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Reiteration of Jane Eyre's Search for the Feminine Subject in Atkinson's Crime Fiction

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Abstract: Kate Atkinson in her first and fourth crime novel, *Case Histories* and *Started Early, Took My Dog,* rewrites Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and other Female Gothic narratives to ponder feminism's failure to 'arrive.' Second-wave feminism asks women to retrieve the half-obliterated feminine subject and construct from the fragments an emancipated identity for themselves. In Atkinson's first crime novel, the amateur detective and actress Julia Land must retrieve a vanished sister and, in the fourth, in her onscreen role as a forensic pathologist the identity of a mutilated sex worker. Yet Julia repeats Jane Eyre's simultaneous search for a lost woman and complicity with patriarchy's occlusion of her. Atkinson, it will be argued, signals that the contemporary literary female investigator and ultimately today's women relive the gothic heroine's dilemma: Susceptible to the myth of romantic love, they abort their feminist mission and collude with patriarchy's obliteration of the feminine subject.

Keywords:

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Atkinson'ın Suç Romanlarında Jane Eyre'in Feminen Özne Arayışının Tekkerürü

Öz: Kate Atkinson ilk ve dördüncü suç romanı *Case Histories* (Suç Dosyaları) ve *Started Early, Took My Dog*'da (Köpeğimi Alıp Erkenden), feminizmin başarısızlığını gözden geçirmek için Charlotte Brontë'nin *Jane Eyre*'ini ve başka Kadın Gotik anlatılarını yeniden yazar. İkinci dalga feminizm, kadınlardan yarı yok edilmiş feminen özneyi bulmalarını ve kalıntılarından kendileri için özgür bir kimlik inşa etmelerini ister. Atkinson'ın ilk suç romanında amatör dedektif ve oyuncu Julia Land kaybolan kız kardeşini, dördüncü romanında da televizyon ekranında büründüğü adli tıp doktoru rolünde, bedenine eziyet edilerek öldürülmüş bir seks işçisinin kimliğini bulmak zorundadır. Ancak Julia, Jane Eyre gibi hem kaybolan bir kadını arar hem de kadının varlığını görünmez kılmaya çalışan ataerkiyle suç ortaklığı yapar. Bu makalede, Atkinson'ın çağdaş suç romanında kadın dedektifinin ve günümüz kadınlarının 'gotik kadın kahramanın' açmazını tekrar yaşadıklarına işaret ettiği savunulacaktır: Kendilerini romantik aşk mitine kaptırarak feminist misyonlarını unutup ataerkinin feminen özneyi yok etme suçuna ortak olurlar.

Anahtar Sözcükler:

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Case Histories,
Started Early, Took My Dog,
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Kate Atkinson's (1951–…) crime novel series, in which women continue to vanish, features the private detective Jackson Brodie—and his (ex-)girlfriend the actress Julia Land. In several of the novels, Julia emerges as an amateur detective in real life and/or as a forensic pathologist on the television screen. Second-wave feminism has ascribed to its daughters the task of retrieving the half-obliterated feminine subject and constructing from the remains a liberated identity for women. Yet Julia wavers in her commitment to this task. Atkinson revisits, in the series, an important antecedent of feminist crime fiction, the Female Gothic, to examine an ongoing cycle of partial failure. In *Case Histories* (2004) and *Started Early, Took My Dog* (2010), the first and fourth novel in the series, she mainly reworks Charlotte Brontë's (1816–1855) *Jane Eyre* (1847). Ann Radcliffe's (1764–1823) *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and Jane Austen's (1775–1817) *Northanger Abbey* (1817) are also alluded to. Radcliffe's Emily St. Aubert, Austen's Catherine Morland, and Brontë's Jane Eyre represent prototypical female amateur detectives; however, they do not accomplish their feminist missions. Atkinson's contemporary amateur detective Julia follows more closely in Jane's footsteps. In *Case Histories*, Julia must in real life retrieve a vanished sister and, in *Started Early, Took My Dog*, in her onscreen role as the forensic pathologist Beatrice Butler the identity of a mutilated sex worker. Yet Julia, on and off screen, re-enacts Jane's simultaneous search for the vanished Bertha Rochester and complicity with the bigamist Edward Rochester's incarceration of his wife, Bertha. While Julia is a present-day version of Jane, Julia's (former) boyfriend Jackson emerges as a present-day version of Rochester. It will be argued that Atkinson insinuates the entrapment of the contemporary literary female investigator and ultimately today's women in the gothic heroine's dilemma: Seemingly empowered feminist agents, they are exposed as present-day Janes who continue to allow the deceptive myth of romantic love to undermine their commitment to feminism and render them complicit with patriarchy's occlusion of the feminine subject. Feminism is thus caught in a time warp and is unable to arrive.

