

IMAGINATIONS

REVUE D'ÉTUDES INTERCULTURELLES DE L'IMAGE ▪ JOURNAL OF CROSS-CULTURAL IMAGE STUDIES



IMAGINATIONS

JOURNAL OF CROSS_CULTURAL IMAGE STUDIES |

REVUE D'ÉTUDES INTERCULTURELLES DE L'IMAGE

Publication details, including open access policy
and instructions for contributors:

<http://imagination.csj.ualberta.ca>

"Adult Fear and Control: Ambivalence and Duality in Clive Barker's *The Thief of Always*"

Gabrielle Kristjanson

November 12, 2013

To Cite this Article:

Kristjanson, Gabrielle. "Adult Fear and Control: Ambivalence and Duality in Clive Barker's *The Thief of Always*" *Imaginations* 4:2 (2013): Web (date accessed) 91-117. DOI: 10.17742/IMAGE.mother.4-2.5

To Link to this article:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.17742/IMAGE.mother.4-2.5>



The copyright for each article belongs to the author and has been published in this journal under a **Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial NoDerivatives 3.0** license that allows others to share for non-commercial purposes the work with an acknowledgement of the work's authorship and initial publication in this journal. The content of this article represents the author's original work and any third-party content, either image or text, has been included under the Fair Dealing exception in the Canadian Copyright Act, or the author has provided the required publication permissions.

ADULT FEAR AND CONTROL

AMBIVALENCE AND DUALITY IN CLIVE BARKER'S THE THIEF OF ALWAYS

GABRIELLE KRISTJANSON, UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

This article considers the relationship between the text and accompanying illustrations in Clive Barker's children's novel *The Thief of Always: A Fable*. This tale of abduction was published in the social background of fear around the child predator of the early 1990s and incorporates ideas of monstrous villainy, loss of childhood innocence, and insatiable desires. As a fable, *Thief* is a cautionary tale that not only teaches that childhood years are precious and are not to be wished away or squandered in idle leisure, but also of the dangers that some adults pose to children. Problematically, an honest and frank discussion of adult sexual desires toward children would despoil the very innocence that is trying to be protected; thus, a lesson such as this must be sublimated within the story. Yet, it is the illustrations, and more specifically the way in which the illustrations corroborate and contradict the plot of this story that reveals an underlying ambivalence toward the figure of the child and an echoing duality present in both the child and the child predator.

Cet article analyse le rapport entre le texte et les illustrations dans le livre pour enfants de Clive Barker intitulé *The Thief of Always: A Fable*. Barker a écrit cette histoire d'enlèvement dans le contexte social de la peur du prédateur d'enfants au début des années 90. Il y a mis en scène les idées d'un méchant monstrueux, de la perte de l'innocence enfantine, et des désirs insatiables. En tant que fable, le livre est un conte de mise en garde, qui non seulement enseigne que l'enfance est précieuse, étant nécessaire pour chaque enfant qui ne doit pas la gaspiller paresseusement, mais aussi qu'il existe un danger que certains adultes peuvent poser face aux enfants. Une réflexion sincère sur les désirs sexuels adultes face aux enfants étant problématique parce qu'elle dépouille l'innocence qu'on cherche à protéger. Barker a donc dû sublimer une telle leçon dans le récit. Ce sont alors les illustrations et leur rapport au récit à la fois corroborant et contractif qui révèlent une ambivalence cachée du personnage enfant, ainsi qu'une dualité présente dans les deux personnages : l'enfant et le prédateur d'enfants.

This article undertakes an analysis of the relationship between the text and illustrations in Clive Barker's children's novel *The Thief of Always: A Fable*. By considering not only the plot and characterization presented in *Thief*, but also the accompanying illustrations, drawn by Barker himself, an interesting dynamic is revealed. While illustrations are included in children's literature to enliven the work and increase its appeal for the young reader, these additions also serve to supplement the text, introducing and incorporating new information into the work. When the author is also the illustrator, it would be expected that the text and image would work in tandem toward a common hermeneutical outcome, yet when attempting to convey a complex relation with the potential for danger, ambiguity, and ambivalence, like that between the adult and child, conflicting ideas can infiltrate a seemingly cooperative process. The significance in the text-image relationship at work in Barker's *Thief* can be best summarized by Joseph H. Schwarcz, in his book *The Ways of the Illustrator*, who writes that "the pictures let us in on a secret" (17), and given that most secrets are meant to be just that, Barker's illustrations partner with as well as betray the written word in what hidden secrecies they expose.

Barker's approach to children's literature reflects a modern trend described by Emer O'Sullivan in her book *Comparative Children's Literature*, which treats children's literature as literature as opposed to mere didactic

exercise. O'Sullivan clarifies that "this new literary children's literature is distinguished by insecurity and ambivalence instead of certainty, linear rather than circular narratives and diversity instead of simplicity" (28). With the inclusion of his own illustrations, Barker achieves a permeating undercurrent within his linear narrative in which either textual or visual forms are at times complementary, supplemental, or oppositional. As he admits, his images precede his texts: "my image making and story making are associated [...]. My sketches act as notes" (qtd. in Burke ii). Because Barker writes about his images, using them "as notes" as he says, his work can be categorized as ekphrastic. Stephen Cheeke asserts that on its most basic level, ekphrasis constitutes "'literary' prose descriptions of artwork" (4). The text and the images are inextricably linked, each explaining and referencing each other and, in the process, amplifying the "the gap between language and the visual image" (Cheeke 2). Writing and illustrations create representations; hence, it is not the image or the text itself that carries meaning but rather the signifier to which the text, image, or their ekphrastic "gap" points. Barker is both author and illustrator of *Thief*, a rare combination in which multiple threads of meaning become embedded in the literature. When discussing the composite of text and image in literature, Schwarcz affirms that "the combination of the two forms of communication into a common fabric where they complement each other creates conditions of dependence and interdependence"

(4). Barker's illustrations are highly connected with the narrative, creating what Schwarcz calls a close "partnership with the written word," one that is not necessarily complementary (11). Through their ekphrastic relationship, the text and the illustrations in *Thief* expose underlying issues of childhood not explicitly expressed in the text.

Thief is the story of ten-year-old Harvey Swick who dreams of a life free from the tedium of childhood. He wishes to exchange his chores and schoolwork for the leisure and freedom of adult life. Barker thrusts his child protagonist into a predatory realm that threatens both Harvey's childhood and life, leaving him thankful upon his escape for the re-establishment of his childhood and grateful for the time he has to grow up under the watchful eye of his loving parents. Barker imparts this lesson via a child abduction narrative. Enticed by a smiling stranger, Harvey leaves home to enter a fantasy world that promises endless fun. The fantasy world is off-set from reality by a concealing fog and can be imagined as an estate with a large house surrounded by a field, a wooded area, and a pond. The fantasy world is orchestrated by Barker's villain, Mr. Hood, who detains children with promises of abundance, indulgence, and endless leisure, but then uses them to maintain his own immortality. Appearing in two forms, first as the house itself and then later—after the house is destroyed—as a humanized form of a man comprised of debris from the ruined house, Hood is a veritable monstrous representation

of a child predator. The fantasy realm, while it promises fun, magic, and food, is essentially a prison, and predictably, Harvey must defeat Hood to free himself, as well as all the children that Hood has imprisoned within this fantasy realm over the years.

