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New Wine in Old Bottles: Angela Carter's Feminist Revisionary Fairy-Tale Narratives of "Beauty and the Beast" and "Snow White"

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Abstract

This paper examines Angela Carter's revisionary fairy-tale narratives of "Beauty and the Beast" and "Snow White" to demonstrate the marginalization of women's role in the traditional fairy-tale narratives. This paper evaluates how Carter questions, subverts, and reconstructs meanings crystallized by the traditional patriarchal fairy-tale narratives. It considers Adrienne Rich's concept of revisionism to show how it employs intertextuality, parody, metafiction, narrative displacement, delegitimization of the tale, and the carnivalesque as postmodern strategies for rewriting traditional tales. Carter's "The Tiger's Bride" and "The Snow Child" are analyzed to show how feminist revisions question, subvert, and reconstruct the crystallized meanings of patriarchal traditions.

Keywords: Angela Carter, Feminism, Postmodernism, Revisionary Fairy-tale Narratives.

Introduction

Fairy tales are a spontaneous product and never completely abandoned in the culture of different peoples. They are the symbolic report of the accumulated experience of life, a product of the collective unconscious. They have their own narrative structure and the same functions for different characters, they are full of symbols, which refer us to archetypes and the central archetype, the self. It is possible to see that they indicate the path of transformation of the individual from the primitive state until reaching the combination of the opposites. Charles Perrault, Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Andersen are the holy trinity of fairy tale writings. In 1697, Charles Perrault published Stories or Tales of Past Times subtitled Tales of the Mother Goose, that inaugurated fairy tales as children narrative. Fairy tales continue to be narrated through different modes of artistic expressions. Revisionary narratives subvert traditional fairy-tale narratives to generate new meanings. In so doing, meanings are approximated and distanced from the canon to open a space for the emergence of new interpretations that can destabilize the traditional discourses. The main objective of this paper is to show how fairy tales, through revisionism, are deconstructed and reconstructed to imbue with new perspectives and new critical directions. The purpose of this paper is to assess how Carter's fairy-tale narratives question, subvert, and reconstruct the meanings

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formed by the traditional patriarchal discourse. The paper, thus, focuses on analyzing Carter's "The Tiger's Bride" and "The Snow Child", in her collection, *The Bloody Chamber* (1979), seeking to find answers to the following questions: (1) How and to what extent does Carter subvert and reconstruct the fairy-tale narratives of "Beauty and the Beast" and "Snow White"? (2) To what extent does her revisionism establish her as a feminist writer or reinforce patriarchal patterns?

Carter is accused of placing her female characters in a situation of subordination and inferiority in relation to her male characters. In *The bloody Chamber*, her narrative begins to be seen as feminist, as women manage to overcome male domination, perhaps because critics see it as a characteristic that approaches the second phase of female writing (feminist). Critics such as Patrícia Duncker (1984), Robert Clark (1987) and Avis Lewallen (1988) believe that Angela Carter's oeuvre goes completely against the grain of the feminist struggle. Duncker (1984) criticizes Carter for her explicit use of eroticism and the language of male sexuality. She states that Carter "envisages women's sensuality simply as a response to male arousal" (Duncker 1984, 6). Gina Wisker (2016) believes that Carter "exposes the victim position invariably implicit in pornography and then turns it inside out, celebrating the sexuality and power of her female characters" (Wisker 2016, 49). For Wisker, Carter raises problems such as pornography and patriarchy precisely to question her readers. In the same vein, Robin Sheets (1991) points out to the feminist pornography in Carter's *the Bloody Chamber* (1979) where Carter explores "the link between sexually violent imagery and male aggression, the meaning of masochism for women, and the relationship of pornography to other literary and artistic forms" (Sheets 1991, 633-634). Lewallen (1988) believes that a more detailed analysis of the work would reveal the construction of an ambiguous sexuality for women. According to her, Carter employs a seductive style while simultaneously portraying women as victims of misogyny. She argues that Carter creates in *The Bloody Chamber* a dualistic schema in which the female character is seen as either "victim or aggressor" (Lewallen 1988, 146). Clark (1987) finds that a gullible reader does not perceive Carter's criticism and ends up seeing in her work another representation of the patriarchal system that oppresses the female figure and ends up losing the real intention of denouncing this system. According to him, Carter's works "make possible a knowledge of patriarchy, but this knowledge will only come to a reader who already brings a feminist knowledge to the text" (Clark 1987, 159) .

Merja Makinen (1992) states that the eroticism of Carter's texts is a form of subversion and that her writing is the portrait of women who, above all, are survivors. In opposition to other critics, Makinen (1992) claims that they cannot see beyond the sexist binary opposition of phallocentric cultures. Elaine Jordan (1992) also has a positive view of Angela Carter's texts. For her, Carter has no intention of painting a faithful portrait of reality, but even so, between the lines, it is possible to perceive the concern in raising real problems, such as politics and economics, in addition to, of course, sexual issues. Jordan (1992) believes that Carter's characters should not be analyzed in a simplistic way, but rather read and understood within a specific context. For her, critics are unable to "keep up with [Carter's] resourcefulness" (Jordan 1992, 127).

