope in

⁴⁰ Ibid pp.155, 321

a small thing when they intended to resist in larger matters? This man was a stranger of no consequence, a Neapolitan; there had been indictments against him for heresy before, but he had always contrived to escape. He was poor and friendless, he had no means of bribing anyone and no patron to speak for him. It was a cheap way of pleasing His Holiness.”⁴¹ Those who are financially wealthy and influential, despite their ignorance, are given more favour and respect than those who do not possess such material grandeurs even though they retain a much greater degree of honesty and veracity. It is interesting then that the Pope Clement VIII whose decision it is to make regarding Bruno’s death is the only man who doubts that he should be killed. The pope’s pompous Cardinals have no such doubts but the Pope’s own apparent sensitive nature renders him implacable to Bruno’s plight. He is unsure of his decision to send Bruno to trial and he is pushed to do so by his peers. His consideration, “Even men like San Severina and Bellarmin had not been able to discover much that was wrong or heretical in his works...The Cardinals would give this Felipe Bruno’s body to the flames and his soul to Hell...His power weighed on him like a chain around the feet, shackling him to earth. If I am God’s Viceroy, why do I feel so diffident, so self-critical, so ill-assured? If I am God’s Viceroy, why do I feel so far from God?”⁴² shows this book is not necessarily about the rights and wrongs of religion but about humans and how religion is individually interpreted, misused and exploited by them. The few people who understood Bruno, vastly outnumbered by the rest of European society, were those who were sympathetic to his teachings and were instinctively aware that his theories did not arise from a blasphemous or malevolent intent. The sentence to death of an innocent, meditative and extremely intelligent philosopher and mathematician is indicative of the church’s abuse of power.

Bruno believed that the soul is separate from the body, that the body will perish and the soul live on amongst God within the heavens. Death for Bruno exists only in the physical sense and

⁴¹ Bowen, *The Triumphant Beast*, p.302

⁴² Ibid p.316

therefore he refused to retract his teachings in order to live as encouraged by the priests around him. He perceives death as the release, the journey to freedom and his inevitable return to God. Foolish ignorance lies at the heart of the unbridled contempt towards Giordano Bruno and his continued perseverance throughout such tribulations is testament to his innate faith, a faith he refuses to relinquish even in the face of his punishment - being burned alive. Religion in this novel is easily confused with politics by the characters in this novel, the Pope is represented as a political figure and the church is portrayed as the epitome of the politics of power.

Giordano Bruno is a figure that compounds both romantic thought and feeling and scientific theory and progression. His spiritual philosophy and scientific logic does not seek to represent two conflicting views that cannot co-exist. On the contrary, both of these elements portray a reflection of completion. James Joyce referred to this dichotomy as the view that, “(His philosophy is a kind of dualism) every power in nature must evolve an opposite in order to realise itself and opposition brings reunion.”⁴³ Felipe Bruno is the representation of people breaking away from the church and turning to more spiritual and liberal modes of thought. Masson claimed one of the major mechanisms of romanticism was isolation and that it denied a foregone past of upholding enlightenment traditions, “Although Romanticism tended to share the Enlightenment postulate of autonomy, we should understand the frequent Romantic portrait of a poet in lonely social isolation or even exile, as well as its characteristic rebellion against authority, as a reaction against the rapid and progressive degradation of personal integrity.”⁴⁴ This appears to be embodied in the figure of Giordano Bruno. The quote in Rousseau’s *The Social Contract* (1762) “Men are born free but are everywhere in chains,” expresses the idea of a pre-civic ideal world and the reluctant necessity to attempt to belong in the modern world where this idealism no longer exists. The past which

⁴³ James Joyce, Letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver, 27 January 1925, *Selected Letters* p. 307

⁴⁴ Hass, Jasper and Jay, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of English Literature and Theology*, pp.121-122

reflected a state of nature where all humans lived freely shows that Bruno, a Romantic solitary figure with Wordsworthian concepts, is a Rousseau but centuries earlier.

There are similarities between *The Viper of Milan* and *The Triumphant Beast*. Victimisation, tyranny and torment are encompassed within both novels but where in *The Viper of Milan*, Gian Visconti, a man, is the oppressor, the church of Rome is the tyrant in *The Triumphant Beast*. There are few gender distinctions within such victimisation as Felipe Bruno, Valentine Visconti - Gian's persecuted sister, and Isotta d'Este are all tormented by evil and wickedness. Both Valentine and Felipe refuse to mentally and emotionally yield to the tyrannical power that threatens them. Both can be perceived as rebellious but this is represented in a positive light, their spirit cannot be broken. In *The Triumphant Beast*, the church is the oppressor and represents innate power. Those who are spiritual but not profoundly religious suffer at the hands of the church and indoctrination. In *The Viper of Milan*, Gian Visconti represents the Roman church in human form. His eagerness to build ostentatious and grand churches is a reflection of his dominion and his belief in God's infinite blessings upon himself. Despite Visconti's assumed security, he is still struck down when his sins have reached incalculable limits. With *The Viper of Milan*, perhaps Bowen is making a distinction between God's will and what humans believe and perceive to be God's will. Humans assumed knowledge regarding the will of God can be manipulated in order to extinguish and dispose of what is perceived as threats to their establishment, rule and order. In the case of Bruno, the church succeeds in killing Bruno for this exact reason. Giordano Bruno's extinction at the hands of the Pope is reflective of the title - the church is the triumphant beast. Bruno suffers at the hands of God's representatives on earth, despite his integrity, compassion, knowledge and wisdom.

God and The Wedding Dress, published in 1938 and set in the seventeenth century, relates the story of the Rector William Mompesson and the Dissenter Thomas Stanley's united fight against a plague outbreak in the English village of Eyam. Although William Mompesson and Thomas Stanley take an instant dislike to each other at the novel's conception due to Mompesson's replacement of

Stanley as the village rector, they eventually decide to join forces against the sudden outbreak of the disease in the village. The mutual dislike between the two men is acute. In *Religion and The Decline of Magic*, Keith Thomas discusses the rivalry between the Anglican and Dissenting churches and describes the remnants of the struggle between paganism and the different strands of the English church, as Mompesson frequently notes the past Pagan rituals of the country-folk surrounding him with a demeaning intolerance. The catastrophe that befalls the community and Mompesson's reactions to it is perceived within Keith Thomas' explanations of the theological explanations regarding such misfortune versus the past pagan rituals and beliefs in magic.⁴⁵ William Mompesson is juxtaposed against the villagers as representing the neoteric while the community and Thomas Stanley signify the archaic and both are struggling for their own rituals, beliefs and customs that each perceives as being threatened by the other. Thomas wrote, "The contemporary clergy saw the cunning folk and astrologers as their deadly rivals...because they resented a competing pastoral agency...they were anxious to replace a magical explanation of misfortune by a theological one...In their place they affirmed the sovereignty of God's providence and interpreted his judgements in accordance with the conception they had formed of his intentions."⁴⁶ In *God and The Wedding Dress*, it is believed by the Rector that the disease was brought to the village in a box of clothes from London, which was sent for by William's wife Kate for her sister Bessie's wedding to the wealthy villager John Corbyn. The outbreak succeeds in destroying most of the village population over a course of a few months and once again it seems Bowen is exploring here the use of determining God's will upon others. It was believed by Mompesson and Stanley that God brought the plague to Eyam as a necessary tribulation for the villagers to bear and as such, his will must be exercised. Both men closed down the village to stop members of the community from fleeing to safer places to escape the plague. The dead remained unburied during the hot summer due to the fast pace of those stuck down by the disease and the plague spread uncontrollably. If such actions had not been

⁴⁵ Keith Thomas, *Religion and The Decline of Magic*, London, Penguin Books, 1973, p. 28

⁴⁶ Ibid p.762

taken and the community were able to escape at the first sign of the plague outbreak, many of the villagers may have survived. This story tells of the disastrous consequences that can occur in the midst of such misplaced religious overzealousness. Alternatively, it could also be perceived that Thomas Stanley and William Mompesson were the two men destined to deal with such an arduous fate.

God and The Wedding Dress is not as precisely or as fluently written as some of Marjorie Bowen's other novels and short stories. It lacks an atmospheric power and ability that she was able to express so fluidly in other works but the novel was published to positive reviews in the *Evening Standard*, *The Observer* and the *Sunday Times* due to its poignant and touching portrayal of grave anguish and extreme woe. The characters are also not as interesting or as potent as the characters described in *The Viper of Milan*, *The Veil'd Delight*, *The Cheats* and *The Triumphant Beast*. A possible explanation for this may be because Bowen was more adept at exploring inherent evil rather than absolute goodness and those characters within her novels that contain strands of both good and evil, or those that rebel against the masses are the most interesting. Visconti and Mompesson differ greatly in terms of resonance and curiosity from a reader's point of view. However, due to its religious content and ideas, it was deemed useful to mention in this chapter. Despite its various weaknesses the novel poses interesting questions, specifically how to truly love God in a world that is preoccupied with materialism and financial gain and how to uphold one's faith in the midst of a great deal of suffering, pain and death. Both Jacques Stewart in *The Cheats* and William Mompesson have to carry the huge burden of such heavy discontentment due to what appears to be uncontrollable and significantly difficult circumstances. Both characters are tested to the utmost. Subsequently, they consistently try to understand how to align their religious beliefs with the callous world that surrounds them. Bowen quotes both Henry Vaughan, the seventeenth century Anglican clergyman and poet and Daniel Defoe, a Dissenter, at the novel's outset which immediately sets the religious tone that has been placed within this novel, as religious identity is so important to the plot. The suffering is severe and despite the novel's apparent weaknesses, it is contrived somewhat

effectively so that the reader feels the claustrophobic suffering of such a calamity, despite having little interest in the fate of the characters.

In *The Oxford Handbook of English Literature and Theology*, the study of the connections between literature and theology is discussed. In his chapter on 'The Study of Literature and Theology,' David Jasper debates the origins of the relationship between literature and religion and he refers to a lecture by Professor George Gordon at Oxford University where Gordon claimed literature has a duty to save humanity as religion has failed in this regard.⁴⁷ Contrary to this viewpoint is the essay 'Religion and Literature' by Bowen's contemporary T.S. Eliot, published in 1935, where Eliot believed that all literary criticism must be ascertained from a religious perception as without that, literature renders its power and influence over humanity,

Deeply influenced by Heidegger and existentialist thinking, Nathan A. Scott's repeated theme is the central importance of the 'theological horizon' in the literary landscape of the twentieth century, a time indeed characterized by fragmentation and isolation. For Scott, the enduring stability of the literary imagination and the poetic was fundamental in the construction of religious belief, and he looks back to English literature of the nineteenth century, in his last major book *The Poetics of Belief* (1985) specifically to S.T. Coleridge, Matthew Arnold and Walter Pater, in order to build a philosophy of religion based on the faculty of imagination.⁴⁸

Certainly Bowen can be seen as drawing on the same tradition as she sees the "sickness" in society, the isolation and declining morality and refers to the horrors of the period in her autobiography and her works. The novel's themes certainly contain a distinct sense of loss and tradition and what she believed to be the refinement of the past. However, for Bowen, institutional religion (and Christianity) was not necessarily the single solution as the "failure of religion" originates from the Church's own hypocrisy. Instead, humanity's redemption could be achieved through the imagination, spirituality, philosophy and accepting God as part of our life's journey without using

⁴⁷ Hass, Jasper and Jay, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of English Literature and Theology*, pp. 16-17

⁴⁸ Ibid pp. 19-20

religion to persecute others. Bowen's plots and fictional heroes suggest human redemption amongst keen religious observations.

In *Religion and The Decline of Magic*, Keith Thomas discusses the varieties of class and the varieties of intelligence within the period of the 1600s to the 1700s and he refers to it as a great deal of different belief systems that varied in terms of complexity and intricacy.⁴⁹ This is evident in Bowen's novels, despite the fact that the novels have been created with far greater contexts in mind - from the fourteenth century to the eighteenth century. William Mompesson, Giordano Bruno, Jacques (James) Stewart are all learned men of a particular discipline of study and every one of them questions religion and the world as perhaps it is human nature to do so. Within such characters as Gian Visconti, William Mompesson, Giordano Bruno, Jacques Stewart and Henry Darrell, perhaps Bowen was creating a literary timeline of the changing attitudes and beliefs towards religion throughout the centuries. In all the novels, the lower classes and the elite are pitted together within a mass of class distinctions; Mompesson and the labourers and his struggle against the remnants of pagan traditions, the lowly born and illegitimate Jacques against the English royalty and the Italian Jesuits, the destitute scholar Bruno against the powerful Church of Rome, the poor and lowly dependant tutor Henry Darrell against the English aristocracy as characterised by his tormentor Miss Flora, the Duke of Milan - Gian Visconti, against everyone who he perceives to be below him in class, power and wealth. Yet despite such class distinctions, all have their struggles, many have their sufferings. In the presence of religion, many characters have their convictions, their beliefs, their existential struggles and fears surrounding their truth. Bowen may have been attempting to show the varied perceptions and beliefs within these periods by exploring a diverse range of characters from the past and the examination of the changing modes of thought. This is particularly

⁴⁹ Thomas, *Religion and The Decline of Magic*, p.5

represented by William Mompesson and his study of the sciences and Felipe Bruno who undeniably excludes and dismisses the Aristotelian classical philosophy of logical thought and processes.

The suffering Bowen inflicts on all these characters seems extreme and this may be due to how Bowen perceived both life and to some extent Christianity as a source of constant suffering. In Bowen's autobiography *The Debate Continues* which was published later in her life in 1939, she sought to explicitly convey what is implied in the novels, "I had long since ceased to expect anything like happiness. I do not see how even a moderate measure of happiness can be possible for one individual when there is so much suffering in the world. We must, all of us, have so much of the Christ as that in us."⁵⁰ Nonetheless, *The Veil'd Delight* and *The Cheats* conclude serenely and positively. Both Henry and Jacques have complete acceptance of divinity and subsequently they reach a transcendental state of wisdom and peace. Their alignment with the divine represents harmony. Following on from this theme, Bowen mentions in *The Debate Continues*, "I believe that the noblest emotion is a sense of harmony – of union – with what is not only higher than oneself, but the highest conceivable and I do not think it matters if we term this God, or Truth, or Beauty, or find it in the substance of another human being."⁵¹ Problems can arise from reading too much into the beliefs explored in an autobiography and therefore one must be aware of authorial intention as the writer may have a number of reasons to place such ideas within an autobiography, for example market pressures or financial obligations. Historical novels and autobiographical books are certainly two very different kinds of work. However, it is rather striking here that Bowen would refer to one's union with the divine from a romantic standpoint and I think it is possibly fair to say that this belief is showing a particular part of Bowen's own nature and this is one of the reasons why she chose to engage with such material.

⁵⁰ Campbell, *The Debate Continues* p.112

⁵¹ Ibid p.297

These novels show that Bowen had an imagination that could engage in religious matters without using dogma. She shows theology and conventional/dogmatic religion as a set of propositions which she used to explore religion in her own period and religion in the past. Religion is apprehended through her imagination. She had the capacity to explore immortality, otherness and religion as representations of the infinite.

It is not surprising that the study of religion would have appealed to one of her romantic temperament and sensitivity. Both *The Viper of Milan* and *The Veil'd Delight* emphatically show remnants of her belief in the supernatural and the unexplained and all five novels portray a distinct belief in fate, destiny and the inability to escape a life purpose that has perhaps been arranged by God and the heavens itself. These five novels spanning thirty years of Bowen's career represent a suitable introduction to the rest of the novels that will be discussed within this thesis. This chapter has established the importance and the use of themes in this thesis. The discussion here of spirituality, late Romanticism, violence and cruelty introduces established Bowenesque ideas and the relationships of the novels exploring such matters to the gothic genre is clear. Bowen's use of the gothic is also strongly linked to the uncertainty and ambiguity that she deliberately places within her work, for example, the obscurity of human nature and the questioned status of religious dogma. By using and updating the gothic genre to convey elements of romanticism, cruelty and spirituality, she achieves a systemic ambiguity, resisting final explanation, which produces what is almost a species of neo-gothic for modern readers.

2

Redefining Elegance: Marjorie Bowen's perspective on Regency and Nineteenth Century Dandyism in *The Rake's Progress*

Dandyism is closely linked to the religion ideas explored within chapter one as it also draws, in a different way, upon the themes of morality, evil, fate and the supernatural from a historical viewpoint. Dandyism is a topic of historical interest as it has a richly symbolic history, as both fact and metaphor from the Regency period, to the Victorian period and culminating in the Edwardian period: dandyism was still current when Bowen published her novel *The Rake's Progress*.⁵²

Marjorie Bowen's use of such a well-known historical theme such as dandyism is particularly interesting as she instilled great elements of supernatural darkness within this novel. The themes of cruelty explored in chapter one of this thesis is also used within *The Rake's Progress*, its Hogarthian title immediately recalling eighteenth-century decadence and corruption, but not from the same grandeur of the rich and powerful as pertained in *The Viper of Milan* and *The Veil'd Delight* for example, but more from a psychological perspective from the destitute and the desperate. Dandyism to Bowen was troublesome, vain and often contained elements of extreme selfishness.

The Rake's Progress, a historical novel set within the Regency period, tells the story of a roguish rake attempting to maintain his aristocratic lifestyle while losing all integrity, decency and morality in the process. The novel was published in 1912, just after the Wildean era and the dandy period of the naughty nineties in the nineteenth century. Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, published in 1834, arguably pushed the late Byronic dandies such as Edward Bulwer-Lytton off the stage to pave the way for Victorian respectability, yet dandyism was reinforced once again by Oscar Wilde and Max Beerbohm whose own dandy essay was published in 1896. Beerbohm, Wilde, Bram

⁵² There is a great deal of secondary literature on the dandy in literature which I have used, some of which include Regina Gagnier's *Idylls of The Marketplace: Oscar Wilde and The Victorian Public* in 1986, Eve Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet* in 1990 and Philip Mann's 2017 *The Dandy at Dusk*. Ellen Moers' 1960 book *The Dandy* is possibly still the most well-known study on the dandy to date.

Stoker's *Dracula* and Carlyle appear to be major influences for Marjorie Bowen's novel. *The Rake's Progress*, William Hogarth's early eighteenth-century series of illustrations from which she borrowed her title is another major influence as the novel is similar to the paintings. The novel also pictorially describes the repeated follies of a young man seeking to acquire monetary fortunes and the Hogarthian influence hints at the immoral undertones of a dandy's life and the consequences of such irresponsible behaviour. The dandy is an oppositional figure and as such, well-known authors throughout the Victorian and later periods have adopted differing literary perceptions in relation to it. For example, Mrs Humphrey Ward, whose later literary career overlapped with Bowen's, was a serious anti-dandy Victorian in the Hogarthian tradition, but in the person of Lord Peter Wimsey, Dorothy L. Sayers used an updated version of the figure of the aristocratic dandy to amuse the middle classes. Evelyn Waugh, although he retained a degree of ambivalence, bought into the neo-Wildean dandyism, William Thackeray certainly appeared to view the dandy as the epitome of frivolous vanity and Bowen, a Hogarthian, bought into the keen perception of Victorian seriousness when considering dandyism. It seems novelists realised the dandy could be used in a number of different contexts.

The Rake's Progress, now undeservedly forgotten because it explores dandyism from an Edwardian stance and shows Bowen's depth of historical, literary and artistic knowledge, narrates the story of a twenty-five year old man called Rose, the Earl of Lynwood, and his family – his mother, his cousin Miss Susannah Chressham and Marius, his younger brother - who through Rose's entertainments, vices and fickle pleasures are destitute, in severe debt and hurtling towards a life of ruin. Rose Lynwood, the eldest son of the family, to save his estates and assets from being seized by creditors at the last moment makes a disastrous pact with the bourgeois Mr Hilton to marry his daughter, Lavinia Hilton, the middle-class heiress for money - the perilous exchange of the Lynwood family name for the payment and clearance of all the Lynwood family debts. Consequently and inevitably, the marriage is a disaster for them all. Lavinia Hilton, although she was Marius' planned betrothed whom Marius met earlier during his summer travels in Luxembourg, marries Rose despite

the marriage being abhorred by both of them and perceived to be a hateful bargain. With the unfortunate exchange of new money for an aristocratic title looming within the background of their union, Lavinia and Rose grow to hate each other with an immense and fierce passion. Lavinia, through all her scorn and the typical acts of vengeance propelled by a woman's fury, seeks to destroy Rose in every possible way. This includes victimising the graceful and beautiful Selina Boyle, a respected and admired woman among the ranks of London society and Rose Lynwood's genuine beloved, while continuing to wheedle and seek the comforts of Marius Lynwood's pity. Simultaneously, while Lavinia is wreaking her vengeance, Rose is spending Mr Hilton's money with renewed force, dragging them all once again along the path of destitution and ruin. Through making the deal with Mr Hilton, Rose not only sells himself and his family name, but he also sells his soul and destroys any future happiness or contentment that any of the characters may otherwise have known.

It was quite common in the late-Victorian and Edwardian period for men of fashion, perhaps from old but impoverished families to marry rich heiresses of new money, money which was made in America or in the diamond mines in South Africa and the title of the novel, *The Rake's Progress*, has definitive negative connotations. The rake, in order to maintain the life of the fashionable dandy, marries for money which inevitably leads to his downfall. The rake and the dandy, through his frivolity and dishonourable means, cannot actually progress towards anything except a lonely and untimely death. Despite Rose's influential contacts and the numerous chances he could have had to become Chancellor or Secretary of State, he throws every opportunity away. The term progress here is an ironical term for one who chooses not to achieve anything worthwhile and honourable and prefers instead to only pursue a life of fashion, vice and pleasure.

Rose Lynwood represents male style and vogue. Bowen portrays him as the pure dandiacal body, the epitome of Thomas Carlyle's adverse description in *Sartor Resartus* in 1836, "A

clotheswearing man.”⁵³ Bowen paints a vision of Rose as the embodiment of all that is aesthetically pleasing; beauty, grace, a masculine perfection tinged with a female delicacy of features, the best physical traits of both man and woman combined in one person. Yet this illustration is not particularly representative of a positive image in the novel. Despite his sheer handsomeness, pale countenance and overt charisma, it is his mocking, sarcastic nature that shows the acute suffering and torment of his soul. He maintains a cold and guarded persona, which is indicative of an emotionally-fraught character within and simply following the undesirable pursuits of fashion, frivolity, pretence and vulgarity is an act of self-degradation in the novel. Similarly the name Rose indicates a rich and magnetic beauty externally but the decay becomes prominent at the core when that beautiful rose inevitably starts to wilt. His beauty and his luck are perhaps on borrowed time, as his actions inevitably create disastrous consequences for himself and for those surrounding him. In Rose Lynwood, this decaying beauty signifies devastating repercussions as a result of his selfish actions. Rose’s name is sexually ambiguous and represents a description of a feminised dandy whose unique attentiveness to fashion and clothes retreats from traditional masculinity. Rose’s character has an almost erotic female and male sexuality combined and Bowen is exploring gender boundaries by juxtaposing depictions of acquisitive male stereotypes against the female backdrop of fashion and clothes. The novel also draws upon the role of the theatre and hints at the extremes of theatricality, costume and drama which are similar to the themes of Oscar Wilde’s *Dorian Gray*.

Throughout the novel, the reader is consistently aware of Rose’s sense of dress, his manner, taste and his fashionable splendour which is never outrageous but simply stylish and subtly magnificent in its description.

Marius fingered his cravat, and was silent; he felt constrained and ill at ease – troubled, not so much by the threatened revelation of misfortune as by the presence of his magnificent brother, who was a more splendid gentlemen than any he had seen...His light brown hair was unpowdered and tied with a turquoise ribbon in his neck; he wore no jewels; the silk flowers, pink and red, on his

⁵³ https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/c/carlyle/thomas/sartor_resartus/book3.10.html, last accessed 9th April 2016

waistcoat sparkled with threads of gold. His complexion was naturally pale; at the corner of his full lower lip a patch of black velvet cunningly cut into the shape of a bat showed in contrast with it.⁵⁴

The phrase, “Rose is the fashion – a town rake,” and the referral to the black velvet bat is used consistently in the novel and it is the choice of this specific animal that belies the essential components of Rose’s nature. He is nocturnal, a solitary rake, who is seen as a famous predator among women and a man who indulges his vanities, his vices and engages constantly in various entertainments devoid of significance, morals and meaning. However, this outward appearance is a parody, a false representation of Rose’s true nature. He is a slave to ancestral curses, just as his forebears lived before him, and he propels himself towards financial ruin just as his fathers did before him. Bowen shows beauty, the reliance on just the physical and aesthetic as deterioration and just as Rose lives for pleasure only, likewise his dandiacal body also begins to fall apart, particularly when it becomes apparent that Rose’s inner torment and misery, his mental and emotional faculties are suffering immensely due to his relentless pursuits and dishonourable actions. Marius accuses him, “Mr Hilton’s money was not bought for us but for yourself, to save yourself from ruin; you married his daughter for no noble consideration but to give you the means to continue this life of a man of fashion.”⁵⁵ Once the dandy’s sensibility becomes undone, so too does his dress and outward appearance begin to unravel, “A sharp exclamation left his lips, for he seemed to be looking at a dead man. Against the murky background the face of Rose Lynwood showed white in between the tumbled grey curls. There was a fixed smile on his colourless lips and a lifeless droop in his weary pose. The brilliants under his chin sparkled in an incongruous fashion.”⁵⁶ Max Beerbohm in his essay, *Dandies and Dandies* claimed, “But the marvellous affinity of a dandy’s mood to his daily toilet is not merely that it finds therein its perfect echo nor that it may even be, in reflex, thereby accentuated or made less poignant. For some years I had felt convinced that in a perfect dandy this

⁵⁴ Marjorie Bowen, *The Rake’s Progress*, London, William Rider & Son Limited, 1912 p.27

⁵⁵ Bowen, *The Rake’s Progress*, p.133

⁵⁶ Ibid p.134

affinity must reach a point, when the costume itself, planned with the finest sensibility, would change with the emotional changes of its wearer, automatically.”⁵⁷ Marius Lynwood is the complete antithesis to Rose. Although he retains a degree of innocence and perhaps naïveté about the world, he is noble, honest and subsequently he is appalled by his brother’s behaviour and what he perceives as his disastrous antics and the disagreeable and unfair treatment towards Lavinia. Fashion, for Marius, infuses his scorn and the relentless pursuit of money, greed and materialism, according to Marius, is the epitome of immorality and degradation.

The name Marius could allude to the late-Victorian aesthete Walter Pater’s novel about searching for fulfilment *Marius the Epicurean*. Bowen’s Marius embodies wholesome morality. He is on a journey of the soul, in contrast to his depravity-stricken older brother. Although Marius is keenly aware of his brother’s faults, he is also suitably impressed and awed by his charismatic beauty. Yet Marius learns that beauty is not the complete and accurate portrayal of Rose, that his beauty cannot wholly disguise the apparent rottenness that lies at the core within. Marius is taught, however inadvertently, by his brother not to be like him as Rose himself is also aware of the decay of his own soul, the lack of his own morality.

Oscar Wilde believed in the physical and the graceful beauty of women and he adapted the feminine traits of bright colours, rich long curls and modish splendour to show his own dandy attitudes. In her essay ‘Fashioning Asceticism by Aestheticizing Fashion: Wilde, Beerbohm, and the Male Aesthetes’ Sartorial Codes’ Talia Schaffer claims, “Wilde used what, to modern readers, seems unmistakably female conventions: women’s materials (satin, silk, lace), women’s colours (lavender, purple), and women’s styles (long hair, decorative cape).”⁵⁸ This suggests Wilde would not have distinguished and differentiated between the appearances of a happy or an unhappy woman as his idea of a female aestheticism was purely physical and based on the outward appearance of women

⁵⁷ <http://www.dandyism.net/beerbohms-dandies-and-dandies/> last accessed 9th April 2016

⁵⁸ ⁵⁶ Talia Schaffer, ‘Fashioning Asceticism: Wilde, Beerbohm, and the Male Aesthetes’ Sartorial Codes,’ *Victorian Literature and Culture*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (2000) p.45

in more general terms. Yet Bowen's descriptions of the female exterior consistently hint at the emotional mechanisms of the woman involved. A woman's true nature is always exposed. She shows the aesthetic and the physical, not as separate entities, but as a part of the female emotional framework. She makes it clear that a trapped woman in all her scorn, bitterness, misery and distress can represent little else but a sordid physical ugliness despite the flamboyant lavishness of bright colours and jewelled adornments. Bowen wrote, "Marius had never liked these bright colours that she wore, nor associated them with anything that was desirable in woman. He stared at her intently, thinking of muslins and a chip hat in the gardens of Luxembourg, and brown curls blowing against fresh cheeks. He blamed Rose, something hotly, for this distortion of simple charm into attraction unnatural and fantastically, unhappily splendid; yet he himself found a fascination in her paint, her flaring colours, her scornful eyes."⁵⁹ Bowen's exploration of dandyism is showing the blurring of gender boundaries within a fashionable world but with negative connotations and a distinctly Bowenesque sinister twist. Marius' fascination here represents a fascination of the tangible horror in front of him, an engrossment in the bizarre and the grotesque. This married male and female couple, in their slavery and submission to money, frivolity and fashion are both doomed. Thomas Carlyle's claim, "A witness and living Martyr to the eternal worth of clothes,"⁶⁰ is significant here as Lavinia is the witness and Rose is the inevitable tragic martyr. Marius' character is an important consciousness in the novel. His name suggests, when discussed from Walter Pater's viewpoint, that he is the voice of reason and morality. Consequently, *The Rake's Progress* is exploring perceptions of moral awareness.

Throughout the novel and from the outset, Rose's scorn of the aristocracy and the bourgeois middle class society is evident. He is distanced from both classes yet his life is bound up with them. He is an aristocrat but one riddled with debt; his disdain of the middle class is clear but his wife is a tradesman's daughter (This is reminiscent of the quasi-aristocratic Oscar Wilde and his

⁵⁹ Bowen, *The Rake's Progress*, p.161

⁶⁰ https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/c/carlyle/thomas/sartor_resartus/book3.10.html, last accessed 9th April 2016

quasiaristocratic mother who were descended from a successful bricklayer and builder). Rose is part of a game within society. He belongs yet he does not belong, he refuses to belong yet he is known and revered within society for his charms, his vices, his failures. He plays the role of a lover among women and women fall prey to his charismatic charm and unattainable beauty. He plays with the affections of women, choosing to captivate and enthrall them yet feeling absolutely nothing within when he takes his courtesies and his caresses away and they crumble under their disappointment. Society and life appear to disgust him and his scorn manifests itself to other characters in the novel as complete nonchalance, a cold indifference and simple mockery. For Rose, rudeness, harshness and violent displays of anger and emotion are not a necessity and such sentiments rarely taint his persona, despite his inner torment. In Thorsten Bortz-Bornstein's essay 'Rule-Following in Dandyism: "Style" as an Overcoming of "Rule" and "Structure"' he claims rules were the essential component of a dandy's nature, not necessarily the following of such rules but the rejection and disregard of these rules;

In following the rules of society without enthusiasm the body of rules which constitute for the aristocrat a 'serious reality' become for the dandy nothing but a game...He is the only real player in society. In the end he plays their game but, because only he plays, it is always his game. This is the reason why he sees no necessity to fight for any particular game. He follows neither rule nor counter-rule but the absolute no-rule. The dandy's refusal of rules becomes manifest through insolence and demonstrative indifference. However, this insolence is, just because it is combined with indifference, never harsh.⁶¹

Rose Lynwood is an unusual hero, perhaps in the fact that he is not actually a hero at all but more of an anti-hero. He is not as cunning or as manipulative as Stendhal's dandy, Julian Sorel, nor is he as light-hearted a dandy as Wilde's Lord Goring or Algernon Moncrieff. It is possible that Marjorie

⁶¹ Thorsten Bortz-Bornstein 'Rule Following in Dandyism: "Style" as an Overcoming of "Rule" and "Structure," *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 90, No. 2 (April, 1995) p.288

Bowen's Lord Lynwood may have been an influence for Georgette Heyer's alluring Lord Julian Worth in her Regency novel *Regency Buck* published in 1935 as the levels of shrewd duplicity within both characters mirror each other to a certain extent, although Heyer's novel lacks Bowen's dark seriousness and concentrates more on the refinement and glamour of the period. Additionally, amidst Rose Lynwood's severe selfishness and his constant willingness to travel heedlessly along the path of self-destruction, Rose actually bears the strongest resemblance to Thomas Carlyle's negative perception of the dandy and therefore, in consequence, retains features and characteristics more in common with the Dickensian dandies. He is the pure representation of the "grey man" as discussed by Ellen Moers in *The Dandy*,

Dickens' "grey man" is patently a gentleman, and his habits of mind, his manner, his appearance bespeak a gentleman of a new dandy tradition – isolated in a middle society hostile to dandyism...The first bond among the grey men is a negative one: they are nothing like Dickens' early heroes...They are irresponsible, lazy, listless, worn out, indifferent, cold, dissatisfied. They live with failure, not with success. Almost all of them are vaguely aristocratic in upbringing...They have lost or are losing caste, and they are all wracked with a sense of having come down in the world...They are occasionally unscrupulous and always careless in money matters, and they survive by sponging on others or going into debt. The prime vice of the grey men is the great dandy virtue: selfishness. If they redeem themselves at all (few are, by middle-class standards, redeemable) it is by one final, uncharacteristic act of self-sacrifice which usually terminates in their destruction.⁶²

The Rake's Progress is a neo-Carlylean and neo-Dickensian view of the dandy. Oscar Wilde used the image of the dandy to reject Victorian seriousness but Bowen is rejecting the Wildean frivolity with an earnest Edwardian morality. Carlyle believed in the puritanical and had a severe contempt for London frivolity, the middle class versus an idle aristocracy which Bowen examines here. Mr Hilton is the representative of a middle-class man intent on social mobility. He retains a strong and driven work ethic while Rose is the innate portrayal of a languid, indolent aristocrat. In addition to the Edwardian and Victorian views of the dandy and the English social system, the thematic ideas within

⁶² Ellen Moers, *The Dandy*, London, Secker & Warburg, 1960, p.233

this novel are integrally complex. Mr Hilton is a cruel and a demanding man, his goal is to climb the social ladder at any cost and the damage inflicted as a result on his daughter's sanity and happiness is keenly disregarded. Rose is the victim of his familial upbringing and the one haunted by and bearing the burden of his cursed forefathers. In the novel, the shadow of a Faustian pact looms undeniably between the two characters, incorporating a touch of supernatural fervour to the story. It contains hints of the Faustian legend but without the symbolic resonance and it is evident, at times, that Rose does not seem quite human as he has a strange and preternatural countenance with his bat like and vampiric qualities. Is Rose the deserving victim of a Faustian pact or is Rose the devil himself? The significance of a dandyism novel written from a supernatural point of view is important as it strongly relates to many of Bowen's novels where the supernatural is a keenly explored theme and is often embodied within the historical novel framework. Human evil, morality, the supernatural and history are quintessential Bowenesque concepts.

Like a true dandy, according to Beerbohm, "English society is always ruled by a dandy, and the more absolutely ruled the greater that dandy be,"⁶³ Lord Lynwood's reputation and fame precedes him as Bowen narrates "This equipage excited attention, not only by the manifest splendour of the white horses, the sumptuous livery of the footman, and the gold-plated harness, but by the fact that the small crest on the body of the chariot was that of the famous Lord Lynwood, a name they all knew as that of the most brilliant but vague world of fashion that sparkled somewhere beyond their vision."⁶⁴ Rather than glorify the famous dandy as Beerbohm seeks to do, Bowen undermines such fame by the use of the word "vague." The phrase "sparkling beyond their vision" also seems to convey a sense of pretence, an almost fraudulent grandeur. The marriage pact that quickly follows this description of Rose's indisputable reputation is contrasted with Rose fleeing the tradesman's house after exchanging his soul for financial gain and "driving like the devil."

⁶³ <http://www.dandyism.net/beerbohms-dandies-and-dandies/> last accessed 9th April 2016

⁶⁴ Bowen, *The Rake's Progress*, p.41

Although Rose has appeared to make a Faustian pact, the exchange of money for a loveless marriage, it is not specifically Mr Hilton who is portrayed as the devil but rather Rose's character. Rose has a sense of a sinister duality about his persona, he is uniquely a victim and a perpetrator, as it is Rose who eventually destroys Lavinia's emotional and moral sensibility, which ultimately leads to her bitter and vengeful suicide. Yet Rose himself suffers a great deal of emotional agony as well as Lavinia. Rose's split personality hints at an uncanny duality. There is the Rose that suffers the severe and terrible consequences of his actions and there is the Rose who deliberately cannot help but act maliciously to those around him, his emotional and psychological detachment is, at times, quite palpable. He bears resemblances to well-known Gothic literary figures that portray the double and duality within human nature, particularly Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and Oscar Wilde's *Dorian Gray* - the exploration of the doppelganger that resides within one individual as opposed to being an entirely separate entity due to the complexity of human nature. Although Rose Lynwood represents a sense of Gothic duality, though perhaps in a marginally less explicit form than Marjorie Bowen uses in the Gothic novels under the Joseph Shearing pseudonym, the strong undertones of morality and integrity remain explicit.

As well as playing upon ancient and modern literary motifs of the day, for example, the Faustian pact, Gothic dualities of nature and Gothic motifs, Victorian morality, social decency and the dandy, Benjamin Disraeli's *Henrietta Temple* published in 1837 and Ouida's *Moths* published in 1880 with their similar themes of marrying for money with the sole purpose of ensuring the maintenance of ancient family estates and escaping financial ruin offer interesting literary comparisons. As previously discussed in this chapter *The Rake's Progress* plays within the realms of varying distinct genres that preceded it while being firmly instilled and representing a new code of Edwardian social consciousness and morality. Bowen is also exploring here a combination of two separate histories; the sixteenth and seventeenth century rake converged with the nineteenth century dandy. *The Rake's Progress* is an historical novel but it is an historical novel that exploits

popular stereotypes whilst simultaneously examining literary tradition - the challenges of preservation for the famous and the fashionable and the tradition of the gothic. It is here in which one of Bowen's unique proficiencies comes to the fore. She was a writer who, as well as being infinitely well-read and knowledgeable, was also keenly aware of popular cultural contexts. Her work was a combination of high literary tradition and popular fiction.

Marjorie Bowen's knowledge regarding William Hogarth was extensive as she went on to write a biography on the eighteenth-century painter published in 1936 called *William Hogarth: The Cockney's Mirror*, and despite the novel being published over two decades earlier than the biography, the material common to both books has been thoroughly researched and conscientiously deployed.

Rose Lynwood is the literary and fictional embodiment of the Hogarthian Rake, Tom Rakewell. Towards the novel's conclusion during the familial mourning caused by Rose's ill-timed and accidental death, Bowen wrote, "A straight beam fell across a row of prints in black frames that hung opposite. Miss Boyle raised her eyes and looked at them. The title, engraved finely beneath each subject, seemed to start out and be written on the sunlight: "THE RAKE'S PROGRESS." Mr Hogarth's terrible pictures; she had seen them and shuddered over them before. "The Rake's Progress." "Susannah!" she cried on a sobbing breath. Miss Chressham entered from the bedchamber. "Hush! My lady sleeps." "Susannah, those pictures; can you live with them?" "My lord did not live to reach that final scene," answered Susannah; "So they do not frighten me but make me thankful."⁶⁵ It is renowned that the final scene in Hogarth's paintings was insanity and it is clear that Rose Lynwood's inner turmoil, if he had not died previously, would have inevitably descended into an abject psychosis. Throughout this novel, Rose is subject to a particular psychological torment and as a result his character can be cruel, selfish and vicious towards others, yet he is not evil, horrible or even extremely unlikeable. The ambiguity that is so present in Bowen's novels is extremely evident here.

⁶⁵ Bowen, *The Rake's Progress*, p.296

She displays dandyism as a costly societal trap, an image that must be upheld by those who indulge in frivolity and vanity even if they do not have the financial means to do so but Rose, her example of it, is not condemned out of hand. In all his queer beauty, supreme confidence and egocentric intelligence, he is actually not unattractive and she does not deliberately paint him as an evil wrongdoer. She insults and pokes fun at dandyism itself and at class distinctions but not at Rose. Rose is purely a slave to his desires and as a result, suffers extreme psychological torment because of his choices, namely the Faustian pact with the devil which recurs in various guises throughout the gothic tradition.

3

Murdering Villain or Heroic Knight? A critical perspective on the life of Richard III in Marjorie Bowen's *Dickon*

The subtle hints in *The Rake's Progress* of evil, devilry and the personal torment of an individual express Bowen's consistently keen sense of the darkness in our world, our enemies and our psychological frameworks. Bowen based her historical novels on many different periods rather than adhering to one particular period and consistently using it as her literary focal point. European history and English history in particular were key aspects of her historical works. *The Governor of England*, published in 1913, based on the figure of Oliver Cromwell, the novel *I Will Maintain*, published in 1910, using the story of William Prince of Orange and his rise to fame, and *Patriotic Lady – A Study of Emma, Lady Hamilton and The Neapolitan Revolution of 1799*, published in 1936, which featured the story of Lady Emma Hamilton, the mistress of Horatio Nelson, are just a few examples of some of the excellent historical novels she produced within the European history sphere.

