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Breaking the Magic Spell of the Feminine Fairy Tales Through Subversion: Angela Carter's "Wolf Trilogy"

Rompiendo el hechizo mágico de los cuentos de hadas femeninos a través de la subversión: "la trilogía del lobo" de Angela Carter

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Abstract
This study, analyzing Angela Carter's three fairy tales: "The Werewolf", "The Company of Wolves", and "Wolf-Alice" comparatively with Perrault's and Grimms' versions of "Little Red Riding Hood", aims to show Carter's subversion of Perrault's and Grimms' versions. It presents different reasons why fairy tales have been changed and rewritten over years. Afterwards, dwelling on the motives behind the urge of the feminist writers to create revisions of the classical fairy tales, it specifically displays how and why Carter altered the classical fairy tales, interestingly drawing on an earlier version while rewriting her own versions. Thus, it concludes that Carter, with her revisions of the fairy tales, wanted to break up with the norms of the patriarchal society reflected in Perrault's and Grimms' versions, and she desired to subvert the idealized and coded gender roles. All these points contribute to the originality of the study.

Keywords: Fairy Tales, Perrault, Grimms, Angela Carter, Revisions of Fairy Tales, Subversion.

Resumen
Este estudio, que analiza los tres cuentos de hadas de Angela Carter: "El hombre lobo", "La compañía de los lobos" y "El lobo-Alice" comparativamente con las versiones de "Caperucita Roja" de Perrault y Grimm, tiene como objetivo demostrar la subversión de Carter de los cuentos de Perrault y versiones de Grimm. Presenta diferentes razones por las que los cuentos de hadas han sido modificados y reescritos a lo largo de los años. Luego, centrándose en los motivos detrás del impulso de las escritoras feministas de crear revisiones de los cuentos de hadas clásicos, muestra específicamente cómo y por qué Carter alteró los cuentos de hadas clásicos, basándose de manera interesante en una versión anterior mientras reescribía sus propias versiones. Así, se concluye que Carter, con sus revisiones de los cuentos de hadas, quería romper con las normas de la sociedad patriarcal reflejadas en las versiones de Perrault y Grimm, y deseaba subvertir los roles de género idealizados y codificados. Todos estos puntos contribuyen a la originalidad de este estudio.

Palabras clave: Cuentos de hadas, Perrault, Grimms, Angela Carter, revisiones de cuentos de hadas, subversión.

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Introduction

As products of imagination fairy tales have always been attractive as well as creative. They are attractive in that they have been sources of inspiration for many, including writers, scholars, researchers and critics for many years, and they have frequently been rewritten, reinterpreted, criticized, analyzed and studied. Apart from their attractiveness, being products of imagination, fairy tales are creative. Another reason why they are creative is that they lead many scholars to create and recreate new fairy tales. One of the most significant reasons rendering them so popular is, without a doubt, their flexibility and adaptability. That flexibity and adaptability are the factors that allowed the fairy tales by Grimm Brothers, Perrault and Andersen, just to name a few, to have been rewritten, reinterpreted and changed a lot over the years. There is one significant question to be asked here so as to be able to start our argument: Why have fairy tales been changed over the years?

There are several socio-political, cultural, and religious reasons to explain these changes. For instance, when Jack Zipes talks about how the functions of the wonder tales altered in the Late Medieval period, in his article entitled “The Changing Function of the Fairy Tale”, he states that

> Peasant women and men also transmitted these tales to the upper classes when they worked for them as wet nurses, maids, servants, and day-laborers. These tales were considered trite and pagan, more suited for children and peasants than for polite society. However, priests began to incorporate them into their sermons in the vernacular as parables to illustrate a moral message. Interesting here is that, while the priests "christianized" certain folk tales, they also created new ones that were in turn appropriated by the peasants and often changed and spread without the Christian elements (Moser-Rath, Predigtmärlein der Barockzeit) (1988:13)

In other words, in the Late Medieval period wonder tales first underwent a change due to religious reasons, and then they were adapted according to social concerns.

In all periods storytellers or writers have had different reasons for retelling/writing the fairy tales. To illustrate, as Zipes states, although the Grimm Brothers used Charles Perrault’s fairy tale of “Little Red Riding Hood” as a source of inspiration, they exposed the fairy tale to a sanitization process since it was written “not only for children but also for an educated upper-class audience that included children” (2006: 65). Since Perrault’s version of the fairy tale reinforced the idea of rape explicitly, especially “more conservative Wilhelm Grimm” (Zipes, 2006: 62) revised the fairy tale so as to meet middle-class codes (coming from modesty) and taste, however, with the preservation of the themes of sexuality and rape. Moreover, Grimms’s fairy tales such as “Little Red Riding Hood”, had a function of imposing preconditioned gender roles, determined by male-dominated society, on children:

> What became apparent to these writers and critics was that the Grimms’ tales, though ingenious and perhaps socially relevant in their own times, contained sexist and racist attitudes and served a socialization process that placed great emphasis on passivity, industry, and self-sacrifice for girls and on activity, competition, and accumulation of wealth for boys. (Zipes, 2006: 60).