The thorough reading of literature on Carter's oeuvre leads one to state that Carter has fought so hard to strengthen the female voice in fiction. She knows how to work with issues related to the feminine and female sexuality like no one else. She proves herself as a writer who seeks to give a new look to fairy tales, especially to female characters, who previously have not played a leading role in the traditional patriarchal stories. She has used pornography in favor of women. On reading Carter's tales, one must go far beyond what's on paper. It is necessary to carry out an exercise of transcendence, of analysis of the various symbols that she carefully chooses to place in her text. Carter appropriates violence and eroticism to expose the female situation in a patriarchal world. She does not seek to solve problems, nor to present the feminine as a magical and superior being, but rather to expose the sexism that still violates and oppresses women. Her female characters have important characteristics to be observed, such as the ability to adapt and survive despite all adversity. To understand Carter's work is to observe the unfair and violent patriarchal world and seek ways to suppress abuses and reduce injustices. She presents her images to society and urges it to assume it or transform itself. Carter's engagement is undeniable and what her writing full of symbols seeks to unravel. Criticized or not, the fact is that she is a woman who embraces fairy tales and gives them new life.

1. Revisionist Fairy-tale Narrative

Revisionary fairy-tale narrative is considered a narrative strategy through which classical narratives are re-visioned offering "postmodern fairy tales" (Bacchilega 1997, ix). Contemporary feminists intend to rethink sexist attitudes in fairy tales to demonstrate that women have been marginalized as an insignificant other in these magical narratives. In their revisionism, they seek to subvert the hierarchical social relationships that privilege men over women by questioning and subverting hegemonic patriarchal doctrines inherent in these narratives to validate "diverse forms of gendered and sexual identity" (Teverson 2013, 138). Feminists propose a new reading of literary works to highlight the discussion about the canon and "to recover positive images of women and attitudes toward women in the texts along with revisions of previous androcentric exegesis" (Anderson 2001, 25). Moreover, it has "displaced male bias as the center of analysis" and "jostled male traditions" (Abel 1981, 173) not only to "bring the renewal of the genre" but also "to foreground gender as its foundational trapping" (Bacchilega and Orme 2021, x).

Adrienne Rich introduces her concept of "writing as re-vision", from a feminist perspective that is based on the repetition of a story, but in a different way. Such a revisionary perspective involves social, cultural, economic and ideological transformations within the scope of both postmodernism and feminism. Therefore, revisionary narratives are "part of a larger dialogue about what gender is, how we come to learn about gender and sexual roles, and how such roles can (and should be) conformed to or contested" (Jorgensen 2018, 262). Thay attest to the possibility of seeing something again through repetition, reformulation, and retelling. According to Warner (2018), the pleasure of such revisions "gains from the endless permutations performed on the nucleus of the tale, its DNA as it were" (Warner 2018, 34). Rich's concept of revision as "re-vision" is "the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction" (Rich 1995, 32). This perspective is shared by many

feminists as “an act of survival” through which women write back to patriarchy seeking to question, subvert and reconstruct its attitudes against women. For Rich (1995), re-vision is not only a female search for self-knowledge or identity, but also her “refusal of the self-destructiveness of male-dominated society” (Rich 1995, 32). Such re-visions “can help to change the lives of women whose gifts – and whose very being – continue to be thwarted” (Rich 1995, 35).

The postmodern revisionary fairy tales “bring out, what the institutionalization of such tales for children has forgotten or left unexploited” (Bacchilega 1997, 50). They endow female characters with voicing of which they were deprived as they deal with issues of power, violence, alienation, social conditions, and sexual roles. This impulse will be accomplished through narrative alterations that subvert the dominant patriarchal discourse and highlight the subversive intent of feminist criticism in revisioning traditional fairy tales. Nugent (2005) sees the fairy-tale narrative as “the feminine oral genre par excellence” (Nugent 2005, 382). The feminist fairy tale narratives “challenge conventional views of gender, socialization, and sex roles, but they also map out an alternative aesthetic terrain for the fairy-tale as genre to open up new horizons” (Zipes 2012, xi). They show dissatisfaction with dominant patriarchal discourse and sexist attitudes inherent in traditional fairy-tale narratives to enable new and different views of the world, in which women are given a voice. They liberate narrative “from the traditional power and authority” of the father who is displaced giving voice to the marginalized women (Allen 2000, 4). Furthermore, they demand “an open-ended discourse which calls for the readers to complete the liberating expectations of the narrative in terms of their own experience and their social context” (Zipes 2012, xi).

2. Intertextuality, Parody, and Revisionary Narrative

Revisionary fairy-tale narratives involve manipulating literary traditions so that the canonical stories can be re-evaluated, deconstructed, and reconstructed. Revisionists engage with the genre “as a vital and transformative site for reimagining a future that is both just and sustainable” (Bacchilega and Orme 2021, ix). Such re-visions use parody that cannot disregard the traditional canonical text of the fairy-tale narratives in building a new narrative. They present themselves as a product of intertextuality that “promotes a new vision of meaning, and thus of authorship and reading: a vision resistant to ingrained notions of originality, uniqueness, singularity and autonomy” (Allen 2000, 6). The intertextual theory is produced by Julia Kristeva in her “attempt to combine Saussurean and Bakhtinian theories of language and literature” (Allen 2000, 3). The term shows that literary discourse does not have a single meaning but reveals a textual dialogue. Thus, every writing is a reading of a previous literary corpus. The literary utterance reflects an intersection of textual surfaces, a dialogue, both on the horizontal and vertical levels. Through intertextuality, “any text is the absorption and transformation of another” (Kristeva 1986, 37) .