The psychological torment and cruelty that was explored in chapter two is taken one step further in this chapter as psychological torment takes shape as an actual demonic presence in a character's life. Chapter two explored psychological torment and cruelty within the aristocratic classes against a historical backdrop of ancestral curses and this chapter investigates psychological torment within royalty, once again from a historical standpoint and in the context of ancestral curses. There is one key figure in English history who has been largely portrayed and referred to as a sinful and malevolent villain and that is the infamous Richard III. Marjorie Bowen's *Dickon* was published in 1929 and is a historical romance novel in three parts telling the story of the life and reign of King Richard III. Part I (1460-1466) is called *The Three Suns*, Part II (1470-1472) is called *The Bear and Ragged Staff* and Part III (1482-1485) is titled *The White Boar*. The novel describes the story from

Dickon's childhood deportation to Utrecht to Henry Tudor's usurpation and Dickon's bloody and violent death on Bosworth Field.

Bowen explores here what she perceived as the curse on the House of York from the novel's outset. Jon Fogge, Dickon's evil shadow and personal inner demon, reveals Richard of Gloucester's belief in curses and condemnation from an extremely young age and Bowen's sinister narration powerfully supports the novel's plot and design making it conceivable and convincing the extent of the young Dickon's haunted and terrified state of mind, "He asked me to go into the woods with him. It was most dark and all the leaves looked very large. He walked ahead and kept smiling at me over his shoulder. And I thought then that he had horns and long wings which trailed on the ground behind him. He said: 'Come with me, little Dickon; come with me, little sir; come with me, good prince! I am thy Devil, thy own Devil, whom Jesus Christ beat out of Heaven.'" ⁶⁶

Richard's love for his older brother, King Edward IV is illustrated in no uncertain terms, as is his love for all his family members, close relations and Anne Neville, his childhood companion and destined future wife. He admires, respects and treasures his older brother and although he loves too with a fierce familial loyalty his younger brother, George of Clarence, he often becomes exasperated with what he perceives to be George's unscrupulous ambition and inherent disloyalty. In dealing with the difficult rivalry between George and Edward, Dickon consistently adheres to his motto in the novel from the beginning, "Loyalty bindeth me," and therefore acts as the continual peacemaker of the family unit. Subsequently, in portraying such a characteristic portrayal of Richard in this form, Bowen is depicting, what she believed to be the inherent goodness within Richard III with startling clarity. Bowen takes every opportunity to show the strong family ties between the House of York and the love shared between them is undeniable even in the midst of Clarence's sentence to death and Edward's own ensuing familial treachery. Dickon, as a sombre, proud and serious little boy is as

⁶⁶ Marjorie Bowen, *Dickon*, London, Fontana Books, 1971, p.21

impressive, thorough and a realistic portrayal as Dickon when he is a mature man, a skilled and extremely competent knight, as Duke of Gloucester and King of England.

As King of England, Richard III consistently underestimates his bitter and loathing enemies, in particular his female enemies, and Bowen shows them to always be at the centre of the court violence and the treachery, particularly in the figures of Elizabeth Woodville, Jane Shore and Margaret of Anjou. These enemies against the House of York and their continuous plans to underhandedly betray and deceive lead to Richard's inevitable downfall.

Bowen's precise, meticulous and unequivocal narration for recreating the absorbing historical situations and portraying the hardships and dilemmas of such an infamous key figure in English history is extremely effective within this novel. Her illustrations of love, religion, faith, hell and damnation, betrayal and emotional torment set within the framework of bloody and brutal battle scenes combine to create an absorbing, rich and potent story,

Reining up the animal, Richard glanced down, and saw Montacute beneath the charger's hoofs – dead, a broken weapon in his helpless hand, the Bear and Ragged Staff torn from his surcoat. Dickon yelled with battle lust – with rage that it should have come to this, with sorrow for the friend against whom he fought. Spurring his horse forward in the mist, he still shouted his brother's name. The mist swirled about in fantastic shapes before his eyes. He saw Warwick on foot, bareheaded, his helmet dashed from his brow by the blow of an axe, his forehead bleeding, his black hair harsh and dripping red. Warwick was shouting, fighting and shouting, his head held high. Richard called to him to give in. The dark Earl did not hear the young Prince's anguished voice. The mist dropped again like a curtain between him and Neville. When Dickon plunged through it he found he was trampling Warwick's body; the dismounted Earl had had his mortal wound; he writhed and cried out, blinded by blood.⁶⁷

There is no mention here at all of Richard's physical qualities as having a hunchback or a withered arm. He is shown to be a skilful and able-bodied soldier.

⁶⁷ Bowen, *Dickon*, p.131

Bowen adheres to the fifteenth century dialogue which injects her prose with traditional sentiment and atmospheric authenticity. It is a romantic novel full of torment and emotion and infused with ceaseless tragedy, a royal version of the melodrama of excess identified by Peter Brooks.⁶⁸ Bowen portrays Richard as a tragic figure with good and honest intentions. He is a brave knight, a good ruler and a fair king while simultaneously being tortured by what Bowen perceives as his wretched curses and haunting demons; Richard's fate is to be cursed by God, which is made to coincide with his being at the mercy of the traitorous men surrounding him.

Bowen firmly believed that Richard III was not a ruthless murderer willing to commit evil for his own gain and ambition. Bowen wrote, "Elizabeth Woodville had resigned her younger son Richard from the sanctuary; he was with his brother in the royal apartments in the Tower. Richard thought of these two children as he left his room, and of his brother's will making him their guardian, and of his motto, 'Loyalty bindeth me.'"⁶⁹ Bowen is hinting here that the Princes were alive and well in the Tower during Richard's lifetime thereby making a subtle declaration in favour of her protagonist's virtue. Additionally, his severe grief at the two succeeding deaths of his wife and son indicates Bowen's belief that Richard did not murder his wife, Anne Neville.

In an article called *Ricardian Fiction: Trash and Treasures* on The *Richard III Society* website, a website based on the presumption of Richard's innocence and frequented by the people today that continue to believe he was of a good and virtuous nature, Roxane C. Murph detailed her views on the best Richard III novels of the day and in previous centuries. I believe the use of *The Richard III society* here within an academic context is justified as Bowen herself was an active member of the society when she was alive. Her membership is significant when considering her beliefs surrounding the true character of Richard III and not the assumed character as portrayed throughout history.

⁶⁸ Peter Brooks, Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination – Balzac, Henry James Melodrama and The Mode of Excess*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1976, p. 81

⁶⁹ Bowen, *Dickon*, pp. 204-205

Subsequently, there are advantages to using the opinions and theories of this society over the use of print sources. Murph mentioned those writers as she claimed,

And some of them for all their many flaws, are dear to the hearts of some Ricardians, because they are on the 'right' side of the controversy. I know that many of you enjoyed Marjorie Bowen's *Dickon*, since the author is firmly on the side of the angels, but in my opinion that is the only thing it has going for it. Bowen, unaccountably, ignores the question of the fate of the princes surely the central mystery of Richard's reign, and the one on which his reputation rests. Since she dispenses with that little problem, she has no problem portraying Richard as the perfect knight, whose actions are governed entirely by his desire to bring peace and prosperity to England.⁷⁰

This is a rather strange and sarcastic review. It is indeed obvious that the reason Bowen did not mention the princes in the tower and their fate is because she did not believe Richard III had anything to do with their disappearance. The entire novel is an exoneration, an attempt to bring to light what Bowen believed to be his true character and the events that genuinely occurred throughout his lifetime, and she does this without explaining his role in any of his crimes, apart from the apparent necessity to execute certain enemies, because she does not believe he committed them.

In fact, to be as accurate as possible here, Bowen did not at all portray Richard as the "perfect knight." She was extremely candid in regard to his faults as well his apparent good and sensitive nature. According to an article by Jeremy Potter on the Richard III society website, *Richard III's Historians: Adverse and Favourable Views*, Potter wrote, "Buck set out to refute one by one the accusations made against Richard, including his alleged deformity. He listed Richard's virtues and good works but was not blind to his faults: a misguided leniency towards traitors (he should have beheaded Morton and Stanley along with Hastings) and underrating his enemies and rashness on the

⁷⁰ <http://www.r3.org/fiction/roses/murph.html>, last accessed 29th May 2012

battlefield.”⁷¹ Bowen highlights and definitively exposes all these faults also and describes them in comprehensive detail to make the reader aware of Richard’s faults as well as his positive qualities.

Horace Walpole also believed in Richard’s possible innocence and sets out to explore Richard’s crimes individually. Walpole suggests in his essay, *Historic Doubts On The Life and Reign of King Richard The Third*, that Richard was completely resistant to his brother George, Duke of Clarence’s sentence to death by Edward IV and Bowen also includes this in her novel.⁷² She does not include Clarence’s supposed drowning in a barrel, a butt of malmsey. Walpole disputes the claim Richard apparently made that his brothers were bastards as written by Thomas More.⁷³ Bowen does not mention this in the text but is clearly aware of it as she highlights her disbelief in the claim by making it clear of the hereditary likenesses between the Plantagenet sons. Bowen, as well as Walpole, believes that Richard’s execution of Hastings was in self-defence.⁷⁴

In the book *The Princes in The Tower*, Elizabeth Jenkins argues, “These two works (Josephine Tey’s *The Daughter of Time* and Sir Clements Markham’s *Richard III, His Life and Character*) are the best known of their genre, but there are a heap of others of similar inspiration. One feature is common to them all. They describe, often with admirable lucidity, the course of events leading up to the coronation of Richard III, but when they try to provide an alternative solution to the enigma of the Princes disappearance, they spin off into space.”⁷⁵ Bowen’s novel retains sharp focus throughout the entire novel and as she does not entertain and try to explain the disappearances of the princes in the tower, it is clear her novel has only one aim in mind, to vindicate Richard III and validate his innocence to modern historians.

Jenkins also claimed, “Richard, in a passion of fury and desperation, now saw the battle in terms of personal conflict; the slaughter of either himself or Henry Tudor would mean total victory for the

⁷¹ <http://www.r3.org/bookcase/misc/potter.html>, last accessed 21st May 2012

⁷² ⁷² Horace Walpole, *Historic Doubts On The Life and Reign of King Richard The Third*, Oxford University – School of English, Oxford, 1768, p.13

⁷³ Ibid, p. 71

⁷⁴ Ibid, p.46-49

⁷⁵ Elizabeth Jenkins, *The Princes in The Tower*, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1978, p. x

other. With eighty men at his back he charged down the slope and across the plain. A detachment under Sir William Stanley barred the path; the shock of the King's charge carried him and his knights through it. It must have been at some point after this that Richard's horse was killed under him, but he had got so near to Henry Tudor that he was able to kill the standard-bearer, Sir William Brandon, and the large-bodied Sir John Cheyney who had come to Brandon's defence."⁷⁶ This is exactly how Bowen described the events of the battle leading up to Richard's death which shows her inherent accuracy as an historical novelist when her description of events is likewise similar to the words of a modern twentieth century historian. Bowen wrote, "For the sun, which was then high over Redmoor plain, shone and glittered on the riders so that the rebels could not see properly, and Richard Plantagenet was upon them before they saw his crown. Before his vehement assault they fell back; he broke off the cruppers of some of them with his spear, and when that broke, he pulled out his sword and struck down those who pressed around Henry Tudor, and no one could get near him...'Come forth!' shouted King Richard, 'ye who be man and pretend to a crown. Think ye I be weary?' Then Sir William Brandon, who was holding the Red Dragon, put himself in front of the King to cover the Tudor. He was a big man but Richard gave him such a buffet that he fell of his horse and the sword broke in his mail, so that it stuck in his body, and the Red Dragon went down into the mud. Lovell put another sword in the King's hands and with this he struck Sir John Chaney, who had come to help the Red Dragon. He was a large, strong, famous knight, but he fell like a child beneath the blows of Richard."⁷⁷ Bowen retells the story here infused with enthusiasm, energy and drama. Her ability to translate the violence of medieval times into stories for twentieth-century readers indicates an uncanny literary insight.

Bowen's *Dickon* and Shakespeare's *King Richard III* are two extremely diverse characters and are perhaps as different as two characters in literary history are likely to be despite their portrayals having been based on the same historical figure. Shakespeare portrays Richard as the epitome of a

⁷⁶ Jenkins, *The Princes in The Tower*, p. 214

⁷⁷ Bowen, *Dickon*, p. 243

monster, both physically and mentally. He is a master manipulator with the sole intention to betray his family and commit murder to steal the English crown. His physical deformity belies his evil nature, his villainy, his unworthiness to be a lover, his twisted mentality. Visions of hell, nightmares, terrible premonitions and prophecies, the supernatural and witchcraft appear a great deal here as in Bowen's novel, though Bowen uses it to illustrate the good nature of Richard who is surrounded by betrayal and villainy in others. The references to hell are used to emphasise Richard's evil persona but Bowen uses her own to emphasise the curse that lay on the house of the Plantagenets. Bowen claimed in her autobiography that Shakespeare was one of her influences. It is interesting that she has taken such an opposing view of Richard III, despite the supernatural themes of witchcraft, hell and damnation remaining so resonantly in both works. The most likely sources Shakespeare used for his play, according to Bullough,⁷⁸ appear to be another play called *The True Tragedy of Richard the Third* in 1594, *History of the Arrival of Edward IV in England and The Finall Recoverye of His Kingdoms from Henry VI* in 1471, *Chronicle of Brut*, *History of Croyland Monastery*, *Johannis Roussi Historia Regum Angliae* and *History of Henry VII* as well as the additional sources written by Edward Hall, Richard Grafton, Raphael Holinshed and Polydore Vergil. Bowen would have been familiar with these sources and many more besides since the sixteenth century and she would have had a great deal more sources at her disposal. Bowen certainly did not use Thomas More's account, the basis of Shakespeare's character portrayal, if only perhaps to create the exact opposite. Instead of a "witty villain" as Hammond describes Shakespeare's Richard in the Arden introduction to Shakespeare's play,⁷⁹ Bowen depicts him as a sombre and loyal young man. Bowen herself wrote in the preface to Dickon, "The reign of King Richard has been described as the 'darkest, the most complex annals'; such material as is available, and such modern disquisitions on it as various historians have made, are easily accessible, and therefore it is needless for any list of them to be given here; it is sufficient

⁷⁸ Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare Volume III*, London, Routledge, 1966 p.223

⁷⁹ Anthony Hammond, ed. *King Richard III*, London, Methuen, 1981, p.75

⁷⁴ Bowen, *Dickon*, p.7

to state that the author of the following romance has studied them all, has violated no known fact, nor presented any character or action in any light that is not probable as well as possible.”⁷⁴

Bullough argues, “Shakespeare did not imitate the laboured moralising of *The Mirror* [for Magistrates], but he shared its moral attitudes, and showed that the downfall of great men was often due either to divine justice working against them or to other men’s evil desires which would finally bring on evil reward. Richard III is heavily loaded with this sense of moral retribution.”⁸⁰

Additionally, Hammond claimed Richard is “the representative of the Arch-enemy, whose function as political anti-Christ is expressed in a conventional theatrical idiom.”⁸¹ Bowen too draws on this idea of good and bad in her novel as discussed by Bullough and Hammond, though not in such simplistic forms. There are representative portrayals of both heaven and hell on earth, angels and fiends in human form. Bowen wrote, “The extraordinary evil fortune that pursued and overtook our last Plantagenet King has been symbolised in a personage with a human semblance.” Bowen’s use of Jon Fogge is an indication that Dickon is the victim whereas the ghosts that visit Shakespeare’s Richard seek to emphasise the point of Richard’s villainy. Bowen’s Richard is certainly condemned, not by his own actions however, but by his fate, his destiny and that of his family. Bowen additionally attempts to explore Bullough’s “divine justice” but from the angle of the effect on the undeserving and the cursed. Her novel, in essence, is a tale of human conflict, those who refuse to exist in harmony by fighting for traitorous power and betraying for greed.

Josephine Tey’s novel *The Daughter of Time*, published twenty-two years after Bowen’s *Dickon* in 1951, is a good, absorbing and thorough exploration of England’s most controversial King. Where Shakespeare and Bowen use supernatural elements to drive their stories, Tey simply places her own work within the detective genre and uses it to lead the reader through a step-by step account of Richard’s innocence. Tey depicts Thomas More as an inaccurate critic fulfilling the role of Tudor propaganda and covers a great deal of the period and lists Richard’s innocence crime by

⁸⁰ Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, p.232

⁸¹ Hammond, *King Richard III*, p. 104

crime. It mentions the War of the Roses, Edward IV as King, Richard's curses, his good nature, adept skills as a soldier and his strong family loyalty. Tey explains John Morton's role in Richard III's slander, Shakespeare's Tudor myths, the *Titulus Regius* detailing Richard's right to the crown and Richard's forgiveness towards his enemies. Like Bowen, she acknowledges Richard's protests at what he perceived as his own condemnation. The novel outlines and demands notice for Richard's innocence and is seen as a landmark for Ricardians, despite Bowen's novel having been published twenty-two years previously and Bowen's past illustration of Richard clearly foretells the depiction of Richard's character to come in Tey's own work.

Bowen's novel of human conflict was certainly relevant to the period in which she was writing, for depression, class conflict, the civil war themes and foreign policy anxieties abounded throughout Europe in 1929. However, despite the backdrop of the York and Lancaster Wars of the Roses and the plot's association with the modern period, Bowen's novel *Dickon*, like Tey's *The Daughter of Time*, is fundamentally a character study. Marjorie Bowen was a member of a Ricardian group, The Fellowship of The White Boar founded in 1924, which also included the members, writer Philip Lindsay, the historians Philip Nelson and Alymer Vallance and actor Tom Heslewood. They put in place a memorial to Richard III, the Middleham Window, in 1934 and at the ceremony, Bowen uncovered the memorial and gave a speech paying tribute to Richard, his character, his family and their place in history.

It is clear from Bowen's personal involvement with the restoration of Richard's character in her lifetime that it may possibly have been an endeavour quite dear to her. Indeed, the book's dedication to the actor Tom Heslewood, "whose knowledge of the characters and period of the 15th century may make him sympathetic towards the attempt at a portrait of the last Plantagenet King," shows her link with others who possibly shared the same passion. The conviction in the novel's possible reality, her knowledge of the events in its entirety is where the sheer power of this novel derives. Novelists with a mass readership have a great deal of power at their disposal and Bowen

used the art form to explore, expose and rehabilitate the historical slur on Richard's character.

Bowen wrote, "It is not likely the truth of these mysterious and terrible events will ever be known; the historian and the novelist alike must fill in the gaps with conjecture and imagination...The times, the men and women, when they have been carefully studied, are clear enough for us to guess their characters from what can be realised of their deeds and destinies."⁸²

Critical acclaim and tribute for Bowen's *Dickon* still lives on today in the heart of a well-known and successful novelist. Rose Hawley Jarman's 1971 novel *We Speak No Treason: The White Rose Turned to Blood* gained excellent reviews after it was published and was a successful novel with an award for the novel and an American award for the author herself. The book is seen as an emblematic and iconic symbol for modern day Ricardians. Yet in an interview with Jarman on the Richard III society website in 2011 called *We Speak No Treason: Forty years On*, Jarman said, "Yes I am proud of what I did but still wish I had written Marjorie Bowen's sublime *Dickon*, which I consider immaculate in portrayal and atmosphere."⁸³

Dickon contains a civil war theme also and illustrates warring discords and those on opposite sides within history. Subsequently, the novel is a consideration of the man's character himself within this war rather than the examination of the historical division that is taking place between the Lancasters and the Yorks, the Tudors and the Plantagenets. In a response to a criticising newspaper review of Marjorie Bowen's *Dickon*, Bowen defended her novel in the Correspondence pages of *The Times Literary Supplement* in 1929 by claiming it was meant to be a character study of Richard III only.

Bowen wrote,

Sir, while thanking you for your review of "Dickon," may I explain that the death of the "Princes in the Tower" is not touched on because the novel deals only with the life of Richard III and ends naturally with his death. Gardiner, no champion of Richard III, thought Henry VII "at least capable" of the murder of the two boys; he certainly afterwards murdered the only son of Clarence, the last male Plantagenet

⁸² Bowen, *Dickon*, p.7

⁸³ http://www.rosemaryhawleyjarman.com/we_speak_no_treason40yearson.html, last accessed 29th May 2012

(whose sister the Countess of Salisbury, was murdered by the second Tudor, Henry VIII) the reason for supposing the two boys to have been alive when Henry VIII reached London are too long to go into here: Sir George Buck, Horace Walpole, Halstead and Sir Clement Markham give the case for Richard III. There is, of course, no reason whatever for supposing that Richard III and his Queen were not happy; as to the legend about him marrying his niece, that is reduced to absurdity by the fact that the children of Edward IV, were illegitimate, and such a union could therefore have been of no advantage to the King; if such a project was ever brought forward it was by the Woodvilles themselves (See Sir Clement Markham for an investigation of this affair also).⁸⁴

This represents Bowen's literary fascination of character first and foremost. Her depiction of historical events alongside her abilities for historical research placed within the backdrop of modern times for modern readers, is a close secondary consideration, though of course, as an historian of sorts and an imaginative novelist, she would have had to omit certain information from the novel's storyline, as she stated in the appendix of *Dickon*. The recent discoveries of Richard III's remains in Greyfriars Friary Church in Leicester in September 2012 perhaps could throw part of Bowen's assessment of his physical traits into question as she referred to his dark hair and slight height but did not mention the raised right shoulder which was a result of a spinal defect. Yet, despite this, the novel remains an interesting and sympathetic perception of England's most contested king and this recent exhumation does not actually diminish Bowen's story because the battles that he won and fought before he died in battle must somehow pay testament to his combating skills, regardless of his spinal deformity. It was believed, in the findings and the analysis of the examinations of the remains, that this deformity would not have caused a hunchback or made the king physically inactive. In fact, Bowen's description of the final battle scene - the Battle of Bosworth in 1485 between Richard III and Henry Tudor's supporters and Richard's death and burial, are aligned with the recent findings of the trauma and wounds sustained to Richard III's skeleton. Bowen wrote,

A knight caught him across the thigh with a battle axe; a spear pierced his hauberk...Richard Plantagenet was down...his wounds gushing, men closing in on

⁸⁴ *The Times Literary Supplement* (London, England), Thursday, September 05, 1929; pg. 684; Issue 1440. (219 words)

him and striking at him. They fell on him with terrible force, hacked off his helmet and snatched away the gold circlet...They tore his chain of Esses, his jewels, his rich surcoat and dented armour, his gilt spurs and baudrick, so he lay naked...King Richard, naked, covered with blood, was set on a war horse, and taken to Leicester, his head hanging one side and his feet the other...the King's dangling head was bruised and beaten...The naked body was taken through the streets of Leicester to make a show to the people.⁸⁵

Tackling the monstrous historical perception of Richard III that was so firmly embedded within English society and attempting to portray him as a righteous and courageous man rather than the colossal villain many people understood him to be is particularly interesting for Bowen and shows another side of her imaginative sympathies as she frequently preferred to engage in her storytelling with radically transgressive humanity. This chapter shows Bowen's treatment of psychological torment within royalty and the courtiers and the themes of cruelty and violence echoes within *Dickon* and beyond. This examination of Richard III's life in *Dickon* was not only a character study but also a radical investigation into the politics of class where duplicity, greed, dishonour and deception ran to extreme lengths. The radicalism helps to demonstrate Bowen's distance from the conservative 'middlebrow' novelists of the interwar period studied by Alison Light and others.

⁸⁵ Bowen, *Dickon*, pp. 245-247

4

Une Sombre Histoire: Love, murder and betrayal during the French Revolutions in *The Third Estate* and *Forget-Me-Not*

Radical reappraisal of the *status quo* tends to be both a cause and a consequence of civil war and revolution. Marjorie Bowen developed the civil war theme of *Dickon* as mentioned in the previous chapter in various ways, using the French Revolutions as the basis of her novels on French history. The keen character studies that were discussed in the last chapter on Richard III also takes precedence here. Her non-fiction and fiction both contained stories, plays and biographies dealing with Pope Joan, Nell Gwynne, William Hogarth, King James I, Sophie Dawes, Mary Wollstonecraft, the Glencoe Massacre and Mary Queen of Scots to name a few. The list of her works in its entirety shows the extent of Bowen's historical knowledge and French history was a major theme for the basis of her writings including the non-fiction work *The Angel of the Assassination*, published in 1935, which is the biography of the French revolutionary figure Charlotte Corday. The themes of murder, evil and the struggle for power that featured so richly in the novels set in England also abound in the novels set in France and constant fear of social disorder and revolutionary disturbance in England had given English readers and writers a particular obsessive interest in the revolutionary history of France. Marjorie Bowen's treatment of class, power and the difficulty of gender relations can be traced from chapter one in this thesis until this point in chapter four. Bowen's use of class, the revolutions within society and gender imbalances is ambiguous as she does not rigorously convict nor does she actively support either side. Interestingly, she assumes the position of middleground and represents the issues and problems of both the aristocracy and the poorer classes, and of both men and women.

The Third Estate, published in 1917, later republished as *Eugénie* in 1972, was based on the French Revolution of 1789 and *Forget-Me-Not*, published in 1932, was based on the Paris Revolution of 1848 with two key female protagonists. Both Charles Dickens and Baroness Orczy had written

bestsellers within the Victorian and Edwardian periods based on the French Revolution and Rachel Field also wrote about the 1848 revolution with her bestseller *All This & Heaven Too*, published in 1936. All three are very good historical novels to compare to Bowen's novel as all four of the writers covered the same history within their work. This should help to determine Bowen's skill as a worthy historical novelist.

The Third Estate is essentially a love story. It is not a love story with a positive conclusion but a portrayal of two lovers who abandoned their families and responsibilities to be together. The novel's protagonist, Marquis De Sarcey, a callous and handsome aristocrat firstly married Pélagie Hautpenne, a plain, shy, good-hearted and unattractive woman, in a dowry-related contract. He falls in love with her sister Eugénie, an innocent yet selfish and beautiful woman who is susceptible to men and seems to bewitch every man she meets with her alluring charisma. They run away together, unable to fight their passion. Pélagie married De Sarcey knowing he was in love with her sister and consequently, the reader is aware that the fate of the sisters is doomed from the beginning. The novel hints at the love between De Sarcey and Eugénie as being unable to last. The dissolution of affection seems inevitable due to the way in which they came to be together. De Sarcey and Eugénie flee to Italy where they spend two blissfully happy and content years after having been told by Eugénie's father they cannot marry and they become émigrés, just as the revolution is beginning to take its violent hold on the streets of Paris.

The deserted Marquise Pélagie writes to De Sarcey two years later in Italy pleading for his help during the revolution as she is destitute and alone. He comes to her aid, leaving Eugénie in Italy and travels back to Paris, merely for the sake of his own pride and honour than through any affection for Pélagie. Eugénie is distraught at his desertion of her but continues to use her looks and charm to secure the affections of other men while Pélagie, once the Marquis is back in Paris, commits suicide as she acknowledges her husband will never be hers alone. She realises he will never truly love her. Eugénie eventually follows De Sarcey back to Paris seeking to secure his love once again. De Sarcey

calls her a whore, leaves her a large sum of money and flees with his men to fight the revolt while Eugénie, at the novel's conclusion, desperately contemplates suicide. Then suddenly realising the value of her beauty once more, she writes to her *amore* in Italy asking for another chance. The name Eugénie, also the name of the Empress Eugénie de Montijo (1826-1920) who was the wife of Emperor Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte III (1808-1873) is hugely significant here due to its aristocratic connotations. It is this name that enhances the character's extraordinary beauty in the novel and how she is perceived by others by aligning her with aristocratic heritage.

The Third Estate focuses on the lives of a group of people caught up in the midst of the early years of the French Revolution of 1789. Bowen depicts the French Revolution and the politics in society that lead to its eruption from the viewpoints of the aristocracy, women, the French monarchy and the Third Estate. The novel touches upon the Third Estate Tennis Court Oath in June [commemorated in a well-known painting by Jacques-Louis David, 1790-94], the convocation of the Estates-General, the attack on the Bastille, the Versailles March, the apparent weakness of King Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette's failure to understand the citizens and the political and financial tensions of the day. Bowen draws on France's bankruptcy, taxation issues, American links and the difficult lives of the citizens in the character of De Rochefort's lamentations and obvious wretchedness at what he perceives as the people's suffering at the hands of the aristocratic class.

De Rochefort, who fell instantly love with Eugénie at the first sight of her as she came out of her convent and Eugénie's original betrothed, is a sensitive and compassionate aristocrat who is very aware of the growing unrest amongst the people. He is so outraged and embittered by Eugénie fleeing to Italy with De Sarcey that he becomes a traitor to his social class by joining the Republican ranks and openly declaring De Sarcey, a lazy and haughty aristocrat without career or purpose, as his enemy. De Rochefort is the only character that fully comprehends the seriousness of the situation in French society and it is this understanding, severely embodied in the character of De Rochefort,

which appears to emanate from Bowen herself as it indicates her own understanding of why this historic event arose and its apparent inevitability.

Bowen undoubtedly outlines both sides within this novel. She clearly grasps why the French Revolution occurred while simultaneously portraying its effects on the monarchy and the innocent victims of the aristocracy who suffered during these terribly intense times. Bowen's coverage of this major historical event is an illustrative, thoroughly researched and realistic portrayal. The narrative of the Bastille, the cry for "Arms" which is a reference to the music of Claude-Joseph Rouget de Lisle's French Revolutionary anthem *La Marseillaise* – '*Aux, armes, citoyens* To arms, citizens!, the continuous chime of the Tocsin, the striking description of Mirabeau himself, the real figures of Marie Antoinette, De Launay, M. Besueval, M. Necker and Lafayette all play a steady part within her third person subjective narrative which allowed her to fully express the thoughts and sentiments of all characters involved.

Bowen's sympathies, unlike those of Baroness Orczy in *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (1905), are not necessarily with the aristocracy. In fact, she is quite hostile towards this class and De Sarcey in particular has been created to be the archetypal aristocrat, a characterisation responsive to the history of this time. His inability to understand and his ignorant mentality towards why the French Revolution has surfaced plays host to the growing unrest and acutely embodies the microcosm of the unfair attitudes that were in place before these events occurred. Yet alongside this is De Sarcey's ability to love completely, wholly and irrationally and this combined with De Rochefort's sentimental sensibilities, Bowen is clearly portraying aristocrats as essentially humane and subsequently, is catering for and appealing to her middle-class readership by producing a tragic historical romance spiced with aristocratic glamour, thrills and violence.

Although *The Third Estate* is a historical romance at its core, the novel's thorough research and insertion of historical places, events and names implies the story is not merely a costume drama or simply a love story set within the backdrop of an historical event. There is a deeper layer of

meaning that lies beneath the text and a strong radical theme of tyranny to be resisted resonates firmly within. The tyranny that a man can exert over a woman, the aristocratic oppression against the citizens, the great gender divide between men and women and the fervent rift between the social classes ensures *The Third Estate* characters are actually shaped by the history they relate to and this specific historical period plays a significant role as important as the characters. Georg Lukács, an important Hungarian Marxist critic of historical fiction in the first half of the twentieth century, argues that other novelists who produced successful historical novels followed this method, “Think of novels like *Moll Flanders*, *Tom Jones* etc. Their broad, realistic portrayal of the present takes in here and there important events of contemporary history which it links with the fortunes of the characters.”⁸⁶ This is in sharp contrast to Charles Dickens’s *A Tale of Two Cities*, published in 1859. Dickens explores an explosive, forceful and powerful historical situation in which individual character often seems almost unimportant whereas Bowen uses history to shape the lives of her characters.

Bowen’s coverage of the French revolution signifies her acute interest in history and her instinctive talents as a researcher. However, the novel, although a fairly decent read in its entirety, in spite of the level of engaging and dramatic intrigue, is simply not the best of her work. In Bowen’s own time it was hailed as Book of the Week by the *British Journal of Nursing* in 1917⁸⁷ which paid homage to her middle-class readership. It was also regarded as one of the best romances ever written about the French Revolution by horror writer Dennis Wheatley and it certainly is a novel that can be enjoyed to a certain extent. It represents the art of literary escapism while accurately bringing to life the horror and the spirit of Paris by educating the ways in which this historical event of the past was endured. Yet at times, one cannot wholly believe the characteristic actions of the Marquis De Sarcey. He is a cunning and selfish womaniser, a haughty and sexually appealing alpha male with

⁸⁶ Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1976, p.16

⁸⁷ The British Journal of Nursing, February 9 1918, <http://www.rcnarchive.rcn.org.uk/data/...page102-volume60-9thfebruary1918.p...> (last accessed 04/03/2012)

dark good looks who has little regard or care for those he comes into contact with. He is perhaps a twentieth century representation of the Byronic hero and due to his ability to love completely and irrationally while simultaneously able to disregard all others at mere will, he mirrors the emotionally available yet emotionally unattached mysterious and sinister Heathcliff of Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*. The reader has to question De Sarcy's composition, to ask what truly lies at the essence of his heart and try to determine whether he is good, evil, or two indefinite halves of both. He is cruel yet retains a certain degree of good qualities. He is able to love wholly and inexplicably while at the same time, he is cold, calculating and unable to forgive those he once surely professed to love. The extent of Bowen's understanding of human nature is explicit here. In examining the character of De Sarcy in his singular completeness is when one fully realises the extent of Bowen's gift in understanding the dual complexities of the human temperament. De Sarcy is portrayed in shades of grey and not simply black and white. He may not be as consistent as the rest of the characters but despite this, the Marquis is a fascinating and thought-provoking character who maintains the novel at its dramatic best and his aristocratic ignorance is excellently portrayed throughout.

When Bowen's work and characterisation is considered alongside other novels that feature the French Revolution as the essential component of the storyline, Bowen's inherent darkness is all the more apparent. In Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* and Baroness Orczy's *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, the characters are extremely black and white, an array of good and evil, the eventual and rightful union of the hero and heroine inevitable and foreseen. Bowen's characters, Eugénie, De Sarcy and even Pélagie are essentially more complicated. They are cruel yet capable of love, innocent yet capable of deceit and virtuous yet capable of manipulation and they engage in various selfish acts in pursuit of their ambitions. Orczy's novel is an adventure story first and foremost. It is light and entertaining while retaining a sense of dramatic intrigue but in its most basic literary form. Although covering the same historical event, Orczy and Bowen are two completely dissimilar writers. The love between Marguerite St Just and Percy Blakeney is relatively simple compared to Eugénie's

and De Sarcey's heart rendering emotion. Orczy uses gothic and occultic metaphors to describe the darkness and terror of the novel's narrative situations, like Bowen herself, but in Orczy's tale it adds little effect to the text due to the novel's light-heartedness and easy spirit. Orczy's peaceful and happy conclusion of a couple's union is strikingly different compared to Bowen's relatively ambiguous ending of a single woman coldly rationalising her plans for her survival. Although Bowen's main characters are also fictional, the reality of French history and its aim for accuracy is apparent whereas Orczy's is not.

Dickens's *A Tale* is a powerful and excellently written novel. It deserved to be a bestseller in its own time and remains a classic today. Marjorie Bowen's *The Third Estate* also retains a degree of power and its exploration of French history renders it an absorbing read but perhaps not as much compared to the sheer atmospheric force of some of her other novels. However, despite being two completely different writers, it is evident both Bowen and Dickens, writing with the benefit of Thomas Carlyle's monumental *The French Revolution: A History* (1837), understood the political base that formed the revolution and there are narrative concepts within the two novels that the two undeniably share. Dickens, like Bowen, depicts the tyranny of the aristocratic class and the extreme ignorance of their beliefs within society. Charles Darnay, like De Rochefort, attempts to persuade those figures that have done wrong to perceive their wrong, to understand it. Darnay's uncle in claiming, "Better to be a rational creature" shows the very crumbling of the classical ages as the citizens attempt to destroy the aristocracy. Both Dickens's Darnay and Bowen's De Sarcey are both humane enough, compassionate enough, to resolve to go back to Paris and help the distraught innocents who have written to them by letter detailing their strife in the violent-ridden streets of Paris.

Thomas Carlyle's influence on Dickens's work can also be perceived within Bowen's own descriptions of the revolution but on a slightly less detailed scale than Dickens's. Thomas Carlyle described, "Already one poor invalide has his right hand slashed off him; his maimed body dragged

to the Place De Grève and hanged there.”⁸⁸ Bowen herself wrote, “‘They are killing people in the streets’ he said, ‘They are hanging soldiers on the Place De Grève – one with his hand off.’”⁸⁹ The English Literature critic, Hilary Fraser, claimed a historical novelist technique was, “The use of the present continuous tense and the first-person plural produces a sense of immediacy, as if he and we the readers are eye-witnesses to these scenes on the streets of Paris, figure in the crowd, caught up in the drama of these cataclysmic events. It is about as far removed from the contemporaneous ideal of objective history as it is possible to be.”⁹⁰ Dickens and Carlyle may possibly have been sources of inspiration to Bowen as she also unfolds her story in real time ensuring the immediacy of events gives her story the compelling power it needs. Thomas Carlyle was quite sympathetic to law and order where religion and decency were being severely threatened. Both Dickens and Carlyle believed in the Burkean sense of the importance of stability and used the French Revolution as the basis of their warning for England’s ruling classes. Carlyle clearly thought an inactive and decorative aristocracy was at the core of an unfair society and Bowen makes it clear she believes the same. Neither Bowen nor Carlyle was in favour of overthrowing by anarchic forces but they were at the same time critical and scathing of a lazy ruling class. The description of the Marquis De Sarcey at the beginning of the novel shows her contempt for an idle aristocrat, “He was not often bored. At thirty years of age, life had scarcely begun to pall on him, and he contrived to find interest and pleasure in vice, in idleness, and in uselessness. He had no definite aim and no definite occupation...He believed in nothing but himself and the impregnable position of a peer of France. Young, brilliant, unscrupulous and completely sure of himself, he had already made his name conspicuous among his own class by his excesses, his gifts, his extravagance.”⁹¹ De Sarcey is shocked out of his indolent aristocratic complacency when he falls in love with Eugénie and it is significantly juxtaposed against

⁸⁸ Thomas Carlyle, *Selected Writings*, London, Penguin Classics, 1986 p.127

⁸⁹ Marjorie Bowen, *Eugénie*, London, Fontana, 1976 p. 140

⁹⁰ Hilary Fraser, Joanne Shattock, eds. *Writing The Past, English Literature 1830-1914*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010 p. 119

⁹¹ Bowen, *Eugénie*, p.5

the French Revolution with its politics, thoughts and feelings where the entire ancien régime was jolted out of its former place within society.

The portrayal of women in *A Tale* and *The Third Estate* ensures this is where the similarities between Dickens's and Bowen's novels end. Women play a large role within Dickens's illustration of the French Revolution compared to Bowen's female characters. Dickens' Madame Defarge is at the head of the women during the revolt while synchronized alongside this is Lucie Manette, the nurturing representation of peace, goodness and serenity. In Bowen's novel the female characters play little role in the swift developments of the revolution. The male characters in claiming "women are better away" and taking steps to ensure their hurried departure out of the city during the sudden uprising shows what the men perceive as female weakness and feminine fragility. Peter Merchant emphasises this point in more detail, "Wisdom and comfort and cheerfulness radiate, therefore, from Lucie Manette. The things that are good, gentle and magnanimous in *A Tale of Two Cities* are generally done by those to whom this 'baby, girl and woman' (p.107) is daughter or wife, or mother, or whom she otherwise tenderly draws into her circle of influence...This reversion to the safe anchorage of the domestic and the feminine is a familiar reflex in Victorian fiction... 'In *A Tale of Two Cities*,' writes Walters (p.124) 'the Victorian middle-class family appears to promise a haven of true love and humanity in the midst of the Revolution.' 'Domestic ideology,' writes Lamb (p.236), 'becomes the primary containment strategy by which Dickens attempts to morally manage and ultimately repudiate the forces of the revolution.'"⁹²

Bowen does not attempt to counter the storm of the revolution. Instead she utilises it to illustrate the difficult and unsettled relations between men and women. Bowen presents women as having little choice regarding their own lives and needing male relations, fathers and husbands to survive and although the male relations are needed, it is the men who do not understand or even

⁹² Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*, Wordsworth Editions, Ware, 1999 p. xiii (John B. Lamb, *Domesticating History: Revolution and Moral Management in A Tale of Two Cities*, Dickens Study Annual, 25, 1996, pp.227-43, Catherine Waters, *Dickens and the Politics of the Family*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997)

attempt to comprehend the position and possible plights of the women in their lives. Rather than being given the chance to counter the revolution like Lucie Mannette, Bowen's female characters are victims of it due to their dependence and entrapment within a patriarchal society. While exploring this, Bowen also emphasises the fact that the women may have more choice than it first appears, choice and a slight degree of agency, but albeit with limited resources. Bowen portrays and outlines their limitations while simultaneously demonstrating their small degree of power. It is a concurrent critique of patriarchal society and an exploration of it. Eugénie knows how to use the resources available to her. Her feminine charm and beauty, her very survival is ensured by her recognition of this triumph. Pélagie is helpless to the patriarchy, a slave within it, while Eugénie has some freedom within it. Eugénie, after all, told by her father she could not marry De Sarcey along with his threats of placing her back within the convent she only recently arrived from, chose to flee with her lover in spite of her father's opposition. Eugénie also chose to continue her life at the novel's conclusion rather than put an untimely end to it. The philosophy of *Moll Flanders* resonates strongly here and Bowen uses Defoe's ideas intentionally or unintentionally to the fullest in her own work. *Moll Flanders* believed, "She is always married too soon who gets a bad husband, and she is never married too late who gets a good one; in a word, there is no woman, deformity or lost reputation excepted, but if she manages well, may be married safely one time or another; but if she precipitates herself, it is ten thousand to one but she is undone."⁹³

Pélagie kills herself because she cannot continue with the thought of existing alongside a foolish husband who does not care for her. Bowen's Pélagie represents the Balzacian idea of suicide in a Balzacian bourgeois France, a France very much aware of its bloody and violent history. Balzac was a pioneer novelist of French tradition and a voice to the emerging French middle classes. Bowen gives measure to French middle-class society and Pélagie, without direction, lover, family, husband or friend is the epitome of Raphael's yearning for death in *The Wild Ass's Skin* and pays the dreadful

⁹³ Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders*, London, John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd, 1929 p. 74-75

price of her life for her worthless and idealistic ambitions. Her isolated life and her lonely death is a representation of her lonely heart in life, the onslaught of the revolution forcing unappealing women like her, without looks, without charm and consequently without lovers or friends, to be overlooked. Bowen enforces this point by the naming of this character, Pélagie, mirroring Saint Pelagia, the young virgin who chose death. There have been several St Pelagias used in literature but Bowen makes the character in her novel a saintly figure alongside the representation of a youthful virginal woman. This is not to be confused with the ex-dancer St Pelagia of Antioch.