The answer to the question "why many contemporary feminist writers have rewritten or revised classical fairy tales" is that they have aimed to create "non-sexist fairy tales for children and adults" (Zipes, 1988: 25), because they have wanted to break up with the norms of patriarchal society reflected in those stories and subvert the idealized and coded gender roles (or culturally specific models of gender identity) -mentioned above by Zipes- in a male-dominated society. Hence, fairy tales, being products of imagination and giving their authors the opportunity to create and recreate stories, have opened up windows to a variety of worlds where you can act and speak freely:

> In this way, even through the metaphor, the tale allows to say the unsayable, to put on stage what would not be possible to tell otherwise: the death, the taboos, the social and the religious bans. The story becomes the "as if" area and it welcomes what is hidden, dark, deviant, painful; the subject accesses to new forms of self-knowledge, of his world and of his own emotional experience through a journey in the improbable and the unspeakable (Barsotti, 2015: 72).

Therefore, fairy tales are like camouflage, as they help the writers through metaphors, symbols or perhaps allegories to speak their minds freely, but almost always conscious of living in a male dominated society.

However, Karen E. Rowe, in her book chapter titled "Feminism and Fairy Tales", where she focuses on the feminization of heroines and the female objectification in a male-dominated and -thus male-constructed- fairy tale world, questions the possibility of the existence of any writers who can change the existing order, and makes an open call for it with her closing question at the end of her chapter: "do we have the courageous vision and energy to cultivate a newly fertile ground of psychic and cultural experience from which will grow fairy tales for human beings in the future?" (1986/2014: 223)

While some researchers and scholars have claimed that fairy tales have a negative effect on the socialization process and gender role development, others have emphasized the function of fairy tales to initiate an awakening in women (Rich, 1972: 18; Stone, 1975:143 qt. in Hasse, 2000: 37). Whether it may be the negative or positive effect of fairy tales, they inspired and triggered Angela Carter to revisionist mythmaking.

Therefore, Angela Carter's revisions of "Little Red Riding Hood" by Grimms and especially by Perrault seem to have suggested an answer to Karen E. Rowe's question above. Carter, as a critique of the male-dominated/constructed fairy tale world, writes not only one but three different versions of "Little Red Riding Hood". These three tales are called the "Wolf Trilogy" by Kimberly J. Lau, who claims that Carter's last three stories in *The Bloody Chamber* (1979) collection have a special relation to one another through intertexts allowing her to name them a "trilogy" (2008: 78).[1]

Carter's revision and subversion of the classical fairy tales is a way to create different worlds, perhaps better alternatives than the already existing ones, demonstrating how women could (re)gain autonomy in these alternative fairy tale worlds. I say "(re) gain" because, according to Ruth B. Bottigheimer, once women had control over their fertility, they had autonomy, but "[c]oincident with women's loss of fertility control was the emer-

[1] I owe a debt to her and Madonna Kolbenschlag for their inspiration in creating the title of my article.

gence of the new literary genre, fairy tales. As the genre developed toward its modern form, two notable changes occurred in their plots. Men became a danger to women and newly disempowered women cowered in fear" (2000:76). For this reason, Carter's stories utilize strategies to (re)gain autonomy. Her stories are "a self-conscious and critical engagement with the classical fairy tales as a means to liberate women to imagine and construct new identities" (Hasse, 2000: 21).

Therefore, the aim of this article is to reveal how three versions of "Little Red Riding Hood", —namely the "Wolf Trilogy"— by contemporary feminist writer Angela Carter vary from classical versions, "Little Red Cap" ("LRC") by Grimm Brothers and "Little Red Riding Hood" ("LRRH") by Charles Perrault.

"The Werewolf"

Although the first story of the trilogy is rather short if compared to the other two stories, it is significant in that it functions to introduce the background of the three stories to the reader as in the following: "a northern country [...] [c]old; tempest; wild beasts in the forest" ("The Werewolf", 1993, 108) and builds up the setting with all of the necessary components to create a gothic atmosphere on the opening page. It also indicates that she constructs her story upon a myth, with descriptions such as "no flowers grow there", "wreaths of garlic on the doors keep out the vampires", and "a witch [...] some old woman whose black cat, oh, sinister! follows her about all the time" ("The Werewolf", 1993, 108).