Revisionary narratives “become part of the intertextual dialogue, talking in different and often more ambivalent voices than the critics but actively and creatively contributing to our understanding and experience of the fairy tale” (Joosen 2011, 48). Intertextuality lends itself into interdiscursivity through Bakhtin’s dialogism that indicates “any attempt to be “comprehensive” or “authoritative” would be

misguided" (Holquist 1990, x). Intertextuality opens the text, enabling new meanings as designed in the process of revisionary fairy-tale narratives. Using classical fairy-tale narratives, feminist revisionary narratives question and subvert traditional patriarchal discourses and ideologies to allow voicing for women who was previously silenced in patriarchy. The process of deconstructing and reconstructing fairy-tale narratives "echoes the role of wonder and magic in classic tales and, at the same time, mirrors the strategies employed by postmodern adaptations of traditional narratives" (Murai an Cardi 2020, 2).

Parody and metafiction are significant in postmodern feminist revisionary fairy-tale narratives as "modes of installing and then subverting conventions, such as the maleness of the gaze," so that "representation of woman can be 'de-doxified'" (Hutcheon 1989, 147). Thus, parodic strategies of installing and ironizing allow for traditional characters and stories sanctified by tradition to be profane. Metafiction as a fictional re-vision "includes within itself commentary on its own narrative conventions […] to challenge the cultural and literary tradition they inherit" (Greene 1991, 1-2). The use of feminist metafiction as a revision brings out the fictionality of sexist arguments impregnated in the stories to give voice to the female experience and to redefine the premises of representation. Such strategies result in the "narrative delegitimation of the known tale" where "the cultural conventions" and the "sex-gender system" are delegitimized (DuPlessis 1985, ix). They have "always ruptured conventional morality, politics and narrative" (DuPlessis 1985, 108).

3. Carter's Revisionism

Carter's revisionary fairy-tale narratives introduce new perspectives to the tradition through a three-phase process: the questioning phase, the subversive phase, and the reconstructive one. In the questioning phase, the established meanings of traditional fairy-tale narratives are critically examined and destabilized. Subsequently, the subversive phase employs the Bakhtinian carnivalistic act of "the mock crowning and subsequent decrowning of the carnival king" (Bakhtin 1984, 124) to challenge and subvert the expected traditional meanings of stories. The carnivalesque of the "woman-centered and erotically charged" (Zipes 2015, 102) revisionary fairy-tale narratives involves the subversion of official patriarchal discourse. The reconstructive phase is characterized by a double process of deconstruction and reconstruction of the patriarchal discourse of traditional fairy-tale narratives. Intertextuality, parody, metafiction, narrative delegitimization of known tale and the carnivalesque are strategies employed to yield new visions of traditional tales, undermining formerly patriarchal hegemonic discourses. The reconstructive phase has become "a formative intertext for writers exploring gender and sexuality" (Jorgensen 2019, 261). Carter addresses the need for revisioning the canonical fairy-tale narratives to authenticate a legitimate feminist writing of these narratives. She wrote her revisionary versions of "Beauty and the Beast" and "Snow White" from a feminist postmodern perspective that yields new meanings, different from those set by tradition. She promotes the discussion of her critical interventions in these classics and the emergence of new stories of an antipatriarchal and antisexist character. The analyses undertaken here aim to demonstrate the impact of the use of some revisionary strategies in Carter's "The Tiger's Bride" and "The Snow Child" (1079) respectively. Carter uses revisionary strategies

that produce a double act of recognition and defamiliarization. It takes readers back to the original story, meanwhile distancing them from it, demythologizing the mythical pretensions of the traditional texts, thus allowing silenced or muted subtexts to gain voicing and visibility.

Carter's revisionary strategies offer alternative mindscapes, deeply rooted in the critique of patriarchy as she is searching for the "latent content of stories which are explicitly about cannibalism, incest, bestiality and infanticide" (Haffenden 1985, 82). Therefore, she establishes herself as a postmodern writer, who blurs, deconstructs, and reconstruct the world with its binaries and boundaries through "putting new wine in old bottles" (Carter 1983, 69). In other words, she changes the rules of the game, offering a new vision with demystifying objectives towards myths. She seeks to subvert, deconstruct, and reconstruct the function of fairy-tale narratives, that are "heavily implicated in the creation and maintenance of oppressive ideology" (Grossman 1988, 149). Duncker (1984) believes that Carter is "rewriting the tales within the strait-jacket of their original structures" (Dunker 1984, 6). Carter is not up to discard the old bottles, but to fill them with new wine.