As a fable, *Thief* is a cautionary tale that not only teaches that childhood years are precious and are not to be wished away or squandered in idle leisure, but also tells of the dangers that some exploitative or predatory adults may pose to children. This second lesson is far less explicit than the first and likely only readily accessible to the adult reader, yet it is one that discourses around child protection claim is necessary to be conveyed to the child in order to reduce harm and preserve innocence.¹ Problematically, to participate in an honest and frank discussion of adult sexual desires for children would despoil the very innocence that is trying to be protected; thus, a lesson such as this must be sublimated within the story. However, as my analysis will reveal, it is not only this lesson that becomes embedded within the text-image relationship, but also feelings of adult ambivalence and fear toward the child as a figure, effectively calling into question the very notion of childhood innocence. By dissecting the camouflaging effects of magic and monstrosity, the anxieties ingrained in some of Barker's key illustrations are brought to the fore, revealing their contained dualities and contradictions when considered in tandem with the text.

Barker is best known for his work in adult horror film and literature. Beginning in 1984, Barker has published eleven adult horror and fantasy novels² and four children's novels, *The Thief of Always* (1992), and a recent five-book children's series called *Abarat* (2002, 2004, 2011).³ His literature is pluralistic, falling under multiple genre and includes great diversity in characterization, yet an overall obsession for Barker could be described as the aesthetic of the perverse juxtaposed with rhetoric to protect the innocent. Further, many of his narratives focus on the excess of carnal desire. Dissatisfied with mundane everyday life, his characters frequently travel to secondary worlds in search of augmentation: unearthly pleasures or mystical powers. With a taste for debauchery, Barker incorporates violence, horror, and sexuality in his literature with his characters sometimes becoming physically monstrous, arguably as punishment for seeking and experiencing the limits of corporeal excess.⁴ Realms of the real and the imaginary frequently collide, confront or integrate each other and surviving characters emerge with enhanced self-awareness. Barker generally imagines his literary work as fantasy with an infusion of horror, what he describes as a sanctuary for the reader, a space to safely indulge the darker sides of the imagination in the assurance that "the real world is always there to be gone back to" (qtd. in Burke 56-57). His children's books are no different.

Real Fears of the Child Predator

As with his adult novels, Barker uses the invulnerable space of fantasy to explore real-world adult fears, as he describes rather carnivorously, treating "the real world [as] raw material to be devoured and transformed within the belly of my imagination" (qtd. in Burke 55). In *Thief*, this true-to-life adult fear is of child abduction, yet while the text may create an exploratory haven, the real-life existence of child predators denies any such protective claims, intensifying these anxieties within the text. As Paula Fass maintains in *Kidnapped*, adult desires "to inflict pain on children, to get pleasure from their bodies, or to exploit them materially are not a product of our imaginations. Each story of a child lost to a predator (however that is defined) is a true horror story" (262). Published in the early 1990s, *Thief* appears in the wake of some highly publicized and extremely vicious cases of child abductions, which caused widespread social anxiety for child safety.

Historian Philip Jenkins describes the 1980s and 1990s as a climate of fear wherein the conception of the child predator in the American public imagination changed into an abstract notion of a relentless, sexual force that endangered every child. This newly conceived notion of child predators as "extremely persistent in their deviant careers [... and] virtually unstoppable" captured the public imagination and instilled an acute sense of fear for the safety of children in public spaces that is present in this literary narrative (Jenkins

189). It is against this social backdrop of concern for the preservation and sanctity of childhood that Barker's villain can and should be read. Indeed, Mr. Hood abducts Harvey via a secondary agent named Rictus who entices Harvey to accompany him to Hood's Holiday House while Harvey is on his morning walk to school (*Thief* 7). However, like the abstracted conception of the predator, Hood is initially presented not as a tangible person but as the magic of the realm itself, granting all of the child's wishes without expecting anything in return. Yet, as the narrative reveals, the Holiday House is not a fantastical anomaly that exists of its own accord, but rather, a house run by a man who seduces, controls and confines children in order to feed on their life-force to extend his own life, much like a vampire. More explicitly stated, Hood deceives, kidnaps, holds captive, and ultimately consumes children. Metaphorically and metonymically, Barker represents Hood as a monster in both text and image.

Monster scholar Jerome Cohen explains in *Monster Theory* that fictional representations of monsters need "to be read against contemporary social movements or a specific, determining event" (5). He further describes the monster as embodying "those sexual practices that must not be committed, or that may be committed only through the body of the monster" (14). While Hood's interest in the children is not explicitly sexual,⁵ such desires can be read as implicated by his predatory and consumptive nature, particularly given the similarities between his character

and a notorious child predator of the time, Westley Alan Dodd. Public opinion of Dodd was that he was essentially a monster: "the epitome of the merciless and unapologetic predator of small children. [...] evil personified, the ultimate human predator" (Jenkins 193). Hood may or may not have been based on Dodd, but Dodd's pervasive presence in the media, combined with subsequent coverage of child predators in the years following publication of *Thief*, grounds Barker's fantasy narrative in reality. Such grounding instils a sense of immediacy for the anxieties raised by Barker in this text, echoing the social concerns of the time and permeating the experiences of parents who might be reading *Thief* to their children.⁶ Of course, as Peter Hunt explains, in "children's books, it is easy to read against the implications," providing a quasi-protective mechanism for naive readers (4). This sinister narrative is loosely disguised within the text, granting reader-denial if desired. However, a close reading of the text, in conjunction with an analysis of Barker's accompanying illustrations, makes it near impossible to ignore the predatory subtext, compromising the appropriateness of this text for a child readership.

There are a number of similarities between the media portrayal of Dodd and Barker's characterization of Hood that emphasize the paralleling that I speculate is at play in *Thief*. Hood seeks children of ignorance, ones who can readily be duped into entering his realm and who will enjoy his seductive

offerings without questioning them, rather than a specific gender.⁷ Yet, Barker focuses his narrative around Harvey and another boy that he befriends within the fantasy realm, Wendell. Likewise, Dodd targeted both male and female children, but he is most infamous for the murder of three boys, aged four, ten, and eleven (Jenkins 193). Hood's realm is concealed from view by a shroud of fog with the entrance only visible to the children chosen to enter the realm. In this way, the magic fog shields, keeping him invisible and "protecting [Hood] from the laws of the real world. Safe behind the mists of his illusion" (*Thief* 130). Adults within the reality realm cannot see the house, and the children within the realm only see the house; they cannot see Mr. Hood. The mask of the House amplifies the villainy of Hood; it is both his camouflage and his transgression against children and adults alike. Similarly Dodd, prior to his capture, had encountered and successfully deceived a number of representatives from the justice and mental health communities, "most of whom failed to *detect* his lethal potential" (Jenkins 193; emphasis added). Between 1991 and 1993, as Jenkins recounts, "Dodd was at the height of his national notoriety, [...] boasting of the ruthless quality of his crimes and warning that the justice system could never *control* him should he be released" (193; emphasis added). Not only was Dodd uncontrollable by the justice system, he was undetectable by adults in positions of authority; capable judicial and psychiatric professionals were unable to

identify the danger of this man. Dodd's intentions to harm, it would seem, were veiled to officials just as Hood's realm and the actions therein are concealed by the magical fog barrier.