Looking back, in the new millennium, Atkinson signals women's failure to accomplish feminism's aims. Kate Millett, in 1970, concluded her *Sexual Politics* with the hope that feminism – or "a second wave of the sexual revolution" – might finally set women free from patriarchal oppression (363). About two decades after that, Luce Irigaray spoke of the need for half-erased or misrepresented women to "find themselves anew, as subjects" (190). The female investigator or forensic pathologist in crime fiction must thus confront trauma and recuperate "the [female] victim's suffering and identity" (Horsley 152). The act of retrieving what was lost will allow for conceptualizations of the liberated feminine subject and models of non-oppressive society. Catherine Riley and Lynne Pearce include Atkinson among a younger generation of women crime writers whose "books are the legacy of feminism's assimilation of the generic conventions of crime to tell new kinds of stories" (136). Yet the new breed of female investigators is still trapped in the old kind of story. Sally R. Munt speaks of Sara Paretsky's serial female

investigator V. I. Warshawski, who made her debut in the eighties, as a deceptive model of female agency: While she is expected to deflect any "masculine threat," she is often presented as "strong *within* her gender role" (41, 33). Her gender role renders even a tough serial female investigator like Sue Grafton's Kinsey Millhone, in *A Is for Alibi*, which was published in 1982, gullible to the art of "manipulative seduction," as practiced by a man who has killed a woman (Reitz 28). A representative of a later generation of female investigators, Atkinson's Julia is but a contemporary version of Brontë's Jane whose susceptibility to the myth of romantic love renders her an abortive investigator of patriarchal culpability and a wavering feminist. As Millett observes, "[r]omantic love . . . obscures the realities of female status, blinding women to their own 'marginal life'" (37, 38) and to the trauma of other women. The allusion, in *Started Early, Took My Dog*, "to 'Brontë country'" (210) should alert us to the return, in Atkinson's crime novels, of the ambivalent gothic heroine. While Emma Parker draws attention to Atkinson's reworking, in *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* (1995), of Female Gothic narratives, such as Emily Brontë's (1818–1848) *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and Daphne Du Maurier's (1907–1989) *Rebecca* (1938) (20), Lucie Armitt discusses *Case Histories* as a postfeminist Gothic narrative which explores women's ongoing entrapment in patriarchal culture (16–29). Yet *Case Histories* and *Started Early, Took My Dog* are more specifically rewritings of *Jane Eyre*. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *Northanger Abbey* also resonate in Atkinson's novels. The American poet Emily Dickinson's (1830–1886) gothic poem "I started early, took my dog" (1862) – in which the persona goes to the seaside where the sea personified as a male threatens to rape her – moreover, serves as inspiration for the title of Atkinson's fourth crime novel (Beebe 166). In this article, the focus is on Atkinson's use of the gothic heroine Jane as a lens through which to interrogate the contemporary investigator Julia/Beatrice and ultimately flawed feminists' dilemma: They are exposed as present-day Janes who resume the search for the vanished feminine subject in patriarchy's closet only to allow their susceptibility to romance to undermine their search and render them complicit with misogynistic men. Atkinson's use of intertextuality, then, signals women's ongoing lack of commitment to feminism.