"The Tiger's Bride" (1979)

"The Tiger's Bride" (1979) is Carter's reinterpretation of the fairy tale, "Beauty and the Beast". In Carter's revision, Beauty, the narrator, takes off her humanity condition and her own skin. She acquires "beautiful fur" (Carter 1979, 67). Thus, she accepts the nature of Beast. Makinen (1992) draws attention to the meaning of having a beast in human disguise instead of a human in beast disguise. According to her, the character of the tiger in Carter's tale is "something other than man"; "otherness, a savage and magnificent power, outside of humanity". It signifies a sensuality that gives women "power, strength and a new awareness of both self and other" (Makinen 1992, 10) .

" The Tiger's Bride", as its title suggests, changes the focus of the narrative which becomes on the "bride" who has the point of view. In the revisionary narrative, Beauty is transformed into an animal at the end of the tale. Meanwhile, Milord, the Beast is endowed with anthropomorphic qualities to "counter the narcissism of humans in charge of the world" (Bennett 2010, xvi). Despite of the existence of these anthropomorphic qualities in traditional fairy-tale narratives, they do not function as destabilizing forces of binaries and dichotomies. However, in Cater's story, the transformation occurs in relation to Beauty. Narrating in first person, Beauty starts the story abruptly: "My father lost me to the Beast in the cards" (Carter 1979, 51). Here, she emphasizes the patriarchal gaze of women as objects. Beauty and her father come from "countries of cold weather" to "the blessed plot where the lion lies down with the lamb" (Carter 1979, 51). From the very beginning, it can be realized that Carter refers to humanity in bestial terms. Beauty speaks of the "furious cynicism" with which she watches her father lose his inheritance (Carter 1979, 52). She refers to men as lions and women as lambs. Carter transforms the submissive Beauty of the traditional tale to someone who refers to herself as "the girl" or "the young lady", and never as Beauty. Only the landlady exclaims 'Che bella!' From her infancy, she was "always the pretty one", with "rosy cheeks" (Carter 1979, 52).

The narrator makes a series of associations to the image of the rose, which in this tale will have a very different meaning. In Western tradition, the rose is "a mystic symbol of the heart, the center and the cosmic wheel, and also of sacred, romantic and sensual love" (Tresidder 2008, 162). Beauty refers to roses in different situations in the revisionary narrative. She refers to the death of her mother: "My mother did not blossom long" (Carter 1979, 52). The rose, here, is associated with mortality. The father is, therefore, to blame for the mother's death and not the girl. In another situation, the Beast gives Beauty the rose, "from his own impeccable if outmoded buttonhole" (Carter 1979, 52). This rose is not configured as the element of approximation, or exchange, between them. She did not ask for it; there is no theft and "symbolic" debt as in the traditional tale. The debt occurs, explicitly, in the game of cards. Peeling the rose with her own hands is an indication that the young woman is in charge. Everything she will do will be of her own volition and not through guilt or sacrifice .

Beauty describes the beast as an elegant but two-dimensional man. According to her, "he wears a mask with a man's face painted most beautifully on it" (Carter 1979, 53). The beast also wears a wig and a "chaste silk stock stuck with a pearl hides his throat" and "gloves of blond kid that are yet so huge and clumsy they do not seem to cover hands" (Carter 1979, 53). This makes the beast, in Bakhtinian terms, a "carnival king". The Beast, however, is only unable to imitate human speech, as he has "a growling impediment in his speech" (Carter 1979, 54). Thus, his Valet becomes his spokesperson and speaks for him, "as if his master were the clumsy doll and he the ventriloquist" (Carter 1979, 54). In this way, Carter endows manliness with beastliness and silencing, two features traditionally attributed for women. When the Valet comes for the young woman, he brings "a bunch of his master's damned white roses as if a gift of flowers would reconcile a woman to any humiliation" (Carter 1979, 55). Traditionally, the white rose symbolizes "innocence, purity and virginity; the red symbolizes passion and desire, voluptuous beauty" (Tresidder 2008, 162). However, Carter subverts the traditional symbolism of the roses what makes this tale the reverse of the traditional. The weeping father is the one who wants the rose, which she throws at him smeared with blood: "My tear-beslobbered father wants a rose to show that I forgive him […] he gets his rose all smeared with blood" (Carter 1979, 55). The blood-stained rose thrown at the father is the definitive break with the traditional myth according to which the theft of the rose for the daughter shows the father's love .

The narrator makes a series of considerations about the nature of that man's "beastliness" and "digs up" old stories told by her English nurse about tiger men, who never intimidate her, since she is "a wild wee thing and she could not tame me into submission" (Carter 1979, 56). All Beauty has is her own skin: "For now my own skin was my sole capital in the world" (Carter 1979, 56). This statement foreshadows that her "own skin" will be at stake. By her description of manliness, Carter suggests that the male world is a state of death in life void of any luxury or sensuality. The Valet informs Beauty that the Beast wishes "to see the pretty young lady unclothed nude without her dress" (Carter 1979, 58). At this request, she ironically replies that the Beast can lock her in a windowless room and undress her, but with her face covered. Moreover, she further tells the Beast that if he wants to pay her, he must pay her the same

amount he would give any harlot. This ironic reply hits the Beast "in the heart"; so, he sheds a tear, which she hopes to be a tear of shame: "The tear trembled for a moment on an edge of painted bone, then tumbled down the painted cheek to fall, with an abrupt tinkle, on the tiled floor" (Carter 1979, 59). This scene is another subversion of the traditional story. The Beast is the one who makes the innocent request whereas the young lady does the blackmail .