The Role of Magic in Deception and Denial

As if to proclaim its autonomy, the text would have the implied reader believe that the illustrations are mere supplementation, filling in what Barker claims to be an inevitable linguistic lacuna. As if to demonstrate this deficiency in communication remedied by an illustration, Barker presents a poignant scene which follows Harvey's escape from the fantasy realm wherein he attempts to explain his capture to his parents. When interrogated about his escape from Hood's house, Harvey fails to find the words to describe the house of his captor to his parents, so he draws a picture: "He did just that, and though he wasn't much of an artist his hand seemed to remember more than his brain had, because after a half hour he had drawn the House in considerable detail. His father was pleased" (*Thief* 129). Harvey's reliance on the drawing to say what he is unable to say can also be read as a metanarrative that implies the same for the illustrations that Barker included to accompany his words in the novel. Acknowledging his inability to fully articulate his narrative through text alone, Barker relies on his illustrations to provide additional information to his readers, information of which he may not be fully cognizant. Like Harvey, who is able to remember

more through the act of drawing, Barker is able to convey more through his illustrations. Conversely, this reliance on illustrations also reveals a lingering distrust in language's ability to describe traumatic experiences.



Fig. 1 Harvey's drawing of the Holiday House (*Thief* 130).⁸

Through the necessity of Harvey's drawing, the text "reflects on its own literary nature," concluding that the presence of illustrations in children's literature accounts for the linguistic and experiential deficiency in childhood knowledge to create an unassuming image that pleases adult authority (O'Sullivan 28). However, Harvey's illustration is far more sinister in subject and genesis. The allusion to the suppression of memory that follows an abusive and traumatic experience is evident but is made more explicit with Schwarcz's theory of

how illustrations reveal a hidden—or perhaps suppressed—secret. In that Barker is both author and illustrator, he is free to indulge either or both personas,⁹ allowing them to corroborate or delineate, even to the extent that "text and illustration counterpoint each other" (Schwarcz 16-17). Like the extrapolated image of the House from Harvey's subconscious, Barker's drawings reveal "a secret." "The two media reinforce each other's message" (Schwarcz 94), yet the message they reinforce may not be apparent, a secret to both author and reader, waiting to be revealed

The inclusion of magic in this narrative creates a willingness to disbelieve and allows the text to portray itself as a fun story in which a young child defeats his captors and in which the captors' motivations for the abduction is the pursuit of the fantastical aspiration of immortality. The fantastic elements, both textual and visual, like the magic within the tale, appease adult fears by concealing the realness of the narrative. Adult anxieties and fears of abduction can be momentarily forgotten just as easily as one could dismiss magic. Just as the abduction content can be suppressed by the reader, so too can the abduction-like experience of reading. While most readers would not describe the immersive act of reading as being held captive (although, many would likely describe a good book as *captivating*), Barker himself has identified this analogous relation. Reflecting upon *Thief*, Barker likens the interaction between author and reader

to abduction:

Writing the stories is a power trip—and the trip is that you’re actually possessing people for a little bit. [...] You’re actually putting this page in front of them and saying, “Right, I’m going to get hold of you and not let go. And you don’t know me, but when you’re done, you’re going to know some very intimate part of me.” (*clivebarker.info* n. pag.)

The mere creation of a fantasy realm is indicative of forced abduction for Barker. Moreover, the addition of magic enhances the fantastical nature of this narrative, as well as imposes a false sense of fictionality onto real stories of abduction portrayed in the media, allowing adult fears of child abduction or worse to be controlled and denied by the text. Such relief from reality has twofold consequences. First is the creation of space for parental denial of the realities of child abduction via an increased distinction between the untouchable child reader and the child victim in the media. The second is that space is created for the child reader to equate abduction with adventure, resulting in potential desire for such an adventure and the heroism promised at the end, or in an undermining of the potential dangers of the child predator by filtering the abduction through a magical encounter that takes place exclusively in a fantasy realm.

The existence of the fantasy realm, and everything within, is explained by magic. In *Thief*, magic is depicted at times

as real or imaginary, complicating the distinction between reality and fantasy. Problematically, the narrator repeatedly refers to the fantasy realm as “a place of illusions,” trickery, and mirage (*Thief* 59). However, Harvey faces devastating consequences after escaping from the House, revealing magic’s ability to create true change and loss in the real world. After spending a month in the fantasy realm, Harvey and Wendell suspect that they are trapped and, together, escape through the fog barrier. While both re-enter reality still in child form, they find that 31 years have passed and that Hood has stolen their childhood from them (*Thief* 117-19). Still a child, Harvey returns home but has lost the opportunity to grow up with his parents and his community (*Thief* 120). The deadly truth behind Hood’s illusions is first revealed to Harvey when he crosses the fog-threshold in his escape with Wendell, where he finds that his keepsakes from the house turn to dust in his pocket (*Thief* 117). Yet, while these physical objects reveal themselves as ephemeral, the temporal difference between the inside and outside of the fantasy realm, marked by the wall of fog, is affirmed rather than unmade as a real consequence of Harvey’s time in the House. Here lies the difficulty of this text. While the narrator would have the implied reader believe that all the effects of the House are illusions and tricks, the temporal difference is in fact very real.

Having learned the truth of Hood’s trickery while in the realm of reality and empowered by this new knowledge,

Harvey returns to the House. His newly-acquired defense against the mirages of the House is foregrounded in an encounter between him and a tempting slice of pie offered as a distraction meant to lull him back into the rhythms of the house. However, the false-image fails and Harvey, armed with his new ability to see truth, recognizes the façade as the pile of dust that is its true nature: “He looked back at the pie, and for a moment it seemed he glimpsed the truth of the thing: the gray dust and ashes from which this illusion was made” (*Thief* 161).



Fig. 2 Jive holding the illusion of pie (*Thief* 158).

In the illustration, the pie remains in pie form, yet the skull-shaped steam signifies that this pie is not food, and belief in this pie will bring only death. Harvey’s loss of innocence, acquired during his return to reality, removes his veil of naivety and allows him to see past the illusion to the death (the dust) that lingers beneath.¹⁰ Harvey is empowered by his loss of innocence, able to see more and to know more than other children. From this example of the pie, it becomes clear that truth is embedded within the illustrations, a secret adult truth made available to Harvey by entering his adult reality while still a child.

The narrative is clear in its message: adult knowledge is the only weapon against the child predator. This conclusion is rather problematic for a genre that assumes the ignorance of the child. According to children’s literature scholar Perry Nodelman, the imperative of this genre is to mediate, wherein “both children’s literature and fantasy place the implied reader in a position of innocence about the reality they describe” (*Hidden* 201). With the child reader confined to ignorance and the child hero’s success contingent on the acquisition of knowledge that is distributed by adulthood—for Harvey, this knowledge is controlled by the adult author—not only is the child reader stripped of any potency, but he or she is also positioned hierarchically below the child character, who is similarly subordinate to the author. O’Sullivan asserts that children’s literature is predicated on an “unequal partnership” between author and child in terms of

“their command of language, their experience of the world, and their positions in society,” with the scales of knowledge and experience tipped toward the author (14). When combined with the contention that “children’s literature is literature that leaves things out,” this hierarchy implies the presence of an inherent subtext embedded within any children’s literature text, one that the author (or another adult reader) may follow but that the child may not (Nodelman, *Hidden* 198). This complex idea is fully explored by Nodelman, who concludes that “the texts represent as much of the truth about the world as adults assume children are capable of *knowing*,” which is reduced to “the simplicities of a text in terms of the more *complex knowledge* that sustains it and makes it comprehensible” to an adult reader (*Hidden* 199, 205). The paradoxical nature of *Thief* is thus exposed: as a protective fable, it is at once expected to present real-world problems and solutions for children and to shield the child reader from the graphic and disturbing realities of the threat it attempts to warn against.

