

# Angela Carter's *the Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*: A Postmodern Re-telling of Politics

Basim Al-Ghizawi    Ridha'a' Jelaaweiy

Department of English, College of Education, University of Al-Qadisiyah, Iraq.

[basim.neshmy@qu.edu.iq](mailto:basim.neshmy@qu.edu.iq)    [rose54313@gmail.com](mailto:rose54313@gmail.com)

Submission date: 23/12/2018    Acceptance date: 3/1/2018    Publication date: 13/2 /2019

## Abstract

Re-telling traditional stories is one of the postmodern techniques used by most of the postmodern writers for the sake of representing the traditional stories from a postmodern perspective. Most of the postmodern writers desire to get the benefit from the earlier stories considering them as a base for their new tales. Doing so, those writers use the revolvy fashioned stories to revolt against certain political issues which lead to nothing but the chaotic state in the society. One of the postmodern writers who adopted this technique is Angela Carter. Carter, in her collection *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*, used magical realism and re-told fairy tales as elements of fantasy. In this sense, she intended to revolt against the norms and traditions of the patriarchal society that stands against women.

**Key words:** The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories, Politics, Re-telling, Feminism, Sex, Gender, Patriarchal society.

## الغرفة الدامية وقصص أخرى لأبجلا كارتر

## أعادة قراءة للسياسة في ما بعد الحداثة

باسم الغزاوي    رضاء جلعواوي

قسم اللغة الانجليزية، كلية التربية، جامعة القادسية، العراق

## الخلاصة

أن إعادة السرد هو أحد التقنيات المستخدمة في عصر ما بعد الحداثة وقد استخدم من قبل العديد الكتاب من أجل إعادة تمثيل القصص التقليدية من منظور ذي بعد حداثي. فقد رغب معظم كتاب ما بعد الحداثة في الاستفادة من القصص السابقة حيث اعتبروها أساس لحكاياتهم الجديدة. وبهذا، أعتزم هؤلاء الكتاب القيام بثورة على بعض القضايا السياسية التي لم تثر سوى الفوضى في المجتمع. وأنجلا كارتر هي إحدى كتاب ما بعد الحداثة الذين أعتدوا هذه التقنية. كتبت كارتر قصصها القصيرة في مجموعتها القصصية (الغرفة الدامية وقصص أخرى) باستخدام الواقعية السحرية وأعادة كتابة الحكايات الخيالية كوجهين للخيال. وبهذا المعنى كانت كارتر تنوي أن تثور على المعايير وتقاليد المجتمع الذكوري الذي يقف ضد المرأة.

**الكلمات الدالة:** الغرفة الدامية وقصص أخرى، سياسة، إعادة قراءة، نسوية، جنس، نوع، المجتمع الذكوري.

### 1- Re-telling Politics in *The Bloody Chamber* and Other Stories:

The twentieth century witnessed many authors narrating to destabilize earlier power dealings, building a new insight into those associations. Feminism is one of the noticeable voices that stand in the face of the dominating powers, particularly patriarchy. While for feminists "value, speech, image, experience and identity" became "the very language of political struggle", numerous women authors started to interpret the latent connotations in texts narrated by dominant sexist male ideology and to retell selected earlier writings from the female perspective. From the women writers' side to retell the texts helping for patriarchal power, it can be said that fairy tales seized the prominent place [1, p. 117].

Fairy tales go beyond being a part of certain cultures having the important result to echo the circumstance of a society as well as the contribution to the formation of a collective unconscious. In the first half of twentieth century, Carl Jung focused on the considerable influence of collective unconscious, and its verifying basics that are the archetypes found as common representatives in diverse cultures: the myths, legends and fairy tales turn out to be more of a subject for feminist criticism to examine the patriarchal power discourses. In this sense, Angela Carter as a feminist novelist - in her collection *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (henceforth *BCH*) - rewrites a selected traditional fairy tales for the sake of extracting "the latent content from the traditional stories" [1, p.117].