The Valet brings Beauty a "single diamond earring, perfect as a teardrop". Undoubtedly, diamond traditionally symbolizes "radiance, immutability, and integrity" and its "combination of brilliance and hardness gave it a spiritual dimension" (Tresidder 2008, 54). The hardness, clarity, and luminosity make the diamond traditionally a greater symbol of perfection. In this revisionary tale, however, diamond is as perfect as the tear of which it is made. The symbolism of hardness and immutability is subverted and reversed in Carter's revision through the "diamond/tear" paradox. It is Beauty who visits the Beast: "Take off my clothes for you, like a ballet girl? Is that all you want of me?" (Carter 1979, 61). Immediately after this situation, a tear falls from the Beast's other eye. This is how the young woman receives, the other diamond: "I had a pair of diamond earrings of the finest water in the world" (Carter 1979, 61). Here, Carter subverts the tradition of coyness/ initiation in sexual relations. Traditionally, women are characterized as coy and men initiators showing their dominance. Women sometimes use coyness "to solicit sexual aggression" (Crane 1994, 268). However, in the revisionary tale, Beauty is the initiator of the sexual scene by having herself naked in front of the Beast who feels embarrassed with his Valet. Carter demonstrates that women must play the patriarchal game through which they can stoop to conquer. Playing this game "directly threatens the power base of patriarchy which is dependent upon its regulation and control" (Loomba 1989, 56).

Beauty goes on a horseback ride with the Beast. The narrator has already referred to horses, as being better than human beings. In an intertextual hint, Swift's Gulliver's Travels is mentioned by the narrator who states that "I would have been glad to depart with him [Gulliver] to the kingdom of horses, if I'd been given the chance" (Carter 1979, 55). Beauty speaks of the "rational restraint of energy" in the horse, thus subverting the non-human symbol once more. In this tale, Beauty realizes what unites women with beasts: "not beasts nor women were equipped with the flimsy, insubstantial things when the good Lord opened the gates of Eden and let Eve and her familiars tumble out" (Carter 1979, 63). Here, the voice of the narrator evaluates the status of women in patriarchy, which deprives both women and beasts of rationality: "men denied me rationality just as they denied it to all those who were not exactly like themselves, in all their unreason" (Carter 1979, 63). In the horseback riding scene, the game is reversed. The Valet says: "prepare yourself for the sight of my master, naked" (Carter 1979, 63). At this moment, Beauty realizes that "The tiger will never lie down with the lamb […] The lamb must learn to run with the tigers" (Carter 1979, 64). In other words, women must learn the game of patriarchy and to be in equal footing with men .

Magic mirrors are frequently used in traditional fairy tales (Ferber 1999, 127). In this revisionary narrative, Carter keeps the use of the magic mirror in the traditional tale. However, she subverts its use,

making it an instrument so that the heroine, this time, becomes aware of being a mere object and commodity in the hands of the father. Initially, when looking at herself in the mirror, Beauty could only see the image of her father, "as if I had put on his face when I arrived at The Beast's palace as the discharge of his debt" (Carter 1979, 60). This is repeated until the heroine recognizes her situation. After becoming aware of her condition in relation to her father, when looking at herself again in the magic mirror, she realizes: "my father had disappeared and all I saw was a pale, hollow-eyed girl whom I scarcely recognized" (Carter 1979, 65) .

Carter's Beauty clearly sees that she leads a state of death in life. She decides to send her father the mechanical maid "to perform the part of my father's daughter" (Carter 1979, 65). This promotes an important revision of the traditional story in which Beauty returns to her father's house. By substituting the doll for the heroine, Carter writes against the tradition of the story. She suggests, the complete rejection of both automatism, that is, mechanical life, determined, controlled, manipulated by patriarchal society, personified in the figure of the father, as well as the overvaluation of beauty as an essential attribute of femininity. Beauty's decision in Carter's revisionary tale results from the recognition of the similarity between the doll's life and her real situation as a woman. By choosing to send the doll to her father, Carter's protagonist reveals a new vision of herself and her relationship with the world around her. Such a gesture can be seen as her complete refusal to continue being manipulated and controlled. The tale ends with this metamorphosis. Beauty decides to become a beast. The tears of the Beast are restored; the nakedness is total. They get rid of the mask, the wig, the skin itself. Beauty grows in the perception of her sexuality, in the acceptance of the other and in the uncovering of all the symbolic elements in relation to guilt, sacrifice, domination. She grows up because she learns that she too can-or must-be a beast to survive.

"The Snow Child" (1979)

Carter continues to play the game with the patriarchal tradition in her revisionary tale, "The Snow Child" (1979). The title of the tale suggests purity, innocence, and beauty, qualities associated with both snow and children. However, Carter breaks this expectation by building a story with other Gothic characteristics. The title suggests that this tale does not structurally follow the most famous and well-known plots of "Snow White". Issues such as the desire for a daughter, snow and the white, red and black colors ensure the reader's the continuation of the classic story. However, Carter makes possible other experiences and other critical perspectives for the old tradition .