Then we, as readers, learn that Little Red Riding Hood's grandmother is sick and she has to bring her "oatcakes" and a "pot of butter". Then, the reader observes a variant of the warning section by the mother in Grimms' classical fairy tale, which does not exist in Charles Perrault's version:

> One day her mother said to her: "Come, Little Red Cap, take this piece of cake and bottle of wine and bring them to your grandmother. She is sick and weak. This will strengthen her. Be nice and good, and give her my regards. Don't tarry on your way, and don't stray from the path, otherwise you'll fall and break the glass. Then your sick grandmother will get nothing." Little Red Cap promised her mother to be very obedient. ("LRC", 1984/2019: 124)

As seen above, Grimms' fairy tale presents "an obedient" little girl who promises to follow the rules of good manners, which reflects the function of fairy tales to educate children and also the conformity of Grimms' tales to the expectations and taste of the bourgeoisie class. In particular, the sentence "don't stray from the path, otherwise you'll fall and break the glass. Then your sick grandmother will get nothing" ("LRC", 1984/2019: 124) demonstrates that the mother, having grown up in the same male-dominated society, is ready to weight down the responsibility of a potential or possible mistake on the shoulders of the little girl.

However, the attitude of the mother towards the child is quite different in Carter's story: "The good child does as her mother bids--five miles' trudge through the forest; do not leave the path because of the bears, the wild boar, the starving wolves. Here, take your

father's hunting knife; you know how to use it". ("The Werewolf", 1993:109) The mother in Carter's fairy tale seems to be more concerned about the well-being of her daughter rather than the oatcakes and the pot of butter. What mostly distinguishes the heroine of this story from Grimms' little girl is that she is precautious and armed against a potential danger by the wild animals and especially, "the starving wolves", representing men since "wer" or "were" in the Old English means "man" (Lau, 2008: 82). What's more, she was consciously taught how to use the knife when necessary. Although the knife is symbolically associated with a "phallus" and may embody a symbol of male power in patriarchal societies, Carter, by giving the ability to use a knife to her heroine, breaks the magic spell of the feminine fairy tales and subverts the culturally specific gender roles tailored for women such as, always staying indoors, dealing with the housework and living with the support of and under the protection of men.

As the two tales proceed, one witnesses that the actions of the two heroines prove them to be quite the reverse of each other:

> "[…] she knew the forest too well to fear it but she must always be on her guard. When she heard that freezing howl of a wolf, she dropped her gifts, seized her knife and turned on the beast. […] It went for her throat, as wolves do, but she made a great swipe at it with her father's knife and slashed off its right forepaw" ("The Werewolf", 1993: 109).

Unlike the fragile, helpless heroines of classical fairy tales, she is self-assertive and fearless. She knows what to do, and as the wolf attempts to attack her, without hesitation, she cuts its forepaw instantly, not even leaving it the time to continue its attempt. With her decisive act, the girl sets an example for girls and women, in the same way, Carolyn G. Heilbrun suggests using male models in Grimm fairy tales "to enhance their feelings of daring and adventure" (1979: 147 qt. Hasse, 2000: 19-20).

Grimms' Little Red Cap also does not seem to get frightened upon her encounter with the wolf. However, the reason lying beneath her fearlessness has nothing to do with self-assertion or bravery. It is just because of her naivety besides ignorance: "And, as soon as Little Red Cap entered the woods, she encountered the wolf. However, Little Red Cap did not know what a wicked sort of an animal he was and was not afraid of him." ("LRC", 1984/2019: 124). Certainly, she does not know much about the outer world, as she has not been warned by her mother against the dangers of it; thus, she is deceived by the wolf, to whom she gives the exact directions to her grandmother's house, saving it the trouble of searching for it.

Perrault, on the other hand, does not pen an all-alone encounter between the little girl and the wolf, but he imagines instead some other people as witnesses of their meeting: "Little Red Riding Hood departed at once to visit her grandmother, who lived in another village. In passing through a wood she met old neighbor wolf, who had a great desire to eat her. But he did not dare because of some woodcutters who were in the forest" ("LRRH", 1984/2019: 70). Perrault adds some "men" as protective figures to his story, that is why Little Red Riding Hood does not even need to feel frightened. Thus, she is drawn like a helpless, vulnerable figure who needs to be protected. Since there are some woodcutters working in the forest, the wolf has to wait until she reaches her grandmother's house, the directions of which she thoughtlessly tells the wolf, just like Grimms's

heroine: “You must pass the mill which you can see right over there, and hers is the first house in the village.” (“LRRH”, 1984/2019: 70)

In Carter’s fairy tale, the child’s self-assertive behaviour is reinforced through her act of cleaning the knife of the blood on it: “The child wiped the blade of her knife clean on her apron, wrapped up the wolf's paw in the cloth in which her mother had packed the oatcakes and went on towards her grandmother's house.” (“The Werewolf”, 1993: 109). She uses and then cleans her knife very skillfully, almost like a hunter or a male figure, which allows an interpretation that she does not need a hunter to rescue her from the dangers of the forest, but she can do it herself. Thus, Carter subverts the traditional relationship or “ideological solidarity” (Lau, 2008:83) between phallus and the father, or man.