The "latent content" institutes the cooperative unconscious of humankind about female and male individualities and their conventional features which are challenged by Carter in these short stories with a new demonstration of female and male characters. She forms her concern as follows: "I'm in the demythologizing business. I'm interested in myths-though I'm much more interested in folklore-just because they are extraordinary lies designed to make people unfree"[1,p118]. The former demonstration of female and male figures in fairy tales are clearly offered as an accomplishment of the patriarchal system "by challenging the archetypal characters and stereotypical female and male figures. Carter re-examines the themes of marriage, sexuality, power relations between females and males, gender roles, and female liberty. Standing against the oppression by males, she announces the liberation of females in fairy tales" [1,p118].

The first tale of the collection is "The Bloody Chamber". It is the most stylish, compelling the terrible story of "Bluebeard" as its opening point and telling it from the perspective of his newest bride. The whole story is an odd triumph, mingling old fable, new psychological insight, and parodic creativity with great confidence. Its intelligence appears to reject didactic understanding, but surely one can see the girl's bravery and the mother's decisive deed [2, p127-8]. Carter inserts her heroine in a dangerous situation to show her reacting to the readers for the sake of females readers as if to encourage them to do the same if they once are in the heroine's situation. Moreover, Carter makes a change for the sake of supporting femininity again as she puts the heroine's mother in this tale instead of the heroine's brothers in the original tale of Perrault. Here, Carter gives power to the mother (instead of giving power to males) who is a female and saves her daughter [3, p.91]. Even when the male young pianist exists in the castle, he is presented as a blind man; he is a useless male until the mother comes to save the heroine from the Marquise.

In addition, the reality of such a rich man is hidden for a long period of time. The heroine is the only one who succeeds to reveal the truth of this monster. She is braver even more than the earlier wives of the Marquise. For the mother, the narrative

stresses her bravery in many occasions as she is the one who fights a wild animal and kills it with her sword and this may be a foreshadowing to the final scene in the tale [4]. The ending of the story is encouraging for the female readers, but, it is troubling for the male readers, except if male readers are prepared to accept the "blind role" of the young pianist [3, p.128].

The second and the third tales are "The Courtship of Mr. Lyon" and "The Tiger's Bride" which are retellings of the "Beauty and the Beast". The difference between the original tale and Carter's tale is not in the plot. Carter gives the role of narrative to female characters then she puts the narrators in a journey of self-discovery [5, p.89]. The heroines are put in a position of sacrifice; they are not afraid, instead, they are the brave and the afraid side is the monsters. In this sense, Carter gives a courageous feature to her heroines.

The heroines, both, offer a sacrifice for their fathers. However, there is a distinction between each one's personality. The heroine of "The Courtship of Mr. Lyon" is so lovable to her father and her father loses her unintentionally and temporally to the Beast. Though she feels unfortunate at the beginning for her sacrifice, but she is later succeeds to recreate a human from a beast and perceives a human side in a Beast before the transformation. The case in "The Tiger's Bride" is different since the father loses his daughter in cards game as if she is one of his property. Her personality grows differently as she witnesses her value in her father as she decides to leave him at once [5, p.89]. The heroine makes a difficult decision of choosing to be a tigress; instead of transforming the tiger into a human she is the one who is transformed. Both heroines are brave, able to save their families, make a hard decision (to live with a monster), and discover the true nature inside each one of them. Instead of being victims, they are both heroines who rescue the financial problems of their fathers [6, p.44-5].

At the end of "The Courtship of Mr. Lyon", Beauty returns to the castle of Mr. Lyon and, therefore, incredibly saves his life - his body converts into the body of a man. The civilizing presence of the Beauty tames the Beast and consequently makes him adapt to the social requirements. Beauty decides her own destiny and starts her life on the basis of mutual love. However, the end of the "Tiger's Bride" is shocking as the female accepts to be converted into a tigress to be united with the tiger as she discovers her true inhuman nature and thus does this hard decision which changes her destiny. Therefore, one can see how these heroines are different from the heroine of the original tale who was weak and waiting for someone to rescue her as well as her fears of the Beast who is, in these tales, the fearful one [7, p.265].