Atkinson follows in the footsteps of Brontë who, like Austen, in turn, borrowed the storyline of the female amateur detective's abortive search for a vanished woman from Radcliffe. As Diana Wallace and Andrew Smith observe: "It is Radcliffe's novels with their heroines in flight from male tyrants" and – in anticipation of French feminism – "in search of lost mothers . . . which we now tend to characterise as the beginnings of 'Female Gothic'" (2). However, Lisa M. Dresner discusses Radcliffe's Emily and Brontë's Jane as prototypical female investigators who fail to find the object of their search on their own (11, 18). Catherine, who, Dresner argues, misinterprets characters' motives and events (14), most importantly, aborts the search altogether. Both Austen and Brontë, then, offer us variations on the pattern we observe in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*: the failure of the heroine's search for an incarcerated mother surrogate, her aunt (Dresner 11); her dependence on her reunion with the mother surrogate on the gothic villain; and her

marriage to a seemingly reformed version of the villain. Similarly, a reader of the Female Gothic novel, Catherine suspects General Tilney of having murdered or shut away his wife and begins a search for the absent woman who is, however, abandoned because of her romance with the Tilneys' son Henry. While the critics Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, in *The Madwoman in the Attic*, have established *Jane Eyre* as a feminist novel, they discussed its protagonist as another wavering feminist (336–71). Jane's search for Bertha, who is incarcerated "in . . . Bluebeard's castle" (138) remains inconclusive as well. Jane proves reluctant to lift her love interest Rochester's dark secret; Bertha is finally revealed to Jane (Dresner 18) by a cornered Rochester. Like Emily, Jane not only relies on her search for a lost woman on the gothic villain, but her attempt to construct a liberated identity for herself and other women, as suggested by her threat that she will "'preach liberty to . . . [Rochester's] harem inmates'" (297), is also an abortive one. Jane escapes from Rochester only to marry him eventually. Gilbert and Gubar suggest that Rochester is reformed and capable of 'an egalitarian relationship' with Jane (369). Yet their marriage results in a repetition of women's trauma: Rochester's decision to send Adèle to boarding school – which, in its cruelty, invokes little Jane's school – turns her into another vanished female and severs her bond with her surrogate mother Jane. Blinded by love, Jane is, then, like Emily and Catherine, reabsorbed into "[t]he deceptively reassuring and entrapping social and cultural narratives of domestic bliss, the family, security of home" which, Gina Wisker observes, haunt "women's Gothic" (9). In the Female Gothic tales told by Radcliffe, Austen, and Brontë, the task of retrieving the vanished feminine subject and constructing from the fragments an emancipated identity for women thus remains incomplete.

In *Case Histories* and *Started Early, Took My Dog*, despite the cautionary tales of the Female Gothic and the lessons of feminism, the contemporary female investigator Julia as representative of today's women reiterates primarily Jane's susceptibility to romance and her complicity with patriarchy's obliteration of the feminine subject. The title of the first crime novel alludes to a series of unsolved crimes, among them, the abduction of Julia's little sister, Olivia. In her search for her vanished sister, Julia is, like Jane, dependent on her love interest, the private detective Jackson, who is, as noted above, a contemporary Rochester. Julia colludes with Jackson's attempt to cover up a crime and occlude the feminine subject. In *Started Early, Took My Dog*, Julia is separated from Jackson who, she realizes, is a threat to women. The title of this crime novel alludes not only, as noted above, to a gothic poem by Dickinson, but also to Jackson's journey, together with his canine companion, to a seaside town to kill a woman. While Julia leaves him, she continues to search for romantic love and colludes with the patriarchy. Her onscreen persona, the forensic pathologist Beatrice, another present-day Jane, who must retrieve the identity of a mutilated sex worker, renders Julia's and ultimately today's women's complicity more palpable. An ambivalent figure, the pathologist is associated with the reconstruction of the identity of a female murder victim—and through "[t]he sheer violence of autoptic procedures . . . with the criminal act" (Horsley 152). Beatrice's profession thus highlights contemporary women's entanglement in Jane's dilemma: While they must retrieve the

vanished feminine subject, they continue to allow the myth of romantic love to render them complicit with patriarchy's obliteration of women.