This ambiguity is foregrounded in *Thief* in both its employment of the dual realness and unrealness of magic, as well as its emphasis on curiosity. In the fantasy realm controlled by Hood through magic (and Barker), Harvey and Wendell discuss the mysteries of the realm, beginning with the pond around the back of the house which they have discovered is full of large, ugly fish. These fish are in fact the transformed bodies of Hood’s previous victims, a

fate that awaits Harvey and Wendell if they stay at the Holiday House too long:

“Why would Mr. Hood have fish like that? I mean, everything else is so beautiful. The lawns, the House, the orchard ...”

“Who cares?” said Wendell.

“I do,” said Harvey. “I want to know everything there is to know about this place.”

“Why?”

“So I can tell my mom and dad about it when I get home.”

“Home?” said Wendell. “Who needs it? We’ve got everything we need here.”

“I’d still like to know how it all works.”

[...]

“Don’t be a dope, Harvey. This is all real. It’s magic, but it’s real.”

“You think so?” (*Thief* 43)

This scene serves multiple purposes. Most obviously, it establishes the contrast between Harvey and Wendell. While each boy asks questions, Wendell’s questions are dismissive rather than inquisitive, questions that perpetuate ignorance and rebuff truth as opposed to Harvey’s knowledge-seeking questions that request understanding.

Furthermore, this scene demonstrates the displacement of knowledge with magic; when Wendell's "who cares?" leaves Harvey unsatisfied, "magic" takes its place as the answer to "how it all works." Magic, a child's answer for the unexplained, satisfies Wendell; it provides "everything we need," since his needs are childlike: childhood knowledge and childhood desires. Wendell is content with attributing the "real" to magic, but Harvey continues to question right to the end of the discussion, finally asking "You think so?" Within the fantasy realm, something tantalizes the children and intrigues the reader, prompting this reflective scene. The realness of magic, and not the monster behind it as Cohen would argue, elicits the responses of curiosity and desire (16-7). Of course, the element of transgression underscores the experience of Hood's fantasy realm; every aspect of the fantasy—right down to the knowledge that it is a fantasy—initiates a cycle of desire and inquisition in the children. However, by soliciting questions from both Harvey and Wendell despite the lack of answers, magical realness complicates Cohen's monster, adding intellectual intrigue to its appeal.

Doubling the (Child) Monster

The doubling effect of Barker's illustrations begins to reveal itself in the dual expression of life and death, food and dust. Yet, it is the depictions of Harvey that are the most revealing of the embedded ambivalences within this narrative. Consider the first image

of Harvey, presented even before the title page for the book; it is one of clear division and duality within the child:



Fig. 3 This image appears on the third page of the book, prior to any numbering.

Harvey's face is the image of childlike innocence, appearing complacent, banal, and even melancholic; he sits in a passive stance, hands calmly resting in his lap while his head is devoured by a hideous monster. Yet, Harvey has also chosen to wear the costume of the monster and to adopt this frightening, monstrous persona. He appears

monstrous, magnified by the shadow he projects that looms larger than it should behind him and shows Harvey's ears, which should not be affected by the costume, as pointed like a creature's. Moreover, the shadow is both cast by Harvey—a projection of his body—yet it also looms over him in a threatening way. The monster costume—or perhaps more appropriately, the act of donning or embracing monstrosity—is dangerous to Harvey; it threatens and changes him; it conflates him with the monster. He is at once innocence and monstrosity combined, needing adult protection but also visibly frightening—the monster's eyes demanding or inducing fear. Schwarcz's secret contained within the illustrations of the narrative is this ambivalence: the dual conception of the child (and childhood) as both innocent and monstrous.¹⁰

Barker revisits this idea mid-way through the narrative, when Harvey is magically transformed into a vampire as a Halloween treat. Through the magic of Hood's Holiday House, Harvey is transformed into a vampire: he grows fangs, his ears extend into points, his arms become wings, and he acquires the taste for blood (*Thief* 78-85). He flies from the roof and swoops down to attack Wendell, remembering his humanity at the last minute and refusing to "*Bite him. [...] Drink a little of his [Wendell's] blood*" (*Thief* 86). Interestingly, in this representation, the predator turns childhood against itself by filling Harvey with the desire to attack another child: Wendell. Barker's illustrations of Harvey as a vampire are

dual illustrations that frame the chapter in which Harvey is transformed:



(Previous Page)
Fig. 4 Idealized (*Thief* 72).

Fig. 5 Actual (*Thief* 82).

The images represent an idealized and actual reality. In the idealized reality, Harvey relishes in his metamorphosis, untroubled by his enactment of a boyhood dream come to life, while in the actual reality, Harvey is a victim of this dream, fearful of his ability to harm and to instill fear in others. The duality of the child as both monstrous and innocent—a devilish victim of an imagined childhood ideal—is unveiled.

The idealized image of Harvey as a vampire is countered by the chapter title “What Do You Dream?” (*Thief* 73). The question appears to address Harvey, yet it can also be read in two ways: first, to question the aspirations of childhood and second, to question how childhood is conceived by adults. The illustration thus serves to answer both questions. The presence of the adult imaginary is augmented by an earlier conversation between Wendell and Harvey, wherein the adult voice of Mrs. Griffin, an old woman who lives at the Holiday House and acts as caretaker to the children, affirms the normalcy of boyhood morbid interests: “‘You’re monsters,’ she replied with the hint of a smile. ‘That’s what you are. Monsters’” (*Thief* 48). This affirmation suggests that monstrosity is the (fantasized) fundamental nature of boyhood. Harvey’s “dream” of being a murderous vampire is confirmed as an adult conception of the idealized child. The reality of this conception is

indicated by the closing image of Harvey plummeting to the ground with a dark shadow behind him, actual childhood, in need of protection.

Like the pre-emptive illustration of Harvey’s costumed duality, the shadow both results from and threatens the child, yet this dark shadow has its own legs and appears to be a shape independent of Harvey, one that is outside of his control. This shadowy figure is either chasing or perhaps pushing Harvey to the ground, or it is symbolic of the true threat to his innocence: the burden of the idealized adult conception of childhood monstrosity imposed upon him. The title next to this illustration reads “Falling From Grace” (*Thief* 83), which evokes the fallen angel who is expelled from heavenly grace, indicating a failure to live up to some higher (adult) expectation of divine innocence. Through his embrace of the adult fantasy in the previous picture, Harvey becomes monstrous and fearful in his embodiment of the actual rather than the idealized results of this fantasy. However, Harvey is already conceived of as monstrous prior to the commencement of the narrative, indicating adult ambivalence toward the conception of childhood that predicates and infiltrates *Thief*.