The "Puss-in-Boots" is the fourth story of the collection. The narrator, this time, is a male. This tale shows the concept of woman as an object for men. The story involves a married woman to a man who never has sex with her thinking that doing so he will lose his precious energy for nothing. The husband maybe disgusted by his wife. Moreover, the wife is locked on in a house and forbidden from even opening the window. She is given one hour a day to open the window. The woman here is a victim of the patriarchal world, which Carter stands against and tries to criticize harshly in this tale; the woman is treated as a possession or an animal. Even the society is speechless ignoring the woman's situation, thinking that nothing is wrong and it is all the husband's right to practice his power over his wife. In the end, the husband dies and the chains are removed from the wife. Her bold personality is revealed as she frees the hag ordering him after a long time of capturing her for money and starts a new life [5, p.350].

In "The Erl-King", the heroine narrates her tale of an adventure she has in a forest where she is seduced by the Erl-king. He seduces and takes her to his house in the middle of the forest. In the Erl-king's house, there are birds in cages. At first sight, one may think that they sing happily, but in fact they sing out mourning their freedom which is taken by this Erl-king. After a while, the heroine kills the Erl-king and frees the birds who appear to be women turned into birds by the magical power of this Erl-king [8, p.3].

The character of the Erl-king can be a personification of the patriarchal system that used to lock on and keep women in houses as cages, and let them mourn their freedom. At the beginning, the heroine is ready to be even one of the birds since she takes the adventure only to see him and be with him. However, the last scene of murdering the Erl-king clarifies her attitudes when she realizes the consequences of being submissive to this male-dominated patriarchal system and thus she decides to kill her desire for this Erl-king winning her freedom [8, p.4].

In "The Snow Child", a Count and his Countess ride into a forest in the winter season. Carter presents a man who has a Countess as a wife; though, he can get everything he wants from his beautiful wife, this man desires more than he has. As they are walking, he wishes a woman of specific features that he imagines as his wish is accomplished immediately. A girl is inserted as an object of the Count's desire. This man wants this girl strongly when she has no existence; but as she appears, his desire for her starts to vanish. Carter supports this view by the act of rape when the Count rapes the girl after her death, but the girl is melted immediately. As nothing happens they complete their way back to the estate. The Countess represents the face of the reality. She is the one who stands against and refuses patriarchal system despite her jealousy which controls her for a while. Then, the Countess succeeds to get rid of the girl whose appearance is entirely uncomfortable and threatening from the Countess's perspective [9, p.3-4].

In "The Lady of the House of Love", the heroine is a mature vampire lady lives in her castle. This lady traps herself when she hides both her sexual desire and hunger despite her wisdom and strength that may be equal to those of men if not superior. This lady is strong since she is able to submit her desire of never killing a human. She is keeping herself in her dark home feeding on animals unless someone comes to her castle and thus her nature controls her. This lady is presented as more active than men ever, more than the officer himself who comes to save her as he thinks. She is the one who brings her victims and thus the roles of woman and man here are reversed [10, p.2-4].

The soldier is inserted as an image of the patriarchal system. He is the one who will bring light and youth to such dark and gloomy estate; however, he is the one who destroys everything. He thinks that he can assist the lady by going to institutes or by bringing lights to her dark home ignoring the whole truth of her persona. He takes the traditional role of a man who will rescue this woman ignoring the fact that she is superior to him by wisdom. Nevertheless, this man leads her for nothing but death. Angela Carter, through the tale, wants to shed light on the sexual desire of women and the desire for equality of women whom the patriarchal system has misinterpreted. Through an ironical act, Carter put the soldier in a position of a destroyer not a savior and thus patriarchal system is criticized [10, p.9-10].

The last three tales deal with the wolf and thus they are called as Wolf trilogy. All concern sexualized female characters. The first tale is "The Werewolf" which is a very brief tale. Sketchily, the "Wolf Trilogy" to carry a feminist message. Carter simply reviews the tales "within the strait-jacket of their original structure and

therefore [reproduces] the rigidly sexist psychology of the erotic• [11]. Therefore, her wolf trilogy tries to present strong female heroines who practice fearlessness or sexuality to stay free from patriarchal supremacy. Yet, she finishes her feminist determination in the way she depicts her heroines. This is done either by her portrayal of patriarchal resolutions, the way she objectifies women, and the depiction of the traditional gender binary opposition as something essential rather than publically fabricated. Undoubtedly, these interpretations show Carter's feminist scheme in her reworking of the tales [11].