While we are shown, in *Case Histories*, how Julia, a victim of paternal abuse, transforms into a seemingly empowered amateur detective, her interrogation of criminal patriarchy is abortive. Indeed, she reiterates her eldest sister, Sylvia, and the gothic heroine Jane's traumatic experience in and complicity with the patriarchal system. Crime fiction follows the gothic convention of presenting us with a "family with a guilty past" (Scaggs 67). "In Atkinson's work," whether crime or non-crime fiction, "the idea(l) of the happy family is a dangerous illusion and home is always uncanny, marked by absence" – the absence of women – "loss, and trauma" (Hanson 31–32). The Lands' dark family history is a variation of Jane's childhood trauma and the Rochesters' guilty family secret. Julia's father, Victor Land, remembers his vanished mother, Ellen, "as a raving madwoman of the Victorian variety" (*Case* 8). Experiencing severe depression after giving birth to a stillborn baby, Ellen is, as reminiscent of the incarcerated madwoman, Bertha, sent to a lunatic asylum. Victor inherits from his father, Oswald, the role of, an incestuous, Rochester. The gothic chambers of secrets in *Jane Eyre*, the red-room in which Jane is imprisoned as a child for her defiance of her cruel cousin John Reed and the attic in which Bertha is incarcerated transform into Victor's dark study. While the five-year-old Julia escapes her father, outside his room, through screaming, Sylvia is systematically raped in its "forbidden interior" (*Case* 7). Although she is a victim of criminal patriarchy, Sylvia enters into complicity with it by killing her three-year-old sister, Olivia—a betrayal Julia repeats as an amateur detective.

As vaguely reminiscent of a crazed and vengeful Bertha, an apparently mentally deranged Sylvia, who suffers from "fainting fits," contemplates killing her abusive father and ineffectual mother in their sleep (*Case* 4, 404). Yet Sylvia suffocates Olivia instead. As Glenda Norquay notes, in Atkinson's crime fiction "the more conventional notions of victim, perpetrator and crime break down" as suggestive of moral confusion (136). Sylvia sees the gruesome murder not only as a form of mercy killing, which will save Olivia from the father, but also as the offer of a sacrifice to a male God through which she will save herself. Sylvia in fact recollects Abraham's intended sacrifice of his son Isaac (*Case* 411). After the desperate deed, she decides to ask her father what to do. Armitt remarks that "Sylvia recognizes that only Victor can act as accomplice" (*Case* 21). Yet Sylvia, who has obliterated a female, is, in turn, complicit with patriarchy. Sylvia's betrayal of Olivia, then, invokes Jane's betrayal of her 'sister' Bertha. Sylvia's eventual transformation into Sister Mary Luke also brings to mind the crazy nun Agnes, in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, who, in her former life, persuaded her lover, the Marquis de Villeroi, to poison his supposedly adulterous wife, the heroine Emily's aunt. Sylvia's betrayal ultimately foreshadows Julia's own betrayal of Olivia. Atkinson signals that whether in their struggle for survival or in their search for romantic love, women continue to collude with the patriarchy.

In the present of the novel, thirty-four years after her sister Olivia's mysterious disappearance, from a tent in the garden, and two days after her father's death, Julia must adopt the role of feminist amateur detective and interrogate criminal patriarchy and retrieve her lost sister. Yet Atkinson is skeptical about the idea of female empowerment, retribution, and healing. She seems to agree with Munt who suspects, in a chapter title, that the feminist female investigator, or "[t]he New Woman," is but "a sheep in wolves' clothing" (30). Like Jane who survives the cruelty of both her cousin John and the supervisor of Lowood school, Mr. Brooklehurst, the survivor Julia resists confrontation with trauma. However, it clearly continues to inform Julia's present life. As Armitt remarks, "those left behind," namely, the sisters Julia and Amelia, "become haunted by the dark departures of both Sylvia and Olivia" (22). As reminiscent of her prototype, who is, in Rochester's mansion, troubled in her sleep by nightmares, Julia is as a child a troubled sleeper as suggestive of the intrusion of traumatic memories and as an adult an insomniac. Her repeated performance in the role of a terminal patient, in the British television series *Casualty*, moreover, invokes Sigmund Freud's notion of re-enactment of trauma: "[T]he patient does not remember anything of what he has forgotten or repressed, but *acts* it out. . . . he repeats it, without, of course, knowing that he is repeating it" (150). Julia's compulsion to repeat trauma suggests her helpless entrapment in it. In order to move forward, she must adopt the role of amateur detective and confront the culpable past. We are reminded of the protagonist of Atkinson's *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, Ruby Lennox, who, Parker notes, "must face the past in order to have a future" (41). Yet Julia becomes an abortive detective who soon relies on both her search for her lost sister in present-day Rochester and becomes complicit with his concealment of patriarchy's guilty past and present.