Barker’s illustrations, in conjunction with his use of the monstrous in both his villains and his protagonist, create a complex but not surprising duality, contingent on the modern construction of childhood. Nodelman explains:

They [children] are necessarily double

and divided—both that which they mimic, childhood as envisaged and imposed on them by adults, and that which underlies and survives and transgresses that adult version of childhood. The adult impulse [...] requires that children be both controllable and uncontrollable, both what adults want them to be and incapable of being what adults want them to be. [...] The divided child is the only possible child constructed by children’s literature. (*Hidden* 187)

O’Sullivan conceptualizes children’s literature as “a body of literature into which the dominant social, cultural and educational norms are inscribed” (13), while Nodelman envisions it as “a means by which adults teach children how to be childlike” (*Hidden* 203). The didactic imperative of Barker’s fable, while it may be well-intended, is unavoidably confused, formulating conflated and contradictory notions of “childlikeness,” evident in his visual representations of Harvey (*Hidden* 191). *Thief* reflects and constructs a conflated social and cultural conception of childhood.

Despite this ambivalence toward childhood or perhaps because of it, adult fears of child abduction underscore every aspect of this narrative. Harvey is simultaneously victim and saviour, beacon of childhood vibrancy and bearer of death, attacking the idea of immortality in both adulthood and childhood.

Fig. 6 Harvey as duality, white and



black, body and shadow, saviour and witness of death (*Thief* 142).

According to Margarida Morgado in “A Loss beyond Imagining: Child Disappearance in Fiction,” works that engage in the discourses on childhood, like Barker’s *Thief*, simultaneously address “the absence and presence of children: their absence in adult’s recollections [i.e., imagination] of childhood and their presence as real individuals who either differ from or resemble adults” (245). In this statement, Morgado juxtaposes the imagined child and the real child with one conceptualized and constructed by the adult, and the other separate and knowable to the adult only by comparison. She stresses the adult’s ambivalence toward their conceptions of childhood, which results in a dual status of the child as either an ideal or an actual—but in both cases,

paradoxically, an imagined figure. She claims that “adults nurture childhood as a dimension of *infinite* and immutable time, an idea of *innocence*, and a locus of *affective* investment” (246; emphasis added). Adults construct the child as immortal innocence, indisputably ignorant of both mortality and sexuality,¹² a figure who acts as a receptor of adult affection (acceptable in the form of protection and familial love, unacceptable in the form of captivity and sexual love).

It is this idealized memory that adults bring as readers or authors to children’s literature, and this desire that Barker exposes as sinister by applying the childhood notions of immortality and innocence (as a non-sexualized yet insatiable adult) onto Hood, his adult villain. Barker creates similarities between Harvey and Hood and, by doing so in combination with the duality of Harvey as monstrous and innocent, he frees Harvey from what Morgado refers to as the prison of “fictions of innocence” or what David Gurnham has dubbed the “disabling and disarming discourse of innocence” (246; 116). Once freed, Harvey may be used “to articulate [adult] fears and wishes,” including the contradictory desire for and fear of immortal childhood (Morgado 247). The ambivalence toward the nature of childhood, this conflict between what is desirable in children and what is achievable in actuality, is of particular relevance to the narrative of child abduction.

Adults are aware of the taboo sexual desires of some adults toward children, yet divulging that knowledge, propagating that adult-known fear, would result in a corruption of the very innocence in need of protection. Child protection discourses contend that a revelation of the sexual desirability of the child would despoil the child by initiating it into adult knowledge prematurely, but such a revelation would equally taint the adult since it is in the adult that this desire originates. Thus, stories such as Barker’s, which place the threat to childhood outside of the realm of familiar and realistic adulthood, prevents both the child and the adult from corruption. Bronwyn Davies clarifies that “constructing the danger as coming from the unknown Other, the stranger, saves those who are closest to the children from thinking about what dangers they themselves, or their loves ones, might be exposing children to” (ix). Hence, the child is expected to know without knowing, expected to be able to identify an unknowable threat, because of the adult decision to withhold knowledge and perpetuate ignorance, leaving the child to maneuver through a dangerous and unknowable adult world in an idealized state of perpetual innocence.

Yet, this ignorant, unsuspecting child, in his trusting innocence and total dependence, is at his most vulnerable. His susceptibility opens the door for what Morgado contends adults fear most: the monstrous child. According to Morgado, adults fear for children who, through a loss of innocence, will

“re-emerg[e] as monsters or victims of a ruthless society,” revealing the inability to control “the innocent, pure, passive, and dependent child” (251). Such fears spur the creation of literary works meant to educate (but not too much) and protect, preventing this monstrous transformation. Barker, as has been shown, allows this narrative to play through to the cautionary hindsight at its end. Given Harvey’s loss of innocence, Cohen would concede the naturalness of the monstrous child in the presence of the fictional monster (Hood): “The monster prevents mobility (intellectual, geographical, or sexual), delimiting the social spaces through which private bodies move. To step outside this official geography is to risk attack by some monstrous border patrol or (worse) to become monstrous oneself” (12). Ultimately, Harvey transgresses these intellectual, geographical, and sexual boundaries guarded by the monster and gains the knowledge necessary to defeat the predator via his encounter with reality.

Reading between the Sublimated Lines

Ironically, monsters are frequently employed to depict situations that adults fear will create monstrous children. According to Nodelman, “children’s literature is frequently about coming to terms with a world one does not understand” and camouflaging lessons on harmful adult intentions would serve to prepare without corruption by maintaining the “world one does not understand” through literary metaphor, analogy or hidden subtext

(“Generalizations” 178). To achieve this end, such texts “sublimate or keep present but leave unsaid a variety of forms of knowledge—sexual, cultural, historical—theoretically only available to and only understandable to adults” (Nodelman, *Hidden* 206). Similarly, “monsters must be examined within the intricate matrix of relations (social, cultural, and literary-historical)” (Cohen 5). In reading *Thief* as a child abduction narrative, each of these forms of knowledge is suppressed: the “sexual” implications of child abduction, the “cultural” understanding of the threat of a child predator and, the “historical” pattern of passed abductions and their consequences. Hence, the knowledge of the world and its dangers remain silent, unknown, sublimated in order to preserve the innocence of the idealized child.

During their escape, which is a direct result of Wendell’s confrontation with the (sexualized) vampire-Harvey, the boys are chased by Carna, Hood’s winged beast, who crosses the fog boundary in its blood-lust for the boys and then immediately begins to deteriorate. The parallel to Harvey’s vampire metamorphosis, in which he lets out a blood-curdling scream as he flies through the sky before swooping down to trap Wendell and suck his blood, is illuminating. Like Carna, who begins to deteriorate once beyond the fog barrier and outside of the fantasy realm, Harvey’s vampiric qualities dissipate when he refuses to follow through with the fantasy of penetrating Wendell’s neck and drawing his blood

(*Thief* 111, 87-8). Thus, it is the denial of fantasy that dissolves the monster.



Fig. 7 Carna with mouth agape, ready to receive (*Thief* 108).

The destruction of Carna when it encounters reality is symbolic of the boundary maintained by its monstrosity. Carna, “the devourer,” is appetite incarnate, and its emaciated body reveals the insatiability of this appetite as well as the insubstantiality of its objects of desire (*Thief* 111). This idea is reflected in Harvey’s revelation that the food that is meant to sustain him is in actuality merely dust, as well as in the fish transformation of the children who are meant to sustain Hood’s immortal life, leaving only an ugly fish when the child’s essence is spent.