In "The Werewolf", Carter portrays a courageous female heroine who is able to defend herself at a serious risk. Carter shows that the girl is in no need of rescue or protection from anything such as the Huntsman. Besides, when the girl enters the woods, she is hunted by the wolf and thus she hears "the freezing howl of a wolf"[12, p.127]. Carter emphasizes: "now the child lived in her grandmother's house; she prospered" [12, p.128] to suggest that the girl is not only taking control of the wolf, she is also victorious since she controls her own destiny. Moreover, Carter attempts to show the fear and the cowardice of the wolf by her re-writing. The wolf is weak and defenseless after his hand is cut off: "the wolf let out a gulp, almost a sob, when it saw what had happened to it; wolves are less brave than they seem• [12,p.127]. The combination of the characters, the grandmother and the werewolf, highpoints the point that women need to protect themselves from male dominance as well as from other fellow women. The girl thrives off the possessions of her grandmother, and does it as her private properties. It can be said that putting a woman against another woman, distracts the reader from the important message of fighting male dominance, this may weaken the feminist message of the tale [11].

Another tale that shows a strong and independent heroine is "The Company of Wolves" in which the heroine is portrayed as happy with her sexuality. The heroine is characterized as a mature heroine. She is quite young and highly sexualized as "her breasts have just begun to swell" [11] and she has an innocent appeal in that "she stands and moves within the invisible pentacle of her own virginity"[12, p.133]. Her behaviour is also sexualized along with her initial introduction. It is evident in the tale when the girl meets the handsome man in the woods and both make a wager; she asks "disingenuously" [12, p.135] about the thing that the stranger wants to win [12].

Carter portrays the heroine as a young girl who is going through puberty having an enchanting control of her own sexuality. Carter purposes to utter in a slight intimacy with a handsome stranger to shed lights on the heroine's sexual desires. Doing so, she controls him without his conscious and makes him her own savior. Even when the heroine faces death out of the risk she takes, she is still in control of her fear "knew she was in danger of death• [12, p.137]. By undressing and seducing the wolf as she removes her blouse to expose "her small breasts" until she was "clothed only in her untouched integument of flesh• [12, p.138], the girl is saved. Sexuality is used by Carter to highlight how the heroine makes the choice to control her destiny instead of submitting to terror and becoming the victim of the wolf [12].

The last tale in Carter's Wolf Trilogy is the "Wolf-Alice". This tale attempts to portray a strong female heroine in a way which "undermines this feminist purpose as the story conforms to the gender binary". Though Carter tries to show a feminist interpretation by breaking down gender contracts of Wolf-Alice, she truly represents gender as something vital. The heroine grows without a hand of a society on her, suggesting that Carter represents gender as an important and inherent mannerism, not something educated or built. This can be clear when the girl "began to bleed" [12, p.144] as she makes a step toward being a woman. Rabab Al-Kassasbeh contends that

Alice wants to clean her blood since that her "feeling of shame can be explained by the fact that she has internalized the dominant culture" [12,p.32]. Some argue that this shame comes as a result of the nuns, who represents religion or society trying to form the heroine to obey traditional gender roles being uncomfortable by her adolescence. The story precisely remarks that "the nuns had not the means to inform her how it should be, it was not fastidiousness but shame that made her do so" [12, p.144]. Consequently, these answers about shame are embodied as something naturally included. For Carter, she believes that gender and feeling a shame of female sexuality is not learned from society; thus she discourages feminist readings assisting traditional gender roles [11].