Juxtaposed against this is Eugénie, who contemplates suicide but believes instead she can continue and takes control by proposing herself as another man's mistress. Eugénie fights her undoing by appealing to her next choice of lover and although her charm only bewitches De Sarcey for a limited time, she takes what she has learnt from him, the art of seduction and uses it to her advantage to ensnare the next man. Eugénie is determined to survive in whichever way she can. In this way, Bowen is presenting women as having power behind the scenes with an innate ability to influence any man they wish if only for a certain amount of time. Essentially, at the heart of this novel is a tale of an allconsuming love in its entirety but more importantly, in its most simple terms and narrative definitions, it is a story about survival. Bowen is exploring the emotional issues in life that appear to constantly affect a woman in her dealings with men, regardless of how much or how little control, regardless of the notion of feminism, she has in her own life.

Helen Hughes claimed historical romances used the past to explore issues within the author's own present.⁹⁴ Bowen used French history as a basis for gender reflections and the woman's place within relationships. The twentieth century women in Bowen's present were active in society, not just within the home but in the roles of men during the war, the suffragettes' tireless fight for votes and studying at university. Even though women during this time had more freedom than during the eighteenth century, it is the issue of love and abandonment in women's relationships

⁹⁴ Helen Hughes, *The Historical Romance*, London, Routledge, 1993, p.5

with men that Bowen is emphasising, issues that affected women in previous ages and continued to do so in Bowen's own time. Within *A Tale of Two Cities* and *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, the heroes and heroines unite, a unity based on the strength and actions of the heroine. They combine to create the perfect vision of family domesticity and love. Hughes wrote, "The union of the hero and heroine is as important as the success of the mission. The incidents are thus related to activities in the private sphere and the values they imply are embodied in the heroine rather than in the hero."⁹⁵

Bowen used the historical romance distinctively to underline the difficulties between men and women. One gender cannot save the other in her novels and even when a couple do unite, it is not in the form of a definitive and concluding contentment but in the manner of a resolved acceptance, the reluctant termination of feuds and is often surrounded by the shadow of the death of those who could not survive alongside them. Eugénie is the portrayal of a weak woman but not because she genuinely is one but because of how she is treated by the men in her life - her father, De Rochefort, De Sarcey and the Italian prince who later falls in love with her beautiful exterior. She signifies how attractive women have been treated in the past and how they were perceived - as a woman without feeling or intellectual capacity and plain Pélagie, forced to attempt to attract attention by appearing eager to learn about the world of men, gains little from her eagerness and desire to learn but depression and isolation. Pélagie and Eugénie, in addition to their loneliness, sorrow and pain, are modelled on both Defoe's pragmatic and opportunistic figures of *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*. They are the characterisations of young women who can fall prey to devious men while longingly wishing, and perhaps failing, to fulfil any ambition they may have. In creating characters such as these, Bowen, like Mary Wollstonecraft, was expressing the need of the rights of women to be exonerated.

Forget-Me-Not, an excellently written and dramatic novel, covers the Paris revolution of 1848 in great detail and is based on the Henriette Desportes scandal in Paris. It tells the story of a

⁹⁵ Ibid, p.15

young governess, Lucille Debellyme, working for an aristocratic family and the continued embittered toils between the mother, Fanny, and the father, Camille Duc du Boccage, which ultimately results in the murder of the Duchess and the Duc becomes the prime murder suspect. This leads to an uprising and the removal of a King from his throne and although it was an actual historical event, Bowen has changed the names within her novel while also covering the history in great detail.

Rachel Field, a bestselling author and a descendant of Henry Field's family, the man who Henriette Desportes later marries in America, also wrote her version of the story, *All This & Heaven Too*, to counter Bowen's *Forget-Me-Not*. Bowen brings to life the revolutionary spirit of Paris and covers the unsolved murder case in all its completeness and entirety, as does Field. Both authors show remarkable skills for research and translating it into engaging prose and both bring to the fore the apparent love and requited fondness between the governess and the Duke, the questioning and accusation of Lucille/Henriette as a murderous accomplice in court, the Duchess's apparent wretchedness to win back the love of her husband and the frequent indulgence in her Corsican fiery temperament, and the lasting impression of the horrific crime upon the French citizens as they begin to despise and attack the monarchy over the King's inability to deal with an apparently murderous peer of France, Camille du Boccage/Theobald Praslin.

All This & Heaven Too is an extremely different novel to *Forget-Me-Not*. Field champions Henriette Desportes as an idealistic and tragically romantic figure. The novel is a sympathetic portrayal of a good and admirable woman that essentially had bad events happen to her rather than acting as the instigator of them. It is a partisan novel first and foremost. Alternatively, Bowen's Lucille Debellyme is manipulative and selfish but both explore two superbly thorough sides of the same unique story. The few aspects that the two novels share is they both represent Lucille/Henriette as an essentially brave, strong, courageous young woman. Bowen explicitly focuses on the governess' bad characteristics while Field translates any perceived negative into a positive. Field briefly explores the old-fashioned anti-feminist ideas surrounding women at the time but

chooses not to bring the ideas firmly into her prose like Bowen and in both novels, the strong blond beauty of the Duc is similarly described.

Additionally, Bowen's naming of her protagonist, Lucille, meaning light, enforces just how intelligent and vivid the character Lucille is. Bowen shows her as a character who affects all she comes into contact with, whether positively or negatively. The children she looks after as a governess who grow to love her unconditionally, the Duc who is enthralled by her charismatic persona, the lawyers struck and unnerved by her intelligence and bravery within the murder case and Lucille's own future husband to be, Nathaniel Meadows, who falls completely and idealistically in love with her. Likewise, the title of the novel reinforces the same notion, *Forget-Me-Not*, and indeed as thought by Lucille herself in the novel, "She touched her lips with her thimble which was wreathed with the simple blue flower: I shall not forget them and they will not forget me – no, none of those who met me will ever forget Lucille Debelleye - no, I shall not forget."⁹⁶ Indeed, one cannot forget Lucille/Henriette, particularly as she is so firmly steeped in a country's bloody and violent history.

With this novel, Bowen's taste for gothicism comes to the fore. It is a gloomy and mysterious novel with a terribly bleak ending and it may be accurate to say this historical event may have attracted Bowen's attention as it would have been a story to exercise her darkness and gothic literary nature. It was previously mentioned within this chapter that Bowen's dark prose is acutely apparent when compared to other authors. In Bowen's work the darkness is tangible. The descriptions pay constant and creative homage to the occult, "It is like an enchantment, a witchcraft, as if she has taken possession of his very soul."⁹⁷

Forget-Me-Not contains all the themes of a middlebrow novel such as class, the home, gender and the family. The gender roles in this novel note the change in which women were being

⁹⁶ Marjorie Bowen, *Forget-Me-Not*, London, Fontana Books, 1953, p. 248

⁹⁷ Bowen, *Forget-Me-Not*, p. 128

seen and how they regarded themselves, wanting more, desiring more and not just simply to be domesticated but domesticated within wealthy homes. Bowen once again, by painting Lucille as she has, is depicting women in a somewhat negative light compared to Field, but at the same time Lucille does exhibit powerful feminist qualities. She is strong, mentally and emotionally, ambitious, but somewhat depressed as a result of this as there is no definitive path for her to exercise her intelligence. Subsequently, this intelligence soon revolves into a contempt and severe disregard for men as she perceives them as second-rate creatures driven by their sexual desires. The novel contains the idea that women were becoming confident, aware of their own abilities and educated but with no place in society to exercise these reforms and Lucille's bitter belief, "It was cruel to educate me better than my birth," shows her only true ambition can be that of an upper class domestic employee rather than have a solid career. Lucille wishes to aim high but she can still only do this within the woman's realm, the home. She is an intriguing and complex character and it is unclear whether she is to be respected and admired for her bravery and intelligence or despised for her cunning and manipulative qualities.

Similar to *The Third Estate*, *Forget-Me-Not* is also about a woman's fight for survival, self-preservation, love, lack of love and marriage. This instinct for survival outweighs everything else in the characters own lives and it is regarded by Lucille as the ultimate sacrifice and detrimental to her own well-being and happiness, "To satisfy the secret, clumsy, shamefaced lusts of a Puritan, to keep his house in perfect order, to share his enthusiasm for his childish, unpleasant creed, was it worthwhile? Only because of a deep, detested instinct of self-preservation, the inability to forego those poignant memories that must cease at an atheist's death...and yet death was longed for too. What a relief to think that I shall not go to his heaven."⁹⁸ The stark contrast between Lucille and Nathaniel's thoughts regarding their life together at the novel's conclusion once again illustrates the distinct lack of a contented finale in Bowen's literary world, "She had now much that in her youth

⁹⁸ Bowen, *Forget-Me-Not*, p. 247

she would have given half her life to have possessed – the almost idolatrous affection of her husband; the admiration of a large circle of friends; the discreet fame of a Protestant Martyr...comfort, ease, leisure, power and influence over those who felt the force of her wit, her intellect – subtle domination...But she secretly, eagerly marked the passing of every day that brought her nearer to that annihilation which was her firm conception of death...This Evangelistic parson, robust, ardent, simple, was completely happy. He had found that which none of his readings or the transmitted experiences of his elders had predisposed to him to believe possible to find – a woman who could be as alluring as an accomplished courtesan, who was a perfect housekeeper, an intelligent companion; the domestic wife and the accomplished mistress in one, a paragon that many men have laboured to find.”⁹⁹ Bowen’s use of “protestant martyr” here is also a firm acknowledgement of her English readership.

Not only are these misguided and misunderstood thoughts between a man and a woman deeply poignant in Bowen’s literary sphere, it is also sharply noticeable outside it. The same two characters in Field’s novel, Henriette and Henry, are deeply in love and in their long and blissful life together it is the ultimate portrayal of two soulmates coming together as one. The words “Love was all the more miraculous and dear because she had never expected to find it here, speaking its own language with alien accents...long ago on the night of their first meeting she had known this same sensation, this feeling of completeness with another,”¹⁰⁰ compared to Bowen’s Lucille who is ultimately and painfully acknowledging her desperate desire for death and separation from the man she is supposed to love. In *Forget-Me-Not*, the novel very much takes Lucille’s point of view and this gives the novel a sense of the impersonal and the perception of the ideological, whereas Field is an omniscient narrator. With this distinction of narrative perspectives regarding the same historical event, both writers sought to divide sympathies about a case of murder that in Bowen’s time remained unsolved. The novels explored within this chapter are neither extreme onslaughts on the

⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 245

¹⁰⁰ Rachel Field, *All This & Heaven Too*, London, Fontana Books, 1964

aristocracy nor defences of the dazzling glamour of aristocratic freedom and the opportunities they can endure. Also, these novels are not stamped with the approval of controversial feminism or an explanation and excuse of patriarchal domination and its supreme reign within society. Once again, Bowen's ambiguity rises to the surface here as rather than defend or critique the society that allowed such violent and bloody acts in history to occur, she preferred to point out the errors in such societies, rather than devise an answer for such occurrences and to stop such acts from happening again. The only time however, when Bowen set out to offer explicit critique of particular societies and to identify the various failings within them was when prejudice, isolation and hostility afflicted certain unique individuals. This is explored in the next chapter.

The Opposing Forces of Otherness: The cultural and historical significance of being different in *General Crack*, *The Rocklitz* and *Because of These Things*

As previous chapters have already indicated, social discord and alienation in society are among Bowen's recurrent themes. This was shown in the lonesome spiritual figure Giordano Bruno in *The Triumphant Beast*, the tyrannical ruling of the tormented Duke Gian Visconti in *The Viper of Milan*, the psychically gifted and sensitive Henry Darrell in *The Veil'd Delight*, the beautiful yet troubled Rose Lynwood in *The Rake's Progress*, the honourable Richard III who was sorely deceived by those closest to him in *Dickon* and the pale, mournful and melancholic figure of Pélagie in *The Third Estate* who was often overlooked and disregarded by the men around her due to her fragility and lack of appeal. This shows that alienation and estrangement in society which can perhaps be linked with the romantic and Gothic legacy in her work was an important premise for many of Bowen's novels and a theme that must be discussed as it is such a recurring theme within several of her stories.

This chapter links social alienation with opposition, difference and the exploration of the 'other' by studying the historical novels that were based in Italy, Scotland, Germany, Austria and other parts of Central Europe. The previous chapters in examining religion, dandyism, murder, power and selfish desires identify those in society who are separate, detached, solitary and/or persecuted. Leading on from this is the exploration of the other as an identity claim, the existence and experiences of those within society who are deemed to be different from the ordinary and the familiar. The theme will be pursued by examining three historical novels written and published under the Marjorie Bowen and George Preedy pseudonyms.

Because of the These Things was published in 1915, *The Rocklitz* was published in 1930 and *General Crack* was published in 1928. All three novels centrally explore the narrative themes of opposition in history and the sense of the 'other' as perceived by society. The oppositions work in

different ways, one country versus another, man versus woman, Catholicism versus Protestantism, actions versus consequences, irrationality versus rationality, life and death, love versus hate, free will versus fate and destiny, good versus evil and wisdom versus ignorance. At the time of the publication of *Because of These Things*, opposition certainly would have been at the forefront of many writers' minds as the period of world war one ensured the perception of belonging to a world that was almost alien and self-destructive.

Because of These Things is about a melancholy Scot, Francis Moutray, who has a severe tendency to succumb to overt religious zealousness, extreme urges and mental delusions such as seduction, supernatural fears and symbolic evil. The grim self-absorbed religion of James Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* seems to be lurking somewhere in the background. Religion dictates his every thought and action and his psychological repression appears to represent Scotland itself thereby showing the chains of tradition, ancestral curses and its effects upon certain individuals. In his travels to Italy with a friend, he meets and immediately falls in love with Giovanna Odaleschi, a carefree, exultant and striking young woman with a kind heart and honourable intentions. Despite their attempts to put an end to their love, they give in to their desires and Giovanna leaves her life in Italy for Francis, abandons all she knows and marries him in Scotland, despite his Protestant beliefs and her Romanist background. During their six-year marriage, Giovanna bears a son called Elphin. Despite their son, Giovanna's and Francis' life together is a mere disaster. Francis' overt religiousness leads him to despise his wife and son. He consistently perceives them as the 'other' in his life, those unfamiliar strangers he does not and cannot understand. They are the consequences of a deed that he severely regrets, an awful reminder that he chose to follow his desires rather than repress them which any god-fearing man should do. This inevitably, in his innate irrationalism and abject turmoil, seeks to repress his desires for his wife even more. Giovanna continues to love him steadfastly throughout and consequently her fierce loyalty to him leads to her untimely death. Francis, in his troubled mental state and borderline insanity, cannot and does not grieve for his loss.

Francis Moutray is essentially a solipsist. He cannot understand Giovanna in any sense and struggles within himself to view her version of reality. His fanatical beliefs and supernatural fears represent and encourage his solipsistic nature and seek consistently to distort versions of the truth. His irrationality is eerily acute and compared to this is Giovanna's calm sanity, her refusal to be fazed by any mental obstacle he throws in her path and her serene rationalisation highlights strongly his own severe psychosis. He perceives her with repulsion, her beliefs are wrong, the country she is from is damned. She is tainted with evil and corruption. Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophical view of the dramatic essences of Greek Tragedies, the two opposing forces of the Apollonian and Dionysian is apparent here, an aspect of Bowen's modern-mindedness though not exactly 'modernism'.

Dionysian Francis' borderline insanity and religious intoxication is sharply contrasted with Apollonian Giovanna's light simplicity, her brightness, her liberality and rational stability. His religiousness represses his desires and in wanting freedom of release, his delusions seek to fiercely attack his already melancholic nature regarding his distorted views of good and evil. According to Francis' own perception, it is he who is righteous and pure while simultaneously Giovanna is evil incarnate. In her book *Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism*, Maud Ellmann argues, "The semiotic, like the Dionysian, is associated with sonority and rhythm...in which language coalesces with the body and the orchestration of the drives; whereas the symbolic, like the Apollonian, articulates these primal forces into rational, intelligible forms."¹⁰¹ Bowen presents Giovanna to Francis as his chance for genuine salvation, his chance to combine his Dionysian instincts with a tendency for the fanatical, with Giovanna's Apollonian nature, a chance to iron out his destructive emotional nature but he rejects this opportunity and in his rejection of her hurts her immeasurably. After six years of marriage, Giovanna ceases to be the Italian stranger but Francis continues to view her as the local society of Scotland, Glennilich, perceives her, as the other, the stranger, the witch, the enchantress, an evil seductress. Due to Francis' cluttered thoughts surrounding his desires but aligning them with the

¹⁰¹ Maud Ellmann, ed. *Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism*, Harlow, Longman, 1994, p. 25

baseness of evil, Giovanna becomes the object of his hatred and by following his original desire, in marrying Giovanna and taking her to Scotland, ensures their life together ends in disaster. This signifies the Schopenhauerian idea that expressed desire leads to intolerable pain. However, Bowen is also illustrating here that it is not because the desire is actual pain itself but because of the human inability to deal with the consequences of following those desires and once again she is alluding to the fact that both Apollonian and Dionysian forces are needed in any partnership.

Anticipating several of Freud's psychoanalytical ideas which appeared in his *Introductory Lectures* in 1917, later than the publication of *Because of These Things*, the novel resonates with psychoanalytic themes and many of Bowen's narrative ideas can be closely aligned to Freudian philosophy. Bowen portrays love as the answer to the mental and conflicting struggles within one's own mind and is showing the effects that can occur when one rejects the possibility and plausibility that love can save one from oneself but the choice must be true love and not a love of convenience as the latter will certainly lead to suffering. Similarly, Freud wrote on the psychological framework of love and creation, "A strong egoism is a protection against disease, but in the last resort we must begin to love in order that we may not fall ill, and must fall ill if, in consequence of frustration, we cannot love."¹⁰²

Francis' repression resonates strongly throughout and in this respect, the Freudian sublime and the terror of the uncanny also occurs here. His beliefs are repetition, his thoughts, fears and superstitions are repetition. Despite his singular indulgence in pleasure which was marrying Giovanna, he does not allow this to save him. His beliefs are the ruin of his mental stability and his convictions lead to the untimely death of her. If he had allowed himself to love, their life would have had a much more secure pleasurable outcome filled with happiness, love and contentment but instead his melancholic tendencies infect his past, his present and his future. Similarly, as Harold

¹⁰² Ellmann, *Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism*, p.185

Bloom explains in an essay on Freudian sublimity and catastrophe, the uncanny may be “in reality nothing new or foreign, but something familiar and old-established in the mind that has been estranged only by the process of repression.”¹⁰³ In viewing his marriage as a mistake, he seeks to alter this mistake by building churches, adhering to Scottish tradition and persecuting the innocent, viewing Giovanna as a demon and by doing so, by engaging in such irrational, repetitive and destructive behaviour, he is inevitably doomed. Giovanna’s familiarity to him should have been his main source of ease and satisfaction but instead her familiarity becomes alien to him. She represents a source of terror and religious retribution. In this way of thinking, he is inevitably doomed and Bowen is illustrating that human beings are, in actual effect, their own worst enemies and are consistently responsible for their inner conflict and emotional torment. In exploring the ideas of terror and repression, Bowen draws on the themes of Scottish Gothic.

Marjorie Bowen was familiar with Scottish history which she explored in her novel *The Glen ‘O’ Weeping*, published in 1907. She had a knowledge of the opposition between the lowlands and the highlands and she sets out to portray a similar theme of opposition here, the differences between Scotland and Italy, the two alienating forces that can occur between man and woman, heretics and papists, warm sunshine versus cold and bleak winters, dark and light, sanity and insanity, evil versus good. Harold Bloom argues, “We cannot let go of our three fundamental fantasies: the primal scene, which accounts for our existence; the seduction fantasy, which justifies our narcissism; and the castration complex, which explains to us the mystery of sexual differentiation. What the three fantasy scenes share is the fiction of an originating catastrophe, and so a very close relation to the necessity of defence.”¹⁰⁴ The primitive and natural scenes of wintry Scotland, Francis’ sexual urgings for Giovanna and in his inability to understand her gender, her femininity, the cruel accusations of witchcraft and sorcery, the sacred love and unified bond

¹⁰³ Perry Meisel, ed. *Freud, A Collection of Critical Essays*, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1981, p.219

¹⁰⁴ Ellmann, *Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism*, p.194

between Giovanna and their son Elphin, which further leads to Francis' alienation, cold hatred and resentment between father and son, builds a Freudian picture of the inevitable onslaught of tragedy, devastation and disaster. This oncoming danger seeks to reinforce Francis' repression as a defence mechanism, a defence mechanism that is wholly unnecessary because the threat and fear is within his own mind and not emanating from Giovanna herself.

The Rocklitz, published under the George Preedy pseudonym, is an excellent novel based on a seventeenth-century German emperor's mistress. Magdalena Sibylla Von Nietschütz, was the real-life daughter of Major-General von Nietschütz. Trained to be a seductress by her governess and father, she becomes the mistress of Johann Georg IV, the Elector of Saxony, to save the Nietschütz family from destitution and ruin in the novel. Before becoming a mistress of royalty, Madelon, as Bowen calls her, becomes a victim of her own choices and her refusal to marry the man she truly loves, Delphicus Haverbeck, and instead making the choice to reject her own moral code by becoming Johann's mistress, ensures her abject unhappiness to the end. She refuses to marry Delphicus because of his poverty but Delphicus' military skill, genius and fierce ambition, similar to Christian in *General Crack*, enables him to quickly rise to the top of the army ranks. Madelon, knowing she has made a severe mistake in choosing Johann over Delphicus, tries to rectify her decision by telling Delphicus on several occasions how much she loves him. Although Delphicus returns her love, he refuses to become involved with the Elector's mistress and his perception of her is tainted with what he perceives to be the ruin and the cheap covetousness of Johann's desires. Madelon and Delphicus both die towards the novel's conclusion, but their love endures even beyond death as Haverbeck's spirit is seen to be hovering over Madelon's dead body in the novel's final paragraph.

The Rocklitz received admiring and enthusiastic reviews when it was published. Such reviews appeared in the *Morning Post*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Daily News* and *The Referee*; "Indeed a work of genius...Mr George Preedy made his reputation as an historical novelist with *General Crack*, but *The*

Rocklitz, which resembles *Wuthering Heights*, in its sense of impending doom and also, at the long last, in its glimpse of Love outliving death, far transcends that achievement,”¹⁰⁵ “A really first-rate story, life-like, vigorous and genuinely exciting, almost every chapter has its own unexpected thrill. Many people found *General Crack* very good; I fancy that most of them will find its successor even more to their taste,”¹⁰⁶ “Better than *Jew Suss*. A brilliant sensational novel,”¹⁰⁷ and, “I would commend Mr George’s Preedy’s *The Rocklitz* to those who hold that this country has ceased to produce first-class historical novels. I cannot praise too highly the author’s consummate craftsmanship. His style and construction are faultless, his character-drawing is superb.”¹⁰⁸¹⁰⁹ Also, a review in the *Derby Daily Telegraph* claimed, “One of the most successful novels of the season, the intrigue and adventure will hold you enthralled from the very first word. Transcending even the famous *General Crack*, which created such a sensation both as a novel and film, *The Rocklitz* has been acclaimed unquestionably the work of a genius. The background of this splendid romance is 17th century Saxony, with its superb pageantry and desperate plotting...*The Rocklitz* is one of those brilliant novels which will remain the memory of one of the outstanding literary works of our time.”¹⁰³

Haverbeck’s military skill, his intelligence, his strict morality and his alert rationalism is sharply contrasted with Johann’s weaknesses, his apparent slavery to his own desires, his ineptness in the novel and it is a contrast with a very deliberate aim, the powerful exploration of strength versus weakness. Madelon is also resolutely dissimilar to Johann, not just in the sense of gender where the woman’s sentiment is often set against the man’s lustful passions as she has to succumb to a man for her family’s monetary survival, but in her characteristics. Madelon is naturally enchanting. She is a clever woman and her sexual magnetism is so potent that it is perceived by others in the royal court to be sheer witchcraft. She is deemed as the other, evil personified,

¹⁰⁵ E.B Osborn, *The Morning Post*, London, 1930

¹⁰⁶ Ralph Straus, *The Sunday Times*, London, 1930

¹⁰⁷ Sylvia Lynd, *The Daily News*, London, 1930

¹⁰⁸ Edward Crickmay, *The Referee*, London, 1930

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000327/19300325/149/0007>, last accessed 18th March 2019

whereas Johann's animalistic nature is perceived to be without fault. In placing both Madelon and Haverbeck against Johann in such an unambiguous contrast, she is depicting both characters as divine equals. Johann's gloomy awareness of Madelon and Haverbeck's love for each other causes Johann to despise Haverbeck and his jealousy and resentment leads him to arrange the murder of Delphicus Haverbeck. Madelon, unable to exist without her true love, dies shortly after.

General Crack tells the story of a twenty-eight year old man, whose military skill and precision has enabled him to rise to the top of the army ranks and secure his place among aristocratic generals. Aristocrats who hate him for his genius. His infamy and skill has guaranteed his immense wealth which allows him to lead a life of fighting for those that will pay him the most rather than the greatest and most honourable cause. Consequently, there are those who hate him for his genius.

General Crack was set within the European wars, the seven-year war which occurred between 1756-1763, where the Bavarians fought on the side of the Hapsburgs and the novel relates the unhappy dealings between Prince Leopold of Bavaria, whose character is based on the real-life figure of Maximilian III Joseph 1727-1777 and whose reign ran from 1745-1777. General Crack, also known as Christian in the story, whose father belonged to the ancient House of Ketlar, has a shaky familial heritage which is deemed to be unworthy due to the House of Ketlar belonging to Courland which was seized by Russia. His mother was a dancer and this lowly birth affects Christian and his actions throughout the entire novel, despite his fame, his riches and his immeasurable power over many people. Due to Leopold's inability to command vast armies, he enlists Christian for help to secure the throne, promising him the hand of his sister, the Archduchess Maria Luisa and the chance for Christian to finally enter royalty. Christian decides to fight for Leopold and promises to make him Emperor but refuses the Archduchess and instead decides to take Leopold's betrothed for his own, the innocent Princess Eleanora Anhalt-Dessau, by any means necessary. Leopold and Christian's immense dislike for one another and their bitter rivalry causes them to fight over Eleanora. In the

same vein that Haverbeck is juxtaposed against Johann in *The Rocklitz*, Leopold is contrasted against Christian. Christian succeeds in winning her by marriage, but Leopold betrays him by winning Eleanora's love and seducing her in Christian's absence. As a result, Christian becomes tormented. He is heartbroken, full of angst and extremely pained by Leopold's betrayal, but this pain lasts only a short while. In his rationality and developed wisdom and pride, Christian refuses to seek revenge, in spite of his desire to, and instead continues to assist Leopold, crowning him with the Emperor's diadem as promised. At the novel's conclusion, Christian chooses to die, not by suicide, but on his own terms, by fighting to the death when he knows he cannot win. In this way, we see what life means to Christian, that he would rather abandon his own life than have his pride hurt and his strict morality severed by a weak and insignificant character such as Leopold of Bavaria.

Published under the pseudonym of George R. Preedy, *General Crack* was a bestseller in Bowen's time. She was encouraged to write a preface for the new edition published in 1930 due to the interest it aroused among its readers. Bowen describes the novel as a "baroque romance"¹¹⁰ and certainly the mastery of this novel inspired the imagination of its readers. The preface details Bowen's ideas behind the novel, her reasons for the character of General Crack. She wrote,

The writer feels presumptuous in giving the new edition of this work (first published in 1928) the dignity of a preface, but has been encouraged to do so by the recent interest roused in the historical....novel. Many readers have been interested enough in the central figure of this baroque romance to make efforts to search for him in the stern pages of history; there he is not to be found by name...There are many prototypes of General Crack...The man who changed sides as easily as he threw off his gloves, who never inquired into the cause for which he fought, showed not so much inferior morality as a superior intellect...These vaulting and beplumed heroes...had their weaknesses and their downfalls. Sometimes they consulted astrologers or confessors, sometimes humbled themselves in secret before the thought of God... "Therefore, remember you of old kindness, and however I fare, Jesu be your guide in all places," so spoke the

¹¹⁰ Marjorie Bowen, *General Crack*, London, John Lane The Bodley Head, 1928, pp. vii-xii

medieval chivalry. Is there not some echo of this in my Uncle Toby's passionate exclamation over the slaughtered English soldiers – "They have gone to Heaven for it!" – the lament for the inadequacy and the valiancy, the parting and splendour in the dust?...The following is the story of a man who cast all away save "that noble quality misnamed pride."¹¹¹

The reference to Uncle Toby in Laurence Sterne's novel *Tristram Shandy* is significant here. Both novels were set in the same period of the European wars and Bowen's reference to Uncle Toby highlights the military skill, financial gains and conflicting temperaments of the novel. In his discussions on the *Tristram Shandy* novel and the English Novel itself within the eighteenth century, John Richetti claims,

The economically privileged and disengaged individual, devoid of communal function or membership or occupation, pleasing himself and ignoring or disparaging conventional knowledge of the external social and political world, possesses generalized significance...that human beings were the makers of their world. Sterne's odd genius is to render this claim in a very complex fashion by dramatizing both the absurdity and the truthful inevitability of such solipsism in a world of privileged and materially secure individualism.¹¹²

Christian, although highly aware of the politics of his day, the wars and foreign policies of the countries involved, also chooses to disparage the external world. It means little to him, it is a force used to gain riches, to display his power, nothing more. In this respect, there is a grave sense of not belonging here. With the jealousy and hatred imposed upon him from other men, the distinct fear of him thrust upon Christian by Eleanora, the animosity between Christian and Leopold, there is an acute sense of Christian being the 'other', the one that does not belong and in his solipsistic framework, Christian is only aware of and insolently sure of his own mind. His wants, his desires, his pain, his steps to overcome his pain, his morality, his righteousness, his pride and his right to die

¹¹¹ Bowen, *General Crack*, pp. vii-xii

¹¹² John Richetti, *The English Novel in History 1700-1780*, London, Routledge, 1999, p. 277

freely are his only concerns. However, his solipsistic nature alters towards the end of the novel and his wisdom outweighs all else. Christian takes charge of his own destiny by denying his pleasures, his desires and despite his belief in God, the heavens and his suspicions of the existence of fatalistic determinism, he accepts what he perceives as his own wretched fate.

As mentioned previously, *General Crack* was published to very positive reviews and at its time was compared to the notable German novel of the twentieth century, *Jew Suss* by Lion Feuchtwanger and the fantastical adventure bestseller of the previous century, *The Prisoner of Zenda* by Anthony Hope. In a review from 2LO, the London radio station that begun its broadcast in 1922, it was claimed, “Mr Preedy is a real find. Here is a story which in the richness and colour of its background can stand comparison with *Jew Suss*, and which also possesses the one quality in which *Jew Suss*, to my mind, was deficient – a hero in whom the reader feels a strong and affectionate interest. General Crack himself is quite a fascinating figure,” and in *The Daily Express* it was hailed as, “The best book of its kind since *The Prisoner of Zenda*. Before the first chapter is finished some touch of magic in the writing fires that spirit of romance that lies deep down in all of us.” *Jew Suss* and *General Crack* certainly share some distinct similarities. Both protagonists are on the path to enlightenment, acceptance and wisdom. Suss Openheimer rises to the highest ranks within Germany in spite of his Jewish background due to his financial genius and his success creates enemies, jealousy and bitterness amongst all. The rape and death of his daughter by Karl Alexander leads Suss to exact revenge on all but accepts that vengeance is misplaced and peace and wisdom are more essential to the human mind than plans for revenge. According to Roland Dollinger in his essay, *In Defence of Reason and Justice: Lion Feuchtwanger’s Historical Novels of the Weimar Republic*, Suss is on a spiritual journey by becoming a man of Eastern wisdom from a man of Western wealth,

For Feuchtwanger, *Jud Suss* was primarily a novel of ideas, dealing with a number of philosophical oppositions such as *vita activa* versus *vita contemplativa*, outer versus inner life, appearance versus essence, power versus wisdom, the pursuit of one’s desires versus the denial of desires, Nietzsche versus Buddha...In order to

make Suss Oppenheimer an allegorical figure...His inner transformation had to be seen as the result of his own decision.¹¹³

Freudian psychoanalysis resonates within both of these texts. Maud Ellman argues, "Perhaps the most disturbing implication of the Oedipus complex is that love is never merely a relationship between two people but always a contest between three, even if the third is present only as a psychic obstacle...Almost all these triangles involve two men competing for the favours of a woman...Thus the woman, ostensibly the object of desire, is reduced to the go-between in an erotic tug of war between the men...The beloved is often chosen by the lover, not because of her intrinsic charms, but because she is the object of another man's infatuation."¹¹⁴ This love triangle appears in both *The Rocklitz* and *General Crack*. Christian and Leopold use Eleanora as the trophy to be won in the midst of the growing hostility between them. She is not only the symbol of their sexual and emotional desires, but she also represents a goal, an attainment of the assertion of power because it is such a fervent struggle for supremacy between the two men. Leopold envies Christian's dominance, his authoritarian skills and his influence and these qualities in Christian make Leopold's shortcomings, his weakness, his selfishness, his misplaced sensitivity and ingrained self-pity, all the more apparent. Leopold fully recognises this and despises Christian even more for it. Simultaneously, Christian, for all his strength, envies Leopold terribly. His jealousy regarding Leopold's royal heritage makes Christian's lowly birth and crumbling ancestral lineage seem remarkably plebeian. They are both mere reflections of what the other could have been in their circumstances and if they had immediately accepted this alternate possibility and each other, they could have avoided the immense pain that was to follow.

In using such themes for her work, the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer is apparent here.

¹¹³ Karl Leydecker, ed. *German Novelists of the Weimar Republic, Intersections of Literature and Politics*, New York, Camden House, 2006, p.65

¹¹⁴ Ellman, *Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism*, p.13

Preedy's characters consistently challenge the meaning of life, debating its uncertainty and its worth. The theme of irrationality versus rationality was a debate Bowen was fully aware of and her protagonists are very often marked by struggle, pain, dissatisfaction and death in their wish to follow their desires. Preedy describes Christian as a genius in her preface and Schopenhauer describes the genius as being able to perceive beauty in objective terms without their will affecting their perception.

According to Mary Troxell in her essay on Schopenhauer's philosophy, "Schopenhauer argues...the ability to regard nature aesthetically is the hallmark of the genius...The genius, claims Schopenhauer, is one who has been given by nature a superfluity of intellect over will."¹¹⁵ In the case of *General Crack* and *The Rocklitz*, asceticism is represented as the female form. Christian and his perception of Eleanora as an object of aesthetic beauty rather than human desire shows his intellect controls his will. The chase to secure her before Leopold can marry her, his choice to leave her innocence intact after marriage, ensures it is Leopold who succeeds in seducing her first. Likewise, with Delphicus Haverbeck, although he loves Madelon immeasurably and his awareness of her suffering under the control of Johann is tangible, he cannot allow himself or her to use each other for sexual gratification and comfort. Bowen also shows the representation of human will in Johann. For Johann, Madelon represents the mythological figure of Leda and subsequently, his will is repeatedly manifested within the realms of sexual desire which leads to severe loneliness and frustration for him as he cannot secure Madelon's love when she so firmly loves another.

Troxell also claims that Schopenhauer believed that personal suffering is the pinnacle of morality and sacrifice is the epitome of selfless behaviour and this occurs when one denies their complete desires, where consequently wisdom and redemption is the final result.¹¹⁶ As stated previously in this chapter, Christian chooses to endure his suffering rather than exacting revenge. It

¹¹⁵ <http://www.iep.utm.edu/schopenh/> last accessed 29th March 2017

¹¹⁶ <http://www.iep.utm.edu/schopenh/> last accessed 29th March 2017

is only after he experiences his pain to unendurable lengths that his rational mind returns in full force allowing him to transcend the world of human suffering and thus concludes his own journey on earth. In his suffering, he recognises his vulnerability, his humanity and it is this recognition that develops his higher spiritual self and in not succumbing to vengeful behaviour even though he desires it, he chooses peace in his resignation and acceptance. With the thematic portrayal of such ideas, Bowen is also alluding to Eastern Buddhist philosophy in this text.

Bowen makes it clear that both rational and emotional capacities are needed in any individual. To use one or the other faculties separately will not alleviate one's suffering but extend and emphasise it. The rationality of both Christian and Madelon leads to torment which consequently leads to death. The irrationality of Johann and Leopold leads to feelings of inferiority and a distinct lack of intellectual capabilities. All characters are essentially unhappy in the pursuit and attainment of their desires. Madelon, Haverbeck and Christian all eventually renounce their desires but their salvation is in choosing death, a form of resignation, but like Schopenhauer, not death by suicide. Their resignation is acceptance and in their acceptance, death swiftly follows. It would appear at first glance that Bowen is affirming Schopenhauer's belief, that once one renounces their desires they may as well choose death as there is nothing else left to live for. However, it is death in these novels, particularly in respect of the demise of both Madelon and Haverbeck that a stage of transcendental spiritual enlightenment is reached as the love that exists between them is a pure desire, a genuine human love which ensures its strength and potency continues beyond this earth. Bowen's apparent pessimism actually contains streaks of strong optimism here despite their continuous disengagement from the society around them frequently leading to their untimely deaths. It is essentially these individuals that embody the values of life, they know and respect fully the power of love, their strength is testament to the suffering that such individuals can face and the enduring resonance and importance of wisdom and maturity is acknowledged and respected in the midst of their continuous adversities. Additionally, in

Christian's resolution to die with his pride and honour firmly intact, he dies a superb and brave hero.

In the course of studying Bowen's treatment of alienation and isolation, this chapter has established the importance of the supernatural theme of witchcraft and dark romanticism within a historical framework in the novels. This is further explored in chapter six by examining the supernatural's overt links with ancient occultic practices.

The Historical and Occultic Blend: The examination of Sorcery, Satanism and Witchcraft in *Black Magic and The Poisoners*

The 'other' as discussed in the previous chapter, 'The Opposing Forces of Otherness,' can also represent a mode of identity and in this sense the description of the practice of witchcraft is a declaration of the sane and rational world defined by contrast with the supernatural and the occult. Marjorie Bowen's novel *Black Magic*, published in 1909, has been referred to as "the queerest novel in the English Language"¹¹⁷ as detailed in the preface of the novel and indeed only a lively imagination could have conjured such a story. A weird, haunting and powerful thriller, it has an excellent ending and maintains a strong degree of horror throughout. The accounts of sorcery, satanic worship and the evocative black magic scenes in the novel are of a rare breed and the novel's vivid narration almost presents the plot as an adventurous foray into the darker realms of hell, heaven and the omniscient existence of the supernatural which were to become key themes in much of Bowen's later work in the years to come. Gothic melodrama was a particularly potent focal point in Bowen's work, even when the genre of the novel was predominantly historical, gothic and supernatural themes became the enduring narratives of much of Bowen's literary development.

Based on the legendary figure of Pope Joan, the novel traces the path of how a female sorceress Ursula Rooselaare by pretending to be a man, Dirk Renswoude, becomes the most famous man in Rome, the Pope. According to the website www.newadvent.org which is a catholic website for news, Chronicler Jean De Mally alleged that the female Pope Joan was described as a skilful and talented woman disguised in male clothing and she became notary to the Curia, Cardinal and then the Pope but her gender was finally discovered when she was travelling one day on horseback and

¹¹⁷ Marjorie Bowen, *Black Magic*, London, Sphere, 1909, p.9

gave birth to a son, she was stoned to death.¹¹⁸ The New Advent website also describes how Martin of Troppau detailed that the Englishman John of Mainz who had the papal chair for two years was actually a woman, she taught science and gained a great deal of widespread respect, gave birth and perished. The New Advent deny the legend and various reasons for its improbability.¹¹⁹ The Renaissance Scholar, C. A. Patrides (1930-1986) in his book, *Premises and Motifs in Renaissance Thought and Literature*, also denied Pope Joan's existence as he claimed, "Pope Joan is not an historical figure. But she is part of history that in her existence has been so persistently believed in that at times belief threatened to create the thing it contemplated."¹²⁰ It is this improbability that may have attracted Bowen to create such stories based on ancient historical legends due to her ambition to produce stories that were tinged with strangeness, traced with gothic romance, brooding gothic atmospheres, dark and unusual love stories and romances that were set far apart from any realist tendencies.