Carna’s significance lies in its function within the narrative as representative guard of the fantasy realm. Carna is what Cohen calls the “monster of prohibition,” the monster who patrols the border created by monstrosity, maintaining the integrity of the boundary between normativity and monstrosity (13). Bodily appetites can, of course, concern food, of which there are copious amounts within Hood’s realm, but it can also apply to more sensual desires for pleasure. Contradictorily, while Carna limits, it also elicits exploration and begs for understanding: “The monstrous body is pure culture. [...] [T]he monster exists only to be read: the *monstrum* is etymologically ‘that which reveals,’ ‘that which warns’” (Cohen 4). The monster has a dual function, warning and also revealing that which it warned against in the same token.

Revealed at the end of *Thief*, however, Carna is “kept alive not by any will of its own but because Hood demanded its service” (*Thief* 170). In that Carna is Hood’s agent and driven entirely by his will, in effect, Hood is the true monster of prohibition, who “exists to demarcate the bonds that hold together that system of relations we call culture, to call horrid attention to the borders that cannot—must not—be crossed” (Cohen 13). Cohen explains further: “From its position at the limits of knowing, the monster stands as a warning against exploration of its uncertain demesnes” (12). Carna reveals and warns against taboo corporeal desires on behalf of Hood, desires either experienced by

children (the children's desires—their wishes—granted by Hood) or targeted toward children (Hood's desire for children). Of particular relevance to this extension is Nodelman's comment that, given its power to construct notions of childhood, at its core "children's literature may have the unacknowledged purpose of teaching children not to reveal their sexuality to adults" (*Hidden* 201). For Harvey, the boundary that Carna demarcates is dualistic—at once the horrid border of adult sexual desire for children as well as the uncertain demesnes of childhood sexual desire. The presence of the monster foregrounds and forbids these twofold desires.

Magic obstructs this truth, making it unbelievable, even within the narrative. The predator's hide-away is a magical house hidden behind a mystic shroud of fog, a wall whose "misty stones seemed to reach for him [Harvey] in their turn, wrapping their soft, gray arms around his shoulders and ushering him through" (*Thief* 16). This romanticized, fantastical image of a child being welcomed into a magical realm, when seen through the suspicious eyes of an adult gaze, is a threatening image of a child willingly accompanying his abductor to an unpleasant fate. The illustration of Harvey passing through the wall serves this same purpose. No monstrous arms reach to grab Harvey and pull him through, but rather the fog dissolves into a yielding wall of mist that easily allows for Harvey's passage to the other side where a field of flowers awaits.



Fig. 8 Harvey travels through the wall of fog (*Thief* 10).

The path, in that it is a "Hidden Way," as indicated by the chapter heading, is uniquely reserved for children (*Thief* 11). This is the chapter in which the abduction of Harvey takes place, in which Harvey willingly follows his captor to a stranger's house, a promise-land, a "place where the days are always sunny [...] and the nights are full of wonder" (*Thief* 8). The chapter opens with this image of the fog yielding to Harvey and closes with a transitional illustration of his waiting reward, a flowering meadow to contrast the dreary February day he left behind (*Thief* 16-7).



Fig. 9 A field of flowers materialized across the two final pages of the chapter (*Thief* 16-7).

The text that accompanies his crossing the border between reality and fantasy points to the first of many sexual subtexts that charge Harvey's visit to the Holiday House with the threatening presence of a child predator. As Harvey approaches the fog, "within three steps of the wall a gust of balmy, flower-scented wind slipped between the shimmering stones and *kissed his cheek*" (*Thief* 16; emphasis added). The use of "slipped between," most commonly followed by *the sheets*, amplifies the sexual suggestion of Harvey's kissed cheek, but this kiss is perceived—if it is acknowledged at all—as innocent because its source is magical and the knowledge that supports it is childlike. Because children's literature positions the implied reader in a state of childlike innocence, the sexual subtext of the wind's kisses, made more disturbing in the knowledge that Hood controls everything in the fantasy realm, wind included, can easily remain concealed within the text.

The Predator in Two Images

Hood strives for concealment throughout the narrative, using the magical elements of his lair—the house, the fog, the pond, and the wind—to disguise his true nature. Hood is illusive to the children, appearing once as a whispered voice carried by the breeze or a faint question from the shadows. Harvey forces the encounter between himself and Hood when he returns to defeat him and save the children confined as fish in the pond. Harvey demands to meet Hood, at which point Rictus would have Harvey (and the reader) believe that "He is the house" (*Thief* 187). Yet, the illustration and the text conspire against the description, depicting Hood not as the house but of the house, a voice that resounds with the house as its source and a voyeuristic eye that spans the attic ceiling.

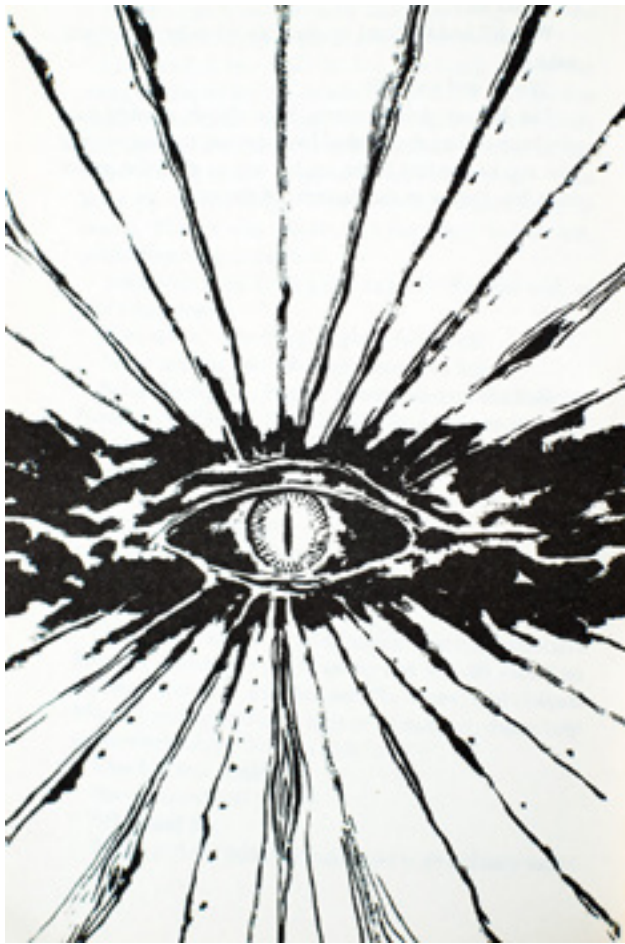


Fig. 10 Hood as voyeur (*Thief* 166).

Despite actively seeking him out, Harvey finds Hood only by accident.

[...] he took little care where he walked. He stumbled, fell, and ended up sprawled on the hard boards, staring up at the roof through a red haze of pain.

And there above him was Hood, in all his glory.

His face was spread over the entire roof, his features horribly distorted. His eyes were dark pits gouged into the timber; his nose was flared and flattened grotesquely, like

the nose of an enormous bat; his mouth was a lipless slit that was surely ten feet wide, from which issued a voice that was like the creaking of doors and the howling of chimneys and the rattling of windows. (*Thief* 170-71)

The description of Hood's face—its distorted formation, grotesque and bat-like—is countered by the illustration, which reduces Hood to a single eye, as if his only crime against the children he captures is as a voyeur. The illustration of Hood portrays his very disposition: a seeing eye that hides from his object of focus, a coward, camouflaged by the house, and then again by this reductive representation. Yet, this eye, when considered with the text, does more than see Harvey. The significance in this encounter is that Harvey sees the eye and not the other way around. Harvey uncovers the truth behind his abductor, but only by placing himself in a most vulnerable position: “sprawled on the hard boards” beneath Hood's gaze (*Thief* 170). Hood's raping eye is violated by Harvey, through his discovery of it, just as it violates Harvey in this most symbolic positioning.