Carter's tale starts with the establishment of the midwinter scenario, characterized as "invincible and immaculate". The familiar "once upon a time" is left out of the narrative, which subverts the genre from the very beginning. Thus, an environment of purity is set up, ready to be broken. The Count and Countess, riding a gray and a black mare, respectively. The presentation of the two characters is insightful: "The Count and his wife" (Carter 1979, 91), which reveals the social status of the man, being presented first and by the aristocratic title, while the woman is characterized with the possessive pronoun,

“his”, – just an object of possession. She only has meaning in relation to him. The female character wears glittering black fox fur and “high, black shining boots with scarlet heels and spurs” (Carter 1979, 91). However, nothing is stated about the Count’s dress. The simple physical description of the characters suggests that, like tradition, the tale takes up positions of the aristocracy. The Countess’s clothes advocate an air of cunning, with fox fur, and of violence, with heels and spurs. the black color is associated with the negative aspect. It is “a sign of death to this world (mortification) and thus of purity or humility” (Ferber 1999, 28). It is in opposition to the white color, which, in turn, is characterized, in the tale, by the winter and snow scenario. Traditionally, the white color “stands for joy, solace, and gladness, because its opposite, black, stands for grief, and because white dazzles the sight as exceeding joy dazzles the heart” (Ferber 1999, 28). The girl is described as snow. With this, it is possible to infer that the Countess will be in opposition to the girl in this revisionary narrative.

Another literary color symbol is the color of the mare ridden by the Count: gray which is “a mixture of Black and White” and “can either point to that which has shades of both colors' attributes, therefore encompassing the wide range between the two extremes, or symbolize that which has gone beyond Duality, transcending it” (Berg 2020, 36). Thus, the character of the Count (man) will be the center and the one who makes the connection between black (Countess) and between white (girl). The scenario continues to be described and shows that the snow was falling where it had already settled. The winter setting prepares for a cold story. After setting the scene of the falling snow, the narration reveals the desire of the Count to have a girl as white as snow. In traditional narratives, it is the queen who desires the child, the result of a maternal instinct. Carter subverts this situation, placing the Count as the one who wants a child. The need for the girl, in this revision, is not a pure and innocent desire of a daughter, but the desire for a sexual object .

On passing through a hole filled with blood, the Count desires a girl as red as blood. When passing through a raven, he desires a girl as black as the bird's feathers. The raven has a negative aspect, being a figure of “ill omen, usually foretelling death” (Ferber 1999, 168). Blood is representative as a vehicle of life since “life is equated with blood” (Ferber 1999, 28). Snow can represent consistency for a given time. It is “a standard of whiteness” from which it is possible to infer that purity will be momentary for this character idealized by the Count (Ferber 1999, 126). At the end of the description, the girl appears naked before the Count’s eyes. The man is amazed that his wish has come true. Nudity represents vulnerability and innocence, and meanwhile it points to eroticism and opposes the excessive description of women’s clothing. The colors that are part of the Count's idealization are present in the Countess, except for white. The absence of white in the description of the Countess indicates her lack of purity. Watching the girl, a feeling of hatred is awakened in the Countess who thought “how shall I be rid of her?” (Carter 1979, 92). The theme of jealousy and envy defines the traditional narrative. However, Carter has taken this theme up to explore issues of male gaze, desire and power .

like the stepmother in the traditional tale, the Countess tries to get rid of the girl in three attempts, characterized as a game of chess, in which each action is countered, aiming at greater power. On the first

attempt, the Countess drops the glove in the snow, so the girl can pick it up, but the Count prevents the girl and promises to buy new gloves. As a magical punishment suffered by the Countess, "the furs sprang off the Countess's shoulders and twined round the naked girl" (Carter 1979, 92). Such a magical punishment of the Countess's fox-skin robes inexplicably slipping off her body onto the girl's body suggests that the girl could replace the Countess. According to Tresidder (2008), the glove is an emblem of nobility as it is "a pledge of action […] especially by people of rank" (Tresidder 2008, 81). Taking off the glove in front of a person can signify the recognition of superiority and disarmament in front of the other. The gesture of throwing the glove means a sign of "a challenge" (Tresidder 2008, 81), accepted when it is caught. However, the Count does not allow the girl to take the glove and accept the Countess's challenge. The fox, on the other hand, has an ambivalent force of human contradiction, as it can be a representative of "cunning and powers of transformation", and meanwhile destructive and fearful with "more discreditable qualities – malice, hypocrisy, evil" (Tresidder 2008, 77). Thus, it is the double of human consciousness, which reveals the complexity behind the Countess's personality.

On the second attempt, the Countess throws her diamond brooch through the ice of a frozen lake, forcing the girl to take it back. The diamond "symbolizes incorruptibility and hence moral virtues such as sincerity and constancy" (Tresidder 2008, 54). Its hardness and cutting power characterize its inalterability and invincibility. But the Count questions her asking if the girl would be a fish to swim in such a cold climate. The boots leave the Countess and go to the girl. Completely naked, they come close to a bush of flowering roses. In the third attempt, the Countess orders the girl: "Pick me one" (Carter 1979, 92). The girl takes the rose, sticks her finger on the thorn, bleeds, screams and dies. The poisoned apple in the traditional story, used by the stepmother on the third attempt, is replaced by the rose thorn, whose death is very similar to the story of Sleeping Beauty, who pricks her finger on the spinning wheel and falls into a deep sleep. The death of the girl and then the "bite" of the rose on the Countess's finger are indicative of how the woman is seen in the eyes of the Count. They are signals given to the Countess that the girl is not different from her. Both are just objects in the male gaze. In this revisionary narrative, the relationship of inequality – between men and women. Seeing the girl dead, the Count cries and rapes the dead girl's body. The Countess watches him. Once the act is completed, the purity of the Snow Child is destroyed along with her virginity .