Black Magic is set in the Middle Ages, the 11th Century, and the protagonist Ursula Rooselaare also known in the novel as Dirk, travels this sinister and mysterious path of sorcery with Thierry of Dendermonde, her accomplice in mastering the dark arts. Dirk exudes a magnetic power, a dynamic influence of extraordinary authority and he seeks to manipulate and destroy those around him, particularly Jacobea of Martzburg, Thierry's beloved. After developing what Dirk perceived as a sacred friendship, Thierry eventually rejects him and betrays Dirk to his enemies but Dirk manages to flee, despite his love for Thierry and his severe loss and misery at the betrayal of his adored and most treasured companion. Aided by Satan's helpers, Dirk becomes a great Scholar, he progresses to become Cardinal Michael II of Rome and then eventually the Pope. Thierry, in all his weakness and wretchedness meets Dirk once again, mumbling his insincere apologies while appealing to a God he believes has forsaken him. Dirk forgives him, despite the warnings not to do so from Satan's helpers

¹¹⁸ <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08407a.htm>, last accessed 28th November 2016

¹¹⁹ <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08407a.htm>, last accessed 28th November 2016

¹²⁰ C.A. Patrides, *Premises and Motifs in Renaissance Thought and Literature*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1982, p. 152

and offers him promises of great wealth and power, his love for Thierry once again in full force at the sight of his return. Dirk, placing his disguise aside on several different occasions by becoming his real female self, Ursula, but with his face still firmly hidden encourages Thierry to fall in love with her. Thierry, attracted to Ursula's sexual charisma and the alluring mystery that surrounds her falls in love with her. With bordering suspicions that Ursula and Dirk are the same person forming on the edge of his conscious mind, Thierry once again betrays Dirk to his enemies despite his promises to remain faithful and God's gradual ascending wrath at the Satanic Papacy in addition to the gathering armies marching to seek her destruction reaches a climax. Thierry's final betrayal destroys them both. Ursula/Dirk's body withers into dust and Thierry dies shortly after while desperately attempting to discover Dirk's true identity and gender among the body's remains. One of the major influences for *Black Magic* may have been Frederick Rolfe's *Hadrian The Seventh* which was a story inspired by Adrian IV, the only English Pope, and based on the imaginary Adrian the seventh, published in 1904 by The Bodley Head where dreams, wish fulfilment, romantic exoticism and fantasy abound.

As the novel was published in 1909, there may have been a neo-romantic interest here in Bowen's work, particularly as the year 1909 was shortly after the period of the decadents and the Wildean cult of opulent luxury which had left its mark on Rolfe's novel. Bowen's novel certainly shows traces of a romantic medievalism combined with an aesthetic relish for traditional and archaic luxury. This is shown in the vividly expressive description of Ursula's lifeless remains.

He looked now at the proud smooth face on the pillow; the gems of the papal crown gleaming above the red locks, the jewelled chasuble sparkling in the strengthening dawn until he was nearly fooled into thinking the bosom heaved beneath. He was alone. At least he could know. The air was like incense, sweet and stifling; his blood seemed to beat in his brain with a little foolish sound of melody; a shaft of grey light fell over the splendours of the bed, the roses and dragons, hawks and hounds sewn on the curtains and coverlets; from the Pope's garments rose a subtle and beautiful perfume...Without the thunder muttered. To know. He lifted the dead Pope's arm; there seemed to be neither weight nor substance under the stiff silk...his cold fingers unclasped the heavy chasuble, underneath lay perfumed samite, white and soft. An awful sensation crept through his veins.¹²¹

¹²¹ Marjorie Bowen, *Black Magic*, London, Sphere, 1909, p.313-315

The descriptions of ecclesiastical garments, precious jewels and archaic fabrics hints at a particularly romantic vision and the reference to samite, which was a luxurious silk fabric interlaced with gold used for dressmaking in the Middle Ages, shows a definitive Tennyson influence as Tennyson alluded to samite in his poem *Idylls Of The King*. Bowen's language conjures up the fantasy-medievalism of Tennyson's poetry with such allusions in her prose.

Being a particularly avid enthusiast for the historical but also the gothic and occult genres, Bowen distinctly manages to fuse the three genres together in several of her novels by exploring the major theme of good versus evil, God versus the Devil. Her unique talent for dark narration lends the novel genuine depth and character. In *Religion and The Decline of Magic*, Keith Thomas claims, "The personification of Good rested upon the same basis as the personification of Evil, and the two concepts were inextricably interlocked...Above all the immanent Devil was an essential complement to the notion of an immanent God...It was only the triumph of monotheism which made it necessary to explain why there should be evil in the world if God was good. The Devil thus helped to sustain the notion of an all-perfect divinity."¹²² *Black Magic* is an exploration of two opposing forces, evil versus good, God versus the Devil. God is minimal in the novel as the Devil's presence appears to be mightier than that of God or so it appears until the novel's conclusion. The power of God is eventually presented as all-encompassing and his angels descend from the heavens above to join the fight. The mysterious, stormy and extraordinary illustrative portrayal of the weather in this scene symbolises God's vengeance as a result of the acts of the devil worshipping sorceress. God in this novel triumphs.

The figures of the witch and the sorceress symbolise the historical gothic and the supernatural concepts in this novel implies proto-feminist ideologies. Keith Thomas' definitions of witchcraft depicts Bowen's portrayal of Ursula in microcosm, "It is possible to isolate that kind of 'witchcraft' which involved the enjoyment...of some occult means of doing harm to other people... In

¹²² Thomas, *Religion And The Decline of Magic*, p.567-568

this sense the belief in witchcraft can be defined as the attribution of misfortune to occult human agency. A witch was a person of either sex (but more often female) who could mysteriously injure other people...It was only in the Middle Ages that a new element was added to the European concept of witchcraft...This was the notion that the witch owed her powers to having made a deliberate pact with the Devil...Witchcraft had become a Christian heresy, the greatest of all sins, because it involved the renunciation of God and deliberate adherence to his greatest enemy."¹²³

Bowen bridges the gap between the historical and the gothic by choosing to illuminate dark events in history. Her extremely active and distinctly melancholic imagination was uniquely able to recreate stories that were embedded with a gritty historical realism while simultaneously maintaining great degrees of atmospheric and vividly graphic prose. Witchcraft, sorcery, black magic rites, devil worship and the renouncing of God abound within her literature. By choosing to write about so many different historical events, fictional or otherwise, in different periods of history in varying countries and the thematic use of physical and psychological violence, wars, conflict and supernatural transgressions, Bowen makes the darkness within European history significant and all the more apparent. She was fully aware, at the young age of 24 when she composed this novel, of the horrors that occurred throughout the centuries and in portraying characters and narratives such as this, it is possible that she was attempting to bring these horrors to light, by firmly exposing the shadows that lurked throughout European history, particularly the actions of evil and wrongdoing for personal gain. History for Bowen then not only represented elegance, glamour and an affinity for a lost and splendidly luxuriant past but it also exemplified varying degrees of mystery, intrigue, horror and terror.

It is easy to question whether *Black Magic* is actually a gothic novel and not a supernatural novel infused with gothic elements. Certainly Robert Hadji's reference to the novel as a melodramatic thriller in *The Penguin Encyclopedia of Horror and the Supernatural* is an alternative

¹²³ Ibid, p.519

yet also accurate description as Hadji claimed, "The bulk of her weird fiction was written under the 'Bowen' pseudonym, commencing with the novel *Black Magic* (1909), a rousing historical melodrama in which the sorceress Ursula becomes Pope Joan and very nearly the Antichrist. It remains one of the best diabolist thrillers."¹²⁴ However, there are a great many levels to this novel and it is certainly possible that Bowen may have been influenced by the mass growth of gothic literature during the period in which she was writing and interestingly this period also corresponded with the birth of modernist literature. This may have given *Black Magic* several degrees of modernist characteristics in addition to gothic qualities and gothic predispositions. Andrew Smith, the writer of *Gothic Modernisms*, described Gothic Modernism itself as amorality, transgression, forbidden uncontrollable desire, compulsions, hybrids, alienation and the city as a gothic backdrop¹²⁵ and this is evident that the themes portrayed within *Black Magic* are possibly stylistic modes of a typical Gothic Modernist nature and the use of Rome in this novel certainly shows the potent and scary landscape of a gothic city. Bowen's political use of gender placed within gothic characteristics in *Black Magic* suggest a literary awareness of gothic modernism also. The patriarchal oppression framed by the realms of the unhallowed ritual of satanic worship is the crux of the gender explorations here. It is a woman who challenged definitive religious systems, she used the only power she believed was available to her. The supernatural themes of female witchcraft and devilry placed against the religious patriarchal system combine both traditional and modern visions. The representations of the tyrannical power of the medieval past which a woman sought to overcome and therefore seize for herself is a display of feminine power. Religious patriarchal domination and melodramatic evil are key gothic themes and were widely explored in well-known gothic novels such as the eighteenth century novel *The Monk* by Matthew Lewis and the nineteenth century novel, *Melmoth The Wanderer*, by Charles Maturin.

¹²⁴ Sullivan, *The Penguin Encyclopedia of Horror and The Supernatural*, p. 50

¹²⁵ Andrew Smith, Jeff Wallace, eds. *Gothic Modernism*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2001, p.3

As previously mentioned, *Black Magic* is essentially historical, occultic and gothic in its form and structure and consequently, traces of female gothic comes to the fore which Bowen manages to completely transform by outlining inherent female restrictions while simultaneously acknowledging female agency. Her narratives exhibit a detrimental patriarchal society, where women are subject to male torment, subjection, dictation and death at the hands of the men who can either choose to love and protect them or scorn and spurn them. Ursula chooses to become a man to fulfil her worldly ambitions. Thierry, with his superficial beauty and integrally weak nature, is extremely limited in his talents without Ursula beside him. Ursula/Dirk, in a distinctive portrayal of transgender configurations, controls all and in becoming the Pope, the most powerful figure of all religious men, represents the ultimate patriarchal power. As Dirk is actually a woman, this patriarchal power is unusually embedded within the hands of a female sorceress who successfully manages her position with dexterity and strength and it could be perceived that this female pope is a unique fusion of both patriarchal and matriarchal competence – the position a woman can achieve if she had the support of men.

Ursula/Dirk's true gender lies unsuspected until the reappearance of Thierry of Dendermonde. Despite this success, her riches, her wealth, her authority, it is ultimately a man and her undeniable love and allegiance to him that brings her to ruin. This paints a significant picture; that if men and women existed together without betrayal, power struggles and deceit then and only then harmony can truly prevail. The aspect of proto-feminism also lies here within. Ursula, throughout the entire novel, is known to Rome as a man, even to the man she loves, the fact that she does this so convincingly and manages to secure the position of the Pope ascertains that she is just as competent as any man. It may not just have been the legend that Bowen was interested in here as she does not fully delve into the birth, life, apparent childbirth revelations and the stoning to death claims, but the interest lies in what Pope Joan actually represented - extraordinary female power having to be masked within a male identity.

Ursula retains her femininity throughout the novel despite outward appearances. As dominant as she is, she is a feminine heroine in her mannerisms and her tastes and as such represents the female gender as Bowen saw it, powerful yet soft, almost a paradox of and complexity of alternate natures, what a woman genuinely was and still could be in spite of any ambitions.

Bowen uses the figure of the witch to portray the difficulties of being a woman. Women who were unafraid to be their true selves and having and fulfilling their desire to choose their own paths, women who attempted to control their love lives as opposed to having their partners and lovers chosen for them, women who were fully able to express their beliefs and follow their own modes of thought and feeling were perceived by others as witches in her novels. Similarly, naturally enchanting charismatic women who men fell madly in love and lust with were also perceived as witches. Ursula, in addition to Madelon in *The Rocklitz* and Giovanna in *Because of These Things* as discussed in Chapter Five in this thesis all contain a degree of proto-feminism but they are trapped within strict patriarchal spheres and slaves to the men they love and even slaves to those men they do not. The character of Ursula here is particularly potent because despite her absolute supremacy in Rome, she meets her downfall due to a weak-willed and impulsive young man whose mental ability compared to hers pales in distinct insignificance.

According to Diane Purkiss in *The Witch in History, Early Modern and Twentieth Century Representations*, stories about the witch written by women portrayed female anxieties and fears. Purkiss argued,

The figuration of witchcraft itself - the witch's power over people and things - is shown to have reflected and reproduced a very specific fantasy about the female body in general and the maternal body in particular. When understood in terms of the magic she performs and the power she exerts, the witch is a fantasy-image of the huge, controlling, scattered, polluted, leaky fantasy of the maternal body of the Imaginary...The body in both elite and popular early modern thought was flowing with humours or liquids, resembling a bag full of potentially populating substances. The idea of the body was shaped by fears that bodies may not be fully confined and kept separate from one another, resulting in problematic

contacts and impingements. To the early modern villager or town dweller, one way to understand those impingements was as witchcraft. Witchcraft was among other things, a form of power which involved exchanges between bodies.¹²⁶

Bowen shows this within her work. In the novel *The Rocklitz* published in 1930 which was discussed in Chapter 5 – *The Opposing Forces of Otherness* in this thesis, the protagonist Madelon represents the power of the female body and the sexual longing and fantasy it can produce and instil in the men around her. Madelon herself does not dabble in witchcraft, sorcery, black magic and potions but she was familiar with the women around her who chose to do so. Ursula represents the sheer power of the witch over other people, circumstances, events and occurrences. Her excess of potions, liquids and also those retained by her fellow friend, the witch Natalie, were of a vast proportion as would be held by a sorceress.

Ursula also represents the fantasy of the female body. The longing she inspires in Thierry when she is dressed as a dancer girl in disguise and his desperate fervour to know at the conclusion if she is a woman or a man alludes to her vital control over his sexual senses. The attractive dancer, in a historical context, has often represented a sexual and feminine figure throughout poetry, film and literature. In *Black Magic*, the dancer displays a type of female eroticism and alluring sex appeal while maintaining grace, beauty and a mysteriously wholesome serenity and intelligence. The mysterious dancing female that Thierry falls in love with may have links to the nineties decadence of the Wildean era as the idea of the female dancer in this novel may possibly be linked to the tragic play *Salomé* written by Oscar Wilde and illustrated by Aubrey Beardsley, a type of representation of the naughty nineties decadent culture.

Giovanna in *Because of These Things* embodies the domesticated mother but her clothes, jewels, beauty and adornments are perceived by her husband Francis and the neighbouring Scots to belong to those of an enchantress, an evil heathen, despite her profound maternal instincts for her son Elphin and her sincere and honourable intentions towards her significant other, Francis. Each of

¹²⁶ Diane Purkiss, *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-century Representations*, London, Routledge, 1996, p. 119-120

these three female protagonists contains an accumulation of what Purkiss describes as "polluting substances."¹²⁷ Consequently, it is essentially their femininity that inspired the threat of physical danger in the other people surrounding them which was continually caused by distorted beliefs regarding the abnormality of women and the female body.

The "problematic contacts and impingements"¹²⁸ that Purkiss also describes, Bowen uses to facilitate and narrate the emotional problems and acute misunderstandings that can arise between men and women once they have bodily contact of a sexual nature encouraged and instigated by the force of sexual attraction. It is the emotional and the psychological concerns that Bowen was keen to portray, the pain that can result from the wayward journey of a tumultuous relationship between a man and a woman. Keith Thomas claims,

When Henry VIII tired of Anne Boleyn he put it about that he had only been attracted to her in the first place because she had practised witchcraft to seduce him. A similar interpretation appealed to lesser men who found themselves in a similar situation...This is what has been called the 'face-saving' function of witchcraft...Nor does it seem necessary to look for psychological or psychoanalytic explanation of the fact that the majority of accused witches were women. This aspect of the trials is more plausibly explained by economic and social considerations, for it was the women who were the most dependent members of the community, and thus the most vulnerable to accusation...The idea that witch-prosecutions reflected a war between the sexes must be discounted, not least because the victims and witnesses were themselves as likely to be women as men...The most that can be said at present on the sexual aspect of the trials is that the mythology of witchcraft was at its height at a time when women were generally believed to be sexually more voracious than men.¹²⁹

Bowen also did not simply use witchcraft as a means to explore wars between men and women, even though she did use the "face-saving" aspect of witchcraft to portray the actions of men who tire of the women they are with while women in turn feel forced to engage in witchcraft to hold onto the men they love. Rather Bowen used witchcraft to examine gender relations as a whole. As

¹²⁷ Purkiss, *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-century Representations*, p. 119-120.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, p.119-120

¹²⁹ Thomas, *Religion And The Decline of Magic*, p. 643-678

well as examining the difficult relations between men and women, it was also used by Bowen as a narrative tool to explore the simultaneously and sometimes conflicting relations between women themselves.

In his essay *The Making of the Female Witch: Reflections and Gender in the Early Modern Period*, Willem De Blecourt claims,

Witchcraft was not sex-specific but it was sex-related, according to a much-quoted statement by Christina Lerner...Lerner had already offered an explanation for women's involvement in the accusations of other women. This was, she wrote, because women who conformed to the male image of them felt threatened by those who did not...Anne Barstow echoed this: Women...sometimes try to outdo their oppressors in scorning women who were perceived as outsiders, in hope of being tolerated or accepted themselves. Hufton...suggested that women in some cases saw the alleged witch as a poacher on their territory...The mere possibility of losing her gender identity compelled her to apply with patriarchal norms of womanhood, a transgression which made it only more probable to incite an accusation of witchcraft. In economic and social terms women who conducted an independent trade or owned their own land were more vulnerable and also those who had moved to new communities...But in principle it sufficed to cross a boundary at the wrong moment. As women were restricted in their actions anyhow, the likelihood of becoming a witch was ever present.¹³⁰

Women who were not plain and subordinate were perceived as witches in *The Rocklitz* and *Because of These Things* and although the two main protagonists of these novels were completely innocent of any witchcraft practices themselves, the other female characters in the novels were not.

Bowen appears to be claiming that not all women are entirely blameless and retain certain distinct faults, just as men do, as they too accuse their fellow women of witchcraft. Yet their suspicious accusations actually stems from jealousy, resentment and envy. Francis is disgusted by Giovanna's beauty, wealth and adornments yet it was her unusual appeal that made him fall in love with her to begin with and so he accuses her of enchantment. The male characters are afraid of Madelon's overt sexual magnetism, yet it was Johann who could not deny his continuous love and

¹³⁰ Willem De Blecourt, 'The Making of the Female Witch: Reflections and Gender in the Early Modern Period', *Gender & History*, Vol.12, No 2, July 2000, p.3-23

lust for her, therefore Madelon too is accused of sorcery. The men, in trying to defend themselves from what they perceived as dangerous lust for the females around them, fail to understand their own feelings of attraction and consequently the women were accused of witchcraft and devilry.

In some respects, the accusation of witchcraft was an excuse for their sexual desires which enabled them to shift responsibility for their own formerly repressed urges. The allegations of severe bewitchment were used to correct and defend their lust in the eyes of God and their fellow man. Women who also had much less appealing outward appearances than Giovanna and Madelon, women who considered themselves to be respectable upstanding members of the communities, accused them too.

This is similar to a point made by Thomas who wrote, "The penalty emphasised that the delinquent's essential offence was his rejection of the standard of the society to which he belonged. Facts like these are necessary if we are to appreciate the high value set on social conformity by this tightly-knit, intolerant works with which the witch had parted company. She was the extreme example of the malignant or non-conforming person against whom the local community had always taken punitive action in the interests of social harmony."¹³¹ Madelon and Giovanna, in all their practicability and rational intelligent natures, refused to entertain what they perceived as ridiculous notions and supernatural fancies. In this way, the perception of the Other is again at full force here when considered within the witchcraft framework.

Bowen is not only critiquing gender relations and the frictional responses of women towards other women but also society as a whole and its failure to recognise that differences are not the prerequisite to improperness and indecency and that those who are different are just as worthy. Giovanna, the Italian stranger to Scottish lands and Madelon the newcomer to the royal German elite in the suspicious role of dependent mistress encouraged these accusations. Blecourt also claimed that "The cat was a metaphor of sexually active women,"¹³² and interestingly, Bowen used

¹³¹ Thomas, *Religion and The Decline of Magic*, p.632

¹³² De Blecourt, 'The Making of the Female Witch: Reflections and Gender in the Early Modern Period,' p. 14

the figure of the cat in *Black Magic*. Jacobea of Martzburg who was having a love affair with one of her ladies husbands has a little grey cat by her side throughout the novel. However, rather than displaying Jacobea's sexuality as immoral in the novel, it is Ursula disguised as Dirk who uses it to bewitch, pursue and manipulate Jacobea for his own gain. It may be understood that Bowen is not portraying female sexuality here in a negative light, rather the fact that Jacobea becomes a ghostly angel of God towards the novel's conclusion appears to be stating quite the opposite. It is not female sexuality that is a problem in society but rather that some men choose to refute it. There are the men who choose to exploit female sexuality for their own gain and there are the repressed men who feel female sexuality is a religious sin and must be rejected.

Subsequently, the male characters in *Because of These Things*, *The Rocklitz* and *Black Magic*, Francis, Johann and Thierry, are largely responsible for the deaths of Giovanna, Madelon and Ursula. They were dominated by males, their limited free-will implementations only lead to further entrapment. Male dominance only sought to increase when the female denies even herself in order to attempt to remain in the man's favour. Bowen uses the church, the papacy, the devil, financial wealth and society as representations of severe patriarchal authority. In each novel, each of the apparent and alleged witches keenly disregard the male perception of how a woman should be in the eyes of men. The influential and extremely clever Ursula versus the saccharine Jacobea, the virtuous and devout Stacey - a plain and upstanding Scottish cousin of Francis versus the flamboyantly uninhibited Giovanna, the Emperor Johann's wife versus the enigmatic and mysterious Madelon but in all of the novels, these representations of female idealisation are no more successful than their witch counterparts. No woman can succeed when subjected to enforced visions of how they should behave and act.

In addition to *Black Magic*, there were various Marjorie Bowen novels that explored witchcraft and satanic worship. *The King's Favourite* which was published in 1937 and based on the reign of James I and the dark arts endeavours of the young Francis Howard and *The Poisoners* which was published in 1936 and based on the black magic rites under Louis XIV in France which seeks to

enhance Bowen's knowledge of French history even further. *The Poisoners* is an excellent novel. It is fast-paced with a conspiratorial and richly atmospheric quality. The real-life historical figures in combination with the fictional characters adheres to Bowen's tendency for creating dark and hugely suspenseful narratives while simultaneously portraying her unique research skills. *The Poisoners* and *Black Magic* are effective examples of where the historical and the gothic blend profoundly in Bowen's work. Bowen used this prolific spread of occultic occurrences throughout history with geographical zealousness in her novels which of course adheres true to the occultic tradition. England, Scotland, Germany, Italy and France were just a few of the settings chosen. *The Poisoners* is an excellent representation of Bowen's literary ability in mixing the historical and the occult and Robert Hadji summarises this ability in microcosm as he claimed, "Bowen possessed an astonishing ability to recreate historical backgrounds in depth, against which intense dramas of human conflict were enacted to a usually tragic end. The supernatural is an integral part of her haunted landscapes, implied in the decayed houses and desolate gardens and essential to her sense of the past. Complementary strains of cruelty and pathos give the narratives dramatic force; beneath runs a subtle undercurrent of melancholy, most evident in her mood pieces. Her best work, after the fear has passed, leaves a lingering sensation of poignancy and haunting beauty, the quintessence of her dark romanticism...*The Poisoners* based on the infamous diabolical cult active at the court of Louis XIV has excellent period flavour and a gruesomely detailed description of the Black Mass."¹³³ Bowen describes her choice for such a novel as *The Poisoners* in her preface, "What emerged from these labours was not only a valuable picture of the life of a bygone period, full of minute details and the elucidation of a historic mystery that had puzzled generations but the reconstructions of a wild, sinister tale of love and magic that would do credit to the imagination of any novelist and provide ample material for what is now called a "detective story" or "thriller,""¹³⁴ and certainly Bowen had the avid qualities of a thriller writer as her novels embedded that severe threat of danger to the

¹³³ Sullivan, *The Penguin Encyclopedia of Horror and The Supernatural*, p.50

¹³⁴ Marjorie Bowen, *The Poisoners*, London, Fontana Books, 1970, p.9

social order, where men and women fought to destroy the evil that menacingly sought to destroy them, which is similarly discussed by Ralph Harper in *The World of The Thriller*,¹³⁵ but more than being a thriller writer, Bowen had a unique ability to combine a variety of different genres with romanticism and gothicism remaining at the fore of much of her work. The gothic exterior of wild and untamed nature such as the cold, distant Scottish lands of Glenillich, the bitter snow and freezing ice of Dresden, the vengeful rumblings of thunder and lightning in Rome and the cruel, deserted and eerie streets of Paris represent acute gothic backdrops for melodramatic excess as Peter Brooks identified it in which these deceitful transgressions, patriarchal entrapment and fearful mysteries take place. These gothic themes were developed even further with Marjorie Bowen's reinvention of her authorial voice in the 1930s under the pseudonym of Joseph Shearing which is explored in the next chapter in this thesis.

¹³⁵ Ralph Harper, *The World of The Thriller*, Cleveland, The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1969, pp. viii - 9

The Terrible Truth: The exploration of True Crime, the Supernatural and Gothicism in Joseph Shearing's *The Crime of Laura Sarelle*

The novels written by Marjorie Bowen under the Joseph Shearing pseudonym are the key focus in this chapter as they feature the recurring Bowenesque themes of darkness, the supernatural and the gothic in combination with the historical. Shearing novels are distinct from those written under the pseudonyms of Marjorie Bowen and George Preedy because they also feature one important element that the Bowen and Preedy novels did not and that is the genre of true crime. Although the Shearing novels are essentially historical novels, the true crime element makes the historical focus quite different to the novels written and published under the Marjorie Bowen pseudonym. Yet, the Shearing novels still retain sinister gothic undertones. In this chapter, there will be a thorough and general examination of the novels published under the Joseph Shearing pseudonym followed by a close textual analysis of Shearing's novel *The Crime of Laura Sarelle* published in 1941.

The Joseph Shearing novels maintain a number of recurring themes throughout each piece of work. The themes of wealthy families, financial difficulties and an inability to break free from monetary constraints, secrets, lies, deception and murder proliferate these novels. There were around sixteen novels published under the Joseph Shearing pseudonym which ensued quite late during the span of Marjorie Bowen's career. They were published between 1932 and 1951 and many of them were based on authentic homicide cases that had occurred in the nineteenth century. These novels proved to be highly popular in Shearing's day, both in England and also in America, due to the English, American, European and Caribbean settings - London, Manchester, Kentucky, Paris and Jamaica are just a few of the settings. The 19th century was the key focus period for Shearing's historical true crime novels, from the first quarter of the nineteenth century until the late nineteenth century, and they make consistent use of essentially nineteenth-century fictional formats, strategies and devices. They can be considered to fit into several different genres as they are gothic, true crime

and the historical novel combined. She took actual criminal cases from the past by researching old newspapers, engaging with historians, reading old memoirs, guide-books, essays, travel books and legal files and recreated them fictionally, usually detailing in her preface the sources for such material and what she perceived to be the likely circumstances that surrounded such crimes. This would have allowed Bowen to further expand her literary interests of exploring issues of the past while drawing on her own discontents with the present. After the First World War and with the Second World War looming in the not too distant future, the gothic would have remained as the genre in which writers could still attempt to explore, dissect and examine the ghosts of the past and the perceived wretchedness within their present. This wretchedness was due to the economic crisis at home and abroad, international tensions, menacing European dictators, major unemployment, poverty and labour unrest at home. There are also various accounts in published memoirs from which these novels have been developed. The range of themes indicated in these novels were, *Forget-me-Not* published in 1932, which explored the case of a governess accused of being an accomplice in the famous Praslin murder case in 1840s revolutionary France and discussed previously in Chapter Four in this thesis; *Album Leaf* published in 1933 which also explored a governess who fell in love with the wrong man and was suspected of being an accomplice to a murder among relatives with a vast inheritance as the motive; *Moss Rose* published in 1934 was based on the story of a noble, unscrupulous, poverty-stricken, fallen from grace female who, in knowing the face of a wanted murderer, turns to blackmail to survive; *The Golden Violet*, *The Story Of A Lady Novelist* published in 1936 explores slavery and racism in Jamaica in the 1800s which interestingly does not paint the black characters as evil savages but as more morally correct, respectful and loving than their white counterparts; *Blanche Fury* in 1939 is based on the murder of distant cousins by the true and rightful unacknowledged heir to the family fortune; *Aunt Beardie* is a curious tale of secrets, prostitution, blackmail and murder within France and England published in 1940; *The Crime of Laura Sarelle* covers a story of madness, murder and familial curses among aristocratic descendants published in 1941; *The Spectral Bride* published in 1942 is also a tale of

blackmail, murder, madness and those doomed to repeat the crimes of their forefathers; *Airing in a Closed Carriage*, in 1943, explores the ambiguous guilt of a woman who was accused of murdering her traitorous and abusive husband and was sent to jail; *So Evil My Love*, published in 1947, tells the story of evil, blackmail, murder, jealousy and deception; *Mignonette*, in 1949, is based on the murderous crime committed by a strange, intriguing and attractive young woman; *The Heiress of Frascati*, published in 1950, tells the story of familial treacheries and a stolen inheritance and *To Bed At Noon*, published in 1951 - the novel's title sharing the reference to Shakespeare's *King Lear* as stated by Shearing in the preface and set in the state of post-pioneer Kentucky in the 1800s, is about a doomed love between a young female aristocratic outsider and a young lawyer with a developing reputation of respect within his social faction. The Shearing novels differ greatly in their creation and consequently, they explore a number of genres, literary themes and aspects, for example gender relations and the class system, while continuing to maintain a distinctive and subtle critique of society. Shearing explored general social issues such as prejudice, inequality and greed, which were common features within many societies and different periods which she subtly highlights and Shearing did not do this for moral reasons but observational ones. Bowen did not believe that art was for ethical and moral purposes, nor either for purely sensational reasons but more as an exploration of how life was as she perceived it – the acute examination of human frailty and suffering.

In addition to such suffering, the female characters in *Aunt Beardie* continuously acknowledge their awareness and intuition. Though they have learnt to ignore this and follow rational modes of thought, Shearing shows that a woman's intuition always comes to the fore. Bowen consistently creates, across many different societies and various situations, the common theme of romance versus reason. This is Bowen's literary exploration of romanticism versus reason and intuition versus rational practicality. Intuition, perhaps our true nature as believed by the romantics, can never be truly ignored. The characters in these novels are always in touch with their emotions and sentiment, which in turn leads to melancholy and a severe existential crisis. Idleness

and inertia dominate the world of the aristocracy and amongst the poverty-stricken is the inability to fit within class distinctions which plagues those of lower birth. There is not a single character who is content in the Shearing novels as all suffer from the shadows of existential nihilism.

In the Conway Hall Arts lecture by Marjorie Bowen given in 1939 in London, the foreword states "Ultimately art is concerned with one value and one value only: truth...In fiction it has laid bare the psychological motives which determine our actions; and generally art has discovered that the imagination is an instrument of revelation."¹³⁶ Bowen's novels under the Shearing pseudonym essentially have this aim, usually within the mind of the perpetrator, the murderer, the accomplice and not necessarily in the victim, though this can sometimes vary as the victims are not always wholly innocent. The link between the preceding actions of the victim and the perpetrator's crime is quite clearly depicted within the narrative and the murderer's mind. The criminal's sense of injustice is linear and ultimately psychologically outlined and defined stylistically by Shearing.

In presenting the Joseph Shearing pseudonym to the public, Bowen in an effort to reinvent her fiction across the globe and herself as an author, offered an underlying and eerily familiar world, a world which represented the twist the modern world had taken - that the enemy was not unseen as had been previously perceived in literature, that the enemy was inhuman which had also been a previous literary concept but that the enemy are those closest to us, physically, mentally and emotionally, that the enemy is human. Shearing portrayed a perception of a modern belief. She personified and characterised human evil, immorality and transgression and showed this as naturally occurring phenomena completely independent of the categorization of religion or doctrines of sin. She also then explored how the legal system played its part in the result of such human endeavours. This is central to how she uses the Joseph Shearing authorial voice.

The Shearing texts certainly appear to retain elements of sensationalist literature, which appears to be in direct contrast with the explicit and unequivocal true crime genre. *The Cambridge*

¹³⁶ Marjorie Bowen, Conway Hall Arts Lecture, London, April 19th, 1939

Companion to Sensation Fiction illuminates the sensation novel as preserving components of class, race and gender. Yet Bowen examines the struggle of the lower and middle classes against the aristocrats and those of noble birth, the struggle of the lower classes against the upper classes is in direct contrast with the conservative tendency of preservation. In *Blanche Fury*, the distant cousins who arrogantly assume their position in the vast mansion of an ancestor are ruthlessly murdered by the rightful heir who maintains the land. Bowen is not on the side of legitimate property ownership even when secured by murder but there is a problematic aspect at play here as Bowen deliberately presents a circumstance where no one is right, despite the murderous crime committed and a villainous protagonist who the reader can sympathise with. In *The Spectral Bride*, the only surviving young and vulnerable member of an old and ancient family descends into madness amidst the presence of a strange and unnerving ancestral curse while being tricked by two middle class sisters where class mobility and monetary gain is the sole ambition. In *So Evil My Love*, the married, rich and fragile Susan is manipulated by the evil, destitute and widowed missionary's wife Olivia Sacret. In all three novels, the aristocracy illuminate a class shift. They represent an outdated and old-fashioned tradition that is quickly slipping from their grasp. The lower class perpetrators, although they wish to be in a financially secure position and live a life of privilege, are unable to achieve their ambitions and the aristocratic victims are simultaneously unable to put an end to the persecution they are facing.

Many of the aristocratic characters in the novels are prone to manipulation, trickery and are often threatened with an unleashing of past secrets and betrayals by the perpetrators. The middle and lower class women are quite intelligent and strong by nature but they remain immobile due to their lack of financial and social security. Andrew Mangham claims the sensation novel was keen to establish "hybrid strategies of social renewal"¹³⁷ and in a few of the Shearing novels, the middle and lower class women seek to join marital forces with the aristocratic men though to no avail. Shearing

¹³⁷ Andrew Mangham, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Sensation Fiction*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013 p. intro

may have been keen to explore societies that were progressive as well as conservative within these novels. In *The Golden Violet*, the white female protagonist fell controversially in love with the black male protagonist during the period of slavery in the Caribbean. Was Bowen a strict sensationalist novelist? Perhaps not but the Shearing novels certainly show definite traces of the Victorian sensationalist legacy. The plots involve extreme, sensationalist, situations which can possibly be resolved into ultimately relieving sensationalist tales of social renewal despite the odds, but she refuses to follow this through. The novels have a quietly disturbing and interrogative effect with a degree of subtle criticism.

In *The Cambridge Companion to Sensation Fiction*, Mangham claims, "One aspect that Fin De Siècle inherited from sensation fiction was the obsession with dangerous female characters... in introducing what was often the dangerous woman's nemesis, the female sleuth, the sensation novel became crucial to the development of the New Woman genre. The latter, itself a significant foundation of the modernist age is well-known for its introduction of strong female characters and for raising questions of gender equality, sexual freedom and rights for women."¹³⁸ Regarding new woman fiction in terms of sensationalist writing, Shearing did not include the role of a female sleuth in her narratives. Rather she investigated beneath the psychological surface of her dangerous female characters while raising questions of belonging, female social mobility and how to assume one's independence without having the means and the power to do so. Joy Wiltenburg's essay, 'True Crime: The Origins of Modern Sensationalism,' explores the literary aspects of sensationalism that can be used to define the genre, such as emotional responses, truth, moral piety, crime amongst family members, sexual scandals, problems in the marital sphere and economic plights.¹³⁹ Wiltenburg's claim "These representations of crime mark a unique point of intersection between structures of power and normative emotional demands – between public order and the interior life of the individual...Yet the demand for truth, the insistence that the content derived from and bore

¹³⁸ Mangham, *The Cambridge Companion to Sensation Fiction*, p.6

¹³⁹ Joy Wiltenburg, 'True Crime: The Origins of Modern Sensationalism,' *The American Historical Review*, vol. 109, (December 2004) p. 1394

directly on real life was an integral part of sensationalism,"¹⁴⁰ is interesting as these sensationalist aspects are definitively present in several Shearing texts. Wiltenburg proceeds to discuss the origins of the genre spanning its entirety, which began in 16th Century Europe and lasted until the 19th Century. The 16th Century, before the novel was established, also invariably shows the connections of sensationalist literature with the theatre, for example the drama revenge tragedy and the 19th Century Victorian melodrama as both feed into sensation fiction. At this time instead of crime being viewed as simply religious sin, crime became secular in many works and Wiltenburg discusses the literary viewpoint that crime could be avoided if one chose not to indulge in heightened feelings.¹⁴¹ Shearing does not acknowledge this in her work, although the secular aspect certainly appears. On the contrary, human existence and heightened emotion are paired in Shearing's novels. Crime can not necessarily be avoided as it is our inevitable interaction with each other that can lead to such extremities of emotion. Shearing showed crime could affect anyone.

Shearing builds suspense by placing the reader in the mind of the criminal, their actions leading to such crimes, their activities, their rationalisations and their desires. In some of the novels, the criminal is more interesting to the reader than the victim and this is portrayed in *Blanche Fury*, *Aunt Beardie*, *Airing in A Closed Carriage*, *To Bed At Noon* and *So Evil My Love* to name a few. The plots come from actual true crime cases and the psychological background is Shearing's own worthy contribution.

Her accounts trace their psychological deliberations and remain true to Marjorie Bowen's literary traits of evocations of mood and heightened suspense. Shearing used different historical criminal cases such as those based on the rich and poor, men and women, adolescents and adults, black and white races, to explore crime, precisely because, as previously mentioned here, it could affect everyone. There is a distinct engagement with evil here, not a theological evil but a moral evil, a psychological and imaginative evil which was one of the elements of Bowen's writing that

¹⁴⁰ Ibid p. 1384

¹⁴¹ Wiltenburg, 'True Crime: The Origins of Modern Sensationalism,' p. 1400

continued to enthrall Graham Greene in the early stages of his career. It is similar to the interest we hold as readers, or at least as perceived by William Blake and Percy Bysshe Shelley, in the figure of Satan in Milton's *Paradise Lost* or in Lord Byron – the gothicised Byronic hero. Shearing is adhering to a precise romantic tradition, namely that the most fascinating individuals are often the most depraved and immoral characters.

Sensationalism was perceived by many to be for the lower masses which Bowen addresses in her arts lecture. She states fervently that art should not be condemned due to critics viewing it as morally wrong and lacking religious piety. It is interesting that Bowen took this viewpoint as she herself frequently negotiated a path between high-brow and middlebrow fiction, between high art and popular art and often sought to combine the two. Wiltenburg argues sensationalist crime fiction was constructed by emotional reactions in the position of the criminals in combination with the legal justice system's response to such crimes of passion, "Sensationalist crime accounts build their emotional potency on both a visceral response to violence itself and the quasi-religious dilemma posed by transgression of core values...Linking violent crime and criminal justice procedures with a prescribed emotional response both personal and communal, these works have been a powerful means of constructing both shared values and individual identity."¹⁴² This darkness, emotion and truth may have been what initially attracted Bowen to the genre. Joseph Shearing's work appealed to many, readers, critics and publishers alike, because her novels had the underlying hint of the loss of ideals in the modern period and she used art, as her contemporaries also did, to reflect this. Bowen said modern art is criticised for its lack of morals and defended its right to be so, but by so doing, she may have been trying to portray how the world has changed and it is good, perhaps even necessary, for art to reflect this. Wiltenburg argues that sensationalist authors deliberately imbued their true crime stories with a sense of religious morality.¹⁴³ Yet Bowen chose not to inherit this sense of religious authorial responsibility. She simply offered a depiction of society as she perceived

¹⁴² Wiltenburg, 'True Crime: The Origins of Modern Sensationalism,' p.1379 - 1380

¹⁴³ Ibid p.1385

it without authorial judgement requiring repentance on the part of the guilty party. She explored what could drive humans to commit such actions and the characters based on real-life notorious criminal events were used to reflect this.

Wiltburg also discusses the presence of a “repentant criminal's voice” in such sensationalist narratives while firmly concentrating on the mechanisms of the criminal's mind. Shearing certainly uses the latter as this is a narrative device of hers used to deliberately focus on the villain of the story as well as any protagonists that are victims. This preferred technique is consistent throughout Bowen's work, including those in the historical and supernatural categories. Bowen's criminals however are not necessarily repentant, just as her victims are not always wholly blameless. However, to Bowen, there could never be perfect control over the emotions and consequently crime cannot always be avoided.