Neither the gothic heroine nor her descendant Julia finds the lost female through her own efforts. The incarcerated Bertha is, as noted above, finally revealed to Jane by the culprit, Rochester. After Julia discovers in a locked drawer of her father's desk Olivia's toy mouse which Julia and Amelia interpret as evidence of the paterfamilias' murder of their vanished sister, the sisters hire the attractive hard-boiled private detective Jackson. A flawed man, Jackson is enlisted in the feminist mission of retrieving a lost female only to fall back into the role of the misogynistic Rochester. Jackson is at once a male devastated by his sister's rape and murder, in the 1970s, and, like his avatar, a man who perceives women as a threat to his masculinity. The tough private detective traditionally "perceives women," in particular, forceful women, "as threatening his identity and fears losing control" (Horsley 82). Both Jackson and Rochester have a harem of women most of whom they see as a threat. Rochester's harem mainly includes Jane, her rival Blanche Ingram, and two allegedly unfaithful women in the shape of his former mistress the opera dancer Céline Varens and his wife, Bertha. Jackson's harem mainly consists of his 'deceitful' ex-wife, Josie, who left him and remarried; the inconstant Julia, whom Jackson comes to see, in *Started Early, Took My Dog*, as the epitome of "the treacherous woman" (84); his fugitive con wife Tessa, who steals his money; and his car GPS navigator Jane. While Rochester

incarcerates his wife in the attic, a more radical Jackson thinks "of killing Josie" (*Case* 263). When hired by Julia and Amelia, Jackson unearths the remains of Olivia—but tries to conceal the patriarchy's guilt. He is in fact also reminiscent of Raymond Chandler's private detective Philip Marlowe who, John Scaggs notes, recuperates the authority of the status quo by hiding its guilty secrets (67). After interrogating Sister Mary Luke, alias Sylvia, Jackson retrieves Olivia's bones, in the neighbor Binky Rain's garden, and discloses Sylvia's guilt to Amelia. But he keeps the truth hidden from Julia. Jackson tells Julia and the police that when he was walking a dog, it strayed off into the garden and led him to Olivia's remains, buried in the undergrowth (*Case* 368). Jackson also speaks of "a tragic accident" (*Case* 368) thus covering up a double crime: Sylvia's desperate deed and the guilt of the incestuous father, who provoked this deed: While Olivia's bones are unearthed and laid out in the police mortuary her story, then, remains partly unknown.

Julia proves half-complicit with Jackson's attempt to conceal the crimes. She and Jackson go to see the remains of her sister in the police mortuary. "The traumatized body [is] communicating what has been inflicted on it" (Horsley 150); but Julia is torn between the desire to retrieve her sister's trauma, by touching the remains of her body on which her trauma is written-an attempt that is forestalled by the forensic pathologist- and the desire to repress trauma. Rather than re/member her sister and create a liberated identity for herself, Julia eventually chooses to prematurely bury and leave behind the ghost of the past. She is heading with her lover Jackson to France, where Jackson has bought a villa. We are reminded of Jane who, though declining the culpable Rochester's plea that they escape together to France, where he, too, owns a villa, eventually marries him. In their desire for love and a home, both Jane and Julia collude in their own and another female's occlusion. Today's wavering feminist is, then, stuck in a time warp and doomed to repeat the gothic heroine's failure to retrieve her vanished political sister and redefine herself as an emancipated subject.

In *Started Early, Took My Dog*, literary history, once again, repeats itself. Emerging as an introspective detective in real life, who examines criminal patriarchy in her mind, and as a forensic pathologist on the television screen, Julia in both roles repeats Jane's and in the former role also Catherine Morland's simultaneous investigation and occlusion of patriarchy's obliteration of the feminine subject. While Julia realizes her ex-boyfriend Jackson's culpability and refuses to be reunited with him, she continues to search for a happy end through marriage. We are, once again, reminded of Jane who runs away from Rochester only to marry him after all—and of Catherine who marries the younger son of an alleged gothic villain. Munt observes that the 1980s female investigator, seemingly a representation of a powerful agency, "no longer needs the external man . . . and almost always he is despatched" (41). Yet the contemporary female investigator is still susceptible to the narrative of romantic love, used as a bait by patriarchy. While Julia's role as a forensic pathologist highlights her complicity with women's dismemberment, her onscreen persona's coma signals that Julia is in danger of turning into another vanished woman.