Furthermore, Barker's depiction of the threat of a child predator as a house rather than a man makes the threat inherently fantastic, removing its association from normative society, while also problematically distancing it from society's control. Through his manipulation of time Hood achieves immortality (the unrelenting and persistent predator that adults fear), and through his use of magic he conceals

his acts, making him undetectable and thus unstoppable. The home, and by extension the parents, offers no protection for the child against the threat of abduction. Harvey's parents dismiss going to the police for help as absurd because of the fantastic nature of the tale:

“And what do we tell them?” his father said, raising his voice.

“That we *think* there's a House out there that hides in a mist, and steals children with *magic*? It's ridiculous.” (*Thief* 130)

This dismissal also affirms the fantasies of childhood wherein children are able to protect themselves: in *Thief*, no adult can save the children; only Harvey can redeem and reclaim the notion of childhood to save not only himself, but all the children. In the end, each child is restored to his or her original time period. Childhood is affirmed within the realm of reality, with Harvey's parents unconvinced as to the crucial role he played in this adventure (*Thief* 227-28).

Yet, Barker complicates his narrative by doubling Hood's representation with a second form. Like the contradictory representation of magic being both real and illusion, Hood is oppositionally represented as both an extremely powerful villain, able to control and confine children without detection or intervention, and a fragile adult easily destroyed by a child. After Harvey succeeds in destroying the house, Hood

returns, rising from the rubble to take the form of a man.



Fig. 11 Hood as a man (*Thief* 206).

By individualizing the predator in the form of a single man, his threat to children becomes manageable. He becomes identifiable, traceable, and susceptible to the laws of society, all qualities that did not apply to him in house form. This transformation confirms his demise within the text: “In the high times of his evil, Hood had been the House. Now, it was the other way around. The House, what was left of it, had become Mr. Hood” (*Thief* 204). The illustrations humanize Hood, piecing together a

man's tenuous face from the debris, yet the text denies this human identity and obliterates this last attempt to construct the predator from the remains of his disguise. Harvey tells Hood "You're dirt and muck and bits and pieces [...] You're nothing!" (*Thief* 212). No longer hooded by the house, Hood is stripped of all protective concealment. Near naked and vulnerable, the child predator is defeated when Harvey pulls the last remaining scrap of fabric off his body to reveal his empty core (*Thief* 211). As Harvey proclaims, the predator is nothing but an empty construction, an impotent nothingness, defeated by a child.

Final Thoughts

Ultimately, Harvey is empowered by the acquisition of knowledge. He is able to defeat the child predator because he understands the operation of the House and the logic of the fantasy realm. By performing this knowledge by returning to the House to destroy Hood and release the captive children, Harvey vanquishes magic from the fantasy realm and dissolves the realm into reality. While the narrative places Harvey as the hero of this tale, victor over the impotent predator, the illustrations reveal another interpretation: the constructed notion of the child predator ultimately terminates Hood. When Harvey unmask the emptiness inside Hood, the text informs that "there was no heart at all. There was only a void—neither cold nor hot, living nor dead—made not of mystery but of nothingness. The illusionist's illusion" (*Thief* 211). The illustration, however,

in its attempt to give a human shape to this illusion, counters this nothingness that the text proclaims. Like the linguistic lacuna remedied by Harvey's drawing, Barker's illustration of Hood indicates the emptiness that language imposes onto the child predator. In the public imagination, the predator is little more than discourse: an impossible to control force that "arose not from any temporary or reversible weakness of character but from a deep-rooted sickness or moral taint" (Jenkins 189). Harvey defeats Hood by exposing the void that replaces his heart, a symbolic gesture that could also be interpreted as an unveiling of the emptiness that lies at the core of his construction.

Yet, this final conclusion unnervingly leaves the predator as an illusion himself, calling into question the reality of his perceived threat. This doubt is reinforced by the return to reality at the end, wherein all of Hood's captives have been returned to their respective times and parents unharmed, effectively erasing their parent's experience of loss and negating the act of abduction save in the child's mind. In this way, Barker's text continues to locate the abduction in the realm of the imaginary, the fantastic, seeming to deny the existence of harm in monstrous desires. This comes as no surprise, given Barker's other depictions of monstrous plurality and pleasure-seeking in his other works. For Barker, our appetites, whatever they may be, are nothing to fear because of their impotence in reality:

"One of the extraordinary things about monsters is that they are over and

over again our appetites caricatured,” he says. “They’re our appetites—our sexual appetites, our literal appetites: our desire to eat more, feel more, see more. [...] They have all the *physical* attributes of things that want to have more sensual experience than people with small eyes, small noses, small teeth, small ears, small dicks.” (qtd. in Burke 98)

To caricature, as Barker promotes, monstrous desires is to ridicule through representation *ad extremum*. While this idea might be appealing in theory, such representations in children’s text minimize the realities of sexual desires for children and the potential for harm therein. Likewise, Barker’s comments are not limited to the adult realm, and while he may claim that the monster represents our appetites, his use of Carna to police the boundaries of desire forbids such appetites in children. Conflicts and contradictions, as has been demonstrated, contaminate *Thief* yet are frequently revealed by the illustrations. Like Hood, it seems, the text hides its true nature.

All these contradictions emerge in this narrative because the story that Barker attempts to tell in this children’s novel is not a children’s story. The crimes of the child predator are, in all actuality, stories that adults tell to each other and to themselves in the media and within communities. Within this children’s story, Hood’s representation conjures arguments made by James Kincaid and Gurnham that the child predator is the cultural manifestation of greater

social impulses to eroticize the child (94; 124). Following public discourse, *Thief* presents a story in which the uncontrollable and unidentifiable predator can be defeated, perpetuating the idea that dangers for children are found outside the familiar. However, in that the predator is represented as a house, one that replaces the child’s familial home through his displacement into the fantasy realm, Barker moves this threat into the home. Perhaps there is another embedded message within this complex and layered narrative, one that I have not yet considered: the potential for harm is not limited to the predator. Cohen relates that, through the conflict “between Monster and Man, the disturbing suggestion arises that this incoherent body, denaturalized and always in peril of disaggregation, may well be our own” (9). This statement brings to mind the dual depictions of Hood as both monster and man, but perhaps this is not where the tension within this narrative rests. With the establishment that the child reader cannot identify with the child hero in *Thief* because of his subordinate positioning and lack of adult knowledge, identification can only be possible for the other reader—the adult reader. Ideally, the adult reader would empathize with Harvey’s parents, touched by their loss of a child, yet Hood’s final exposure and raw vulnerability may evoke identification with a monster hidden within all of us, one that is feared and, thus, must be controlled.

Image Notes

All images are publically available to view online in the *Thief of Always* galleries provided by *Lost Souls* at www.clivebarker.com/html/visions/gallery/index.htm.