Additionally, Wolf-Alice adapts to society's gender prospects when she arises to dress as a woman. She ultimately finds and sets on the wedding dress and "saw how this white dress made her shine" [12,p.147]. The acceptance of dressing "represents a parody of the socialization of the heroine . . . assimilating the cultural stereotype of what costume is appropriate for her gender". Again, the truth that Wolf-Alice accepts all the bonds of her own harmony illustrates how Carter accidentally draws the social prospects of women and gender thus declines the feminist determination. Moreover, the representation of Carter's heroine obedience of the patriarchal societies. This is evidenced in the scene of showing Wolf-Alice as the maid of the Duke who acts as a symbol of the patriarchal command. Being his maid, Carter reinforces the patriarchal ideology that the woman remains at home to do tasks while the man works as the food bringer. The patriarchal traditions are portrayed in the way Alice pities the Duke when he is shot: "he lies writhing on his black bed" [12, p.148]. It is in this moment that the "two appear much like the newly wedded couple we might expect in a happy ending" as Alice leaps on the wounds of the Duke "upon his bed to lick . . . without disgust, with quick tender gravity" [12, p.148]. Once again the heroine is sexualized, but this time to save the Duke and not herself. These final pictures of Alice set over the Duke in a sexy way "ironically enact the prototypical, heterosexual fairy-tale ending". Wolf-Alice is truly ashamed of her sexuality which is defined by the gender expectations of the society; yet, her happy ending is only attainable with a man (the traditional fairy-tale ending). These elements weaken the feminist determination of an independent heroine [11].

The impact of feminism can clearly be seen in "Wolf Trilogy" and the earlier tales in the collection. The heroines' sexualization is a technique that is used by Carter to free female authorization and freedom from male supremacy. In addition, the over-sexualization of the young female characters only assists to show the male fantasies and does not result in the female authorization, however in the girls' objectification. Interestingly, many of the stories in Carter's later short-story collections focus on well-known real as well as fictional characters for the sake of challenging gender roles. The retelling of the collection *BCH* is not for children at all; rather, it is for the most part, refers to happenings in a world separate from our own world. Characters are, on the one hand, sexy, animalistic, violent, and troubling. On the other hand, they are "family-centered" [3, p. 91].

The wolf, the essence of the wild animal Beast, as portrayed in fairy tales, helps to focus points in the final three stories in the collection, "The Werewolf," "The Company of Wolves," and "Wolf-Alice". In addition to illuminating the worldwide animal nature of individuals, the tales encounter the universality of gender roles [3, p. 91]. Seda Arian says:

...as a female writer deconstructing fairy tales previously written by males, Carter has subverted the representational female and male characters. The target

reader is both females and males like in the case of the earlier fairy tales, however with a new understanding of the reader's response to the text. As she decodes the gender roles that are strongly established in the reader's unconscious from the beginning of childhood by fairy tales, the book appears as a resistance against them. The reader therefore adopts a new and radical awareness of genderlect. It is a well-accepted notion that although some fairy tales seem to address both females and males, in many of them the addressee is females. [1, p.120]

In the traditional tales, the writings comprise philosophical patriarchal messages, and there is virtually a straight speech to female characters cautioning them against "males, sexuality, and liberty". In Carter's tales, the addressee is once more mainly female, but the message is different. This is the reason why the tales are written by a female for other females with a different style associated with fairy tales engraved by males for females. Seda Arian continues, "instead of an authoritative and masculine address, Carter's writing is non-prejudicial on behalf of females. Especially in the first-person narrations, the style appears female-oriented"[12, p.120]. As in "The Bloody Chamber", the tale begins with a paragraph-size sentence summarizing the heroine's state of mind when she says: "I remember how, that night, I lay awake in the wagon-lit in a tender..." [12, p.1].

The speaker, here, is given the occasion to tell her own tale and express her sensations. Both the tone and the length of the speech designate the random process of the marriage and put a negative misgiving on it. Generally, Carter's usage of the language of the story lulls the readers into disregarding the risks modeled by "Bluebeard"; it also, intensifies the reader's consciousness of the danger modeled by the "somasochistic underpinnings of much of decadent". In addition, in "The Tiger's Bride", as the greedy form proposes, the audience is prepared to read a tale of imprisonment [1, p. 120]. The tale starts as follows: "My father lost me to The Beast at cards", "My father said he loved me yet he staked his daughter on a hand of cards", "Lost to The Beast!", "how I had been bought and sold, passed from hand to hand, "been allotted", "my father abandoned me to the wild Beasts by his human carelessness" [12, p.56-61].