Julia inherits her introspective detecting skills from Catherine and Jane, whose investigation of trauma continues even in their troubled sleep. These skills allow Julia to uncover "'[t]he leaner, meaner Jackson,'" alias Rochester, hidden within the 'good' Jackson whom Julia loves for his refusal to forget his murdered sister (*Started* 83, 66). Julia laughingly says, "'Ooh, I'm scared,'" but the narrative voice – or is it Julia or Jackson's thought we read? – ominously says: "Perhaps she should be" (*Started* 83). Although resisting his wish that they be reunited, Julia tries to laugh off the threat that Jackson represents to herself and to other women. As noted above, Jackson, in *Case Histories*, thinks of killing the supposedly treacherous Josie. Julia is in his eyes another deceitful woman: While Rochester refuses to own the daughter of Céline Varens, Adèle, as his child, Jackson is, in the third installment in Atkinson's crime novel series, *When Will There Be Good News?* (2008), told by his ex-girlfriend Julia the lie that he is not the father of her son. While apprehensive of his potential for violent retaliation, Julia chooses to ignore it, as reminiscent of Jane who tries to ignore Rochester's culpability. The setting where Julia turns a blind eye to Jackson's dark self, the Terraces above the old Rievaulx Abbey, alludes to Julia's identification with, this time, Catherine who, as noted above, comes to suspect, at Northanger Abbey, that General Tilney has incarcerated or murdered his wife. Yet her romantic attachment to their son Henry, who shames her for her gothic 'scenario' (182), undermines her investigation into criminal patriarchy. While Catherine marries the younger son of an alleged villain, Emily marries a double of the villain, and Jane the villain himself. Their interrogation of patriarchy's crimes is thus curtailed. While Julia leaves her husband, Jonathan Carr, and also resists Jackson's wish that they and their son be reunited, she appears to have found love with somebody else. The die-hard myth of the loving and safe home continues to render women forgetful of the female skeletons in the patriarchy's closet.

Julia in her onscreen role as the pathologist Beatrice Butler, in the television crime series *Collier*, once again, fails to complete Jane's feminist mission. Both the set, a box-like and hence, despite its size, claustrophobic aircraft hangar and the stately country seat on the grounds of which the set is built invoke Rochester's gothic mansion, Thornfield Hall, in which a woman is buried alive. Julia/Beatrice must retrieve her, but the female pathologist who appeared to enter, in crime fiction and crime television series, into a male-dominated field as a feminist agent of retribution cannot evade implication in criminal patriarchy either. The story of how Julia got her role in *Collier* alludes to an attempt at feminist revision. The originally male pathologist was 'regendered' when the actor who played him was uncovered as a gothic villain satisfying his deviant desires with child pornography. Female corpses are also exposed to the voyeuristic gaze of the (male) pathologist. What is more, the male-dominated medical discipline has constructed the female body as unruly and irrational. In the late nineties, Patricia Cornwall and Kathy Reichs created female forensic pathologists, the iconic Kay Scarpetta and Temperance Brennan, respectively. However, as noted above, both the male and female forensic pathologist is an ambiguous figure associated with the reconstruction of the identity and

suffering of the murder victim and, through the autopsy, with the criminal act. Julia in her role as a pathologist, once again, reiterates the gothic heroine's simultaneous attempt to re-inscribe the obliterated feminine subject into history and complicity with patriarchy's occlusion of her.