Works Cited

- Barker, Clive. "Clive Barker: Be Careful What You Wish for, It Just Might Come True...." *The Official Clive Barker Website*. n.d. n.p. Web. 5 November 2011. n.pag. <www.clivebarker.info/yathiefbk.html>.
- . *The Thief of Always: A Fable*. New York: HarperCollins, 1992. Print.
- Bond Stockton, Kathryn. *The Queer Child, or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century*. Durham: Duke UP, 2009. Print.
- Burke, Fred. *Clive Barker: Illustrator*. Ed. Steve Niles. Forestville, CA: Eclipse, 1990. Print.
- Cheeke, Stephen. *Writing for Art: The Aesthetics of Ekphrasis*. Manchester; New York: Manchester UP, 2008. Print.
- Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome, ed. *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*. Minneapolis; London: U of Minnesota P, 1996. Print.
- Daumann, Christian. *Wonderlands in Flesh and Blood: Gender, the Body, Its Boundaries and Their Transgression in Clive Barker's Imajica*. Munich: AVM, 2009. Print.
- Davies, Browyn. "Foreward." Robinson, *Innocence*, ix-xii.
- Dean, Tim. "The Erotics of Transgression." *Gay and Lesbian Writing*. Ed. Hugh Stevens. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011. Print.
- Egoff, Sheila et al., eds. *Only Connect: Readings on Children's Literature*. 3rd ed. Toronto; New York; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996. Print.
- Fass, Paula S. *Kidnapped: Child Abduction in America*. Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard UP, 1999. Print.
- Gerrig, Richard J. *Experiencing Narrative Worlds: On the Psychological Activities of Reading*. New Haven; London: Yale UP, 1993. Print.
- Gurnham, David. *Memory, Imagination, Justice: Intersections of Law and Literature*. Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2009. Print.
- Hunt, Peter. "Defining Children's Literature." Egoff, et al., 2-17.
- Jenkins, Philip. *Moral Panic: Changing Concepts of the Child Molester in Modern America*. New Haven; London: Yale UP, 1998. Print.
- Kincaid, James R. *Erotic Innocence: The Culture of Child Molesting*. Durham:

Duke UP, 1998. Print.

Kristjanson, Gabrielle. "Predatory Realms: To Admire and Desire the Child in Portal Fantasy." *Monsters and the Monstrous* 3.1 (Summer 2013): 53-64.

Mendlesohn, Farah. *Rhetorics of Fantasy*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 2008. Print.

Morgado, Margarida. "A Loss beyond Imagining: Child Disappearance in Fiction." *The Yearbook of English Studies*. 32 (2002): 244-59.

Nodelman, Perry. *The Hidden Adult: Defining Children's Literature*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2008. Print.

---. "Some Presumptuous Generalizations about Fantasy." Egoff, et al., 175-78.

O'Sullivan, Emer. *Comparative Children's Literature*. Trans Anthea Bell. Abingdon, Oxfordshire; New York: Routledge, 2005. Print.

Prout, Alan, ed. *The Body, Childhood and Society*. New York: St. Martin's, 2000. Print.

Robinson, Kerry. *Innocence, Knowledge and the Construction of Childhood: The Contradictory Nature of Sexuality and Censorship in Children's Contemporary Lives*. London: Routledge, 2013. Print.

---. "In the Name of 'Childhood Innocence': A Discursive Exploration of the Moral Panic Associated with Childhood and Sexuality." *Cultural Studies Review* 14.2 (September 2008): 113-29.

Schwarcz, Joseph H. *The Ways of the Illustrator: Visual Communication in Children's Literature*. Chicago: American Library Association, 1982. Print.

Winter, Douglas E. *Clive Barker: The Dark Fantastic*. New York: HarperCollins, 2002. Print.

Endnotes

1. See Robinson, Kerry. *Innocence, Knowledge and the Construction of Childhood: The Contradictory Nature of Sexuality and Censorship in Children's Contemporary Lives*. London: Routledge, 2013; Robinson, Kerry, "In the Name of 'Childhood Innocence': A Discursive Exploration of the Moral Panic Associated with Childhood and Sexuality." *Cultural Studies Review* 14.2 (Sept, 2008): 113-29; Bond Stockton, Kathryn. *The Queer Child, or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century*. Durham: Duke UP, 2009; or Prout, Alan, ed. *The Body, Childhood and Society*. New York: St. Martin's, 2000, among others.

2. *The Damnation Game* (horror, 1985), *The Hellbound Heart* (horror, 1986), *Weaveworld* (fantasy, 1987), *Cabal* (horror, 1988), *The Great and Secret Show* (horror/fantasy, 1989),

Imajica (fantasy, 1991), *Everville* (fantasy, 1994), *Sacrament* (horror/fantasy 1996), *Galilee* (horror/romance 1998), *Coldheart Canyon: A Hollywood Ghost Story* (horror/fantasy 2001), *Mister B. Gone* (horror, 2007).

3. The fourth and fifth books in the series have yet to be published as of September, 2013.

4. This interpretation has been argued in Daumann, Christian. *Wonderlands in Flesh and Blood: Gender, the Body, Its Boundaries and Their Transgression in Clive Barker's Imajica*. Munich: AVM, 2009.

5. Both Joseph Schwarcz and Perry Nodelman maintain that children's literature always contains sublimated sexual references. The same can be said for the portal quest fantasy, wherein the passage through the portal is said to represent a passage into sexual knowledge. See Mendlesohn, Farah. *Rhetorics of Fantasy*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 2008; and Dean, Tim. "The Erotics of Transgression." *Gay and Lesbian Writing*. Ed. Hugh Stevens. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011.

6. See Gerrig, Richard J. *Experiencing Narrative Worlds: On the Psychological Activities of Reading*. New Haven; London: Yale UP, 1993 for more on the information that readers bring to the text during the act of reading.

7. See Kristjanson, Gabrielle. "Predatory Realms: To Admire and Desire the Child in Portal Fantasy." *Monsters and the Monstrous* 3.1 (Summer, 2013): 53-64.

8. All images are publically available to view online. See Image Notes for information.

9. According to Schwarcz, in a text like *Thief*, "the illustrations are more than a decorative item or a mere extension of the text. The text, to be sure, dictates the framework, guides the illustrator and limits him to an extent, but the illustrator is quite free to interfere where and how he wishes to do so." (11). Barker is both author and illustrator, so he both limits and interferes.

10. In Barker's *The Damnation Game* (1985), dust or rather dirt and muck are also signifiers of death and decay.

11. See Kincaid, James R. *Erotic Innocence: The Culture of Child Molestation*. Durham: Duke UP, 1998.

12. See Bond Stockton and Robinson, *Innocence*.

Bio

Kristjanson, Gabrielle is a PhD candidate in the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne, Australia. She holds a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Arts in Comparative Literature, both obtained at the University of Alberta, Canada. Her research revolves around the manifestation of moral panic and criminal monstrosity in Western literature, and her dissertation is on fictional representations of the child predator in adult and children's literature.

Gabrielle Kristjanson est doctorante à l'Université de Melbourne en Australie (à l'école de la culture et de la communication). Elle est titulaire d'un baccalauréat ès sciences et d'une maîtrise ès arts de l'Université de l'Alberta au Canada. Elle mène des recherches dans les domaines de la manifestation de la panique morale et de la monstrosité criminelle dans la littérature occidentale. Sa thèse se concentre sur les représentations fictives du prédateur d'enfants dans la littérature adulte et de jeunesse.