The short and sharp structure of the sentence articulates the feelings of the narrator; this time, not mistrust and depressed but anger and attack. Brooke argues that "[t]he daughter's central weapon against her father is linguistic, manifesting the self-awareness, containment, and respect that is reflected through her narrative". The persona of this female is so different from the heroine of the Erl-king. "The Erl-King" starts with third-person narrative with a descriptive sentence: "The lucidity, the clarity of the light that afternoon was sufficient to itself; perfect transparency must be impenetrable, these vertical bars of a brass-coloured distillation of light coming down from sculpture-yellow interstices in a sky hunkered with grey clouds that bulge with more rain" [12, p.96]. One can see how the writer inserts sentences in a gender-neutral way and does not assume a precise feeling as it blends "the clarity of light" with "grey clouds", and thus readers are given a frame of the external world until the portrayal changes into the first-person narrative [1, p.120-1], the narrative explains:

The trees threaded a cat's cradle of half-stripped branches over me so that I felt I was in a house of nets and though the cold wind that always heralds your presence, had I but known it then, blew gentle around me, I thought that nobody was in the wood but me. [12, p.97]

The external voice again disturbs the narration just after the compound voice, saying: "The Erl-King will do you grievous harm". Though, directly after, narration again endures with the subject pronoun "I" as if the outer voice is the reader's voice

who desires to notify the heroine. As the tale adopts, the readers may have "certain elements of background knowledge, in other words, as the reader knows the story, s/he adopts a god-eye position in the reading process. This background knowledge draws on stereotypical assumptions about gender identities". Carter challenges the readers' attitude by doing a change for certain events, and thus she ends up her story with a completely diverse conclusion. The text addresses a "universal audience" who prepares to face all potentials in a fairy tale, not only "happy endings". Therefore, the style of former fairy tales is masculine which turns into a feminine in a deconstructed way. Opposing the female characters that are "ideally feminine - that is, passive and longsuffering - and defined by her sexual/maternal function", Carter makes the readers understand the possibility of "anti-female-ideals" [1,p.121].

It is important to mention how females and males are named in Carter's stories. In "The Bloody Chamber", the first-person narrator is a female, but her name is unstated. She is called as the "Madame" by the employees in the castle, and as "My little nun", "Baby" [12,p.17], "My little love", and "My child" [12, p.18] by her husband. The female narrator markers herself by some words such as "I, the orphan", "the Chatelaine" and "I, the little music student" [12, p.13], "a little girl" [12, p.18], "child" [12,p.18], and "his bride" [12,p.13]. It appears that she accepts the adjectives qualified to her by the exterior world. However, the man marries the heroine and thus she inherits his name, "The Marques" [12,p.36], (which represents "mastery and power"), whom she calls "my husband" and "my purchaser" [12,p.15]. In the tales "The Courtship of Mr. Lyon", and "The Tiger's Bride" the heroine is called the Beauty symbolizing the outer description of girls. Hence, Carter never states the names of her heroines. Her usage of the common naming styles for both male and female in these tales is to form an atmosphere of a fairy tale. Later, by transferring the end of the tales into rebellious alternatives, she intends to challenge the male-dominated thought [1, p.121-2].

Moreover, most of Carter's stories are recognized for being mostly pornographic due to their open use of sexuality, especially females sexuality. However, her use of language comes as a result of her intention "to deal with the shifting structures of reality and sexuality". Feminist opponents mostly criticize the "inequality of gender-specific terms" and thus they aim to rebuild female sexuality. Sara Milles examines Carter's way of describing the male and female's genitals. The title of the story collection, "The Bloody Chamber" is an obvious orientation to female genitals and female understandings of "losing virginity and menstruation" [1, p.122].

In this sense, Carter evidently gives suggestions of female sexuality to adopt the sexual involvements and femaleness found in women. As the narrator of "The Bloody Chamber" resembles herself to a female character in an engraving labeled as "a lamb chop" [12,p.17], she compares her sexual tissue to a "scarlet, palpitating core" [12,p.15], and her first erotic understanding as willingly "bleeding" and "loss of virginity" [12,p.18]. Hence, the broad trend to overlook sexuality that is actually concealed in classic fairy tales is decomposed and prepared clear by Carter. Consequently, the restrictions connected to female understanding such as loss of virginity is intended to be clarified in these tales.