A spirit medium of sorts, the pathologist, as she examines the wounds, must listen to the dead speak. Jackson watches an episode of *Collier* in which Beatrice estimates the time of the death of a sex worker, at the crime scene, and, in another scene, descends to the mortuary to perform an autopsy on the victim's mutilated body. We are reminded of Julia's abovementioned descent to the police mortuary and forestalled attempt to touch her sister Olivia's remains in order to retrieve Olivia's tale of trauma. While the clinical blue scrubs, which Jackson sees Julia wear, when visiting her on the film set, protect Julia's onscreen persona during the autopsy – which is not described to us – from contact with the blood of the corpse, the pathologist cannot evade submersion in the victim's trauma of mutilation. He or she must "listen to the voices of the dead" and assume the task of "reassembling the fragmented body parts" and "reincorporating the body within a narrative structure that will rescue it from abjection" (Horsley 150, 153). In her role as pathologist-cum-spirit medium, Julia apparently draws on her own familiarity, in real life, with violence and death. She mentions "'[the physicist Erwin] Schrödinger's cat'" which is, she explains to Jackson, "'[b]oth alive and dead at the same time'" and interprets "'[a]rcadia'" as life in death (*Started* 116, 68–69). Julia appears to allude to her own experience of trauma and her existence at the threshold between life and death which makes possible communication with the dead. She and her onscreen character have apparently also inherited Jane's paranormal sense perception. Thanks to the servant Bessie's tales of supernatural creatures, the adult Jane can sense the presence of a ghostly Bertha in Rochester's mansion. Yet in her role as Beatrice, Julia, once again, reiterates Jane's partial failure to respond to the ghostly woman's demand for reconstitution.

As noted above, Beatrice's profession is an ambivalent one highlighting women's complicity with patriarchy's obliteration of the feminine subject. Yet her coma signals that colluding women are doomed to vanish from history as well. On the set of *Collier*, Jackson tells Julia, "'I've never had a thing for people who cut up corpses'" (*Started* 258), the remark alluding to the performance of an autopsy as a violent act. The "phallic instruments" used in an autopsy (Head 42) suggest more specifically patriarchy's dismemberment of women in which Julia/Beatrice is, then, implicated. Beth Head points to "the inherently voyeuristic nature of autopsy" as well (42). Julia/Beatrice also reiterates Jane's implication in the voyeuristic display of the traumatized female body. Stepping inside a room and lifting, in a theatrical gesture, the hanging that hides another door and entering through it into another room, Rochester displays Bertha to Jane, who, adopting the male gaze, in turn, displays to the reader a "beast[ly]" creature (321). Julia's mention, to Jackson, of *Collier*'s "'[g]reat viewing figures'" (*Started* 259) alludes to the implication of Julia's onscreen persona, Julia herself, and the audience in this act of voyeurism. As the representative of wavering feminists in contemporary society, Julia,

then, reiterates not only in her real life, but also onscreen Jane's failure to commit to the task of interrogating patriarchal crimes and reconstructing mutilated feminine subjecthood. In spite of its popularity, the series *Collier* appears to have run its course as suggestive of feminism's (partial) failure. In the last episode, an attack by an unknown perpetrator leaves Beatrice in a coma. The supposedly empowered female pathologist turns into another vanished woman. Beatrice's coma is reminiscent of Jane's fainting fit when imprisoned in the red-room for her abovementioned rebellion against her cousin John. Horrified by the thought that her uncle Mr. Reed, who died in the room, will return as a ghost to punish her for her disobedience, Jane becomes unconscious. With Julia/ Beatrice in a coma, the radical potential of feminism appears to be doomed to remain dormant or unfulfilled.

Atkinson, once again, insinuates the responsibility of both men and women for feminism's partial failure. A mystery pervades the identity and motive of Beatrice's male or female attacker. The only clue that we are given by Atkinson is that the attacker is "the crazed relative of a —" (*Started* 473). Given in *Started Early, Took My Dog* the conflation of Julia and her onscreen persona, the reference to the multiple tragedies in Julia's family (109), and the confusion of text and intertext, the crazy culprit invokes all three: Jackson, alias Rochester, who calls himself a "madman" for running early in the morning (*Started* 176) and in whom, as noted above, lurks a murderous psychopath; the possibly schizophrenic Sylvia, who believes herself to be communing with God; and Brontë's madwoman Bertha. We are, then, allowed to construe Beatrice as the victim of not only a male-, but also a female-perpetrated attack which reinforces the idea that women, too, bear a good portion of the responsibility for their own and other women's ongoing invisibility.