Unlike the traditional fairy-tale of "Snow White", there is no happy ending; there is no punishment against those who do evil; there are no people who help the girl to get out of the way; there is only the "warning" issued at the end of the tale by the girl through the "bite" of the rose: "The Count picked up the rose, bowed and handed it to his wife; when she touched it, she dropped it. 'It bites!' she said" (Carter 1979, 92). This suggests a warning for the Countess that she is as insignificant as the girl under patriarchy. The woman-woman relationship in this revisionary narrative is "one that reproduces itself as rivalry, as struggle to survive at the other woman's expense" (Bacchilega 1997, 38). Carter explores in her tales what the inscrutability of male-female relationships is like and how these relationships are authorized. She exposes the denaturalization of effects, of familiarities, through "symbolic mirrors [that]

superimpose sensual, social, and economic relations to lay bare their naturalization as a constrictive, repressive fiction”4 (Bacchilega 1997, 36). The Snow Child begins to melt and returns to the elements from which she was conceived by the Count. The fox's trait symbolizes the Countess's clothes. The Count’s permission for the Snow Child to harvest the rose is indicative of his participation in killing the girl. The clothes that the girl wore are soon returned to the Countess: “Countess had all her clothes on again. With her long hand, she stroked her furs” (Carter 1979, 92). This description hints at the bestial nature of the Countess who is described as if she were a cunning fox .

It is observed that the two female characters cannot exist together. One needs to die so that the other can survive. The death of the Snow Child can mean the death of male representations imposed on female figures. Carter questions the need to break this pattern of the subjugated woman from servitude through female agency and the power of female voice and choice. In the patriarchal discourse “woman is kept apart from all positions of power […] in which she might pose a threat to the phallocratic status quo” (Waelti-Walters 1982, 2). The girl in the tale, has no voice, does not act and does not speak on her own, thus representing a social type that has no participation in decisions. She lets herself be dominated and, therefore, dies. The idealized girl is a fantasy and symbolizes a cultural creation. At the end of the tale, she returns to the elements from which she was imagined. In a patriarchal scenario, the idealization of a submissive, passive and subservient feminine figure represented the maintenance of relations of domination between men and women. While the Child is the dominated object, the Countess is the character who does not allow herself to be dominated. Hence, the impossibility of the two coexisting since the existence of one is the negation of the other .

The death of the Snow Child proves that giving meaning to her existence cannot depend on patriarchy. There is no romantic vision of an idealized hero who rescues the heroine from the tyranny of her stepmother to marry her and live happily ever after. On the contrary, the tyrant is the Count who rapes the girl under the eyes of his wife. The Count is taken by the emotional desire, consummating the act in an animalistic way, while the woman waits for him in a rational way. After the act, the girl melts, and the Countess's observance on top of her horse is also characterized as manipulative. Therefore, there is an abyss between the tradition and the revisionary tales: Snow White is rescued and praised; while the Snow Child disappears, a victim of a brutal and grotesque male impulse. The Countess’ denial of the flower is a denial of man's manipulation of the submissive woman's human condition. In this way, the feminine freedom disguised as resistance and determination is praised. The Countess, heroine of the revisionary tale, has a voice and she uses the power of words to save herself from passivity. In the traditional tale, the stepmother dies. In Carter's tale, the Snow Child dies. Salvation, therefore, does not lie in prince charming or marriage (“and they all lived happily ever after...”), but in the subversion of the values present in patriarchy.

In revisionary fairy tales, the roles of heroes, antagonists and victims, change from those roles adopted in the traditional ones. Such changes are made possible by the new structural sequence brought to the narratives. “The Snow Child” (1979) does not begin with “once upon a time” and “they all lived

happily ever after". The grotesque elements that appear in the plot cause a sense of defamiliarization. The traditional plot is not followed, but the tale present in the collective imagination is evoked. Another visible subversion is the desire of a child by a male figure – the Count, and no longer female – which would continue the vicious cycle of narratives. The hatred between the female figures and the victory of the Countess (stepmother), and not the girl (Snow White) remains the same as in the traditional fairy tale. Traditional fairy tales usually focus on "a heroine, on a young woman suffering a prolonged ordeal before her vindication and triumph (Warner 1995, 202). However, the revisionary fairy-tale narrative points to the victory of the Countess, who is presented as the stepmother in the traditional fairy tales.