As in many fairy tales, males and male sexualities are labeled with animal metaphors in "The Courtship of Mr. Lyon" and "The Tiger's Bride"; the males are already a tiger and a Beast. The animal-like males who signify authority and control are enlightened by Carter at the end of these tales by being killed by female characters. Sara Mills argues that: "Male sexuality is often described in terms of



metaphors of animal behaviour, as an animal's, and a little under control. The describing of sexuality in these terms means that extreme male behaviour such as rape may be understood to be only natural" [1,p.123]. That is why Carter uses the word "loins" in "The Tiger's Bride" and in "The Courtship of Mr. Lyon" for representing genitals. Another erotic portrayal is offered by Carter when the Beast in "The Tiger's Bride" desires to perceive the Beauty as naked, "her pride" not "her shame" "thwarts her finger" and thus she never fears him. As an alternative, the role of the "lamb", cliché imagery for female characters, she turns into a tigress [1,p.123], when she says, "The lamb must learn to run with the tigers" [12,p.72].

In each of the tales, "The Bloody Chamber", "The Courtship of Mr. Lyon", "The Tiger's Bride", Carter highlights the association between the subjectivity of woman's sexuality and their objective role as possessions. But in the feminist re-telling, one can see how Carter converts women's victimization; the victimizer becomes the victim who is killed by the mother – a female. In the two versions of the "Beauty and the Beast", the lion and the tiger are nothing but a man, in animal-like. In both tales, despite the difference between the situations of the heroines' fathers, the heroines choose to explore the dangerous, frightening transformation that comes from selecting the beast. "The Courtship of Mr. Lyon" and "The Tiger's Bride" present a mutual wonder and horror towards the beasts from the side of the Beauty and in other scene readers perceive the equality of the dealings as when the lion kisses Beauty's hand, Beauty kisses lion's and when the tiger strips naked and so Beauty selects to reveal her fleshly nature [13,p.10-11].

In "Puss in Boots", Carter inserts the cynical puss who views human love and desire in a light-hearted comedy which demythologizes sex with humor and pleasure. In this respect, the cat "Puss" signifies the sensual desires of women they need to admit within themselves and thus the characters in the tale signify the problematic of desire, as in the sex scene between the Puss's boss and his beloved. The master of Puss and the woman have sex already when a chance provides for them on the ground in the woman's house. In "Snow Child", Carter presents the inaccessibility of desire, which will always be melted before "possession". In a sense, no one can fulfill desire's constant deferral as in the scene of girl's rape by the Count. The girl has melted already after the Count's sexual desire finished [13,p.11].

The tale of the "Erl-king" is a difficult representation of a subjective conspiracy within the male look. Readers recognize the woman narrator as being both afraid and having desires to be entrapped within the birdcage of the Erl-king. The Erl-king, in reality, never exists; rather, he is a figure created out of the imagination. Thus, the shift occurs in the narrative between the two voices of the narration, first and third person, signifies the two opposing erotic desires, one for freeing femininity and the other for engulfment masculinity in a tale that demarcates the inconsistency of desire. In addition, animalistic issues are used on behalf of patriarchy in the classic fairy tales. Criticizing the recognized descriptions that emphasize the adopted knowledge, Carter releases the gist of animal allegories, particularly in "The Erl-King". In this tale, she points to the domestic features of the Erl-king as "he is an excellent housewife", "his kitchen shakes with birdsong" and "his rustic home is spick". Carter offers the girl sexual appetite in the story: "Eat me, drink me; thirsty, cankered, goblin-ridden, I go back and back to him to have his fingers strip the tattered skin away and clothe me in his dress of water, this garment that drenches me, its slithering odor, its capacity for drowning" [12,p.102]. The heroine is defined as "a perfect child"; she is converted into a killer and thus frees the imprisoned weak birds along with herself of his control over her desire [8,p.4].

In "The Company of Wolves", Carter describes the young girl in the forest, going to her grandmother's house; this description is an erotic portrayal:

Her breasts have just begun to swell; her hair is like lint.... She is an unbroken egg; she is a sealed vessel; she has inside her a magic space the entrance to which is shut tight with a plug of the membrane; she is a closed system; she does not know how to shiver. She has her knife and she is afraid of nothing. [12,p.133]

In fact, the girl is longing to be deflowered; either knowingly or unconsciously, this is what the readers can conclude from the rewriting of the tale as Isaias Carvalho says, "Our time is not a time of innocence. Innocence has strayed from the path" [14].