Jackson represents a threat to both Julia and her onscreen persona because they are women and know the patriarchy's guilty secrets. Jackson's expectation that "[Julia] would be a corpse," rather than "a forensic pathologist," in *Collier* (*Started* 255), betrays his own murderous intention toward Julia and foreshadows the attack on her onscreen persona. The palpable threat Jackson poses to another woman, the noir writer Marilyn Nettles, who lives in the seaside town of Whitby, reinforces the assumption of murderous intentions. It is highly significant that he decides to call and arrange an appointment with Nettles after watching an episode of *Collier* in which Julia, in her role as Beatrice, performs an autopsy on the tale-telling corpse of a sex worker. Jackson seeks to hide another crime. As a newspaper reporter, Nettles was on a case of domestic violence in which a police officer killed his lover, a sex worker. In his seeming attempt "to steady the swaying Nettles, Jackson 'accidentally' knocks down her manuscript from the desk" (Melikoğlu 182). Significantly, "the pages of *The Butchered Bride* [are] fluttering like disembodied birds onto the floor" (*Started* 360). We are presented with a figurative manifestation of his intention to disembody and silence Nettles (Melikoğlu 182). Julia and her onscreen persona are, then, other possible victims because they, too, are women who know the patriarchy's guilty secret: its disembodiment of women.

The female candidates for the role of crazy perpetrator, Sylvia and Bertha, might, on the other hand, attack Julia/Bertha in order to cover up and uncover female complicity with criminal patriarchy, respectively. As noted above, Sylvia, who is the deranged victim of an incestuous father, kills her youngest sister, among others, to save herself. Sylvia's attack on Julia/Beatrice would prevent the exposure of both patriarchal culpability and female collusion. Yet Julia and her character not only interrogate, but, like their avatar Jane – and Sylvia – also cover up and collude with a patriarchal crime. We might thus read the attack also as a revenant Bertha's retaliation against another woman who is complicit with patriarchy. In *Jane Eyre*, Bertha attacks both Rochester and her brother, Richard Mason, who, while disrupting Rochester and Jane's wedding, has failed, for years, to put an end to Bertha's live-burial. Julia and her onscreen character are like Mason – and, we might add, Jane – half-complicit with patriarchy and hence possibly the target of Bertha. Atkinson, then, accentuates present-day Janes' occlusion of patriarchal crimes and collusion in their own and in other women's obliteration.

A sense of the futility of hope of feminist revision pervades *Case Histories* and *Started Early, Took My Dog*. While, at the end of the latter novel, Jackson is back on the road, in his car, a piece of impersonal technology, as suggestive of retreat into a male world, Julia and her character turn into absent women. Julia's character is in a coma, and Julia is left without a role to play. As reinforced by the intertextual loop, the wavering daughters of feminism are caught in a time warp, unable to complete Jane's attempt to retrieve the half-obliterated feminine subject and construct from the fragments a liberated identity for themselves. They are still stuck in the gothic house of fiction.

The readers are invited to recognize themselves in Atkinson's present-day Janes and Rochesters and confront their own responsibility for the (partial) failure of feminism. They must also reassemble the fragmented 'body' parts of the novels *Case Histories* and *Started Early, Took My Dog* as suggestive of the reconstruction of feminine subjecthood. Both novels are, like the body of the sex worker on Beatrice's autopsy table, mangled. They reveal the "fragmented, non-linear structure" Parker observes in Atkinson's writing (20). We are reminded of the noir writer Nettles' manuscript titled *The Butchered Bride* which is, as noted above, knocked down from the desk by the perpetrator Jackson, "the pages . . . fluttering like disembodied birds on to the floor" (*Started* 360). 'Mutilated' as they are, Atkinson's and Nettles' narratives mirror the gothic dismemberment of women. The readers must, then, as a pathologist of sorts reconstitute Atkinson's narratives and reassemble the feminine subject's body parts. Yet submerged in the dark reality of fragmentation and dissolution, they must also interrogate their own implication in the patriarchal society and in the collective guilt for the obliteration of women. While Atkinson's crime novels force us to face our own guilt and implicate us in the reconstruction of feminine subjectivity, they close off the possibility of a healing resolution. We are ultimately presented with a world in which feminism's radical potential is doomed to remain unfulfilled.

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