In Fred Botting's *In A Gothic Darkly*, Botting recalls the political writings of Edmund Burke's *Reflections On The Revolution in France*, published in 1790, where Burke discussed and compared a bloodthirsty, violent revolutionary France with the ordered and rationalised England¹⁴⁴ and of course it is well-documented that gothic literature began to flourish during this period and into the nineteenth century and beyond, eventually transmuting into romanticism, female fiction and the ghost story. Gothic is often about contrast and has been so in the original gothic fictions that followed the French Revolution. The aristocracy versus the bourgeoisie, the rational versus the irrational, nature versus the supernatural, evil versus good, light versus darkness and Bowen uses this Gothic technique of contrast in the Shearing novels, not to differentiate but to group entities together. In Bowen's novels, the destitute protagonist is as acutely trapped as the financially secure aristocrat and in portraying the gothic theme of difference and contrast, Bowen is showing the seriousness of similarity. There is little distinction despite the characters backgrounds. Their desires and passions are equally dark and tortuous in nature. In the Shearing novels, there are the

¹⁴⁴ Fred Botting, *A Companion to Gothic*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 2000, p.6

upstanding, rational and methodical characters and there are the romantic and sensitive figures whose passions descend towards the verges of insanity yet neither character is content. All are troubled. All in some way, fare no better than the other in what Shearing presents as the uncontrollable forces of life, mystery, destiny and nature.

Long before Burke turned to discussing the political upheaval in France, he also wrote extensively on the imagination and the beautiful in nature and in our world in his 1757 discourse '*A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*' which is an important work worthy of consideration when discussing the stylistic technique of the gothic genre. The other imperative piece of work that can also be considered in any gothic discourse is Sigmund Freud's essay, *Das Unheimliche* (The Uncanny) published in 1919, which discussed the eerie and the psychologically strange and terrifying, yet it is these strange circumstances that are also considered to be unnervingly familiar to us. In 'Gothic Sublimity,' David D. Morris states, "Gothic sublimity demonstrates the possibilities of terror in opening the mind to its own hidden and irrational powers. It is a version of the sublime which demands a psychology adequate to Freud's belief that the ego is not master in its own house."¹⁴⁵ Would it be accurate to say that the Shearing texts represent a part of the Freudian uncanny in novel form as the characters consistently lose control? Possibly, or at the very least it is an idea worth exploring in some of Bowen's work generally but not necessarily in the Freudian sense as we know it when considering gothic, supernatural and horror fiction. Bowen did not deliberately use the Freudian uncanny in the Shearing novels as a specific literary device because what happens in these novels is accounted for in human rather than supernatural terms, but her novels perhaps demonstrate the existence of the uncanny in life itself. This is because the uncanny resides purely, first and foremost, within human psychology. Where ancestral curses represent repetition, that is a psychological compulsion to repeat ancestral patterns of behaviour, those descendants are doomed to repeat the murderous deeds of their ancestors; where the

¹⁴⁵ David B. Morris, 'Gothic Sublimity,' *New Literary History*, vol.16, no.2, *The Sublime and the Beautiful: Reconsiderations*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, (Winter, 1985) p. 310 - 311

encouragement of female fragility, the dumbing of the intellect, female entrapment and sexual female secrets within a male sphere indicates repression; the uncontrolled alter-ego, the double, that erupts out of sheer circumstantial desperation and indulges in criminal acts. Shearing, perhaps more venturesome in this than the Bowen persona, took such Freudian ideas of the uncanny and placed them distinctly within the ordinary citizen and within their own consciousness as Freud himself may have also perceived them.

It may be worth noting here that the reader does not necessarily experience terror while consuming the Shearing novels. The reader may experience a subtle sensation of eerie chills perhaps, but not fear necessarily as the terror is constricted within the characters themselves. The readers are voyeurs. Shearing maintains a subtle distance and inspires an almost vivid fascination at the cruelty of and disappointment in human relations. Death in Bowen's work is not simply an action, a result, it pervades through her entire work and this is her gothic link, the mark of Bowen's writing as a true gothic descendant. Morris argues, "Death in the Gothic novel is not conceived in linear relation to life...Life in Gothic fiction never frees itself from the presence or threat of death."¹⁴⁶ The Shearing texts were marketed by the publishers as 'Queen Size Gothic' and there could be several reasons for this. The darkness and the mechanism of the psyche dominantly prevailed within the backdrops of gloomy spheres. The threatening labyrinthine cities, numerous male tyrants and female victims, betrayals, secrets and lies that abound within these novels and using the Gothic as a tool to explore the morally encumbered present are just a few of the possible explanations for such marketing strategies. It is the particular use of death that binds her authorial voice to this genre. Unnatural death is the result of desperation and desperation surely just may be the result of desire. The endings are rarely conclusive, never wholesome but an indication of the shadow of the horror and terror that surrounds us consistently. The terror does not end with death but exemplifies it.

¹⁴⁶ David B. Morris, 'Gothic Sublimity', p. 308

A number of Shearing's novels were adapted into theatre productions from the 1940s to the 1960s and it is interesting that Hollywood chose to use the British fiction of Shearing for film adaptation during this time, particularly as this was also during the era of the masterfully gripping and enthralling films of the famous film director and producer Alfred Hitchcock. This was the era of Hitchcock filmmaking and Hollywood producers seem to have sensed unnerving quasi-Hitchcockian possibilities in these texts. Some of Shearing's/Bowen's work that were made into films were - *Blanche Fury* filmed as *Blanche Fury* (1948), *Airing in a Closed Carriage* filmed as *The Mark of Cain* (1947), *So Evil My Love* also known as *For Her To See* filmed as "Lux Video Theatre: So Evil My Love" (1955), *Mistress Nell Gwynne* (filmed as *Nell Gwyn* (1926), *General Crack* (filmed as the American film *General Crack* (1930), Bowen's play *Captain Banner* (filmed as "BBC Sunday-Night Theatre: Captain Banner" (1954), The short horror story *The Avenging of Ann Leete* (filmed as "*Matinee Theatre: Avenging of Ann Leete*" (1957) and *Moss Rose* filmed as *Moss Rose* (1947). When considering the popularity of the Shearing novels particularly in America and within the cinematic sphere, it begs the question as to why the Shearing novels were so vastly popular across the globe and appealed to such directors as Alfred Hitchcock, the British film director and producer Herbert Wilcox and the American director, actor and producer Gregory Ratoff and Irish film director Brian Desmond Hurst, who all made films based on the Shearing novels. It is interesting to note that the Shearing novels also contained elements of noir fiction which consistently viewed immoral acts through the eyes of the criminal or the victim. Film Noir represented great and opulent escapist films of the modern period and it is fair to claim that the Joseph Shearing section of Bowen's output was so extraordinarily visual it also appealed to filmmakers. The novels and the films had a specifically targeted British and American audience and were categorically made into British and American film noir motion pictures.

In the essay 'Murder As Social Criticism,' Catherine Nickson believed that the attractiveness of the detective novel from the nineteenth century into the twentieth century was due to the perception of the accelerated and alarming rate of crime and aggression in modern society and the

popularity of Roman noir and film noir simultaneously offered explorations of morality and the debilitating effects of modernity on contemporary society, as Nickson wrote, "Roman noir presents, in other words, a corrective history of a still-remembered past as well as the expression of a whole set of anxieties about employment, gender and material happiness in the 1930s and '40s."¹⁴⁷ It appears that even within her crime and gothic fiction, Shearing/Bowen consistently used the past to examine the present and used notorious crimes of the past to dramatize as she believed they were able to portray the social issues within her own present time both in her home country of England and abroad in America.

Despite the popularity of the detective novel whose main focus was to explore the crime from the detective's viewpoint, Shearing chose to shift the perception from the detective in her novels to the perpetrators and the victims. She was infinitely more interested in the crime itself and the criminal's state of mind and using true crime for the basis of her criminal plots serves to heighten its effects. The detective, if he or she appears in the novels, appears albeit rather briefly and this may explain why several of Shearing's novels appealed to film directors as there is a definitive link here between crime fiction, film noir, Roman noir and Shearing's literary aspects. The Shearing novels cannot be placed within any one generic category of fiction as it pertains elements of so many categories, namely sensationalism, mystery, thriller, gothic and true crime. It could be said that the Shearing novels could perhaps have been perceived by film directors as film noir in fiction form though with a more heightened and profound sense of psychological exploration. In 'Crime, Guilt and Subjectivity in Film Noir,' Winifred Fluck wrote, "Film Noir deals with crime...but shifts the issue of crime from gangster to ordinary citizen. With this shift, questions of moral responsibility and the puzzle of criminal motivation move to the centre of the noir-narrative...These noir theories of the subject range from the authentic self of the American outlaw and the repressed self of popular Freudianism" to an "empty" self-driven by desire, impulse and mood that is subject only to the

¹⁴⁷ Catherine Nickson, 'Murder as Social Criticism,' *American Literary History*, vol. 4 (Winter, 1997) p. 744

absurd guilt of the wrong impulse.”¹⁴⁸ The psychology of the main characters is the key focus in Shearing's texts certainly, however she does not present her characters as “empty” but rather the opposite and this possible guilt stems more from abject desperation as a consequence of their troubled circumstances as opposed to impulse stemming from a vacant existence. Their crimes are immoral but not usually meaningless. The perpetrators always have reasons, justifiably or indefensibly, to commit the crimes they do. Though Shearing has many aspects in common with film noir and Fluck acknowledges film noir to be based on fiction that was created by Dostoevsky for example, her claim that crimes were committed because of empty voids in one's own life can be further explored.¹⁴⁹ Perhaps this point is fair and valid but it may also be interesting to state that such crimes were never vacuous. Each perpetrator within every story told will always have distinct reasons for their crime, even if the reasons only remain logical to them. The Shearing texts are emotional and irrational explorations of a criminal's psyche framed within the backdrop of a romantic and gothic framework. This is presented without the juxtaposition of the rational reasoning of a calm and collected detective unperturbed by the littered remnants of destruction left behind by those involved in crimes of passion.

Bowen's penchant for darkness and remembering the past unsurprisingly finds creative expression through genres such as crime, sensation fiction and gothic. The sense of melodrama in her novels feeds into the sensational aspect of her fiction which in turn was effectively processed into cinematic and pictorially vivid sensationalism on film. The American popularity of the Shearing novels could be due to the mood within American society at this time. Though Bowen was certainly no modernist in narrative technique, she shared something of the modernist vision of dislocation and hollowness of T.S. Eliot and F. Scott Fitzgerald. Like them she registers isolation, distrust, decline and a craving for past ideals and, as Fluck argues, these were specifically related to the post-war

¹⁴⁸ Winifred Fluck, 'Crime, Guilt and Subjectivity' In *Film Noir*, *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 46:3, vol.46, no.3, 2001, p.381

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid* p.381

period in America, the abject and torturous suffering of existential nihilism and despair due to the inability to find one's freedom.¹⁵⁰

Bowen as Shearing, like Bowen as Bowen, deliberately placed a sense of ambiguity within her novels. As previously mentioned, the perpetrators are not necessarily evil incarnate and the victims are not necessarily wholly innocent and the extent of their guilt can certainly be debated. Yet on some level, all her characters retain a degree of guilt in relation to choices made in the past. The exploration of criminal guilt was central to film noir at the time, as Fluck assures us.¹⁵¹ But the Shearing novels depicted an all-encompassing human guilt and suffering where the ability for criminal endeavours varied. Shearing examined what could drive an idea, a thought, a desire into possible motivation. In these novels, each set of circumstances is placed before the reader to portray the steps leading to the criminal intent and consequently the murder itself. It should be noted here that Shearing's characters tend to display more profound strength of character rather than the inherent weakness as discussed in Fluck's argument as their motivation does not usually curtail from characteristic weaknesses. They commit their crimes due to desperation, love, poverty, desire, ambition, entrapment and injustice. Shearing often focused on female characters committing crimes, though some male protagonists were used also, not necessarily because they were depicted as femme fatales but because of a duality in nature - a persecuted and unhappy woman driven to the depths of despair alongside a determination to escape from circumstantial constraints. Such women are always financially ensnared by men. The male characters who commit the crimes are simultaneously ensnared by the women, albeit emotionally either by love, hate or a tantalisingly cold disregard. In all there is a longing for a different set of circumstances to the ones they find themselves in, which often spirals out the borders of sanity into absolute madness such as in *The Crime of Laura Sarelle* and *The Spectral Bride*. This could be the reason for Shearing's appeal as the

¹⁵⁰ Winifred Fluck, 'Crime, Guilt and Subjectivity in Film Noir,' p. 381

¹⁵¹ Ibid p. 381

stories embodied all the cinematic drama and darkness of film noir while simultaneously offering a more acute understanding of human nature in all its complexity in true Bowenesque form.

In the Conway Hall Arts Lecture, Bowen said “The nineteenth century produced great artists and began reforms we are now trying to complete...The form must continuously change or the art die.”¹⁵² This was Bowen’s literary aim as she perceived it and this belief is deeply embedded within her work as she consistently returned to the past to expand on the present by continuing past literary traditions. With this lecture, Marjorie Bowen is referring to those that are shocked by modern art because they prefer the art of the past which they believed retained more virtue and less evil. This, to Bowen, is irrelevant and unappreciative as modern art in her day originates from the past and is continuing and progressing while still exploring tradition and the artist must be allowed to do this. She rejected those who deemed modern art as immoral.

It could be fair to say here, particularly with the consideration of the number of genres that the Shearing novels drew upon, that Bowen herself as a writer cannot fit into any specific literary category because she perceived art as a skill that did not have to be neatly categorised. Though carrying on past literary traditions was essential to her authorial voice, compounded of gothicism, historical romance and romanticism to name just a few, the inspiration for new thought must also be present. She researched, wrote a biography of and was an admirer of Mary Wollstonecraft but while exploring feminism in her work also sought to place the female apart from feminism, hinting in the biography, that despite a woman's wish for freedom and independence, she could still be trapped by men emotionally. This notion could be viewed as both feminist and anti-feminist as she sought to understand the female tragedy of entrapment. She was keen to instil the idea in her novels that human happiness and fulfilment could transpire from a reformed structure of marriage, marriage that could and should offer equality and partnership between the sexes. She believed evil was beyond the devil and religious sin and a human responsibility. She adhered to the romanticism

¹⁵² Bowen, Conway Hall Arts Lecture

versus reason debate which is consistent within her characters and narratives as two opposing forces but ultimately the same human suffering can still reside within both. Overwrought and tortuous human emotion and pain are placed against human complacency and indifference, nihilism is contrasted with purpose, the spirituality and intuition that was discussed in chapter one of this thesis is more powerful than superstition and institutional religion. The Shearing texts are a complicated mix of unique explorations regarding the human existence structured by the themes and forms of inherited literary traditions.

Joseph Shearing's *The Crime of Laura Sarelle*, published in 1941, is a dark and emotive tale where time, the past and the present, are mirrored against each other in acute synchronicity amidst a framework of diabolical greed and murderous intent. The novel tells the story of a nineteen year old woman who is tormented by the secret past of her family and her namesake - the prior Laura Sarelle. The previous Laura Sarelle lived in the same house sixty years ago where the unfortunate present Laura and her brother Theodosius now reside.

The Sarelles are an English aristocratic family whose wealth and social position are apparent to the reader from the outset and Laura and Theodosius, both born in Jamaica, now live in Leppard Hall, a sinister and gloomy mansion in Warwickshire. Laura is a difficult and free-spirited character who is fully aware of her dreams and desires but her brother presides, he rules and controls her life socially, emotionally and financially. He is master of the house and of Laura. Both siblings, despite their rich tapestry of a familial history, are orphans and have very few living relatives. The cold-hearted Theodosius is the sole guardian of his sister, his refusal to entertain society or to allow Laura to build relations with those of the same class ensures their isolation within their own social ranks. Theodosius wishes to see his sister married, not because he cares and considers her happiness but simply because he desires to remove her from his life and what he perceives as a maddening responsibility towards a woman he cannot understand. In his mind, she is simply a burden, a wretched nuisance and a constant source of irritancy. His sole wish is for Laura to marry a suitable man of his own choosing which will leave him free to live as a recluse and able to indulge in his one

scholarly interest - studying the ancient classics and the Greek philosophy of times past, the remnants of his classical education at Eton and Magdalen College in Oxford, Oxford which was the decadent Oscar Wilde's College and may be significant when considering Shearing's literary interests.

Theodosius succeeds in finding a husband for Laura, a distant cousin named Harry Mostyn who greedily desires the Sarelle fortune and Laura's huge dowry after his own lavish expenses and the maintaining of his appearances has left him in dire financial constraints. At the beginning of the novel, the reader discovers Laura's heart belongs to another man, Lucius Delaunay. Lucius, a man with a keen sense of integrity, duty and love towards Laura, is Theodosius' old school friend and the employed steward of Leppard Hall. Lucius is equal to Theodosius in every manner. With his good Irish birth and aristocratic descent, his intelligence and inquiring mind, his equality to Theodosius is apparent. However, Lucius unfortunately lacks wealth and financial stability, despite his ancestral background and Theodosius, though he pretends Lucius is his friend, still perceives him as a paid servant. Yet Lucius, in addition to his equality regarding intelligence and cleverness, also surpasses Theodosius in manners, wit, personality and charm. Lucius' empathic, romantic and sensitive nature is sharply juxtaposed against the cold and distant nature of Theodosius.

Lucius eventually asks for Laura's hand in marriage which Theodosius forbids and vehemently denies. Regarding the proposal as an utter betrayal from his old friend, he furiously orders Lucius to leave the house and terminates his role of steward for the surrounding grounds. Laura, already on the verge of a breakdown due to her entrapment and emotional imprisonment, rapidly continues her spiralling mental descent. Theodosius' cruel treatment of his sister is largely the result of a terrible family secret he desperately wishes to keep buried. The village residents are sworn to secrecy and the plot of the novel is shrouded in suspense and mystery as both Laura and Lucius embark on separate journeys in an attempt to uncover the fiercely guarded secret of Leppard Hall, the secret that not only Theodosius but also all the previous male heirs have sought to keep hidden. The reader eventually discovers that the Laura Sarelle of sixty years ago was involved in the sudden death of her brother, that there was an inquest in 1780, that she too was in love with

someone else she was forbidden to marry and as the story unfolds, it is evident that the characters in this novel are doomed to repeat the actions of those that previously occupied Leppard Hall.

The Crime of Laura Sarelle is not a traditional ghost story. The ghosts are of an entirely different nature in the novel, they live inside the heads of those that dwell in the house and this is where they thrive. However, Laura's own hauntings, visions and fears progress much further than mental degeneration. Her phantoms actually resemble, not just apparitions, but also the spectral possession of a human soul.

The novel opens with Laura's demands to her brother that he remove the two life-size portraits of a man and a woman, the woman is the previous Laura from sixty years ago and the other a man whose name is unknown until the mysterious plot begins to further unravel. The novel, as with quite a few of the Shearing texts is atmospheric, vivid and visual. The novel, in parts, is a description in colour and represents Shearing's personal interest in fine art and her optic awareness. One of the portraits which Laura so vehemently dislikes is by the English portrait painter, Thomas Gainsborough, and Shearing describes the portraits and landscape in vibrant detail and briefly hints at the landscape beyond the portrait which Gainsborough is so renowned for creating. Theodosius refuses to give into what he perceives as Laura's whimsical demands and immediately, the reader can recognise Theodosius' mistake. It is clear to the reader that the two ominous portraits appear to represent the spirits of the dead and it is their presence in the room, their belongings that still remain in the mansion, that effectively bring the past swiftly back into the present. The brother is once again murdered by the sister in order to be with the man she loves and the one she is forbidden to marry.

Interestingly the name of the protagonist, Laura, which relates to laurel leaves, appears to represent the symbol of honour and triumph. Laurel leaves are evergreen as they do not immediately fade but they are also extremely poisonous and Laura's plan to murder her brother and frame Harry Mostyn for the crime is certainly triumphant for a time. Theodosius dies from a poisonous concoction distilled from the laurel bushes outside Laura's bedroom window and she is

victorious in the fact that her plan certainly runs smoothly until Harry and Lucius quickly devise her intentions and the real culprit behind Theo's untimely death. Yet at the end of the novel, the reader is left wondering who the real murderer actually is – the present Laura Sarelle in the 1840s or the dead Laura Sarelle from the 1780s as Harry Mostyn sees two Lauras wandering about in the woods on the night of the murder. This is the only time we are given a hint of the Laura Sarelle from the past in actual physical, albeit ethereal, form. The name Laura is also representative of a beloved and a beautiful idealised figure from the Elizabethan and Renaissance periods, which Laura Sarelle with her dark and unusual exquisiteness, certainly appears to personify. Shearing similarly explains the meaning behind the name, “The breeze in the bushes, L’aura...A pun used by Petrarch in his sonnet to his Laura.”¹⁵³

The eighteenth-century definition of the word sensibility, as previously discussed in the earlier section of this chapter, can be applied to the character of Laura. In fact, *The Crime of Laura Sarelle* is a pastiche proto-feminist novel of sensibility. Her frequent “follies and fancies” are representative of an emotional and fraught nature while her character is perceived as being acutely unstable by those around her. She is an extremely sensitive young woman whose natural intuitive ability remains strongly intact despite her difficult circumstances, her fierce longing for emotional freedom and desperation for release. Laura's physical ailments, namely fevers and headaches are a reaction to her environment, to her oppression and to her imprisonment. Despite her inner strength, she is also quite fragile and vulnerable. She does not attempt to hide her acute unhappiness and this consistently fraught emotional nature of hers does not bode well with her brother. Theodosius single-handedly creates the sheltered and cold environment she has to live in and consequently, her emotional pain starts to physically manifest. The book *Sensibility and Female Poetic Tradition 1780-1860: The Legacy of Charlotte Smith* by Claire Knowles heralds Emily St Aubert as the example of the Heroine of Sensibility in Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Emily's fragility, artistic ability,

¹⁵³ Joseph Shearing, *The Crime of Laura Sarelle*, New York, Berkley Medallion Books, 1965, p. 45

romantic nature and her suffering were positive and definitive traits for a heroine of sentimental literature and these traits allowed the reader to be able to empathise with Emily's difficulties throughout the novel.¹⁵⁴ This is similar to the plight of Laura Sarelle. The reader can certainly empathise with Laura's difficult domestic situation and the sense of a profound claustrophobia certainly enhances the narrative. Yet while Emily's nature was inherently good, Laura slowly becomes a manipulative murderer without regret. Sensibility is portrayed as a valuable trait in Gothic novels which Shearing certainly appears to use but she also showed the alternative side to sensibility portrayed in such a text; that is fragility and disempowerment eventually leading to a diabolical mentality and the distortion of morality in order to escape a tyrannical situation. Laura's unbearable circumstances change her. Shearing shows how pain and suffering can eventually lead to murderous intent, revenge and a loss of innocence.

Sensibility is perceived by Shearing as good but it is those who do not possess this trait and cannot see the worth of acknowledging and understanding the emotional side of human nature that is deemed as negative. In discussing sensibility, Ann Jessie Van Sant refers us to the French philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who believed sensibility was akin to morality and tender feeling towards mankind.¹⁵⁵ It is the reason why Theodosius, who in his complete lack of innate sensibility, is able to see his sister with such abject distaste and treat her with such merciless cruelty.

Ann Wierda Rowland's survey of Romantic Fiction discusses the immediately pre-Romantic 'sentimental' philosophy of David Hume and Adam Smith who believed in passion over logic and rationality and Smith's respect for "one [who] puts himself in the situation of another"¹⁵⁶ is evident here. There was a definitive touch of sentimentality or emotional identification in Shearing herself as a writer and this enabled her to mirror such strong human emotion in her work as she was able to.

¹⁵⁴ Claire Knowles, *Sensibility and Female Poetic Tradition 1780-1860*, Farnham, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 1998, p.65

¹⁵⁵ Ann Jessie Van Sant, *Eighteenth Century Sensibility and The Novel: The Senses in Social Context*, New York, Cambridge University Press, p.6

¹⁵⁶ Katie Trumpener, Richard Maxwell, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Romantic Fiction*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 194

The novel reflects the nineteenth century Romantic novel with strong gothic undertones for the twentieth century.

The novel is also an exploration of gender. Two siblings, one male who is twenty-four years of age and one nineteen year old female, both equal in intelligence and strength of spirit, differ greatly, mostly because the male has the freedom. In addition to managing a large household, the accounts, the lands, the family wealth, the guardianship of his sister, he is also able to indulge in his revered pastime of translating ancient languages. Yet his sister is expected to simply learn how to manage the servants and uncomplicated domestic duties. Her brother feels she lacks the desire to learn what he terms the “female arts” as he constantly seeks to reduce her level to those of the tenants, the servants and those he perceives as below his own standing. The term “female arts” is quite ironic here as Laura does indeed wish for the chance to be able to exercise her interest in actual art - books, concerts, the opera, paintings and the theatre, all of which Theodosius looks upon with disgust. As mentioned previously, Laura is a sensitive woman whose instincts and intuition are at the core of her being, but the people around her perceive her intuition and her shrewdness as “follies” and “fancies.” She is trapped in an obscure and dark existence where logic and reason prevail, where Theodosius rules, where her romantic nature is stifled and unable to be exercised or suitably fulfilled. Consequently, Theodosius' intense dislike for his sister ensures Laura's downward spiral. The classical name Theodosius, which means “giving to god,” was also the name of two emperors from the Roman and Byzantine eras and in this novel, Theodosius' word certainly presides. He is an intrinsically masculine figure who gives little but deems himself as a gift from the gods and his obsession with classical materials and ancient history displays a military point of view. He rules over them all, Laura, Lucius, Harry and Laura's weak companion, Mrs Sylk, who often goes against her own intuition at the expense of Laura's well-being, and determines everyone else's fate, including his own.

Laura and Theodosius (Theo) are two opposing forces, yet they do show similar veins of the same. Laura represents the uncanny nature of the world we live in. Her mind is an expanse of

loneliness and reflects a disturbed and untamed nature. Sentiment, darkness and an unsurpassed and profound emotion exists within her. Alternatively, Theodosius represents a solid stoicism. Rationality and reason are at the core of his yearnings for a calm, orderly existence and peaceful surroundings. Laura's desire for companionship, art, romance and love is pitted against Theo's wish for a solitary life and the continuance of his studies of the Greek historian Arrian. Arrian, an historian in the ancient world, was the principle source of our information about stoic philosophy and as such a major figure in an inherently masculine intellectual history. Brother and sister are representatives of the oppressor and the oppressed, a callous quasi-stoic composure depicted within the oppressor brother versus the wild fury that characterises the oppressed sister, that may recall the young Jane Eyre and consequently, they both portray a sense of dismal repression. Theo, "a born celibate," gives up on his life, on marriage and children despite his young age and Laura, in spite of her own desperate efforts, will never be able to live her life independently away from Leppard Hall. It is a tale of fancy versus fact, emotion versus reason and Laura versus Theodosius. Lucius Delaunay, however, is a thought-provoking combination of the two: a character that is certainly able to fantasise, dream and love while still retaining the necessary degree of rationality and logic when needed. In the book *Gothic & Gender, An Introduction*, Donna Heiland claims gothic sensibility was perceived to acknowledge and support patriarchal frameworks or to disrupt it.¹⁵⁷ In *The Crime of Laura Sarelle*, Theodosius is the representation of a male dominated sphere and Laura herself is the disruption - the core opposition to such an imbalance between gender relations of the period.

The character of Theodosius is a by-product of the enlightenment age. He refers to himself as a stoic and a practical scholar, refusing to concede to, what he perceives to be, the whims of a foolish woman and the thoughtless superstitions of those around him. But Shearing presents superstition as an actual force of life to be reckoned with. It is the refusal to acknowledge the possibility of forces beyond our control that is Theodosius' downfall and the catastrophic unravelling

¹⁵⁷ Donna Heiland, *Gothic & Gender, An Introduction*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2004 p.12

of the two remaining Sarelles. It is clear to the reader that it is precisely superstition and evil omens that Theodosius should be acknowledging. The dreamy and trance-like effect of the house on the inhabitants is shown throughout the novel as the plot develops. Laura, Harry Mostyn and Mrs Sylk appear to invariably shift consciousness and mood, to another time and place where the secretive sinister events of the past slowly infiltrate the present. The house remembers and those that are sensitive to its past feel the dread that still lingers.

When considering the elements of the novel's front cover, *The Crime of Laura Sarelle* appears to retain all the motifs of a traditional Gothic story. The landscape looms dark and ominous in the gloomy background, we see the sharp outline of white marble graves within the mausoleum and we encounter the obligatory young woman resplendent in a flowing and richly embroidered gown with a fearful look in her eyes. According to the front cover, Laura appears to represent an innocent victim and she is, in the best Gothic tradition, victimised and oppressed, but at the novel's conclusion, it is Laura that we need to fear, not only due to her murderous actions but also because of the great intensity of her psychological imbalance. Catherine Spooner follows Chris Baldick in maintaining that a gothic text should comprise, "A fearful sense of inheritance in time within a claustrophobic sense of enclosure in space, these two dimensions reinforcing one another to produce an impression of sickening descent into disintegration."¹⁵⁸ Psychological and physical imprisonment is the direct cause of Laura's mental instability. The house's furniture, the old clothes, the rich and ornate items of a period past and the unique artwork, represent an almost gothic stage and it is as strong a feature in this novel as in other gothic texts such as *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, where the painting represents the past, mental degeneracy and malevolent sin.

The Crime of Laura Sarelle is a tale essentially of reincarnation, repetition and the paranormal. The present Laura feels she has previously occupied the hall before and it is almost as if her spirit is taking up the reins of where it left off in the past, "There are other things of hers up there too, and I

¹⁵⁸ Catherine Spooner, *Contemporary Gothic*, London, Reaktion Books Ltd, 2006, p. 18

dare say that after a while I shall feel that I am in the past again and that I am the other Laura Sarelle. But I hope I shan't die like she did, for that means I should have no more than five years or so left to live...I shall close my eyes and imagine what she was like and what she did. Perhaps her whole history will come back to me in a kind of trance, or dream.”¹⁵⁹ For it does appear quite compellingly to the reader, that Laura's nature is split into two halves. She has a sense of an ominous duality about her which hints at the possibility of a possessed spirit. The sickly Laura, the emotional and unbalanced Laura is pale and frail, prone to fainting fits and weaknesses of the mind and yet the other part of Laura shows a distinct quickness of mental faculties, a natural determination and a keen resilience of spirit. By showing two alternate Lauras within the same novel, the novel has a dramatic sense of looking back. The present is continually haunted by the mistakes of the past and the novel itself is a reliving of the past – the story is the past incarnate.

Laura is a character who has the ability to unsettle and unnerve the reader. This is not necessarily instantly recognisable as insanity, for at times she appears quite lucid, but there are short bursts of an eerie quality about her that unsettles the reader from the outset and by doing so, the notions of the Freudian uncanny can be perceived within the text and within the character of Laura and her words, “So I have to come back here again after all these years.”¹⁶⁰ This gives us a sense of reincarnation and déjà vu amidst a sense of doomed repetition.

The village clergyman in the novel, Nathaniel Mist - the Hebrew name Nathaniel also meaning given by god, is a curious though not an immediately obvious character. In fact, he is quite as vague as his surname, Mist, suggests. He hovers with a sense of vagueness in the novel but it is he who is able to accurately describe the theme that the novel essentially plays upon – the human position between two worlds, life and death. His reference to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, “Wasn't it our great poet, our Swan of Avon himself, who said 'in that sleep, what dreams come'? I sometimes think that this whole place is infected with the dreams of the dead, that they can project them into

¹⁵⁹ Shearing, *The Crime of Laura Sarelle*, pp.57-59

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, p.18

very powerful forms, phantoms perhaps – whispers – suggestions,”¹⁶¹ is certainly representative of Bowen’s/Shearing’s literary interests. The Shearing novels are an exploration of unbearable lives and premature deaths, where murder and vengeance, often link the two together. Bowen’s historical novels, supernatural horror stories and the mysterious gothic thrillers all revolve around the “dreams of the dead” concept and in conveying historical figures, true crime mysteries and the tales of the uncanny, the weird and the peculiar, Bowen/Shearing is essentially exploring the thoughts, sentiments and actions of the dead. The “whole place” that the Reverend Nathaniel Mist is referring to here is greater than the setting of the novel. It could be implying that the “whole place” is earth itself. Perhaps Shearing believed the consciousness of the living is consistently infiltrated by the dreams of the dead and that there are those who are more acutely sensitive to such presences than others. The past always influences the future and as a consequence, the dead can always affect the living. The Reverend Nathaniel Mist also obscures the harsh edges of reality, though in a much bleaker fashion. With the hint of the vaporous meaning behind his name, he is a distant and vague character in a lonely and unfulfilling world, and an almost spiritual mediator between death and physical reality.

There is a haunted disposition in a great deal of Bowen’s work and it is this that creates the melancholic and evocative atmosphere that Bowen was so adept at creating. In examining the idea of “the dreams of the dead,” the novel is actually exploiting different states of consciousness which is similar to the Romantic appropriation of dreams, in works such as Samuel Coleridge’s *Kubla Khan* and Thomas De Quincey’s *Confessions of An Opium Eater*.

However, the novel is not as fluently written in parts as some of the other Shearing texts. *Aunt Beardie*, *The Spectral Bride* and *The Golden Violet* are stronger in their creation. The specifics and the smaller details in *The Crime of Laura Sarelle* can sometimes appear weak, almost as if Shearing wrote the novel quickly and perhaps under some pressure. Aspects of Laura herself derive a

¹⁶¹ Shearing, *The Crime of Laura Sarelle*, Shearing, p.8

little too obviously from the passionate frustrated heroines of Victorian fiction such as Jane Eyre or Maggie Tulliver. The phrase “eyes expressing fury” does not quite show the core extent of the emotional frustration and suppression that Laura is suffering at the hands of her tormentor. There are too many repetitive phrases and not enough consideration given to some of her descriptive prose. The words wild, wilful, caprices, fancies and whims are used too often in the text and some of the descriptions do not come quite as close to the wickedly simpering evil of Olivia Sacret in *So Evil My Love* or the haunting resonating ambience of the tale *To Bed At Noon*. Yet *The Crime of Laura Sarelle* is told with vigour. The quality of intimacy in her dialogue and the mentality of the characters certainly cement the novel's goal - to thrill her readers with fascination for such an interesting protagonist, for Laura is indeed interesting and a unique protagonist in various ways. She is vulnerable but in certain aspects, a true villain. She is at times weak but a robust character is clearly evident. The hints at her insanity is portrayed with a real perception of a spiralling descent as she forges closer to her crime and due to the clever intricacy of the plot, the reader is not even completely sure who the real murderer is at the novel's conclusion – Laura or the ghost of her namesake. The headstrong and independent female character is a particular trait within the Shearing novels and is akin to the strong and rebellious female characters within the novels of the Brontë sisters. Jane Eyre, Bertha Mason, Catherine Earnshaw and Laura Sarelle display hints of the same characteristics in a female gothic world amidst the framework of the noble (or at least big) house tradition, the large house that is witness to terrible events. The explicit supernatural phenomena at the end of Shearing's novel show all in this world can be haunted and it is indeed an excellent and extremely imaginative ending. To the other characters within the novel, the present Laura can appear quite distant from reality but to the reader, she is simply trapped within an unbearable situation. Perceived by others as continually “wild” and “wilful,” she displays an acute judgement of character and an uncanny ability to know other people's intentions without being timidly afraid to say so. Her candour and unreservedness display a sense of modern appeal and female independence, despite the shackles placed on her by her brother, and she is certainly different to the

type of subservient woman Theodosius would have preferred her to be. Theo's perception of her as a disobedient irritant is to us a character that refuses to follow conventional rules and female domestic pretensions as would have been the behavioural modes of her time. Despite the apparent weaknesses of some of Shearing's prose within this novel, there are times when her writing simply flows with a certain vivacity and belief in such a richly constructed narrative.

There are no actual ghosts throughout this novel and the explicit supernatural phenomena does not occur until the novel's conclusion, but all the characters are profoundly affected by Leppard Hall. As previously mentioned, the two portraits are representations of ghostly embodiments and superstitions. They appear almost animated and their presence is greatly felt in the house as if they were in fact physical entities. Shearing may have been exploring the archaic idea that the souls of the dead were once understood to continue to exist within the portraits that were created when they were alive. Consequently, the dead in this context never wholly depart the living and if their souls were of a villainous and evil nature in life, this will continue in the same vein after their death. They impress upon the living to follow in the immoral footsteps of the dead and the living repeat the actions of those that preceded them. Certainly Harry Mostyn and the present Laura Sarelle are the prime examples of this as the thoughts of the husband of the dead Laura Sarelle, Captain Edward Avenshaw, appear to filter through Harry's mind as if they were his own. Laura Sarelle, as discussed earlier within this chapter, is in effect two souls, two Lauras. The Laura from sixty years ago, growing ever present and stronger in Laura as the novel continues and her desperation grows, is a most unusual doppelganger. This is an evil twin who is already deceased. The reader is never fully acquainted with the Laura from the past but her presence is as strongly embodied within the text as the present Laura.

Due to the various themes in the novel, the categorical genre of this book is quite indeterminate as it touches upon several ideas and concepts, such as mystery, thriller, gothic, true crime and horror. The conclusion suggests it to be a combination of a gothic thriller and a supernatural ghost story and due to the structurally complex thematic mix, the reception of

Shearing's work was a positive one. *The Crime of Laura Sarelle* represented an extreme form of a mystery thriller and the novel's features greatly contributed to the general popularity of the Shearing texts, albeit intense crime thriller mysteries with effective gothic and supernatural themes. Some of the reviews for Shearing's work were as follows: *The Spectral Bride* – "Really something...one of the master's finest works"¹⁶² in the *New York Herald Tribune*; "Addicts will be delighted...very fine and evil as anything,"¹⁶³ "A superb writer...a master of horror," in *The New Yorker* and "A true thriller of rare quality" in the *Birmingham Post* for *Blanche Fury*. Orville Prescott, the main book reviewer on *The New York Times* commented "So Evil My Love is a gruesomely fascinating story about a thoroughly wicked woman...By probing deep into Mrs Sacret's cold, smug mind and telling his story almost entirely from Mrs Sacret's point of view, Mr. Shearing has given, "So Evil My Love" a wonderfully intimate authority...and the mounting tension of the situation with evil on the verge of triumph is sustained...Joseph Shearing, as the author's small but loyal following knows, is one of the pseudonyms used by Mrs Gabrielle Margaret Vere Campbell Long, the brilliant and fabulously prolific author of more than 130 books...In the forty years since her first novel was published many writers have produced more important books than hers; but it is doubtful if any writer has produced as many good ones."¹⁶⁴ In *The New Yorker*, Sally Benson believed, "Mr Shearing is a painstaking researcher, a superb writer, a careful technician, and a master of horror. There is no one else quite like him."¹⁶⁵ In a review of the novel *The Crime of Laura Sarelle*, the American literary critic Will Cuppy claimed, "Those who want a good workout of the more perilous emotions will do well to read Mr. Shearing's impressive tale of love, death and doom...Join the Shearing cult and meet one of the most malevolent females in song or story."¹⁵⁸

The American literary critic and university lecturer, Professor Edward Wagenknecht (1900-2004), included Bowen's works in his critical book *Seven Masters of Supernatural Fiction*, published

¹⁶² Joseph Shearing, *The Spectral Bride*, London, Sphere Books, 1973, p. back cover

¹⁶³ Shearing, *The Spectral Bride*, p. back cover

¹⁶⁴ Orville Prescott, 'Books of The Times,' *The New York Times*, December 5, 1947

¹⁶⁵ Stanley J. Kunitz, Howard Haycraft, "Shearing, Joseph," *Twentieth Century Authors, A Biographical Dictionary of Modern Literature*, (Third Edition), New York, The H.W. Wilson Company, 1950, (pp. 845-6) ¹⁵⁸ Ibid, p.845-6

in 1991, which makes it clear that his knowledge of her work is extensive. Bowen also consulted with Edward Wagenknecht regarding the historical material for the Shearing novel *To Bed At Noon*. Wagenknecht wrote a feature on Bowen, using her real name Gabrielle Margaret Campbell Long titled 'The Extraordinary Mrs. Long' published in *The New York Times* in 1943. In detailing and acknowledging her authorial flaws, the distinction between her being a great writer and a good writer, he succeeds in identifying the core essence of her talent. Marjorie Bowen was not a brilliant writer, he concedes, but she certainly showed very specific elements of creative dexterity and unusual skill. She may not have been "great" as such but much of her work certainly demonstrates elements of a unique and very rare quality. In detailing her ordinariness, he brings to the fore these extraordinary aspects to her writing. Wagenknecht claims, "I am not of course saying that Gabrielle Long is, in the largest sense of the term, a great writer. Nobody, I am sure, could be more embarrassed than she would by such a claim. She sees herself rather as "a woman who earned her living by writing fiction – with occasional essays in that kind of history deplored by historians." Her books are uneven; some of them have been made to order...Fatigue casts its shadow over some of her books; she is sometimes matter-of-fact; she does not always write the King's English correctly. But she is more than "a born story-teller;" she is a witch, a genius in the creation of atmosphere. When she is at her best, this atmosphere...is of a sinister or semisupernatural variety; it stirs the blood."¹⁶⁶ Wagenknecht also examined the core focus of the Shearing novels and the literary interests that lay beneath the compositions, "The artist Joseph Shearing is drawn to crime and mystery as Conrad or the Brontës were drawn to them, not because they can be wrapped up in neat little artificial packages but because it is in extreme situations that the real capacities of human nature are revealed, and because human life itself is a mystery."¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ Edward Wagenknecht, 'The Extraordinary Mrs Long,' *The New York Times*, May 2 1943

¹⁶⁷ Ibid

As Professor Wagenknecht and the critics illustrate here, the Shearing texts were popular in America and it leads one to examine the possible reasons for this popularity as mentioned previously when examining the transference of Shearing's work from the novel to film. In *Gothic America: Narrative, History & Nation* by Teresa A. Goddu, Goddu explains the differences between British and American Gothic by claiming British Gothic reflected and explored social terrors due to its diverse cultural history and American Gothic, due to its less expansive but still significant history, is portrayed within the structures of mental dispositions.¹⁶⁸ This may explain Shearing's popularity in America. The Shearing novels utilise historical events of true criminal endeavours while simultaneously and profoundly exploring the mental states of the protagonists. Psychological instability and social awareness were some of the strongest subject matters within her work. Also, a novelist with a strong sense of history and an understanding of the repercussions of the past would have been keenly desired and admired at such a time in history, particularly as the Americans were just entering the European war and consequently, thereby entering the European world. This perhaps showed an American nostalgia for English Romanticism.