Furthermore, the last three wolf stories investigate the relationship of women to the "unruly libido", but the werewolf story suggests an isolated otherness, because of the half-human appearances, than the stories of the "Beast, Tiger and Puss". In the first tale, the old Grandmother appears to be the werewolf, and the girl's conquering of her is perceived as an achievement of the symbolic society that punishes the weird and any supernatural being. In contrast with the heroine of the "The Tiger's Bride", whose heroine chooses desire over conventional wealth, the girl of the "Werewolf" is a good child who sacrifices the uncanny for prosperity. In the second tale, "The Company of Wolves", the list of manifestations of werewolves, the combination of human and wolf; emblematic and imagined, clinches with the second "Little Red Riding Hood" tale. In sense, the wolf does not consume the grandmother; rather, it is "outfaced by Red Riding Hood's awareness that in freely convention his sensuality, the libido will transform meat into flesh". After the achievement of their mutual desire, he is converted into a "tender" wolf, and thus she sleeps safely between his paws [13,p.12].

The final tale of the wolf stories tells a tale of a girl raised by wolves, without the social training. The young girl grows up outside the ethnic inscriptions and thus she acquires a new intellect of the self from her encounters whether with the mirrors and from the changes in her body out of being mature. In addition, the girl starts learning a sense of time and routine. Lastly, her pity starts to convert the werewolf Duke into the rational world. Reading Carter's retelling of the fairy-tales as her female protagonists' clashes with desire, in all its disorderly "animalness", yields a rich reward. Patricia Duncker, however simplistically, reads the tales as "all men are beasts to women" and thus perceives the female protagonists as inescapably enacting "the roles of victims of male violence" [13,p.12].

## 2- Conclusion

Angela Carter's *B CH* retells some of the classic fairy tales from a feminist perspective. In spite of the debate about this view since some feminists objected to the matter of such rewriting perceiving the portrayal of women politically unfitting and incorrect [2, p.127-8]. Carter possesses the distinctive aptitude to expose her "viscera as well as her brains in a manner that not only outshone her sister-authors, but also matched the skills of stylistically equivalent male contemporaries such as Moorcock, Nye and Anthony Burgess" [15,p.29]. Thus, she succeeds despite the competition from the many brilliant British women authors of her generation who arose in the wake of 1960s feminism. Her writing's tools are the carnivalesque sensibility which is labeled as a post-modern; however, it is really as everlasting as that of her folk, mythological and traditional inspirations [15,p.29].

Feminist critics argue that the traditional fairy tales were a reactionary form that celebrated misogynistic philosophy without searching whether women readers will always and essentially classify with the female figures. In using such a form, they argue that despite Carter's good intentions, she is closed into the conventional sexism.

Patricia Duncker uses Angela Dworkin's *Pornography: Men Possessing Women* to dispute that Carter is "re-writing the tales within the straitjacket of their originals structures" and therefore reproducing the rigidly sexist psychology of the erotic" [13, p.4]. Avis Lewallen proposes that Carter "has been unable adequately to revision the conservative form for a feminist politics, and so her attempts at constructing an active female erotica re badly compromised- if not a reproduction of male pornography" [13,p.4]. For Makinen, he argues that, in opposition, it is the critics who are unable to perceive what is "beyond the sexist binary opposition" [13,p.4].

Carter's *B CH* includes different stories that frequently involve similar subjects and motifs such as the objectification of the woman by limiting her regular role in lifecycle; this is a recurring subject which is supported by deceit and death motifs. Through a sardonic female viewpoint, Carter conveys her political messages using the fantastic mode as her technique. Thus, the works are regarded as postmodern fiction as a result of such a blend (politics and fantasy) which leads readers to be in a dual place – reality and fantasy.

With the death of Angela Carter, in 1992, readers lose a significant brilliant feminist author who is able to criticize "phallogentrism" in an ironical gusto and to improve an extensive and more complex illustration of femininity, sexuality and gender through fantasy genre [13,p.14]. The mystification of her tenderness with the demonstrations of sexuality which are locked into pornography never blind readers from Carter's works that challenge the habitual thought of the patriarchal society.

#### CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

There are no conflicts of interest

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