

“The Hunt”
a novel
and the accompanying exegesis
**“A Voyage Through Darkness:
Finding a Voice in the Silence of Bluebeard’s
Castle”**

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|------------|
| ABSTRACT..... | 3 |
| STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY | 5 |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... | 6 |
| “THE HUNT” | 7 |
| FIGURE 1. EDVARD MUNCH “PUBERTY” (1894-1895) | 8 |
| CHAPTER 1 | 9 |
| CHAPTER 2 | 18 |
| CHAPTER 3 | 33 |
| CHAPTER 4 | 54 |
| CHAPTER 5 | 82 |
| CHAPTER 6 | 104 |
| CHAPTER 7 | 136 |
| CHAPTER 8 | 157 |
| CHAPTER 9 | 182 |
| THE EXEGESIS | 198 |
| “A VOYAGE THROUGH DARKNESS: FINDING A VOICE IN..... | 198 |
| THE SILENCE OF BLUEBEARD’S CASTLE” | 198 |
| CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION | 199 |
| CHAPTER 2. BLUEBEARD’S WIFE: PASSIVE VICTIM OR WILY PROTAGONIST?..... | 206 |
| CHAPTER 3. ANGELA CARTER’S “THE BLOODY CHAMBER” AND FEMININE DISOBEDIENCE..... | 214 |
| CHAPTER 4. BARGAINING WITH BLUEBEARD: MIRANDA AND CLEGG IN JOHN FOWLES’ <i>THE COLLECTOR</i> | 224 |
| CHAPTER 5. VOICE FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE: ALICE SEBOLD’S <i>THE LOVELY BONES</i> | 236 |
| CHAPTER 6. ESCAPE FROM BLUEBEARD’S CASTLE: ALICE’S QUEST FOR FREEDOM IN “THE HUNT” | 242 |
| WORKS CITED | 262 |

Abstract

The novel “The Hunt” follows the journey of a thirteen year old girl, Alice, as she navigates a path through the uneasy terrain of family breakdown, the onset of puberty and the slow, deliberate entrapment by an older man and his female accomplice. The novel charts Alice’s progress towards captivity, as she becomes slowly alienated from both her family and best friend. Alice finds herself in a perplexing world, where only her instincts alert her to the presence of danger. The novel can be read superficially as a story about a young girl and her pre-teen world of horses, friends and parents. However the significant themes of the novel are predation and capture, cruelty, alienation and the presence of mortal danger. The novel seeks to give voice to an aspect of the captor/captive narrative that is frequently absent: namely the perspective of a victim, in this case a young girl, who barely understands what is happening to her. The novel explores a world where things are not what they seem.

The exegesis, “A Voyage through Darkness: Finding a Voice in the Silence of Bluebeard’s Castle” explores the role of myth and fairy story in the development of the thematic and narrative concerns of the novel “The Hunt”, framed particularly through the story of “Bluebeard”. It chronicles the struggle to develop a credible narrative voice, particularly in the central character of Alice. It also traces and analyses the “narrative footprints” of those who have covered similar territory in fiction, returning to archetypal myths and fairy tales and acknowledging “Bluebeard” as a template for a type of predatory male. Questions of feminine disobedience and curiosity are explored as keys to freedom.

The exegesis examines texts that represent the predatory male/female captive dynamic: namely Angela Carter’s *The Bloody Chamber*, John Fowles’ *The Collector* and most recently, Alice Sebold’s *The Lovely Bones*. These texts, in revising the “Bluebeard” tale, inform my novel, although “The Hunt” attempts a different ending. I

argue that archetypal myths and fairy tales still provide a framework through which a modern readership can interpret and therefore better understand our world.

Statement of Originality

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution to Vanna Morosini and to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

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