The perverse temperament of the stepmother is recurrent in traditional fairy tales. the stepmother creates strategies to abandon or annihilate her stepdaughter. In this revisionary fairy tale, there is an established game of forces that has the intermediary of the Count, who controls the suffering of the Snow Child from the vicious attempts of another female character. However, this is not enough to prevent the girl's death. The death of the snow girl represents not the destruction of women, but of male representations. This female character is not fragile because she is a woman, but because she fits the masculine idea of feminine perfection. The Countess's victory, by managing to destroy the Count's feminine idealization and showing her choices in front of him, is characteristic of the subversion achieved by Carter. The rupture of meanings, in the revisionary narratives allows writers and readers to recognize the visions developed throughout the tradition of fairy tales. Therefore, revisionary fairy-tale narratives present new clothes for the female characters, through questioning, subversion, and reconstruction of the tradition by opening to new possibilities of meanings to the narratives.

Conclusion

The revisionist process reveals itself as a manifestation that questions and subverts meanings within the discourse of traditional narrative. It considers other voices that demonstrate that history can and must change, giving new meaning to notions once considered natural and universal. In these revisionary narratives, the intertextual process fulfills the function of destabilizing the world as an absolute truth. Intertextuality, metafiction and parody are postmodern revisionist strategies that denaturalize universal patriarchal beliefs. Such a revisionist process observes not only the content of these new stories, but the way in which they are narrated. Revisionary fairy-tale narratives allow the female characters to have a voice to inscribe new meanings to old narratives .

While Carter asserts her feminist stance and aligns her writing with feminist agenda, she elicits divided opinions among readers and critics. Many believe that she is an accomplice of the patriarchy since her female characters are placed in subordinate roles and victims of aggression from the male characters. Criticism also points out that the highly erotic and violent writing only reproduces masculinity. Many of her female characters convey, for some readers, the image of victimized and servile characters who are in the works only for the sadistic pleasure of the male characters. However, Carter uses the tricks of patriarchy to expose the wound that is still open today. If the whole situation in which

the female characters are placed causes shock, disgust and revolt, then the objective has been achieved. It is up to the reader to decide how to position himself in relation to the real problem that Carter has decided to expose. Carter proves herself as a profound expert on the issues debated by contemporary cultural criticism as she manages to transgress not only by subverting and deconstructing meanings set by patriarchy but also by reconstructing these meanings to endow them with new values. Carter uses myths of masculinity and femininity to dramatize issues of racial, sexual and cultural power. She really is a woman who subverts concepts and problematizes positions and identifications about the feminine in her works.

"The Tiger's Bride" (1979) and "The Snow Child" (1979) present processes of deconstructing and reconstructing myths about women. All aggressive eroticism explicitly placed in Carter's heroines can be considered a problem, as it does not bring a solution and does not modify the patriarchal system. However, Carter's revisionism is subversive and illustrates the potential perversity of female sexuality. The two re-visionary narratives are written in an extremely sensual and engaging way, which stirs the readers' senses, allowing them to visit, in a careful reading, the deadly chamber of Milord and the snow child landscape. In addition, Carter seeks to give new meanings to myths and beliefs by putting "new wines in old bottles." In the two re-visionary narratives of "The Tiger's Bride" (1979) and "The Snow Child" (1979) nothing is by chance. Violence and sexualization are not unjustified, nor is Carter interested in finding solutions for the role that the phallocentric society imposes on women. She shifts the reading to another space outside the discourse of male desire. Carter seeks to expose the pitfalls of patriarchy and use them to create subversive writing. Her characters, although placed at different levels of domination and violence, are characterized by the will to survive, even if they use sexuality and violence to their advantage. Carter allows her female characters to have violent, perverse personality traits, to feel desire and to be sexually active. Her intention is to end the stereotype of passive and domesticated femininity. Making this move, Carter uses pornography in the service of women. Her protagonists manage to survive by using the weapons they have. Carter's message is that even the most passive and silenced woman can reveal herself as a rose, and that she bites in the end.

خمر جديد في قوارير قديمة: سرديات أنجيلا كارتر النسوية المنقحة للقصص الاسطورية "الجميلة والوحش" و"بياض الثلج"

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الملخص

يتناول هذا البحث سرديات أنجيلا كارتر المنقحة للقصتين الاسطوريتين، "الجميلة والوحش" و "بياض الثلج" لإظهار تهميش دور المرأة في القصص الاسطورية التقليدية؛ والبحث يهدف إلى إظهار كيف استطاعت كارتر أن تشكك، وتقوض، وتعيد بناء المعاني، التي تبلورت في القصص الاسطورية الذكورية التقليدية؛ لذا فإن البحث يتناول مفهوم "ريتش" عن "التنقيح" بغية إظهار توظيف التناص، والمحاكاة الساخرة، والسرد الشارح، والاحلال السردي، ونزع شرعية الحكاية، والكرنفالية كاستراتيجيات ما بعد حداثية لإعادة كتابة الحكايات التقليدية؛ ومن ثم فإن البحث يتناول بالتحليل قصتي كارتر الاسطوريتين: "عروس النمر" و "الطفل الثلجي"، لإظهار كيف أن القصص النسوية المنقحة أن تشكك، وتقوض، وتعيد بناء المعاني المتبلورة للتقاليد الذكورية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: أنجيلا كارتر، النسوية، ما بعد الحداثة، السرديات المنقحة للقصص الاسطورية.

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