There is a wide-ranging assertive spiritual dimension, perhaps, as distinct from a sense of institutionalised religion, in the Shearing novels as in other work by Bowen. Shearing alludes to a spirituality which is not closely embedded in a religious context and has no room for penance or punishment for sin as religiously understood. Spirituality is an important part of her fiction and is portrayed as a significant fragment of the human experience. There is an element of the inexplicable and the dangerous which touches gothic fiction and Bowen explored this idea also within her short ghost stories. The idea that the dead speak again, that the dead never completely leave the living, whether psychologically or physically or indeed both, flourish in her ghost stories. Writers of gothic literature and the intense prevalence of the ghost story into the Edwardian period and further into

¹⁶⁸ Teresa A. Goddu, *Gothic America: Narrative, History & Nation*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1997, p. 3-12

¹⁶² Morris, *Gothic Sublimity, The Sublime and the Beautiful*, p. 310 - 311

the twentieth century showed an increasing awareness amongst these writers that the enemy, that is the demonic or demonised Other, was much closer to home than had previously been written about in the nineteenth century. Shearing's novels reaffirmed this belief. If the ghost stories prevalently believed the enemy was externally close, then the Shearing novels deemed that the enemy was psychologically within. In *Gothic Sublimity*, Morris' claim, "It is not Walpole's ghosts who inspire terror, but the ghosts we carry within us,"¹⁶² shows the enemy is not just the ghosts of our past within us but this claim can also pertain to the sinister, less humane and the vengeful part of ourselves. Shearing's characters are immersed in a complex of dualities – the past and the present, the living and the dead, the innocent and the aggrieved, the victim and the perpetrator. The link between Joseph Shearing's gothic sensationalist true crime fiction and Marjorie Bowen's ghost stories is ultimately poignant suffering and death. The unwavering shadow of mortality, spiritualism and ghosts that was so present in *The Crime of Laura Sarelle* also permeates Bowen's supernatural short horror fiction which is studied in the next chapter.

Vengeful Ghosts and Haunting Traditions: A critical perspective on Marjorie Bowen's ghost-stories

The gothic novels written under the pseudonym of Joseph Shearing, as explored in the previous chapter are quite different in style and composition from the short ghost-stories of Marjorie Bowen. Joseph Shearing's *The Crime of Laura Sarelle*, as well as hinting at the certainty of the existence of spirits roaming the earth and possessing the living, also represents a subjective subconscious, an internal world of horror as perceived within the unstable mind of a femme fatale, but in the Bowen ghost stories, ghostly hauntings are part of the natural order. They are a part of our world, not just part of a fevered and subjective imagination but they also exist within us and outside of us: their presence is tangible.

The ghost story was an extremely popular form among writers of the early half of the twentieth century. The popularity of the short story as published in *Blackwoods Magazine* and various periodicals of the day boosted the short story as a genre and contributed significantly to the continuing development and growth of the writers. Ghost stories are particularly effective as short stories and they seek to push against the boundaries of the short story form. Rather than providing just a selfenclosed snapshot or a brief encounter, ghost stories can create a more lingering impression, a certain sensory and perceptive recognition within the reader, such as the acknowledgement of the strange and the eerie and the possibility of the uncanny that hovers just outside our consciousness. As previously mentioned within this thesis, Marjorie Bowen was a romantic but she was a romanticist of a much darker variety, a romantic whose explorations of supernatural tales, romanticism and religion, as in the writings of Sheridan Le Fanu and Henry James, may be a direct result of her unusual upbringing where religious dogma and personal ghostly encounters experienced as a young child immediately attracted her mind towards the gloomy, the sinister and the mysterious. She was keenly aware of the sublimity within nature and the romantic and spiritual mysticism surrounding human existence. Bowen's profound and unalterable interest in

the supernatural lasted throughout her long and immensely prolific career. The advancement of technology and the world wars in the twentieth century may also have attracted Bowen to tales of this genre even more, a romantic reaction against the technological world of war and bloodshed, a response to the horrors that were occurring in society and throughout the world. It is this consistently dark romantic position that makes Bowen different from her contemporaries such as the self-consciously scientific dreamer H.G. Wells.

Marjorie Bowen explores numerous themes throughout her ghost stories. These include satanic worship, violence, passion, murder, human evil, the desire for death, unrequited love, destructive forces, telepathy, sibling rivalry, family feuds, revenge and comeuppance in the short story collections of *Kecksies and Other Twilight Tales* posthumously published in 1976, *The Last Bouquet* published in 1933 and *The Bishop of Hell* published in 1949 among several other collections. All seek to convey the disturbing, the ominous and the menacing side of our existence as evil, regret, sorrow and revenge abound within these tales. In addition to such themes and ideas, women play a significant role in these stories and interestingly, the female characters vary between the representations of beautiful, dangerous, cunning and daring women and women who are plain, victimised, harassed, physically tormented and persecuted. The stories consistently examine the actions of women who are scorned and vengeful as a result of hardship and wrong-doing. They are oppressed, brutally treated and callously murdered. Women, for Bowen, were the crux of complexity and the ghost story was a form that could explore this complexity to its utmost, psychologically, emotionally and mentally.

Bowen does not frame her supernatural tales in the gothic tradition with its architectural stage-furniture. Dungeons, vaults, castles and unusual settings are not much in evidence within her short stories. They are based within the sphere of the ordinary, the everyday and the familiar. The house that is haunted is not haunted by external spectres but by the memories of those that still reside within it. The ordinary, heightened by perceptions of the sublime and the terrible is at the pinnacle of Bowen's short horror stories. She delves into the terror and horror that lives within us

and outside of us, the fear and the doubt regarding those closest to us, the people around us that can seek to plot, to murder, to betray us and force us to live an uncertain existence due to the innocence we exude of other people's ambiguity. There are the evil apparitions who want to transport us from this world into the next. We cannot even trust ourselves. In Bowen's stories, what she believed to be the sheer mysticism of life constantly surrounds us and she appeared to be just as comfortable writing short stories as she was when narrating much longer pieces of fiction. Bowen's ghost stories retain the dark resonances of death and mortality and they radiate the profound gothic undertones of the graveyard poetry school in the eighteenth century.

Nicholas Royle's book *The Uncanny* is a useful guide for understanding Bowen's ghost stories. Royle wrote about the strange and the unusual, that the supernatural effectively draws upon the uncertainty regarding what is real and what is not. Supernatural tales question nature, human nature and views the strange in a familiar context. The uncanny hints at fatalism, nihilism, determinism and its thematic aspects of repetition, repression, the desire for death and nostalgia are understood by Royle to be a twentieth century version of the Burkean Sublime as described in Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* published in 1756.¹⁶⁹ The uncanny, according to Royle, "Has to do with a sense of ourselves as split, double, at odds with ourselves."¹⁷⁰

Many writers regarded the ghost story as a narrative form in which to explore purely ghostly phenomena and paranormal occurrences. Bowen, however, used the ghost story to explore her characters' lives, their history, their experiences and how these life-choices led to the appearance of such supernatural occurrences. For example, murdered lovers avenged, the seeking of greed and desire leading to hell and damnation, sibling rivalry where in the loss of sisterly closeness in life, the two siblings can only then be linked in death, or even in the instance where there is the longing for death because one's life is so unsatisfactory and solitary. The ghost story, for Bowen, seeks to

¹⁶⁹ Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2003, p.6

¹⁷⁰ Ibid p.14

explore the possible existence of life after death and how it is human choices that ultimately lead to where a soul may belong in eternity. Her short stories often have a severe sense of loss and the inability to recognise a sense of one's belonging, an inability which can only be realised in death when it is too late. Bowen's capacity and aptitude for examining the past to discover answers for the present arises here. Bowen's stories, alongside the work of better-known ghost story writers such as Cynthia Asquith, M.R. James, Algernon Blackwood and May Sinclair, commonly share an astute sense of the supernatural and project distinct images of spectres wandering the earth at any time, any place and certainly anywhere but the comparison between Bowen's contemporaries and Bowen herself as a horror writer ends there. The characters in Bowen's ghost stories are not simply haunted by just any ghosts that bear little or no relation to the victims in earthly life. The characters are haunted by the literal ghosts of their own pasts, people they knew and loved, people they hated and annihilated, particular places they have never physically been to but nevertheless feel that uncanny sense of *déjà vu*, the inexplicable link between character and place. Bowen's hauntings are never coincidental and those that must receive what they deserve always do with a curious twist of fateful determinism.

The short story, 'The House by The Poppy Fields' (1916) although dramatically atmospheric and detailed in its description, retains a raw sense of unique simplicity in its depiction of nihilistic determinism. The solitariness of the house and the melancholic discontent of the main character bleed through its pages. The strong urge for death here is skilfully constructed and despite the lack of violence and passion that are clearly evident in her other stories, this narrative is just as unsettling as the others. The uncanniness here lies between the reader and the text and how one may feel when that yearning for death consumes the natural will to live. The element of time is important within this story as it hints at an elongated and extremely prolonged sense of isolation and desertion. Bowen's stories have an acute and significant sense of time. The past, present and future is greatly considered which appears to be quite different to other short ghost stories written by female authors that abounded throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Many of the ghost

stories written by Bowen feature contemporary and historical settings, they are glimpses of certain periods in a world of ghostly happenings.

Rather than writing ghost stories in the realms of the psychiatric and the psychological like Cynthia Asquith and Charlotte Perkins Gilman for example, Marjorie Bowen's stories contain, not necessarily the irrational or the dislocation of an already disordered mind but show the paranormal occurrences as an unquestionable state of being, not as a mental state, but as an order, a necessary figment of life on earth. Bowen, clearly interested in ancient legends like other horror writers, such as F. Marion Crawford and in using aspects of the ancient, manages to fuse this with aspects of the modern, such as mediums, spiritualism and psychical beliefs within the framework of the occult. Although Bowen presents the supernatural as a state of being and not an aspect of hallucinatory irrationality, psychology still remains a large part of her work. Certainly fears, dreams and the subconscious underlie the themes within her narratives but the supernatural experiences are just as real outside of the characters' minds as they are within them (i.e. the minds).

The Virago Book of Ghost Stories, published in 1987, is a collection of short ghost stories written by numerous popular female authors in the twentieth century and it includes two very short ghost stories by Marjorie Bowen. They are *The Accident* and *A Persistent Woman*, both of which Richard Dalby, a literary researcher and bibliographer acclaimed: "The art of writing a successful ghost story in under 150 words is a notoriously difficult one – but here are two of the best examples to be found anywhere."¹⁷¹ In the same anthology, Jennifer Uglow wrote in the introduction, "Can one tell from these stories what women are most haunted by? Well, they are the fears that stalk all women...Women readers of Asquith's *The Follower* will recognise her dread at once...Gradually this sexual terror, too easily written off as paranoia, spreads outwards to implicate men in general, who mask under benign exteriors an urge to destroy the women who trust them...The bizarre climax, the sudden cry, the final twist of plot take us back with a gasp into the 'real' world. This is why comedy is

¹⁷¹ Dalby, *The Virago Book of Ghost Stories - The Twentieth Century*, p. 107-108

not alien to the ghost story but almost essential. Laughter is the ultimate shock absorber.”¹⁷²

Certainly Bowen wrote stories about innocent victims subjected to cruel mistreatment and the cruelty they experience but their cruelty stems from the humans around them, their husbands, lovers, brothers and the ghostly happenings that arise from this is the female ghost seeking her revenge on those who sought to do her wrong. Rarely in Bowen’s supernatural tales are innocent humans subject to the torturous vengeance of a ghost whose past has nothing do with them. In Bowen’s stories, there is always an unnerving link between the living and the dead, between innocent victimisation and deadly injustice. Similar to Wilkie Collins’ ghost story *Dream Woman*, within its plot of dreams, premonitions and ill forebodings, the real danger as Collins shows does not necessarily lie within the realms of just the paranormal but exists within our own lives and the people we think we know. This wreaking of vengeance against evil injustices is not limited in Bowen’s stories to female victims only. Female perpetrators and femme fatales abound within her literary sphere.

Thematic techniques such as the use of comedy in horror-writing Bowen refrained from using. Comedy in horror, for Bowen, took away the power of the haunting and demeaned the reality and existence of fear itself. Bowen’s thoughts on the ghost story in her *Kecksies* collection were varied and in the preface she wrote,

Some of these tales have some foundation of truth...but most of them are inventions, expressions of the desire to relate the terrible, the monstrous, or the incredible that some story-tellers ardently feel...The old-fashioned emphasis on evil, the malice of the dead, the unholy power of fiend and phantom...is what arouses that thrill of emotion that is the tribute to the most satisfactory kind of ghost story...The present writer has a keen dislike for some types of ghost story. First the ghost that is a sham, a waxwork, a dream (in the “then I woke up” style) or the results of lunacy. Mrs Radcliffe’s celebrated spectral terrors are ruined by being thus accounted for in some prosaic fashion. A comic ghost is also intolerable...Even that favourite butt, the spectre with the clanking chains, is a sinister object to those who know how many people for how many generations died manacled in dungeons beneath the rooms where others lived at ease...In the same way many reputed “hauntings” that have now become ridiculous or

¹⁷² Ibid p. xii - xv

tediously stale have an authentic origin...It is this feeling that makes the present writer regard either caricatured or machine-made ghost stories with aversion. All these now "stock" phantoms meant something once and should be respected.¹⁷³

There is an absence of Freudian psychoanalysis in this preface which is often a key component to many ghost stories written in the first half of the twentieth century. Perhaps Bowen, though she would certainly have been aware of Freudian concepts, was somewhat uninterested and disassociated from psychoanalysis as a therapeutic practice, despite her keen understanding of human psychology. It may be fair to interpret this preface as Bowen's way of dispensing with explanations of the supernatural. The supernatural and the uncanny, perhaps in Bowen's view, were not to be explained and fully understood, but simply acknowledged and allowed to remain a mystery. Her admiration of the subject appears to refer to an awareness of the supernatural, a dawning consciousness of the mystical, without fully comprehending its existence.

Discussing supernatural tales within the early decades of the twentieth century, Jack Sullivan in *Elegant Nightmares* claims, "There has been occasional speculation about why ghost stories proliferated during this period, most of it an appendage of the larger question of the Edwardian obsession with ghostly societies, experiments and manifestos...The tale of terror was symptomatic of a cultural malaise which some historians view as a premonition of the Great War."¹⁷⁴ Sullivan claimed that the American author, Philip Van Doren Stern, believed this also and Stern's own assessment was as follows, "A fierce, new technological civilization then in the throes of birth was to bring horrors of its own upon mankind...Like the beginners of the Romantic movement, the men who were writing the supernatural literature of the early years of the century probably did not know they were singing the swan song of an earlier way of life."¹⁷⁵ Bowen's stories were a romantic reaction to the changing world and the swift advancement of technology and modernity, similarly to HG Wells'

¹⁷³ Marjorie Bowen, *Kecksies and Other Twilight Tales*, Wisconsin, Arkham House Publishers Inc, 1976 pp. ix - xii

¹⁷⁴ Jack Sullivan, *Elegant Nightmares - The English Ghost Story from Le Fanu to Blackwood*, Ohio, Ohio University Press, 1978 p. 3-4

¹⁷⁵ Ibid pp. 3-4

The War of The Worlds. Bowen's work was very different from Wells though the work of both writers can be seen as a symptom of underlying social and moral change. Bowen was fully aware of the past, of the events that came before her own time and her historical novels in essence prove her natural ability for historical research. She understood and wrote about the past with certain nostalgic evocations. That definition of her authorial voice as, "All that I read and heard I turned instinctively into narrative, suffused with a romantic temperament and coloured by dreams and sentiment,"¹⁷⁶ is the explanation for her literary choices and this is combined with the ideas on her writing and the perceptions about her own time in her autobiography *The Debate Continues*, "I liked grandeur, refinement, elegance – I could only find these things in meditating on the past...Few or none of the tales I had in my head were pleasant...often full of dark and sinister shades. I wrote not only to express my own ideas...but to escape from the world in which I lived...I was never optimistic, having read too much of history, but I did not think the world would become what it is now."¹⁷⁷ Bowen infused her narratives with the combination of the dark present combined with her understanding of the romantic past and consequently, the romantic writing within her work was a reaction to the horrors of the present she lived in. She did not write ghost stories simply to scare her readers but used the form and the genre to understand the horrors that existed in her own time. As previously discussed within this thesis, Robert Hadji, in *The Penguin Encyclopedia of Horror and The Supernatural*, aptly referred to Bowen's supernatural tales as "dark romanticism."¹⁷⁸ G.R. Thompson in his chapter 'A Dark Romanticism: In Quest of a Gothic Monomyth' explains: "The word Romantic usually evokes an ideal world, infused with internal energy and dynamically evolving toward a higher state, in which the single, separate self seeks unity with Nature...Adding the adjective Dark may evoke an image of the lonely, isolated self, pressing onward despite all obstacles while either indulging or struggling with an internal evil."¹⁷⁹ This is the dominant note in Bowen's short stories

¹⁷⁶ Bowen, *The Bishop of Hell & Other Stories*, p. 8

¹⁷⁷ Campbell, *The Debate Continues*, pp. 80 - 295

¹⁷⁸ Sullivan, *The Penguin Encyclopedia of Horror and The Supernatural*, p. 50

¹⁷⁹ Peter B. Messent, ed. *Literature of The Occult*, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall Inc, 1981 p. 31

and much longer pieces of fiction. The protagonists struggle with their own inner turmoil while battling the obstacles that exists in their lives and in the lives of those around them.

The majority of what is considered by the very few that have studied her work in detail to be her weird and supernatural fiction was published under the Marjorie Bowen pseudonym. Edward Wagenknecht's book, *Seven Masters of Supernatural Fiction* (1991) where he explores her alongside six other writers deemed to be the leading literary masters of the ghost story genre shows Bowen was clearly considered to be comparable, as a writer of supernatural fiction, a genre where a plenty of writers, both male and female, flourished. Arthur Conan Doyle, who appeared to have a particular dislike for the work of female authors and who claimed, "I don't like women's work as a rule"¹⁸⁰ as detailed in his correspondence to Bowen, praised her supernatural tales. The works of Henry James, Arthur Machen, Algernon Blackwood, M. R James, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, Walter De La Mare and Marjorie Bowen are discussed and dissected in great detail by Wagenknecht and Bowen did indeed share quite a few interesting qualities with these more better-known authors of the genre. Why then is Bowen so obscure today as an avid writer of the supernatural when her fellow contemporaries are much more discussed and documented when it comes to an academic discussion of this genre? Henry James' most famous ghost story, *The Turn of The Screw* published in 1898 uses the psychological to explore the concept of ghosts. Are they real or imaginary? Is the governess to blame or is she innocent? Delusions of a mad mind or story concocted from reality? Both Henry James and Bowen certainly share a penchant for psychological fiction.

Marjorie Bowen though used life itself to explore the supernatural, with an almost existential perspective on the supernatural. Our everyday experiences of love, dreams, hatred, anger, revenge, greed, loneliness, loss, grief and lust are the specific themes within her narratives alongside questions regarding our reality, the meaning of our actuality and our inferiority when in the presence of such supernatural and mystical powers. There is not a belief in the eerie and the preternatural

¹⁸⁰ The Marjorie Bowen Papers collection at Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Box 32, (Yale University, Connecticut, USA)

here that is suspended. The belief in ghosts is firmly embedded within the text and in the mind of the characters and even in their settings, such as France, Italy, England, to Bowen horror was and could be everywhere. The ghostly tales in Bowen's collection, *Twilight*, published posthumously by Ash Tree Press and with an introduction by Jessica Amanda Salmonson in 1998, contains some of the best horror tales composed by Bowen. Certainly 'Decay', 'The Recluse and Springtime', 'They Found My Grave', 'The Last Bouquet', 'Madam Spitfire', 'The Fair Hair of Ambrosine', 'Guiditta's Wedding Night', 'Vigil' and 'Julia Roseingrave' to name a few are excellently written with suspenseful and intriguing plots. They have been written with an absolute conviction of compassion for the human psyche while simultaneously maintaining an extraordinary sense of place and acute sinister suspense. Sentiment and romanticism proliferate within these tales of lost dreams, alienation and regret which is steeped firmly within her unique touch of scepticism regarding the human existence. Imprinted within these ideas is a firm doubt regarding life itself. It illustrates and hints at a particular belief that has echoes of fatalistic determinism and the shadow of existential dilemmas. Love, romance, even true love is permanently shadowed by the ghosts of the past and the insecurity of the future culminating in the one certainty in life, death and separation.

Spiritualism, the belief that the spirits of the dead can communicate with the living is explicitly expressed in Bowen's work. Arthur Conan Doyle's career overlapped with Bowen's, they shared similar interests and consequently they were on friendly terms. Doyle, whose own interest in spiritualism was explored in his book *History of Spiritualism* published in 1926, and Bowen wrote various letters to each other where Doyle commented on Bowen's short horror stories. It has been previously mentioned in this thesis that Bowen was an advocate of the literary movements of the past; dandyism, the occult, historical fiction, sensationalism, romanticism, religion, the alchemy tradition, the Gothic and the ghost story and the adherence to such past traditions reflects her gift for continuing literary conventions into the twentieth century. Her short stories are littered with a subtle hint of nostalgia, a longing for the past, an understanding of regret, loss and a sincere remorse, the fear of death, the longing or acceptance for death. Bowen's stories as a whole are an

exploration of human life and human existence, almost as if she strove to examine and comprehend the point of our world, our significance within the framework of, not a religious conviction, but within a firm acknowledgement of a definitive spiritual belief and the cosmic mystery that lies within our universe.

Bowen and Henry James expressed in their fiction a sincere interest in the psychological and the irrational but the irrational in Bowen does not stem from the supernatural experiences but from the human temperament; the fear is within our own minds and the supernatural represents this in unearthly form. Ghosts are often used to portray unbalanced mentalities, misplaced desires, selfish wants and misgivings. Those that are the most haunted, certainly in Bowen's fictions, are those that have made the most mistakes. Their loneliness is the severe result of their misdeeds, their hauntings the result of an alternative existence that should never have been. In supernatural stories by specifically Blackwood, Machen and Bowen, the supernatural is also particularly embedded within nature. Their imagination is not just a strong imaginative base but an enhanced awareness of the mystery within life and in us. They offer a keen understanding of both good and evil, love and hatred, false abundance, the reality of loss and the extent of tangible fears. This awareness intensifies Bowen's narratives to such a great extent that the reader is touched by the magnetism of Bowen's haunted atmospheres. In Bowen's work, ghosts return with diabolical vengeance to punish those who murdered their spouses, those who left their lovers due to their own selfish wants and those who dabble in the dark arts out of sheer greed and a gross misunderstanding. Dishonesty, debauchery, pain and guilt permeate her fiction. The apparitions are the representations, their retaliations, the actions they would exact if they had the ability to return once again in living form. Bowen's ghost stories almost embody a spiritual warning, to be careful of those you treat ill because the dead will always return. The dead in her stories are in fact virtually alive, alive in memory, alive in their hauntings, alive in their revenge but it is death and the certainty of death that haunts all of her stories. Death is often embodied in a landscape of existential nihilism and futile ambition. In the short ghost tale, *Decay*, Bowen wrote, "Do you see it Lorimer? It was all dead, love, ambition,

kindness, the souls themselves, shut in, stagnant, he sold for money, his comforts, she sold for her satisfied lusts, each exacting the price... each hating the other – no children, nothing let in, nothing going on – putrid, rotten... each caged and caught by the other-and Lorimer, stinking themselves to hell.”¹⁸¹

The claustrophobia within Bowen’s tales is created by the minds of the characters. They are made to feel that the entrapment is caused, not just by their own mistakes but by the cosmos. Despite her talent for writing such tales, her language and its slight repetitiveness on occasions can affect her prose and at times, the quality of an eerily beautiful and unique phrase can be slightly shadowed by a halting sentence or two within the narrative which disturbs its natural flow. In spite of this occasional stylistic weakness, the sheer natural quality and rawness of her literary ability is perceived. She had a unique and rare ability to display human nature from all its numerous sides. She had a tendency to locate these stories very effectively, in ancient cities, lonely landscapes and settings rich in historical flavour or when it suited, the modern metropolis of a dark and eerie London. The supernatural and the unearthly presented within Bowen’s fiction is also represented by nature. The mysticism, or at least the sense of the mysterious, that Bowen explores throughout her short stories, novels and novellas is not always a religious, theological or a Christian mysticism but it (i.e. the mysticism) can also suggest the omnipresence of an alternative power and divinity. In the Edwardian period when Bowen was keenly starting to develop her craft, there was great interest in spiritualism, the paranormal and religion as a psychological experience as opposed to a theological doctrine, self-consciously moving on from Victorian religiosity. This was investigated in the work written by Henry James’ brother, William James (1842-1910) who was a Psychologist and Philosopher. William James’ book *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, published in 1902, contained ideas that explored aspects of the consciousness of the strange, the eerie and the effects of religion and mysticism on humanity’s psychological development, personal knowledge and understanding. It

¹⁸¹ Jessica Amanda Salmonson, ed. *Twilight and Other Supernatural Romances*, Amazon Kindle Edition, Ashcroft, Ash Tree Press, 1998, p.

suggests mysticism and human nature may perhaps be inextricably linked from a pantheistic perspective. Human sensibility is related to the earth, the heavens and the stars. In Bowen's novella, *Julia Roseingrave*, published in 1933 under the pseudonym Robert Paye, nature represents human misery and turmoil. The power of nature and human emotions are aligned and represented as both external and internal forces on earth. *Julia Roseingrave* is a dark tale of deadly passion and a dangerous enchantment where lust and desires are akin to hatred and a putrid sense of fate. It involves witchcraft and alchemy while hinting at devilry and demonic possession. The skill of this tale lies within the unknown, the dark unknown spheres in which the mind can reach when possessed of a force entirely not of their own making and also within the uncertainty of the reader who is unsure of the true origin of evil in this tale. We are as unsure as the protagonist, the enchanted Sir William Notley, as to where the true source of this evil resides. Yet the genuine skill of this tale lies within its deliberate uncertainty. Whether Julia Roseingrave is an enchanting evil temptress and witch or simply just a foolish and desperate woman, the reader can never be fully sure but it is certainly a tale of subtle haunting and unnerving beauty, passion, trickery and otherworldly forces.

Both Bowen and Algernon Blackwood used nature to explore the sense of mystery within life. Nature incorporates both the living and the dead. Blackwood uses it to a greater extent in *The Willows* and Bowen uses it on a more subtle basis, yet the intention between both writers is significant and somewhat similar. Similarly, Walter De La Mare and Bowen both share a literary (rather than theological) belief in the spirit world, specifically spirits that can perpetuate the land of the living, that they can exist alongside us and even certainly within us and both authors reflect this in the graveyard motif in De La Mare's *The Return* (1910) and Bowen's 'They Found My Grave' (1938). The grave is symbolic and reflective of life, purpose and death and the questions surrounding whether souls are resting in peace or enduring an eternity of turmoil lies unmistakably beneath the textual surface. Marjorie Bowen was extraordinarily prolific in her day and being consistently aware of writing fiction of literary merit as well as retaining degrees of economic popularity and readership, she would have perceived the shifting literary and cultural traditions and fashions of the twentieth

century, such as the ghost story in the short story format as found in *Blackwood's Magazine*, the earlier decades of the twentieth century being the pinnacle of the evolution for both popular and literary fiction combined. The increasing political, economic and social unrest in this period provided abundant stimulus for ghost and short story material and numerous writers of this period were diligently continuing the traditions established by the great short story writers that preceded them, for example, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu and Edgar Allan Poe. Additionally, the novella or more developed short story provided a form that Bowen could adopt for her works on the supernatural. She followed in the great tradition of combining the supernatural and the psychological as set by Poe's *The Black Cat* in 1843 and Charlotte Perkins-Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* in 1899, Le Fanu's *Green Tea* in 1872 and Henry James' *The Turn of The Screw* in 1898 as one can question and consistently debate whether the ghosts in these supernatural works are genuine or of a deliberately fictitious variety as a consequence of a diseased and disordered mind. Using explanatory resources such as the psychological within the realm of the supernatural as the basis for ghost stories is actually a technique that consistently abounds through much of Bowen's fiction more generally. Bowen's historical and gothic novels both largely rely on the mechanisms of the psyche. This concern dominates her fiction and her penchant for sombre storytelling. A profound sense of darkness and suffering is Bowen's authorial trademark. The terror that can reside within us does not simply belong to experiences of the supernatural but is also a fear of our own purpose and those external forces that can thwart us, hinder us or help us. Quite often in supernatural fiction, good people are haunted by these terrifying and evil spectres but the characters throughout Bowen's fiction are rarely wholly good, nor are they wholly evil, they are an extraordinary and ambivalent mixture of the two and it is the atmosphere of her fiction that pervades this inexplicable blend. Dread, alienation, pain, fear, a looming and diabolical vengeance, cynicism, entrapment, mysticism, unease and the extreme power of the cosmos are just a few of the emotions her atmosphere provokes and inspires, a tangible black ambience breathes through her prose. The atmosphere and the ambiguousness regarding her hauntings is where Bowen's horror thrives.

In the article 'The Extraordinary Mrs Long' for the *New York Times* in 1943, as previously referred to in chapter seven of this thesis, Wagenknecht's strong claims regarding Bowen's fiction, "She is more than a "a born story-teller," she is a witch, a genius in the creation of atmosphere...She has then all the prime gifts of a writer of "thrillers,"¹⁸² shows the extent of her unusual abilities as an author. With such similarities in common with the famous ghost story masters of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is clear to see why Edward Wagenknecht chose to include Marjorie Bowen in his study of the supernatural genre, the *Seven Masters of Supernatural Fiction*.

Wagenknecht's study contains quite an expansive overview of Marjorie Bowen's supernatural production and his admiration of Bowen's work is clear. Wagenknecht's chapter on Bowen begins by exploring her literary tastes and rationality behind her artistic choices as well as her own ghostly experiences, nocturnal visions, explorations regarding psychic phenomena, hauntings of the strange and the eerie, bizarre experiences of déjà vu, her romantically inherent mysticism and spiritual leanings. For Bowen's melancholic romanticism that appeared to remain at the core of her creative being is a key aspect of any literary study involving her supernatural, spiritual and historical tendencies. Wagenknecht's claim, "Intellectually she was a "rationalist" but temperamentally she was a mystic; writing of herself in the third person in her autobiography, she declared that at times she "could believe herself one with the harmony that runs through everything,"¹⁸³ does appear to embody Bowen's creative and romantic nature in microcosm. Wagenknecht uses the trilogy, *God And The Wedding Dress*, *My Tyler's Saints* and *The Circle In The Water* which are about the connection between God and human suffering as a basis for his argument regarding rationalism and mysticism. Wagenknecht liked *God And The Wedding Dress* a great deal and it received many successful reviews but I do feel it lacks much of Bowen's genuine supernatural and atmospheric dexterity and the only book of the trilogy that actually contained supernatural elements was *The Circle In The Water*.

¹⁸² 'The Extraordinary Mrs Long,'

¹⁸³ *Seven Masters of Supernatural fiction*, p.154

In the *Seven Masters of Supernatural Fiction*, Wagenknecht refers to the following stories by Bowen that are considered to be firm tales of the weird genre, which is a helpful starting point as an expansive overview of her supernatural works. Although Wagenknecht discussed Bowen's supernatural and horror fiction in great detail, the number of stories mentioned in the study is too extensive to list here in its entirety. A few examples are *Black Magic*, *The Haunted Vintage* which he claims is a masterpiece in itself, the psychologically haunting and creepy posthumous book *The Man With The Scales* which Wagenknecht associates with Franz Kafka in his study due to the subtle German romanticism that lies beneath the text, *Five Winds* which Wagenknecht claims was influenced by George Macdonald's *Phantastes*, *I Dwelt In High Places*, Joseph Shearing's *The Crime Of Laura Sarelle* and *The Spectral Bride* and George Preedy's *Lyndley Waters*. Bowen's supernatural tales were imbued with toying with the idea of human hallucination, overactive imaginations, genuine spectres, tales of reincarnation, the psychic ability of clairvoyance and ghosts that return to avenge. Such ideas as these are explored in *The Prescription*, *Half Past Two*, *The Housekeeper*, *They Found My Grave* and *The Avenging Of Ann Leete* which is one of Bowen's best known tales and has a definitive detective story interest. *The Last Bouquet*, *Dark Ann*, *A Persistent Woman*, *The Accident*, *The Crown Derby Plate* – Bowen's most anthologized story, *Raw Material*, *The Breakdown*, *Kecksies*, *One Remained Behind*, *Madam Spitfire*, *The Fair Hair of Ambrosine*, *Ann Mellor's Lover* and *Crimes Of Old London* denote a sense of folkloric tradition, devil worship, alchemy, angels and the devil. He claims Bowen's influences for such narratives arose from writers such as Virginia Woolf, E.T.A Hoffmann and Franz Kafka. Wagenknecht believed that Bowen may have understood that ghost stories need an explanation.¹⁸⁴ This is interesting and quite debatable as Bowen did not always tend to do this, disliking the reductiveness of common-sense explanations of strangenesses and it is fair to claim that perhaps Bowen does explain the ghosts but more often adhered to the stylistic techniques and the backdrops of psychosis and insanity which many of her characters experience.

¹⁸⁴ *Seven Masters*, p.166

Wagenknecht makes a convincing case for Bowen as a “master” of the supernatural and this is important for understanding her work as a whole. Her supernatural production was so varied and so mysteriously infused with such paranormal considerations that Bowen is and should be referenced as a key figure of ghost story authors in the twentieth century. The peril that is consistently portrayed within her fiction is represented as a human suffering and it has within it a transcendent ability to mix two worlds, the living and the dead, the earth and the heavens, showing the painful extent of the human condition in all its cosmic wretchedness. Both Bowen and Arthur Machen’s *The White People*, published in 1904, share this unique ambiguous representation of good and evil and saints and sinners blended within a framework of an acute spirituality. Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu and Marjorie Bowen share a literary belief in the spirit world, spiritualism and those that seek to explore it. Both represent and explore the uncanny and the evil spirits who use their power to destroy the living. Le Fanu wrote, “The delight of hell is to do evil to man and to hasten his eternal ruin,”¹⁸⁵ is embodied in both Bowen’s and Le Fanu’s work. Vengeful, malignant and malicious spirits abound and similarly throughout the stories of M.R James, Le Fanu’s devoted and learned follower and Bowen’s own contemporary. She was an admirer of James’ stories. Similarly to Le Fanu and James, Bowen herself experienced nightmares, nocturnal visions and her childhood experiences of living in haunted houses may have contributed to her penchant for the genre but this is where the similarity between James and Bowen ends, for their ghost fiction varies a great deal. They are different in their approach, narratives, ideas and techniques. M.R. James’s classic ghoststory *Oh, Whistle and I’ll Come to you, My Lad* published in 1904 uses the protagonist’s disbelief in the supernatural to explore vengeful paranormal phenomena. The reader here is on intimate terms and James occasionally includes the reader’s input. Both the hauntings and the ghosts are certainly diabolical in nature but both writers portray them from a completely opposite stance. Salmonson claims Sadleir stated that Bowen’s ghost stories actually exceeded those ghost-stories written by

¹⁸⁵ Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, *Green Tea 1871, Mr. Justice Harbottle 1872*, Amazon Kindle Edition, p. 152 ¹⁸⁰ Salmonson, *Twilight and Other Supernatural Romances*, p.9771

M.R. James, "There is an Aesthetic ingredient (in Bowen) which James never aspired to, and a better comparison would be to Arthur Machen...James expresses next to nothing of the catastrophic depths and vertiginous heights of human emotion...Bowen...never letting the reader forget that she and we are each of us as much the perpetrators as the victims of inexplicable urges and activities...Whereas James subtly rips the wainscoting from the walls, to reveal something terrifying in the environment, Bowen's architecture is the human condition itself."¹⁸⁰ Salmonson claimed in her research notes, "Jamesian author Rosemary Pardon...tells me, "The basic premise of comparing MRJ with Marjorie Bowen is a valid one. MRJ represents the "it's coming to get you" camp, whereas Bowen stands for "it's going to escape from inside of you" faction."¹⁸⁶

The seven horror writers discussed by Wagenknecht share an innate and profound ability to express horror and terror as an indefinable aspect of everyday life. The sheer irrationality steeped firmly within their works arises from the normal and the paranormal being reflected as two halves of one incomprehensible picture. The lack of concrete metaphysical and spiritual knowledge we have pinpoints humans as the missing link but our empiricist observations indicates a presence known and at once immediately felt. It is certainly evident that Bowen, Machen, Blackwood and Le Fanu believed firmly in the mysticism of life, the mystery of the cosmos, the omniscient presence of hell and our insignificance within its power to destroy us. This idea is substantially and perpetually explored in their ghost stories.

Bowen's ghost stories, although written steadily throughout her prolific career were particularly prevalent between the years of 1909 to 1930 and in the 1930s, the Joseph Shearing pseudonym made his authorial debut as previously mentioned within this thesis. Bowen's ghost stories and the gothic novels by Shearing tend to overlap in nature, form and characteristic. In the chapter, 'The Ghost Story,' in *A Companion to The Gothic*, Julia Briggs believes that between the years of 1830-1930, the ghost story was the gothic story.¹⁸⁷ Both Bowen's ghost stories, gothic novels

¹⁸⁶ Ibid p. 9771

¹⁸⁷ David Punter, ed. *A Companion to The Gothic*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 2001 p.12

and several of her historical novels show Bowen was clearly a descendant of the Gothic tradition in which the family unit is often presented as a source of the danger. The danger-bringing family was a specifically Gothic characteristic, as Briggs observes.¹⁸⁸ This danger is not always represented as a physical danger but also as an emotional danger and a psychological entrapment. The family is consistently disconnected and the members are just as likely to hurt each other as the ghosts that return to seek justice and revenge. For Bowen, the family is at the root of the gothic uncanny depicted in her scenes of ancestral curses, madness within the descendants and a fatalistic inability to break free from certain consequences.

The fact that Bowen was a woman may also contribute to this ghost and gothic overlap. By claiming her monetary freedom and independence as a female writer herself, she still sought to examine the plight of the female position in her stories. Briggs claimed the ghost story and the Gothic story was a form for female writers to explore their own imaginative power and freedom as they were denied this in domestic, social and political spheres.¹⁸⁹ Though this may have been true to a certain extent for Bowen, Bowen was also aware of the actual female plight, regardless of how much freedom and power and independence women were presently gaining in her time and would continue to do so long after her death. For her, female freedom still brought its own set of difficult consequences. Consequently, in her novels, the femme fatales and the persecuted female victims retain similar aspects. They still find themselves living with loss and suffering when it comes to their dealings and relationships with men, their fathers, their brothers, their husbands, their lovers. They maintain a certain degree of weakness because men are their Achilles heel.

Briggs argues, "The powers of horror have their origins within us; yet they also manifest themselves publicly and historically, in forms of social life: the ghost story as a form concerns itself with either an outer or inner world."¹⁹⁰ Both outer and inner, to Bowen, were potentially and

¹⁸⁸ Ibid p. 127

¹⁸⁹ Ibid p. 128 - 129

¹⁹⁰ Punter, *A Companion to The Gothic*, p.129

equally horrifying and threatening. The supernatural lives not only within us but also outside of us as a definitive and mysterious form due to the consequences of internal decisions. Marjorie Bowen's ghost stories reflect the frightening and sublime outer world co-existing alongside the inner and the Joseph Shearing novels embody the psychologically dangerous and immoral inner world co-existing alongside the outer. The short story format was a suitable form for Bowen's literary position on the supernatural as she used it to embody a particular psychological experience within each character. She used the form as a way to directly home in on the characters thoughts, feelings, fears and emotions within a brief snapshot of revelation and experience in that character's life.

In examining and exploring the uses of spiritualism and ghosts in Marjorie Bowen's work, this supernatural theme continues as the basis of the next chapter which discusses alchemy, the pursuit of gold and immortality, the use of mediums, the presence of angels and demons and a curious fatalistic determinism. Such Bowenesque ideas are framed once again within an occultic and dark romantic backdrop. The life of the Mathematician and Astrologer to Queen Elizabeth I, John Dee and his medium Edward Kelley, who lived within the Renaissance period in sixteenth century England, is the novel explored within the next chapter.

Communing with Spirits: Marjorie Bowen's contribution to the Alchemy tradition in *I Dwelt in High Places*

This final section of this thesis, the Historical Supernatural, shows the culmination of Bowen's literary interests. Bowen's historical novels were not without darkness and hints of the supernatural and her gothic novels were not without history, the supernatural and true crime – presented by Bowen as episodes in the history of evil and of criminality which she used with great zest and enthusiasm as it pertained to research and concluding opinions regarding the actions of people in the past. Bowen's historical novels and Bowen's supernatural novels and short stories all culminate here within the historical supernatural category. The spiritualism and ghosts that were explored in chapter seven and chapter eight of this thesis demonstrate Bowen's prolonged interest in the supernatural. In addition to the novels and short stories based on history, the gothic, actual criminal cases and ghosts, Bowen approached some of the same themes from a different starting-point, adding engagement with the theme of alchemy to her creative endeavours. It is clear to see how the alchemy tradition throughout the periods in English Literature would have appealed to one of her creative imagination and partiality for historical research.

The theme of alchemy remains popular in contemporary times for modern readers; the explosive success of the *Harry Potter* novels is evidence of this, and this chapter on alchemy and the supernatural is important as it shows Bowen's relevance to literary scholarship and literary history as she participated in and enriched long-standing literary themes that remain popular today. It investigates her treatment of various supernatural themes that are strongly linked to well-known historical figures and in doing so it also supports my defence of Bowen as both a popular author and a well-read and knowledgeable novelist.

Bowen wrote both short stories and novels on the subject of alchemy and the two short stories *Brent's Folly* which appeared in her short story anthology *Crimes of Old London*, published in

1919 and *The Recluse and Springtime* and the novel, *I Dwelt in High Places*, published in 1933, which is based on the famous astrologer and mathematician to Queen Elizabeth, John Dee are the key texts studied in this chapter due to their strong alchemical focus. John Dee, in particular, has remained relevant in contemporary culture from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries until the twenty-first century in books, plays, operas and video games.

As mentioned, there have been many references to John Dee in popular and literary fiction that preceded the 1900s and it seems Marjorie Bowen may have been the first author in the twentieth century to fictionally write about John Dee followed by several other writers from the year 1927 onwards to the present day. Marjorie Bowen, with the letters F.R.S.L and F.R.HIST.S. after her name indicating her scholarly credentials as a Fellow of both the Royal Society of Literature, founded in 1820, and the Royal Historical Society, founded in 1868, also wrote an article on John Dee in *The Occult Review* in April 1933 which was titled, *Dr. John Dee, M.A., Astrologer And Alchemist* and she listed quite a few of the references on John Dee in the historical note in her novel. She wrote other historical works where alchemy remained a plot-element throughout the novel or the short story. For her as for others the alchemical quest could stand for more general, even universal, concerns: throughout the ages, educated men have struggled to find what they perceived to be the meaning of life, the scientific answer to mortality, divinity and the secret to material wealth and riches on earth.

The treatment of the alchemical theme in Bowen's works is particularly tragic. She uses alchemy both at a literal level and in a metaphorical sense, suggesting the human – and Faustian – desire for transformation and transcendence, using real people and real places set within a romantic background. This romantic framework imbues the text with an imaginative sense of the historical. It represents an ambitious but imperfect science which related to Bowen's fiction more generally as she perceived life itself and our intellectual and imaginative grasp of it to be quite imperfect.

The short story, *Brent's Folly*, although it has an air of an historical tale rather than set within a contemporary setting, seems to belong to no specific period in the past. It is a sad tale about

broken dreams and a longing for the best in life but where such existences that involve striving for perfection only result in mediocrity, dullness and discontentment. The protagonist is a character called Sir Roger Brent who has everything in life that one could wish to have and acquire - money, status, good looks and yet all of these physical and monetary attributes are still not enough to satisfy his thirsty needs for knowledge and power. He has studied a great deal, travelled extensively and has socialised with the rich and the successful. He has had dozens of affairs with many beautiful women and his money, class and reputation have afforded him the best in life which consequently also led to a consistent yearning for the best at all times. In a bid to find the one passion that would enlighten his entire being with purpose, Roger Brent studies alchemy and occultism with zest and intensity but, despite his continued efforts, he discovers little and attains even less.

Eventually Roger Brent resolves to quit these studies but one day he meets a stranger who promises him the secret to what he had been seeking for so long, the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life which can bestow beauty and youth on all who come into contact with it. The stranger and Roger Brent come to an agreement that Brent should take a dull woman for his wife, an extremely ugly woman whom he could in turn transform into a rare and magnificent beauty but on the day of their wedding, the stranger has disappeared, never to be found again, and Brent is left with this uniquely unappealing wife for the rest of his days. The description of his wife exemplifies the chilling disconsolation that Brent is left with after the stranger's departure, "*She is so dull, she deadens, so stupid she frightens, so unlovely she depresses.*"¹⁹¹ In this story, alchemy is presented as a fruitless task and results in a punishment for the pursuer of those who are always seeking and yearning for more than what they have. This constant search and yearning for power eventually can only lead to disempowerment.

¹⁹¹ Salmonson, *Twilight and Other Supernatural Romances*, p. 6308

The wife's name in the story, Lily Waters, is also significant here as it is the flower that relates to death as Brent eventually, with this wife, becomes increasingly a shadow of his former self and living on the verge of insanity.

The Recluse and Springtime, is a short story about a man called Prince Riccardi, who loses his wife and children to the plague in Renaissance Italy. As a result, he bitterly turns his back on religion and dabbles in scientific experiments to try to bring them back from the dead, in a manner recalling Edgar Allan Poe's *The Fall of The House of Usher*. As *The Recluse and Springtime* is a post-Great War story, it may allude indirectly to the contemporary phenomenon of grieving widows, lovers and mothers seeking quasi-spiritualist contact with loved ones killed in the war. It is an eerily evocative tale and particularly atmospheric in its creation. Prince Riccardi, frequently visited in his derelict mansion by his dead family members, also becomes a shadow of his former self, much like Roger Brent. He is obsessed with his bereavement and plagued by his lonely existence as he hovers significantly between the two worlds of life and death. Prince Riccardi is presented as an almost pallid character. His house is dusty and he himself is close to his demise. He is perpetually haunted and severely punished for dabbling in studies that are not meant for the acquiring of human knowledge.

Marjorie Bowen's Elizabethan novel *I Dwelt in High Places*, published in 1933, explores the life of the historical figure John Dee (July 1527 – December 1608) and his medium assistant Edward Kelley also known as Edward Talbot (August 1555 – 25 November 1597). The book poses interesting ideas regarding the pursuit of spiritual knowledge, scientific labours, human love, loyalty and cosmological contemplations. The story focuses on John Dee's writings, his family, financial difficulties and his travels abroad. Bowen has also used Dee's recorded Enochian conversations with the angels, Michael, Uriel, Amael, Madimi and Edward Kelley's evil spirits, Belmagel and Navalge. Using John Dee's controversial reputation which has proceeded long after his death and his life pursuits for the basis of this novel within the alchemy category is particularly significant due to the

questions that have surrounded John Dee's true intentions while he was alive and Bowen's aims for exploring such a debatable topic. *I Dwelt In High Places* also seems to represent the alchemy of creating a novel and the different fragments featuring incompletely known lives and events to build a realistic portrayal of a notorious scholar with a severely damaged reputation.

The story is narrated by Dr Dee's wife, Jane Dee, and opens with Dr Dee's search for a scryer, that is a person with the ability to use divination to foretell future events, at his house in Mortlake. This is where we are first introduced to the mysterious and alluring Edward Kelley. Kelley proves his worth as a medium to Dr Dee and together they record angelical conversations in the 'Enochian' or occult language devised by Dee. In a quest to further finance their labours, produce gold and to seek the elixir of life, the philosopher's stone, they set out on a journey to Eastern Europe. They are instructed to do so by the angels and with the patronage of the Polish Graf Laski to attract the attentions of European royalty, particularly Rudolph II, the Emperor of Prague, who himself has been driven mad by his own scientific experiments. It is an attempt to achieve their dreams and to attain what Bowen presents and is believed to be the absolutely unobtainable – the transmutation of metals into pure gold.

At the novel's outset, we are immediately given a vivid picture of Jane Dee as she looks out of the window at the flowing river beside her house. The references to the "bare willows dragged sideways," "soggy earth" and the "perished weeds" appear to represent Jane's existence as Jane is quite melancholy and much less vibrant than her astute husband. She is exhausted and worn down, despite her intense and secret feelings for Edward Kelley as the novel progresses and her fierce loyalty to her husband. She appears to regard her life without passion and perceives it as her duty which perhaps is the consequence of her long struggle constrained by precarious finances and her position as a woman in such times. Although we are given a sense of Dee's vast intellectual achievements, these achievements seem almost futile due to his lack of financial gain, the rogues he has formerly been involved with before Edward Kelley and the empty promises from Queen

Elizabeth. The family constantly have to accept hand-outs, charity and donations of food despite Dee's famous intellectual leanings and consultations. The pressure on his wife is extremely difficult and placed alongside this struggle are the spiritual undertones in the novel, the belief that the body has a soul which is separate from the physical body and that this soul can yearn for freedom from restrictive earthly obligations. The water symbolism, embodied within Jane's musings, is important here. Jane's thoughts as she focuses on the flowing river are important in this scene as Edward Kelley's sudden appearance at the front door of her home makes it profoundly appear as if nature, fate, has unexpectedly hastened Kelley into their lives. It is Kelley, in combination with the red and white powders and the book of instructions within his possession which he discovered in Glastonbury, who leads them on this impulsive journey of experimenting with alchemy abroad in Europe. Kelley achieves his dream of magnificent wealth and recognition but his violent, manipulative and volatile nature seeks to trick and conspire for his own selfish gains by attempting to steal Jane away from Dr Dee for his own sexual gratification. He selfishly disregards his own barren wife Joan who finally decides to escape the toxic fury he consistently aims towards her. Eventually Dr Dee and his family return home to England, while Edward is imprisoned by the Emperor and dies in Europe, in a fog of destitution and shattered ambitions.

The description of the aurora borealis during the first meeting between John Dee and Edward Kelley, after Kelley has informed Dee of the discovery of the instructions for the elixir of life in Glastonbury has mythical significance. Bowen wrote,

"Where did you find it?"

"In the most sacred spot in Britain-Glastonbury, and with it were two phials of red and white powder."

"What are these?"

"Though I have studied alchemy, I do not know. Nor can I decipher the manuscript. But I can guess what precious secret I have stumbled on."

Dr Dee controlled his excitement.

"The elixir? So many have been deceived. But in Glastonbury! What is it like? Have you tried any experiments with it?" He checked himself. "But it was as a seer of spirits that you came to me?"

"That is part of the same mystery. The spirits do visit me. But I have not the globes, the tables nor the peace of mind necessary." He clutched the arm of the elder man. "Look yonder! See, the clouds have fled and what glory stains the sky!"

Infected by this, which amounted to exaltation, John Dee gazed from the window. An aurora borealis of crimson, scarlet, gold and violet brightened the eastern and northern heavens..."You see," cried Mr. Edward Talbot wildly, "The very heavens send an omen to mark my coming to you."¹⁹²

The scientific knowledge that was rapidly developing during Marjorie Bowen's own time would have ensured that her audience could understand the connotations of the aurora borealis. The aurora borealis which would have been familiar to them through photography or at first hand as a scientifically explicable spectacle is given a much more ancient perspective by Bowen in this context as it had been believed throughout history that these 'Northern Lights' in the sky were a sign from God. It is this that ensures Dee's acceptance of Kelley as his new assistant and just like Aurora, the Roman goddess of the dawn, the lights appear to represent a new beginning in the novel and their partnership is sealed. Glastonbury was also considered to be exceptionally sacred due to its traditional associations with King Arthur's grave, the biblical Joseph of Arimathea and religious austerity due to the monks that resided there.

The reader is given a picture of Dee's position and reputation in society, his learned mind and his fame through the eyes of Jane and the associations with his various friends, including Queen Elizabeth, who appear to hold his opinion in high regard. The queen visits Dr Dee at his home keen for his advice and astrological guidance and the various charitable donations by his friends ensures Jane and her children's bare survival. Dee, fairly and equally in turn respects those around him and has a deep admiration for those who have discovered as much knowledge or obtained even more wisdom than himself. Bowen wrote "Jane thought of the marvellous Elixir of Life and Philosopher's

¹⁹² Marjorie Bowen, *I Dwelt in High Places*, London, Collins, 1933 p. 23

Stone of which she had heard so much and which was capable of turning all that it touched into gold. Her husband had often spoken to her of this but he had not yet tampered with hermetic experiments, or so she believed. Yet, with what reverence would he speak of Roger Bacon, Saint Dunstan, Raymond Lull, Albertus Magnus and Paracelsus, who had always striven to achieve illimitable knowledge, to set free the spiritual elements in all chemical substances and metals, and to attain god-like powers of wisdom, of healing and to learn secrets hitherto unguessed at by man...She knew that the discovery of the transmutation of metals, the knowledge of how to make gold would be as nothing to her husband compared to that other wisdom he hoped to attain, but for herself, she would very gladly have had a little of the precious metal, even if it were only to the value of a hundred pounds.”¹⁹³ The wish for the knowledge given by God to man in his search for the meaning of life and the description of John Dee's stance through his wife ensures Bowen's aim of portraying Dr Dee as an honourable, ethical and gifted man. He seeks religious knowledge, spiritual affirmation and divine wisdom with pure heart and intention. The desire to commune with the angelic spirits, to know the source of the philosophy that lies beyond the human world is his true desire. Dr Dee's leanings towards hermetic philosophy which associated alchemy, astrology and theurgy – the evocation of spirits - as the basis of its core ideas is the belief that these three components would lead to universal awareness and the understanding of the realm of science and nature. Science and mathematics to Dee was the path to comprehending divinity and his reference to Plato embodies this in a conversation with Kelley, “For mathematics, next to theology, is most divine, most pure, ample, profound, subtle, commodious and necessary...Do you not remember what Plato said: Mathematics lifts the heart above the heavens by invisible lines, and by its immortal beam, melts the reflection of light incomprehensible and so procures joy and perfection unspeakable.”¹⁹⁴ Dee felt that an inexhaustible aperture existed between human knowledge and celestial power, as far as an unbridgeable gap. But he also felt that a window or aperture could be made available by human

¹⁹³ Bowen, *I Dwelt in High Places*, p.24

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 39

knowledge through which celestial power could be glimpsed and understood. He wanted all the tools necessary to be able to fathom the heavens. To him, this knowledge was simply at the periphery of his intellectual vision. Dr Dee is also described by Bowen as having the gift of significant psychic ability. She mentions his dreams, his visions and the ability to hear voices which may possibly, in our modern world, be referred to as clairvoyant and clairaudient but in his view, he needs a medium to be able to properly and clearly commune with the angels of God.

John Dee's nature is presented and characterised by Bowen as almost angelic in human form. His intentions are honourable and his quest for knowledge does not venture away from his religious convictions. They are always aligned with a firm belief in the deity, the angels and in nature. There have been many cultural and literary references regarding John Dee from the 16th century to the 21st century as well as numerous biographies and critical studies concerning Dee's own manuscripts, his life and his diaries. Dee has been firmly aligned with popular superstition in society and has been associated with the terms conjuror, sorcerer and magus. The literary suggestions concerning Dee have been mentioned in the fantasy, scientific and occultic genres and the literary treatments have been suspicious as well as sympathetic throughout the centuries. These also include the plays written by William Shakespeare and the poems composed by William Wordsworth. Bowen is epitomising John Dee as a pre-romantic but early modern figure. She firmly understood that a modern audience would be more sympathetic to John Dee's life story and his romantic quest for unattainable knowledge and power as Bowen and her contemporaries were familiar with romanticism and versions of the Faust legend from Marlow to Goethe and many of them suitably continued this great literary movement into the 20th century by adhering to what was to become known as neo-romanticism. In a biography of John Dee by Charlotte Fell-Smith, published in 1909, Smith's conclusions are similar to Bowen's considerate portrayal of John Dee, a biography which Bowen refers to in her historical note in the novel, as Smith wrote in one of her final chapters in the book titled 'Last Days,' "Meanwhile, Dee's memory may be entrusted to the kinder judges of to-day,

who will be more charitable because more enlightened and less impregnated with superstition. They may see in him a vain, presumptuous and much deluded person, but at any rate they must acknowledge his sincere and good intentions; his personal piety; his uncommon purity of thought and mind... In all the vague hopes held out by him to Queen, Princes and Emperors, of enriching them through his alchemical skill, he was no conscious charlatan, playing a part to lure them on, but a devout believer in man's power and purpose to wrest scientific secrets from the womb of the future."¹⁹⁵

In *I Dwelt In High Places*, John Dee's distinct integrity is sharply contrasted with the diabolical and the innately villainous temperament of Edward Kelley. Bowen does not seek to present a resolution as to whether Edward Kelley was a complete charlatan or whether her descriptions of his strange and unique abilities were genuine. He is portrayed in the novel and perceived by the other characters as retaining a certain supernatural power but whether this was the authority of a clever scoundrel or a genuine medium, as there are events in the novel that can pertain to both, remains unclear and deliberately ambiguous. At times, Kelley does certainly appear to have extrasensory abilities but the truth of this and whether he was a definite fraud or a genuine clairvoyant remains widely unknown. Both men, both completely different in their outlooks and characteristics, are portrayed as slaves to their pursuits. Although John Dee's learned mind was of a scientific nature, he sought to connect the earth and mankind with a religious mysticism which is parallel to the romantic nostalgia of Wordsworth's *Immortality Ode*: "There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream/The earth, and every common sight/To me did seem/Apparelled in celestial light."¹⁹⁶ Dee's prolonged and unshaken belief in Edward Kelley's apparent mediumistic abilities, his consistent ardour and faith in Kelley, demonstrates his naiveté and simple innocence in the consideration of other people's motives and wicked intentions. John Dee is searching for a religious and spiritual truth. For him it is a soul need, he is trying to expand human consciousness and to attain proof of

¹⁹⁵ Charlotte Fell-Smith, *John Dee 1527-1608*, London, Constable & Company, 1909, p.149

¹⁹⁶ William Wordsworth, *Immortality Ode*, <http://www.bartleby.com/101/536.html>, available online, last accessed 11th April 2017

spiritual evolution. Kelley is seeking a financial security only, freedom, wealth, gold, power and a materialistic reason for being. He is mostly indifferent towards studious labours and when he does consider such work he often regards it with contempt; the sciences only serve him as the path to gold and glory. Subsequently, Dee and Kelley are representative of two clashing worlds. John Dee is the archetype of tradition and spirituality while Kelley personifies modernity and the loss of any need for a spiritual assurance within the human existence. Kelley wants to speak with the angels to achieve what he most desires materialistically but Dee has a sincere wish for Kelley to commune with the angels in order for Dee to feel closer to God, in order to understand mankind's existence within the realms of divinity and science combined. This is comparable to the ideas of the 18th century theologian, chemist and natural philosopher Joseph Priestly (March 1733 – February 1804) who deemed the scientific abilities of humans in combination with the appreciation of nature and natural philosophy were regularly progressing mankind's position on earth in his book *The History And Present State Of Electricity: With Original Experiments*¹⁹⁷ which was published in 1767. In a conversation between Edward Kelley and John Dee, we are given Dee's views which ultimately serve as defence of his character by Bowen in a creative bid to confront John Dee's tarnished reputation which occurred in his lifetime and has proceeded his death. Bowen wrote,

"Do you speak of magic?" asked Edward Talbot. The smile on his pale, beautifully-shaped lips had something of a sneer.

Dr Dee became angry. "All these things are easily achieved by skill, will, industry and ability duly applied. If any student or a modest Christian philosopher did these and such like things, mathematically and mechanically, would you count him to be a conjurer?"

"I believe he would be so named by the vulgar, Dr Dee."

"Have you not the knowledge, Mr. Talbot, to see that such accusations are but the folly of idiots, and the malice of the scornful, who seek to injure one like myself

¹⁹⁷ Joseph Priestly, *The History and Present State Of Electricity: With Original Experiments*, London, Dodsley, Johnson and Davenport, Cadell, 1767, p. iv, available online, last accessed 11th April 2017
https://books.google.com/books?id=HZE_AAAcAAJ&q=happiness+of+mankind#v=snippet&q=happiness%20of%20mankind&f=false

who seeks no worldly gain nor glory, but only asks of God the treasure of heavenly wisdom and knowledge?"¹⁹⁸

There is not much written by Bowen in defence of Edward Kelley in the novel. The ambivalence surrounding his character and his visions appears to be quite deliberate. The description of the good versus evil struggle within Kelley's own consciousness does not strive to offer any conclusion regarding the mystery surrounding this man in history. Was he a genuine medium or a fraudulent fake? Was he in fact hounded by demons or guided by angels? The Emperor Rudolph and John Dee appear to discuss this particular question. Bowen wrote,

"Edward Kelley, now, your companion, Curtius told me he could make gold, that he had a portion of the Philosopher's stone and that he could transmute base metals into gold. Why does he not do so?"

"He awaits the commands of the angels," Dee said. "But making of gold has never been any great matter to me, Sire. My work I have held to be greater than money, honours, pride and jewels."

"Yet pride makes you speak thus," replied the Emperor. "Maybe what you cherish so is but a temptation of Satan" ... "Many a saint has fallen into the pit he has dugged for himself by thinking he has a perfect knowledge of God's will. I know something of your partner. His evil living is notorious; he is much given to wayward passion and wild outbreaks, there is nothing about him either pure or holy. Why should the angels commune with such as he?"

"Maybe in an endeavour to save his soul," replied John Dee, trembling, "for which reason I should also cleave to him. With many a parable and with many an exhortation the angels have bidden us labour together. Why, Sire, should I question the heavenly commands? Maybe God has chosen a base instrument to work his ends."¹⁹⁹

The ignorance of humanity is expressed in *I Dwelt in High Places*. It is portrayed by mankind's reluctance to unquestioningly accept those areas of our existence which remain shrouded in mystery. The ransacking of John Dee's home in Mortlake (which might invite comparison with the

¹⁹⁸ Bowen, *I Dwelt in High Places*, p. 40

¹⁹⁹ Bowen, *I Dwelt in High Places*, p 168 - 169

breaking of the radical scientist Dr Priestley's windows by a hostile mob in Birmingham) while he is abroad portrays people's offensive behaviour that can result in the judgement and unfairly cruel treatment of others who are dissimilar to society's norm, much like the treatment of Giordano Bruno in chapter one of this thesis. The obliviousness that can occur when one believes materialistic wealth is the key to a satisfactory existence is embedded within the text and in all of Bowen's treatment of alchemy. The novel also hints at the futility of attempting to change human destiny perhaps as set out by God which ensures that *I Dwelt in High Places* is essentially a tale of human suffering and sacrifice which the imposing presence and the verbal enigmas of the angels in the novel do not set out to disavow. John Dee sacrifices his reputation as too often his delusions rule his intellect, Jane Dee selflessly sacrifices the possible chance for true love by suppressing her passion for Edward Kelley and remaining steadfastly loyal to her much older husband, Edward Kelley sacrifices his freedom and his newly attained power for constant lies and manipulation which ultimately leads to his imprisonment and eventual death in Prague.

Maureen B. Roberts, the author of *'Ethereal Chemicals: Alchemy and the Romantic Imagination,'* claimed, "As base metals are gradually transmuted into gold...the symbolism of the alchemical process represents a centralising and unifying instinct...Hermes Trismegistus...proclaims from the start that the alchemical "work is with you and amongst you"... "Mircea Eliade similarly agrees that the alchemists were seeking their own transmutation through the perfection of their materials."²⁰⁰ Is the pursuit of making base metals into gold a pursuit for perfection within our own selves? Perhaps so but this is why Bowen makes the attainment of the alchemical secrets so inaccessible and unrewarding.

This idea of unobtainable perfection in the novel pertains to the idea of the overreacher, which has been a feature of several tragic plots in drama, for example in Christopher Marlowe's

²⁰⁰ Maureen B. Roberts *'Ethereal Chemicals: Alchemy and the Romantic Imagination,'*
<http://www.erudit.org/revue/ron/1997/v/n5/005734ar.html> - last accessed 23rd May 2014, p.1

plays, including *Dr Faustus*. The human beings in Bowen's novel are far from perfect, as life itself in her novels can never attain perfection, and every character that she presents in such scenarios is ultimately flawed. Even John Dee in all his intelligence, learning and dedication to Jane was invariably and unconsciously unable to see his own wife's acute suffering while he chased futile dreams. In his firm belief in God and the Angels and mystical quasi-alchemical self-transcendence, he refused to accept that perhaps such secrets of our existence are meant to remain unknown, "It is not the base minerals and volatile chemicals that we must seek to transmute," he said, "those are but symbols of the transfiguration which must take place in ourselves, when, the great secret being in our possession, we shall be as gods,"²⁰¹ believes Dee. This may explain why every character who tries to obtain such knowledge falls into the perilous state of emotional and psychological disrepair - by attempting to follow the answers to such questions mankind are not meant to have the answers to. The pursuit of perfection can only lead to discontentment, loneliness and ruin.

In all of these stories based upon the quest of alchemical secrets, the male characters who try to acquire such knowledge, Sir Roger Brent, John Dee and Prince Riccardi are all ultimately abandoned and bereaved by the end of their labours. In the article on John Dee written by Bowen for *The Occult Review*, Bowen's claims regarding the early chemists were as follows, "It is not yet clearly known how far the researches of the alchemists were for an earthly or heavenly prize; in the opinion of some commentators, the bewildering formulae, designs, rhapsodies of their writings, do not refer to the transmutation of metals, but to that of the soul of man. Their goal was not, such argue, the making of gold from base substances, but the making of a perfect creature from frail humanity. The "secret of secrets", "elixir of life", "philosopher's stone," etc, is not, therefore a solid substance, but the attainment of that divine wisdom, which shall make mankind as God – the very promethean fire itself."²⁰²

²⁰¹ Bowen, *I Dwelt in High Places*, p. 137

²⁰² Marjorie Bowen, Dr John Dee, M.A. *The Occult Review*, London, 1933, p.228

Maureen B. Roberts also wrote, “The alchemical marriage spontaneously amplifies into other symbolic dualities. The Romantic alchemical imagination interconnects many dualities which, apart from gold and silver, Sun and Moon, include the alchemical poles of light and dark, heaven and earth, above and below, spirit and matter, cold and hot, active and passive, life and death, mortal and immortal. The hermetic “doctrine of correspondences” in which what is “above” is equivalent to what is “below” is intuitively understood by Keats as equivalent to the human psychic condition.”²⁰³ This duality can also be perceived to exist between John Dee and Edward Kelley. Dee in his inherent goodness seeks a unification of the mind and soul. Kelley, alternatively, seeks fame and power. Dr Dee is serene with a loyal temperament and exhibits an extremely simplistic and benevolent approach. Kelley is often vulgar, vengeful and incensed. His furious outbursts display a vehemently irrational attitude and a worrisome disposition. In every way, they are the polar opposites of each other, perhaps both representing the different psyches that can exist within us and it is certainly possible, given Bowen’s descriptions of Kelley’s frequent uncontrollable rages, that Kelley’s angels are in actuality evil spirits. His behaviour at times does seem to depict the mechanisms of a possessed spirit and a tormented mind.

The fact that Bowen chose to express the duality and such extreme differential opposition between Dee and Kelley may have been influenced by the sixteenth century Elizabethan tragedy *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* by Christopher Marlowe, which was first performed in 1592. Dee and Kelley appear to be the human embodiments of the good and evil angels in *Doctor Faustus*, where Dee exemplifies the good angel and Kelley personifies the evil angel. John Dee’s mathematical brain and acute belief in the divine at times appears to disgust Edward Kelley and his wish for worldly gains and desires which is similar to the Evil Angel’s speech in *Doctor Faustus* as Marlowe wrote, “Both law and physic are for petty wits; Divinity is basest of the three, Unpleasant, harsh, contemptible and vile: Tis magic, magic, that hath ravish’d me.”²⁰⁴ This is similar to Kelley’s belief,

²⁰³ Roberts ‘*Ethereal Chemicals: Alchemy and the Romantic Imagination*, p.7

²⁰⁴ Christopher Marlowe, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, Amazon Kindle Edition, p. 8

“What have these spirits done for me? How many of their promises have they redeemed? Did I not say from the first that I was not seeking heavenly wisdom, but rather earthly good?”²⁰⁵

In the book *Darke Hieroglyphics: Alchemy in English Literature from Chaucer to the Restoration*, Stanton J. Linden discusses the path of the alchemical tradition within literature from Chaucer to the 17th century and distinguishes a marked difference between the two periods. Where alchemy in literature was represented with satirical connotations, the poetical and metaphysical writings of John Donne and George Hebert had a more philosophical inclination and this culminated in religious rationalisation in the writings of satirist Samuel Butler (1612-1680). Linden wrote, “Their employment of alchemy to suggest spiritual growth, purification, regeneration and millenarian ideas reflects several important new emphases in late sixteenth-seventeenth century alchemical, medical and occultist writing...Donne and Herbert represent an important turning point in the course of alchemy’s literary influence...The return to satire in the works of Samuel Butler reflects the antagonism of scientific and religious rationalists and the Royal Society to philosophical enthusiasm and the entire occultist milieu. It is important to note, however, that Butler’s satirical victims are nearly as often experimental scientists as occult charlatans.”²⁰⁶

In the article on John Dee, Bowen’s thoughts were quite similar to Linden’s considerations here regarding the path alchemy had previously taken in literature during the seventeenth century as Bowen claims, “Alchemy was not to be, for many years to come, discredited. In the last half of the sixteenth century, it was revered as perhaps the first of the sciences, and so curiously bound up with transcendentalism that though it at one end attracted the rogue, the charlatan and the fool, at the other it attracted such men as Thomas Vaughn, in whose brother’s poems is a distinct flavour of the highest type of hermetic philosophy...the Silurists and mystics of the late seventeenth century,

²⁰⁵ Bowen, *I Dwelt in High Places* p. 194

²⁰⁶ Stanton J. Linden, *Darke Hieroglyphics: Alchemy in English Literature from Chaucer to the Restoration*; Lexington, The University Press of Kentucky, 1996, p.3

Donne, Vaughan, Crashaw, Herbert, Campion, may be described as the fine flower of that strange plant that had roots in the “broyling” kitchens of the almost mythical Geber.”²⁰⁷

It is interesting then to explore where Bowen’s own alchemical writings fit within such a lengthy and varied tradition. Despite the fact that her novel was published more than 200 years after the period that Linden is referring to here, it has previously been discussed in this thesis just how aware Bowen was of history and the significant literary traditions that had appeared before her time. As knowledgeable as Bowen was, it may be fair to assume she would have been quite aware of the path alchemical literature had previously taken. Did she then assume the satirical or the philosophical?

The novel certainly retains ideas of the longing for spiritual enlightenment within the character of John Dee but Edward Kelley himself is almost satirical in his composition. His tyrannical rages, his forays into deception and debauchery, his visions, are possibly the representations of an extreme and troubled medium. His selfishness, his greed, his desire for clothes, jewels and adornments show signs of an inherently fraudulent nature and the lack of affection and compassion towards his own wife, Joan and John Dee, reveals many innate disingenuous and unvirtuous qualities. Yet there are times when Kelley freely admits his own repugnant traits. Sometimes he even greatly desires a positive change within himself, has a renewed zest and longing to communicate with the angels as much as possible and the wish to shake off the demons and evil spirits that he claims consistently pursue and torment him. Linden also refers to Thomas Norton and his discussions of the “true philosophical alchemist” and the charlatan.²⁰⁸

The true alchemist’s studies are based on God and divine truth but the charlatan will tell all he can make gold due to his intrinsic greed. The true alchemist’s studies are religiously motivated,

²⁰⁷ Bowen, Dr John Dee, p.228

²⁰⁸ Stanton J. Linden, *Darke Hieroglyphics*, p. 63

seeking a true understanding of the world God created, but the charlatan's claims are driven by selfish greed. Linden claims,

Folly places alchemists in a category with men who are truly mad: those who are deceived not only in their senses but also habitually in the "judgement of the mynde"...In emphasising the pathos of the alchemists futile quest, Folly strikes a note that is missing in the writings of the transitional poets...They are not merely evidence of the ways men abuse their fellows or symptoms of the corruptness of the times, but rather an affirmation of the universal infirmity of the human mind. In them, we see the persistence of hope notwithstanding repeated failure to reach a "conclusioun," the waste of labor and money, the empty dreams and self-protective rationalisations. In presenting alchemy as this ignis fatuus of the human mind, Folly reveals a complex attitude that combines comedy and satire, but also Swiftian pessimism and the existentialists' tragic view of life.²⁰⁹

Bowen's words in *Brent's Folly*, "Those studies turn a man's brain,"²¹⁰ and Lily Waters' allusions to Roger Brent's madness appear to be the crux of all Bowen's alchemical works. The quote from *The Book of Job* at the beginning of the novel *I Dwelt in High Places*, "A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where light is as darkness," perhaps may have been used to represent the false hope that alchemy proffered to those that were willing to go to extreme lengths to study it, only to have to return to meet the hopelessness that still remains once the alchemical dreams have dissolved.

The references here to Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, published in 1726 and the Old Testament of the Christian (and Hebrew) Bible *The Book of Job* which is or could be regarded as in some ways a modernised version of Genesis, a book about beginning again after passing through personal chaos and darkness, shows a belief in alchemical works that the light within the world is being threatened and that there is an unravelling of the divine order by attempting to bring light into the dark places we do not and cannot understand. The bad alchemists threaten our understanding of

²⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 155

²¹⁰ Salmonson, *Twilight and Other Supernatural Romances*, p. 6476

the natural world. In Bowen's literary world, not even those who simply seek divine truth will be rewarded and only madness will prevail as the result, as the fervent and clever mind of John Dee also appears to be touched by a slight insanity at the novel's conclusion as he babbles on about the past while swiftly approaching his demise in his death bed after the premature death of the worn out and exhausted much younger Jane. Bowen's *I Dwelt In High Places* is not a revision of the legend of Dr Faustus and the demonology in the novel is deliberately ambivalent. The novel is a defence of John Dee as Dr Dee is actually the good version of Dr Faustus and is not knowingly involved in any supernatural malevolence.

Considering the force of much of Bowen's occultic fiction, *I Dwelt in High Places* exhibits a slightly less potent bearing despite showing the usual Bowen-esque strength of historical research and dramatization. The Enochian angelical conversations that Kelley conveyed to Dee are described with a great artistic zest and sheer imaginative ability by Bowen and the tale of John Dee certainly contains many supernatural and romantic elements. Edward Kelley, the villain tormented by good and evil spirits, John Dee, the representation of wisdom and divinity and Jane Dee, the woman they both love. I suspect Bowen's possible reasons for the milder variety of such a story is because she chose to use it simply as an exploration of character.

Bowen often had a fascination with evil but this story is a tale of renaissance goodness. Much has been written about John Dee, with many trying to ascertain whether he was of a questionable nature and a conjurer of evil spirits or simply a misguided and susceptible man. Bowen may have used this novel, not to explore the occult further but purely to examine the story from a more humane and less judgemental point of view intertwined with morality, spirituality and the succumbing of men and women to good and bad forces. The novel could be perceived as slightly dull in parts if one is unfamiliar with Bowen's other creative literary ventures but having examined an array of Bowen's occultic fiction, I believe this downplay was intentional. It does not quite contain the full vivacity and atmospheric intensity as some of the other works written under the Marjorie

Bowen, Joseph Shearing and George Preedy pseudonyms, though it does demonstrate Bowen's particularly strong research proficiencies and the unusual productive talent that she had for recreating historical and supernatural events in minute detail.

Alchemy, for Bowen, appeared to be a literary theme for expressing morality and the futile attempts of the pursuits of reckless and deluded endeavours - labours which can only lead to loss, dishonour and regret. All are punished in these alchemical writings for their attempts to obtain the absolutely unobtainable. Such pursuits, in Bowen's world, can essentially only lead to anguish and misfortune. The American critic Harry Levin called his study of Marlowe *The Over-Reacher*, linking Marlowe with his madly ambitious protagonists Faustus and Tamburlaine, and in a sense perhaps Bowen is both imaginatively sympathetic to and yet ultimately cautious about dangerously overreaching intellectual, personal and spiritual ambition.

I Dwelt In High Places encompasses many of Bowen's themes that have been traced throughout this thesis from the beginning of chapter one, such as violence, cruelty, dark romanticism, psychological torment, pacts with the devil, dealings with demons and dark spirits, psychic gifts and sensitive individuals, alienation, difficult gender relations, possession, oppressive class distinctions Gothicism, and ancient occultic practices. Bowen's use of the supernatural, the occult, sorcery and the gothic, where once again women are subject to the whims of men and must go where their husbands and fathers order them to, is used in combination with that ominous presence of dark romanticism which consistently filters through this novel. Also, once again this novel manifests Bowen's openended ambiguity of neither wholly evil, nor wholly dark, nor wholly good, nor wholly light, refusing to offer explanations and philosophical musings on the meaning of life but instead portraying characters in their relentless and desperate pursuits of such answers as they seek to fathom and comprehend their place in the world. Bowen is too much a moral realist to present irreproachable and improbably untarnished virtue: she is willing first and foremost to show the failings and mistakes of all her characters.

Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to show that Marjorie Bowen's work has been unreasonably neglected and has sought to examine reasons for why she deserves to be studied again. Her novels contain a unique combination of literary and historical discourses and manifest a mature, intuitive, psychological and she participates in many historical and contemporary debates and there is hardly a subject that she felt was too difficult or too large to tackle.

Each chapter has attempted a separate critical discussion: the gothic, romanticism, spirituality and cruelty in chapter one, the dark side of dandyism according to Bowen in chapter two, the tale of one of the most villainous kings in history with supernatural undertones in chapter three, human nature, human survival and the ambiguous treatment of class and gender amidst the French Revolution in chapter four, the problematic position of cultural identity, prejudice and persecution within society in chapter five, gender inequalities, cultural anxieties and tyranny in chapter six, Gothicism and gender relations in chapter seven, human relations within a supernatural realm in chapter eight and Marjorie Bowen's position on alchemy – a major literary trend that can be traced from medieval literature to the present day in chapter nine. Taken together these linked discussions argue for Bowen's importance for literary and historical academics in our own time. The arguments throughout this thesis also shows the importance of ambiguity within Bowen's work, something that sets her apart from many of the conservative middlebrow or popular writers of the interwar period. Her stories within the spheres of gender relations and inequality, tyranny, cruelty and witchcraft are composed within an ambiguous framework. Human nature too, according to Bowen, is vague, equivocal and confusing to the extreme, an idea which has been traced within all the chapters in this thesis, as no one character is ever simply morally intact and can often veer from sadness to contentment and sincere to evil within moments. Additionally, the Shearing novels consistently ask readers to find their own ethical standpoints regarding the true crime cases that Bowen sought to fictionalise. The extent of Marjorie Bowen's writings, the range of characters, contexts, themes,

genres and ideas, clearly shows that her literary work could be significant to a wide-ranging and diverse audience. She appealed to both men and women alike, younger and older, from famous writers to the ordinary reading public.

Eastern spirituality, Christian medievalism and mysticism and the Hermetic concerns of the West that Alex Owen discusses in *The Place of Enchantment* are all present in Bowen's own work, aspects or modes of access to her dark romantic vision. Novels such as *General Crack* with its Eastern philosophy shows a profound sense of occultic spirituality as despite his own power within society, the protagonist acknowledges a firm belief in a divine power, much more formidable than himself. / *Dwelt in High Places* shows tangible aspects of Hermetic philosophy, of particular interest to late Victorians and Edwardians even though the novel was published between the wars, and Bowen constantly returned to her forays into the realm of the spiritual. It is the occult that is a key thread within this thesis. It is the occult that ties all three sections of this thesis together and it is clear that the occult is the essential nature of Bowen's craft. Owen claims that twentieth-century occultism depended on "a modern reworking of the idea of "mysterious powers" one that refused the idea of the supernatural or necessary "mysterious" while at the same time retaining the concept and experience of the numinous,"²¹¹ and "The "new" occultism was one manifestation of a secularizing process that spells neither the inevitable decline nor the irreconcilable loss of significant religious beliefs and behaviours in a modern age."²¹² This is interesting as the fact that Bowen wrote of such figures that existed in the past within occultic frameworks and for a modern audience where there was an influx of occultic practices in the modern age shows Bowen's literary attempt to reconcile the old with the new.

²¹¹ Alex Owen, *The Place of Enchantment, British Occultism and The Culture of The Modern*, London, The University of Chicago Press Ltd, 2004, p.11

²¹² Ibid4, p. 11

Owen also claims that ambiguities of the modern world and the dilemmas of a life without meaning and spirituality, was at the heart of the fin-de-siècle occultism.²¹³ Bowen uses fin-de-siècle occultism as a form of questioning morality in her work and because she questions but does not propose answers, this imbues her text with that deliberate sense of ambiguity which traces back to the end of the century that would have marked the beginning of her adolescent and adult years. Rationality versus irrationality, supernatural versus the natural, reason versus intuition, are all key components of her work as demonstrated in this thesis. Both ambiguity and the occult are the crux of Bowen's work.

The adventurous side of her ambitious and creative spirit is at the pinnacle of her work. Yet despite this uniqueness and skill, Marjorie Bowen remains an obscure novelist today. The sheer range and volume of her work and the use of various pseudonyms due to her constant wish for authorial reinvention make it rather difficult to develop an overview of her as a novelist. This may be one of the reasons for academic and critical neglect. Marjorie Bowen was not a writer who can consistently be neatly categorised. When discussing Bowen's use of pseudonyms, Edward Wagenknecht shrewdly observed, "Mrs. Long found that if a writer was too prolific, the critics tended to discount her competence, and that her reputation suffered. This was the basic reason for her use of pseudonyms – she built up a series of new reputations for herself, each under a different name, their common identity being unknown to anyone but her publishers until later. Her reasons for it were practical. She was a writer, "for bread."²¹⁴ This leads to questions surrounding whether the use of pseudonyms reflect a writer's level of fame and Bowen herself claimed she wrote for money, perhaps downplaying what she perceived to be a moderate talent, a somewhat useful skill to earn money, yet this perhaps displays a surprising amount of the lack of self-belief regarding her own work. The mystery surrounding the reinvention of herself under the George Preedy pseudonym

²¹³ Ibid, p.239

²¹⁴ Wagenknecht, 'The Extraordinary Mrs Long,' p.21

indicates an extensive sense of popularity as shown within *The New York Times* article, 'London Is Puzzled By Author's Identity,' published in the February edition in 1930 as the journalist claimed "The carefully guarded identity of the writer who uses the pseudonym George Preedy is London's latest mystery which is baffling the cleverest sleuths of the literary and theatrical worlds...The name George Preedy is on everyone's lips but his identity is shrouded in mystery...Mr (Maurice) Brown (of Warner Brothers) said today the pseudonym hid the identity of a well-known author who wished the work to be judged strictly on its own merits."²¹⁵ It may be fair to claim here that a writer who only writes purely for money, would not create so many other identities to ensure novels were based on merit and skill rather than being published under the name of an already prolific author. As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, Robert Hadji claimed Bowen's short stories are better than her novels. But it has been shown that this verdict, which overlooks her superb novel *The Viper of Milan* and other excellent novels mentioned in this thesis, is seriously mistaken. Hadji also argued that Bowen only wrote "potboilers" under the George Preedy pseudonym.²¹⁶ This too is unfair as *The Rocklitz* and *General Crack*, two of Marjorie Bowen's bestselling and most enigmatic and subtlest historical novels, were published under the Preedy identity. She was a popular author, so it is inevitable a large amount of her work catered to popular palates, but there is a more profound level of exploration regarding these novels which has been discussed within this thesis. They are simply more than "potboilers." It is perhaps Bowen's use of several various pseudonyms that has led to contemporary neglect and the misunderstanding and confusion about her imaginative vision and her technical skill.

Marjorie Bowen was not a modernist as she usually stayed within the broadly realist conventions of late Victorian and Edwardian literature, but she developed a distinctive voice and a meticulous craftsmanship within the tradition of romanticism and historical fiction stemming from

²¹⁵ *The New York Times*, February 12, 1930

²¹⁶ Sullivan, *The Penguin Encyclopedia Of Horror and the Supernatural*, p. 50

writers such as Walter Scott, successful in entertaining but also educating her readers in the ways of earlier times. She was also a well-informed historical biographer. She used the form of the historical novel to explore and illuminate themes such as the French revolution, the class system and social injustice, dandyism, royalty and the aristocracy. She engaged with history to a much broader extent than some of the more well-known historical authors of her own period and those that preceded it. It is fair to say that Marjorie Bowen has a few aspects in common with other female writers in the twentieth century, including a subtly understated feminist perspective, but she retains individual and unusual qualities as drew on a very broad range of material and many different historical periods. It was relatively unusual for one writer to cover so many periods in literature as many female writers, for example Georgette Heyer, the novelist who favoured Regency England and D.K. Broster who focused on the Scottish Jacobites adhered to a single period and country for much of their work. Bowen ranged well beyond England and Scotland though she tried her hand at Scottish gothic with novels such as *Glen O' Weeping* which told the story of the massacre of Glencoe, *The Queen's Caprice* which focused on the life of Mary Queen of Scots and *Because of These Things* which was mentioned previously in this thesis. She also drew upon American writers and wrote for an Atlantic audience in particular with the Joseph Shearing novels. She was extremely aware of American and European sources and the dark history of slavery which was the key theme in Shearing's *The Golden Violet* set within the balmy landscapes of the Caribbean. Georgette Heyer's novels are light-hearted, their characters are often practical and unemotional, the plots distinctly lack a heightened sense of dramatic intrigue and emotional depths and the underlying seriousness of Bowen's narratives is all the more apparent and profound when compared to this kind of fiction.

Marjorie Bowen was extremely well-read and knowledgeable, as has been demonstrated, and for a novelist who published so many bestsellers in her time, much of her work could also claim the dignity and status of 'literature'. This was and still remains a rarity for any writer, to be able to combine easily accessible middlebrow narrative and the more durable qualities of literary fiction in

so many pieces of work. This can be compared with Charles Dickens, who was an influence on her, and Graham Greene, who was influenced by her, who pulled off the same combination.

Marjorie Bowen had a keen fascination with character as examined in the novels of *Dickon*, *Forget-Me-Not*, *General Crack*, *The Viper of Milan*, *I Dwelt in High Places*, *The Rake's Progress* and *The Triumphant Beast*. It is not that Bowen was simply a writer who chose not to alienate her readership, taking refuge in personalities rather than tackling extreme positions on certain historical events and periods. It was more that she was interested in problems rather than solutions - that is the problems within human existence as opposed to the possible political or ideological solutions for such problems. This is because she had a keen sense of awareness and comprehension regarding world affairs, human interactions and a fascination for the complexity of human nature which she often sought to explore, represent, dissect and understand. She was essentially a writer who was profoundly interested in historical character.

The claim by Elsa J. Radcliffe, previously mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, that Long (Bowen) lacked compassion for her gothic characters is also mistaken as it has been demonstrated she sympathised with the plight of her characters in the Joseph Shearing novels as well as in the historical novels published under the name of Bowen. The approaches within this thesis can bring a reader closer to Bowen's literary style but her distinctiveness actually resists conventional categories. Unlike many popular authors writing for a market she was thoughtful and perceptive about her art and was not afraid to range beyond generic conventions and limitations. Her usually conventional perspective and mode of telling the story, framing complex themes, belongs with the realist tradition, but it was sometimes enriched and supplemented by the mannerisms of the gothic mystery style. Many writers may have surpassed her and been more innovative in other areas, such as the rendering of the flux of consciousness, and have been praised and prized for anticipating or representing major literary movements, but who else wrote of so many different subjects and used symbolism and atmospheric evocation with such dark intensity?

In her autobiography, Gabrielle Margaret Campbell Long (the real 'Marjorie Bowen') shows Bowen's character in microcosm which summed up her outlook, "She cultivated her mind as far as her powers enabled her and took refuge in what she could achieve of intellectual courage, the serenity of philosophy. Rationalism attracted and convinced her mind but the heart has reasons that the mind knows not of, and she delighted in the mystics, and even at times could believe herself one with the harmony that runs through everything."²¹⁷ It is precisely this that made Bowen such an interesting writer. She in effect knew life – the failings, the sufferings, the happiness and the sadness, the mysticism, the inert melancholy of many existentialist predicaments. She never professed to be something she indeed was not. Her honest and transparent nature and her simple modest approach to her work and her life reveal this. Bowen was an independent woman attempting a realistic understanding of the varying perceptions of female limitations and gender restrictions within her own period and in previous centuries. She combined this in her novels with a sense of the overt miracle that life itself could sometimes seem to be. She explored vivacity and mortality in her work and what it meant to be human - our perceptions, our almost tangible insignificance compared to the vast and mysterious universe, the ceaseless possibility of existence beyond death, the omnipresence of death within life, the power and vulnerability of the human psyche and the fragility of our comprehension regarding the earth, the universe and ourselves.

Contained within all of the Bowenesque darkness, there is a certain beauty, a haunting beauty that is certainly in awe of love, life and death. She admits to and also imaginatively accommodates the vast beauty of life seen over against the rending struggle of pain in her novels and in her short stories. Skilled in the candid use of human psychology and in examining such conflicting realities within different cultures, historical periods, and literary genres, this is where her exceptional power and sheer strength as an author resides. Her imagination, bleak yet rich and romantic, was completely unlike that of any other writer during the twentieth century and, tirelessly

²¹⁷ Campbell, *The Debate Continues*, p.291-292

versatile, her abilities actually extend much further than she herself believed. In being able to compose work relating to the supernatural, the historical, the gothic, gender studies, biography, journalism, folkloric traditions, romanticism and religion, Bowen's unique qualities are all the more apparent. Should the sheer breadth and volume of her work not be testament to a very talented writer as opposed to a writer who was merely tediously prolific? Inevitably, the vast output is of uneven quality, but the work that was most popular in its day is often her best work. To understand Bowen as a writer and all the artistic choices behind her various pseudonyms, one must read several novels in each of the fictional genres she attempted. She repays study because her works offer extraordinary historical insight, not just within her own period, the first half of the twentieth century, but also when one considers from a contemporary viewpoint, the many centuries that preceded her own. For anyone studying gender relations, supernatural literature, art theory, history and the historical romance, Bowen is a natural port of call.

Marjorie Bowen also had an ability that can be used to help apprentice creatives who have an interest in fictions of a darker variety – her work can show them how to use their imagination to the fullest, how to create characterisation, atmosphere, plot, narrative, dialogue, how to use research as an artistic tool. Her uniqueness also lies in the fact that she was able to recreate real historical events for the modern age using her biographical skills rather than having to constantly create fictional characters. Regarding her historical and true crime novels, she wrote about the people who actually lived through such events. These historical events and criminal cases attracted her. This is because she was interested, not just in the events, but in the people and their thoughts, their actions, their emotions, their desires and what drove them.

After studying Bowen to such a degree, I am convinced that she had a penchant for continuing or reviving literary traditions that were in place and widely recognised before her own time of writing. This makes her contemporary obscurity all the more apparent. It is almost as if she was a part of the wrong era for her work, despite her successes. She was writing a century too late.

She was essentially a twentieth century romantic author living more than a hundred years after the Romantic movement had ended. Bowen understood the Wordsworthian perception of nature and was also attuned to the tranquillity of spiritual transcendence. She paid homage to the Coleridgean religious connotations of atmospheric gothic flourishes. She adapted her historical novels for the present day in and for which she was writing by using familiar vernacular language rather than artificial theatrical archaism, recalling the privileging of ordinary language in the *Lyrical Ballads*. Titles of her novels were taken from romantic poetry: her romantic historical novel *Dark Rosaleen* which was set in Ireland, references the famous Irish poets W.B. Yeats, who regarded himself as one of the last romantics, and his precursor James Clarence Mangan. The half-century from the *Lyrical Ballads* to the death of Mangan in 1849 is perhaps the era in which Bowen should have lived. It is not just Bowen's contribution to historical and gothic writing that make her such a worthwhile author to study: it is also her creative responsiveness to the long shadows cast by romanticism. The poetry written and published during the romantic period was also modernised and reinvented by romantic fiction but the period in which Bowen was writing is not considered or recognised as part of the Romantic movement. She is also overlooked today due to the modernism movement which reached a far smaller audience in its heyday than Bowen's own work did and because she belongs with the nineteenth-century rather than twentieth-century literary traditions. She is best understood as a displaced romantic, but with a much darker romantic vision.

Bowen was, as previously mentioned, also a gothicist, writing over fifty years after gothic literature began to decline. Although gothic fiction developed a gothic-occult hybrid in the Edwardian period and beyond, this is possibly one of the few literary movements in the twentieth century with which Bowen can be confidently associated. Consequently, perhaps it may be fair to see Bowen as a romantic historical gothicist with spiritual leanings. Marjorie Bowen pledged her commitment to history and historical fiction while acknowledging the dark. Darkness threads its way continually through her prose, regardless of whether she is recreating the splendour and glamour of

history or narrating the mystical and melancholic gothic tales of her own composition. Bowen's distinctiveness is clear in comparison with modern authors of her time as she has far greater links with the past. She was a middlebrow author producing readable fictions for the market but also a forgotten romantic. If she is considered in relation to American romanticism, English romanticism and French romanticism and if we take account of her affiliation with the ideas of nature and the spiritual worship present in Shelley and Tennyson, she is indeed one of the last romantics. However, although Bowen was writing from a different perspective during her time, compared to the modernists for example, and although it appears from a contemporary academic perspective, as if Bowen was indeed somewhat separated from the writers of her own period, this does not detract from her abilities as a popular twentieth century author. Her historical recreations still had great significance for her readers: she touched her audience with the stories she sought to tell, and can still do so.

Bibliography

Archival Sources

Yale Finding Aid Database: Guide To The Marjorie Bowen Papers, *Hdl.Handle.Net*, 2002, <http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.bowenm>. Some of this material has been used in the published work of Marjorie Bowen, Gabrielle Margaret Campbell Long, George R. Preedy, Robert Paye, Joseph Shearing and John Winch, listed below in the main bibliography.

Ashley, Mike, and William. G Contento, *The Supernatural Index; A Listing of Fantasy, Supernatural, Occult, Weird, And Horror Anthologies*. Westport, Greenwood Press, 1995.

Asquith, Cynthia, *My Grimmost Nightmare*. London, G. Allen & Unwin, 1935.

Asquith, Cynthia, *The Black Cap, New Stories of Murder & Mystery Compiled by Cynthia Asquith*, London, Hutchinson & Co Ltd, Third Edition.

Bak, John. S and Wohrer, Franz Karl, *British Literature & Spirituality, Theoretical Approaches & Transdisciplinary Readings*, Münster, LIT 2013.

Baldick, Chris, *The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009.

Balzac, *Honore'*, Hunt, Herbert James, *The Wild Ass's Skin by Honore' De Balzac*, London, Penguin Classics, 1977.

Beerbohm, Max, 'Dandies and Dandies,' *Dandyism.Net*, 2017, <http://www.dandyism.net/beerbohms-dandies-and-dandies/>.

Benstock, Bernard, and Thomas F. Staley, *British Mystery Writers*, Detroit, Gale, 1988.

Birx,H. James, 'Giordano Bruno,' *Harbinger*, 1997, <http://www.theharbinger.org/xvi/971111/birx.html> (last accessed 28th December 2017).

Blackwood, Algernon, *The Willows*, Enhanced Media (Amazon Kindle Edition) 2017.

Bleiler, Everett Franklin, *The Checklist of Fantastic Literature*, Illinois, Shasta Publishers, 1948.

Bloom, Clive, *Gothic Horror*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1998.

'Books: Worthless Wanton,' *TIME.Com*, 1935,

http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,749050,00.html?iid=digg_share (review of Bowen's *The Scandal of Sophie Dawes* - 16th September 1935).

Bortz-Bornstein, Thorsten, 'Rule Following in Dandyism: "Style" As an Overcoming Of "Rule" And "Structure,"' *The Modern Language Review*, vol 90, no. 2, 1995, *JSTOR*,
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3734540>.

Botting, Fred, *A Companion to Gothic*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 2000.

Botting, Fred, *The Gothic*, Suffolk, D.S. Brewer, 2001.

Bowen, Marjorie, *A Knight of Spain*, London, T. Nelson & Sons, 1927.

Bowen, Marjorie, *Black Magic*, London, Sphere, 1909.

Bowen, Marjorie, *Blanche Fury*, London, Sphere, 1973.

Bowen, Marjorie, Conway Hall Arts Lecture, London, April 19th1939, available online,
https://conwayhall.org.uk/library/memorial_lecture/ethics-in-modern-art/.

Bowen, Marjorie, 'Dickon,' *Times Literary Supplement* [London, England] 5 Sept. 1929: 684. *Times Literary Supplement Historical Archive*. Web. 20 Aug. 2016.

<http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/tlsh/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TLSH&userGroupName=sussex&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=BasicSearchForm&docId=EX1200229772&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0> Bowen,

Marjorie, *Dark Rosaleen*, London, Collins, 1971.

Bowen, Marjorie, *Dickon*, London, Fontana, 1971.

Bowen, Marjorie, 'Dr John Dee, M.A,' *The Occult Review*, 1933.

Bowen, Marjorie, *Eugénie*, London, Fontana, 1976.

Bowen, Marjorie, *Forget-Me-Not*, London, Fontana, 1953.

Bowen, Marjorie, *General Crack*, London, John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd, 1928.

Bowen, Marjorie, *God and The Wedding Dress*, London, Endeavour Press Ltd (Amazon Kindle Edition) 2015.

Bowen, Marjorie, 'Holy Mr. Herbert,' *George Herbert Journal*, vol 28, no. 1 and 2, 2007, (doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/ghj.2007.0000>).

Bowen, Marjorie, *I Dwelt in High Places*, London, Collins, 1933.

Bowen, Marjorie, *I Will Maintain*, London, Methuen & Co Ltd, 1910.

Bowen, Marjorie, *Kecksies And Other Twilight Tales*, Wisconsin, Arkham House Publishers Inc, 1976.

Bowen, Marjorie, *Nightcap and Plume*, London, Hodder And Stoughton, 1945.

Bowen, Marjorie, *Patriotic Lady*, London, David Bruce & Watson Ltd, 1970.

Bowen, Marjorie, *Stinging Nettles, A Modern Story*, London, Ward, Lock & Co Ltd, 1923.

Bowen, Marjorie, *The Bishop of Hell & Other Stories*, Ware, Wordsworth Editions, 2006.

Bowen, Marjorie, *The Breakdown*, available online, ebooks@Adelaide, The University of Adelaide, 2012, <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/b/bowen/marjorie/breakdown/index.html>.

Bowen, Marjorie, *The Carnival of Florence*, London, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1914.

Bowen, Marjorie, *The Cheats*, London, W. Collins Sons & Co Ltd, 1920.

Bowen, Marjorie, *The Folding Doors*, available online, ebooks@Adelaide, The University of Adelaide, 2012, <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/b/bowen/marjorie/folding-doors/> Bowen,

Marjorie, *The Glen O' Weeping*, London, Collins, 1971.

Bowen, Marjorie, *The Governor of England*, Endeavour Press Ltd (Amazon Kindle Edition) 2015.

Bowen, Marjorie, *The Last Bouquet*, London, John Lane The Bodley Head, 1933.

Bowen, Marjorie, *The Man with The Scales*, London, Hutchinson, 1954 Bowen,

Marjorie, *The Poisoners*, New York, Beagle Books, 1970.

Bowen, Marjorie, *The Queen's Caprice*, London, Fontana, 1970.

Bowen, Marjorie, *The Rake's Progress*, London, William Rider & Son Limited, 1912.

Bowen, Marjorie, *The Sword Decides! A Chronicle of a Queen in The Dark Ages: Founded on The Story of Giovanna Of Naples*, London, T. Nelson & Sons, 1925.

Bowen, Marjorie, *The Triumphant Beast, A Tribute, A Confession, An Apology*, London, John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd, 1934.

Bowen, Marjorie, *The Veil'd Delight*, London, Oldhams Press Limited, 1933.

Bowen, Marjorie, *The Viper of Milan*, London, Elliott & Thompson, 1906.

Bowen, Marjorie, *This Shining Woman, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, 1759-1797*, London, Collins, 1937.

Bowen, Marjorie, *William Hogarth, The Cockney's Mirror*, London, Methuen & Co Ltd, 1936.

Bowen, Marjorie, *William, Prince of Orange*, London, John Lane The Bodley Head, 1928.

Brewer, Derek, *English Gothic Literature*, London, Macmillan Press Ltd, 1983.

Brooks, Peter, *The Melodramatic Imagination – Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama and The Mode of Excess*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1976.

Bullough, Geoffrey, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare Volume III*, London, Routledge, 1966.

Burke, Edmund, *A Philosophical Inquiry into The Origin of Our Ideas of The Sublime and Beautiful*,

1756, available online, The University of Adelaide,
<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/b/burke/edmund/sublime/>.

Calvert, Steve, 'A Passion For Horror,' <http://www.steve-calvert.co.uk/book-reviews/the-bishop-ofhell.htm> (last accessed 4th January 2011).

Cawelti, J.G., *Adventure, Mystery and Romance – Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture*, London, The University of Chicago Press Ltd, 1976.

Campbell, Margaret, *The Debate Continues*, London, Heinemann, 1939.

Carlyle, Thomas, *Selected Writings*, London, Penguin Classics, 1987

Carlyle, Thomas, *Sartor Resartus, The Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröckh*, Adelaide, University of Adelaide, 1831, https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/c/carlyle/thomas/sartor_resartus/index.html.

Carpenter, Lynette and Kolmar, Wendy K., *Ghost Stories by British And American Women*, New York, Routledge, 2015.

Chaplin, Sue and Faflak, Joel, *The Romanticism Handbook*, London, Continuum, 2011.

Clay, Catherine, *British Women Writers 1914-1945*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006.

Cox, Michael, and R. A. Gilbert, *The Oxford Book of English Ghost Stories*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008.

Cruse, Amy, *After the Victorians*, Michigan, Scholarly Press, 1976.

Dalby, Richard, *The Virago Book of Ghost Stories*, London, Virago Press, 1988.

D'Amassa, Don, *Encyclopedia of Fantasy and Horror Fiction*, New York, Facts on File, 2013.

De Blecourt, Willem, 'The Making of The Female Witch: Reflections and Gender in The Early Modern Period.' *Gender & History*, vol 12, no. 2, 2000,
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/14680424.00185/abstract>.

De La Mare, Walter, *The Return*, London, John Murray Publishers (Amazon Kindle Edition) 2012.

De Mally, Jean, 'Pope Joan,' *New Advent.Org*, 2016,
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08407a.htm>.

Defoe, Daniel, *Moll Flanders*, London, John Lane The Bodley Head, 1929.

Defoe, Daniel, *Roxana*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996.

Dickens, Charles, *A Tale of Two Cities*, Ware, Wordsworth Editions, 1999.

Disraeli, Benjamin, *Henrietta Temple*, London, H. Colburn, 1837.

Dowrick, Stephanie, *Classic Tales of Horror*, collected and introduced by Stephanie Dowrick, London, Book Club Associates, 1976.

Doyle, Arthur Conan, *Correspondence, The Marjorie Bowen Papers*, Box 35, New Haven, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Dumas, Alexandre, and Coward, David, *La Reine Margot*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008.

Ellmann, Maud, *Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism*, Harlow, Longman, 1994.

Etchison, Dennis and Pringle, David, *St. James Guide to Horror, Ghost & Gothic Writers*, Detroit, Gale, 1998.

Fell-Smith, Charlotte, *John Dee 1527-1608*, London, Constable & Company, 1909.

Feuchtwanger, Lion, *Jew Süß*, London, Methuen, 1935.

Field, Rachel, *All This & Heaven Too*, London, Fontana, 1964.

Fleishman, Avrom, *The English Historical Novel*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971.

Fluck, Winifred, 'Crime, Guilt and Subjectivity' In *Film Noir*, *Amerikastudien/American Studies*, vol 46, no. 3, 2001,
http://www.jfki.fuberlin.de/en/v/publications_fluck/2000/fluck_crime_guilt/Fluck_Crime_Guilt.pdf.

Ford, Ford Madox and Robie Macauley, *Parade's End*, New York, Penguin Books, 1982.

Fowler, Christopher, 'Forgotten Author: No.22: Marjorie Bowen,' *The Independent*, 2009, <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/forgotten-author-no22marjorie-bowen-1546021.html>.

Fraser, Hilary and Shattock, Joanne, *English Literature 1830-1914*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Frayling, Christopher, *Nightmare: The Birth of Horror*, London, BBC Books, 1996.

Freud, Sigmund, *The Uncanny*, 1919, <http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/freud1.pdf>.

Gagnier, Regenia, *Idylls of The Marketplace: Oscar Wilde and The Victorian Public*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1986.

Gayford, Cecily, *Tales From The Dead of Night: Thirteen Classic Ghost Stories*, London, Profile Books, 2013.

Gelder, Robert Van, 'The Story of Sophie Dawes Is A Rags-to-Riches Saga,' *The New York Times*, November 17, 1935.

Goddu, Teresa A, *Gothic America: Narrative, History & Nation*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1997.

Goldman, Dorothy, Gledhill, Jane and Hattaway, Judith, *Women Writers and The Great War*, New York, Twayne Publishers, 1995.

Greene, Graham, *The Quiet American*, London, Penguin, 2004.

Greene, Graham, *Travels With My Aunt*, London, Penguin Books, 1991.

Haining, Peter, *The Mammoth Book of Modern Ghost Stories*, London, Robinson, 2007.

Hammond, Anthony, *King Richard III*, London, Arden Shakespeare; Methuen & Co, 1981.

Harper, Ralph, *The World of The Thriller*, Cleveland, The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1969.

Hass, Andrew, Jasper, David and Jay, Elisabeth, *The Oxford Handbook of English Literature and Theology*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007.

Hawley Jarman, Rose, 'We Speak No Treason: Forty Years On,' *Rose Hawley Jarman*, 2011, http://www.rosemaryhawleyjarman.com/we_speak_no_treason40yearson.html.

Heiland, Donna, *Gothic & Gender An Introduction*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

Heyer, Georgette, *My Lord John*, London, Pan Books, 1976.

Heyer, Georgette, *Regency Buck*, London, Heinemann, 1967.

Hogle, Jerrold E. W., *The Cambridge Companion to The Gothic*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Hope, Anthony, *The Prisoner of Zenda*, London, Penguin Books, 2007.

Horwill, Herbert W, 'News and Views of Literary London,' *The New York Times*, September 20, 1931

Hughes, Helen, *The Historical Romance*, London, Routledge, 1993.

Humble, Nicola, *The Feminine Middlebrow Novel, 1920s to 1950s, Class, Domesticity and Bohemianism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004.

Hutchison, Percy, 'The Mettlesome Character, William Cobbett, Miss Bowen's Biography of "Peter Porcupine" Does Full Justice to the Champion of Innumerable Causes,' *The New York Times*, June 7, 1936.

Jack, Peter Munro, 'Mary, Queen of Scots, the "Daughter of Debate,' *The New York Times*, February 24, 1935.

James, Henry, *The Turn of The Screw*, Seattle, Amazon Classics (Amazon Kindle Edition).

James, Montague Rhodes, *Ghost Stories of An Antiquary*, Amazon Kindle Edition.

James, William, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, Lanham, Dancing Unicorn Books, 2017.

Janaway, Christopher, *Schopenhauer, A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002.

Jenkins, Elizabeth, *The Princes In The Tower*, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1978.

Jones, Henry Festing Jones, *Diversions In Sicily*, London, William Clowes & Sons, www.forgottenbooks.org, last accessed 4th February 2012.

Joyce, James, 'Letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver,' *Selected Letters*, 27 January 1925, 1925.

Knowles, Claire, *Sensibility and Female Poetic Tradition 1780-1860*, Farnham, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 1988.

Kunitz, Stanley J., and Haycraft, Howard, *Twentieth Century Authors, A Biographical Dictionary of Modern Literature*, New York, The H.W Wilson Company, 1950.

Lamb, John B., 'Domesticating History: Revolution and Moral Management In A Tale Of Two Cities,' *Dickens Study Annual*, no. 25, 1996.

Lascelles, Mary, *The Story-Teller Retrieves The Past*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1980.

Le Fanu, Joseph Sheridan, *Green Tea; Mr. Justice Harbottle*, Amazon Kindle Edition.

Letter to Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement* (London, England), Thursday, September 05, 1929; pg. 684; Issue 1440. (219 words)

Leydecker, Karl, *German Novelists of The Weimar Republic, Intersections of Literature and Politics*. New York, Camden House, 2006.

Light, Alison, *Forever England, Femininity, Literature & Conservatism Between the Wars*, London, Routledge, 1991.

Linden, Stanton J, *Darke Hieroglyphics: Alchemy In English Literature From Chaucer To The Restoration*, Lexington, The University Press of Kentucky, 1996.

Long, Gabrielle Margarete Vere Campbell, *The Golden Violet, The Story of A Lady Novelist*, New York, The Readers Club, 1943.

Luckhurst, Roger, *The Invention of Telepathy 1870-1901*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2002.

Lukács, George, *The Historical Novel*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1976.

Macdonald, Kirsty, 'The Bottle Imp, Scottish Gothic: Towards A Definition,' Issue 6, November 2009, <https://www.thebottleimp.org.uk/2009/11/scottish-gothic-towards-a-definition>, last accessed 20th December 2017.

Machen, Arthur, *The Great God Pan*, Amazon Kindle Edition, Start Publishing LLC, 2013.

Machen, Arthur, *The White People* (Amazon Kindle Edition).

Malpezzi, Frances, 'Long [*née* Campbell], Margaret Gabrielle Vere, (1885–1952)' <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/view/article/40902>, last accessed 28th December 2017.

Malpezzi, Frances M, 'The Parson Fictionalized: A Reprise,' *George Herbert Journal*, vol 28, no. 1, 2005, pp. 65-70. *Johns Hopkins University Press*, doi:10.1353/ghj.2007.0004.

Mangham, Andrew, *The Cambridge Companion To Sensation Fiction*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Mann, Philip, *The Dandy At Dusk*, London, Head of Zeus Ltd, 2017.

Marlowe, Christopher, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, Amazon Kindle Edition, 2017.

Mavrogordato, E. E. 'The Last Bouquet,' *Times Literary Supplement* [London, England] 22 Dec. 1932:

976. *Times Literary Supplement Historical Archive*. Web. 20 Aug. 2016

<http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/tlsh/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TLSH&userGroup=roupName=sussex&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=BasicSearchForm&docId=EX1200242379&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0>.

Meisel, Perry, *Freud, A Collection of Critical Essays*, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1981.

Messent, Peter B, *Literature of The Occult*, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall Inc, 1981.

Moers, Ellen, *The Dandy*, London, Secker & Warburg, 1960.

Morris, David B, 'Gothic Sublimity,' *New Literary History, The Sublime and The Beautiful: Reconsiderations*, vol 16, no. 2, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985.

Murph, Roxanne C, 'Ricardian Fiction: Trash and Treasures,' *Richard III Society*, 2012,
<http://www.r3.org/fiction/roses/murph.html>.

Myrone, Martin and Frayling, Christopher, *The Gothic Reader*, London, Tate Publishing, 2006.

Neuburg, Victor Edward, *Popular Literature*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1977.

Nickson, Catherine, 'Murder As Social Criticism,' *American Literary History*, vol 4, 1997.

Nield, Jonathan, *A Guide To The Best Historical Novels & Tales*, New York, Burt Franklin, 1929.

'Occult Fiction - Worldcat Genres,' *Worldcat.Org*, 2017,
<http://www.worldcat.org/genres/occultfiction.html> (last accessed 15th December 2012).

Orczy, Emmuska Orczy, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, London, Hodder And Stoughton, 1952.

Otto, Rudolph, *The Idea of The Holy; An Inquiry Into The Non-Rational Factor In The Idea of The Divine and Its Relation To The Rational*, Translated By John W. Harvey, New York, Oxford University Press, 1958.

Ouida, *Moths*, New York, G. Munro, 1880.

Owen, Alex, *The Place of Enchantment, British Occultism and The Culture of The Modern*, London, The University of Chicago Press Ltd, 2004.

Pater, Walter Horatio, *Marius The Epicurean, Volume One*, London, 1910, (available online)
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/4057/4057-h/4057-h.htm>, last accessed 24th December 2017.

Patrides, C.A., *Premises and Motifs in Renaissance Thought and Literature*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1982.

Perkins Gilman, Charlotte, *The Yellow Wallpaper and Other Stories*, New York, Dover Publications Inc, 1997.

Pepper, Dennis, *Ghost Stories Volume 2*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994.

Potter, Jeremy, 'Richard III's Historians: Adverse and Favourable Views,' *Richard III Society*, 2012, <http://www.r3.org/on-line-library-text-essays/jeremy-potter-richard-iiis-historians-adverse-andfavourable-views/> (last accessed 20th December 2017).

Prebble, John, *Glencoe*, London, Penguin, 1966.

Preedy, George R., *Captain Banner*, London, The Bodley Head, 1930.

Preedy, George R., *My Tattered Loving, The Overbury Mystery*, London, Herbert Jenkins, 1937.

Preedy, George R., *The Devil Snar'd*, London, Ernest Benn Ltd, 1933.

Preedy, George R., *The Rocklitz*, London, The Bodley Head, 1930.

Prescott, Orville, 'Books of The Times,' *The New York Times*, December 5, 1947.

Priestly, Joseph, *The History and Present State of Electricity: With Original Experiments*, London, Dodsley, Johnson And Davenport, Cadell, 1767.

Pulliam, June Michele and Fonseca, Anthony J., *Ghosts In Popular Culture And Legend*, Santa Barbara, Greenwood, 2016.

Punter, David, *A Companion To The Gothic*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 2001.

Punter, David, *The Literature of Terror Volume 1*, London, Longman Group Ltd, 1996.

Punter, David, *The Literature of Terror Volume 2*, London, Pearson Education Ltd, 1996.

Purkiss, Diane, *The Witch In History: Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations*, London, Routledge, 1996.

Radcliffe, Elsa J., *Gothic Novels of The Twentieth Century*, Metuchen, Scarecrow Press, 1979.

Raven, Simon and Shuttleworth, Martin, 'Interview with Graham Greene, The Art of Fiction No. 3,' *The Paris Review*, <http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/5180/the-art-of-fiction-no-3-graham-greene> (last accessed 9th February 2012).

Reeve, Clara, *The Old English Baron: A Gothic Story*, Amazon Kindle Edition.

Richetti, John, *The English Novel in History 1700-1780*, London, Routledge, 1999.

Ringe, Donald A., *American Gothic*, Lexington, University Press of Kentucky, 1982.

Roberts, Maureen B, 'Ethereal Chemicals: Alchemy and The Romantic Imagination,' *Erudit.Org*, 2017, <http://www.erudit.org/revue/ron/1997/v/n5/005734ar.html>.

Royle, Nicholas, *The Uncanny*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2003.

Salmonson, Jessica Amanda, 'The Life of Marjorie Bowen, Mistress of The Macabre,' *Violet Books*, 2011, <http://www.violetbooks.com/bowen.html>.

Salmonson, Jessica Amanda, 'Twilight and Other Supernatural Romances,' *Goodreads.Com*, 2017, <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/3822799-twilight-and-other-supernatural-romances>.

Salmonson, Jessica Amanda, *Twilight and Other Supernatural Romances*, Ashcroft (Amazon Kindle Edition) 1998.

Sayers, Dorothy Leigh, *Great Short Stories of Detection, Mystery and Horror*, London, Victor Gollancz, 1951.

Sceats, Sarah and Cunningham, Gail, *Image and Power, Women In Fiction In The Twentieth Century*, New York, The Longman Group, 1996.

Schaffer, Talia, 'Fashioning Asceticism: Wilde, Beerbohm, and The Male Aesthetes' Sartorial Codes,' *Victorian Literature and Culture*, vol 28, no. 1, 2000, p. 45.
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/victorian-literature-and-culture/article/fashioningaestheticism-by-aestheticizing-fashion-wilde-beerbohm-and-the-male-aesthetes-sartorialcodes/E811275E81004A69FE902F212E4F7CDF>.

Scott, Walter, *Waverley*, London, Penguin Books, 1972.

Sedgwick, Eve, *Epistemology of The Closet*, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1990.

Shearing, Joseph, *Airing In A Closed Carriage*, New York, Collier Books, 1962.

Shearing, Joseph, *Album Leaf*, London, Heinemann, 1933.

Shearing, Joseph, *Aunt Beardie*, New York, Editions For The Armed Services, 1946.

Shearing, Joseph, *Mignonette*, New York, Collier Books, 1962.

Shearing, Joseph, *Moss Rose*, London, William Heinemann Ltd, 1934.

Shearing, Joseph, *So Evil My Love*, New York, Collier Books, 1961.

Shearing, Joseph, *The Crime of Laura Sarelle*, New York, Berkley Medallion Books, 1965.

Shearing, Joseph, *The Heiress of Frascati*, New York, Berkley Medallion Corporation, 1966.

Shearing, Joseph, *The Spectral Bride*, London, Sphere Books, 1973.

Shearing, Joseph, *To Bed At Noon*, New York, Berkley Publishing, 1965.

Simmons, James C., *The Novelist As Historian*, Paris, Mouton & Co, 1973.

Smith, Andrew and Wallace, Jeff, *Gothic Modernisms*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2001.

Smith, Andrew, *Gothic Literature*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2007.

Smith, Elton Edward and Haas, Robert, *The Haunted Mind, The Supernatural In Victorian Literature*, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1999.

Southron, Jane Spence, 'Hogarth and The England That He Mirrored, Marjorie Bowen's Excellent Appraisal of the Artist Whose Character Was as Outstanding as His Genius,' *The New York Times*, November 22, 1936.

Spooner, Catherine, *Contemporary Gothic*, London, Reaktion Books Ltd, 2006.

Stevens, David, *Romanticism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Sterne, Laurence, *Tristram Shandy*, Ware, Wordsworth Editions, 1996.

Stringer, Jenny, *The Oxford Companion To Twentieth-Century Literature In English*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1996.

Sullivan, Jack, *The Penguin Encyclopedia of Horror and The Supernatural*, Viking Press, New York, 1986.

Sullivan, Jack, *Elegant Nightmares - The English Ghost Story From Le Fanu To Blackwood*, Ohio University Press, Ohio, 1978.

Sutherland, John, *Bestsellers*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2007.

Tennyson, Lord Alfred, *Idylls of The King*, available online,
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/alfred-tennyson#tab-poems> (last accessed 26th December 2017).

Tey, Josephine, *The Daughter of Time*, London, Arrow Books, 2002.

The British Journal of Nursing, 'Book of The Week – The Third Estate' (*Eugénie*)
<http://rcnarchive.rcn.org.uk/data/page102-volume60-9thfebruary1918.p>.

The New York Times Article Archive 1851 - 1980.
<Http://Www.Nytimes.Com/Ref/Membercenter/Nytarchive.Html>, 2014,
<https://query.nytimes.com/search/sitesearch/#/marjorie+bowen/>.

The New York Times, 'London Is Puzzled By Author's Identity,' February 12, 1930.

The New York Times, 'Five In One,' October 18, 1942.

The New York Times, 'Literary Notes From London – American Publishers on Their Annual Spring Quest for Books by English Authors,' April 9, 1911.

The New York Times, 'Marjorie Bowen's New Story...God and The King,' March 10, 1912.

The New York Times, 'Nell Gwyn, Mistress Nell Gwyn by Marjorie Bowen,' December 26, 1926.

The New York Times, 'New York Literary Notes,' May 14, 1911.

The New York Times, 'Notes On Books and Authors,' September 19, 1942.

The New York Times, 'Novels by Marjorie Bowen...Prince and Heretic,' April 4, 1915.

The New York Times, 'Margaret G. Long, British Novelist,' December 27, 1952.

The New York Times, 'A Precocious Author,' November 17, 1906.

The New York Times, 'Literary Mystery Solved,' February 1, 1931.

The New York Times, 'London Is Puzzled By Author's Identity,' February 12, 1930.

Thomas, Keith, *Religion and The Decline of Magic*, London, Penguin Books, 1973.

Thurston, Luke, *Literary Ghosts: From Victorianism To Modernism; The Haunting Interval*, New York, Routledge, 2012.

Todd, Janet, *Sensibility An Introduction*, London, Methuen & Co Ltd, 1986.

Troxell, Mary, 'Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860)' *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 1995, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/schopenh/>.

Trumpener, Katie and Maxwell, Richard, *The Cambridge Companion To Romantic Fiction*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Tuck, Donald, *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy Through 1968: Who's Who, A-L, Volumes 1-3 The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy Through 1968: A Bibliographic Survey of The Fields of Science Fiction, Fantasy, And Weird Fiction Through 1968*, Illinois, Advent: Publishers, 1974.

Van Sant, Ann Jessie, *Eighteenth Century Sensibility and The Novel: The Senses In Social Context*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Vance, Norman, *Bible and Novel, Narrative Authority and The Death of God*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013.

Varma, Devendra Prasad, *The Gothic Flame*, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1987.

Wagenknecht, Edward, 'The Extraordinary Mrs. Long,' *New York Times*, 1943.

Wagenknecht, Edward, *Seven Masters of Supernatural Fiction*, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1991.

Horace Walpole, *Historic Doubts On The Life and Reign of King Richard The Third*, Oxford University – School of English, Oxford, 1768.

Walters, Margaret, *Feminism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001.

Wasson, Sara, *Urban Gothic of The Second World War*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Waters, Catherine, *Dickens and The Politics of The Family*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Weinstock, Jeffrey Andrew, *Scare Tactics: Supernatural Ghosts By American Women*, New York, Fordham University Press, 2008.

Wheeler, Kathleen M., *A Critical Guide To Twentieth-Century Women Novelists*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1997.

Williams, Thomas George, *English Literature*, London, Pitman Publishing, 1951.

Wilson, Neil, *Shadows In The Attic: A Guide To British Supernatural Fiction 1820-1950*, London, British Library, 2000.

Wiltburg, Joy, 'True Crime: The Origins of Modern Sensationalism,' *The American Historical Review*, vol 109, 2004,

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249217329_True_Crime_The_Origins_of_Modern_Sensationalism.

Wisker, Gina, *Horror An Introduction*, New York, Routledge, 2005.

Wordsworth, William, 'Immortality Ode,' available online, <http://www.bartleby.com/101/536.html>, 2017.