Upon her arrival at her grandmother’s house, the child realizes that the forepaw of the wolf has transformed into a hand apparently belonging to the grandmother, lying in the bed: “There was a bloody stump where her right hand should have been, festering already” (“The Werewolf”, 1993: 109). Therefore, it is not the wolf eating the grandmother and lying in the bed instead of her as in the classical versions, but the grandmother herself, who seems to have transformed into a wolf. Here, Carter leaves us to solve the ambiguous relationship between the grandmother, the wolf and the witch. Is she a wolf or a witch or both at the same time? Does Carter recall the archetypal relationship between the grandmother figure and the witch? It is also interesting that she creates an identification between the grandmother and the wolf when one considers the identification between wolf and man in the classical versions of the same fairy tale. Kimberly J. Lau also expresses her confusion on the same issue with the question: “If the Little Red Riding Hood tales consistently warn young girls to stay clear of predatory men, "wolves" in the long- standing vernacular tradition, what might Carter be saying in casting the grandmother in the traditional role of male sexual predator?” (2008: 82). Therefore, in an attempt to find an answer to the question she concludes that “Carter creates a phallic mother” (Lau, 2008: 82). Finally the child struggles with her, using her knife again until the neighbours arrive to help her and stone the grandmother/wolf /witch to death. The first tale ends with a happy ending: “Now the child lived in her grandmother's house; she prospered” (“The Werewolf”, 1993: 110).

As for Perrault’s fairy tale, the wolf, after making a deal with the girl in the forest, takes the shortcut to the grandmother’s house and having eaten her, starts to wait for Little Red Riding Hood: “Upon seeing her enter, the wolf hid himself under the bedcovers and said to her: ‘Put the biscuits and the pot of butter on the bin and come lie down beside me.’” (“LRRH”, 1984/2019: 71). Given the identification of the wolf with a man, this invitation to bed by the wolf has frequently and justifiably been interpreted as an invitation for sexual intercourse or an act of rape (Zipes, 1984/2019: 9; Wilhelmsson, 2014: 14). In another study, Zipes justifies the same notion of rape in the fairy tale saying, “[…] Charles Perrault and the Grimm Brothers transformed an oral folk tale about the social initiation of a young woman into a narrative about rape in which the heroine is obliged to bear the responsibility for sexual violation” (1986/2014: 227). Hence, as expected from the mentality of the male-dominated society, the little girl, relying on the myth of Adam and Eve, is held responsible for the act of rape because of her so-called seductive nature, with the man naturally being a victim of temptation. Similarly, Susan

Brownmiller makes an analogy between the classical "Little Red Riding Hood" fairy tale and the act of rape:

> *Red Riding Hood is* a parable of rape. There are frightening male figures abroad in the woods—we call them wolves, among other names—and females are helpless before them. Better stick close to the path, better not be adventurous. If you are lucky, a *good, friendly* male may be able to save you from certain disaster. ("Funny, every man I meet wants to protect me," says Mae West."I can't figure out what from.") In the fairy-tale code book, Jack may kill giants but Little Red Riding Hood must look to a kindly huntsman for protection (1975/1993: 310).

As is the tradition, the girl is eaten by the wolf, substituting the act of rape, which causes the heroine to be depicted as a weak, helpless person in Charles Perrault's classical version.

In Grimms's version of the fairy tale, the little girl is deceived by the wolf during their encounter in the forest. Upon the wolf's suggestion, she spends a long time picking up flowers and giving the wolf enough time to reach the grandmother's house before her, to eat her grandmother. When she arrives, the wolf, in disguise, pretends to be the grandmother. With the closing lines of their dialogue: "'Oh, grandmother, what a terrible big mouth you have!' 'The better to eat you with.'" ("LRC", 1984/2019: 125), the wolf suddenly jumps out of the bed and swallows her. Grimms' ending is quite similar to Perrault's ending, with the wolf swallowing the little girl. However, as the Grimm Brothers found Perrault's already revised version of the original fairy tale "still too cruel, too sexual and too tragic", they "clean[ed] it up for the bourgeois socialization process of the 19th century and adapted it to comply with the emerging *Biedermeier* or Victorian image of little girls and proper behaviour" (Zipes, 1984/2019: 14). Besides, in order to prevent the story from ending cruelly and tragically, they added a male figure, the hunter to deliver the girl from being killed in the wolf's stomach or from being raped metaphorically. Then comes the moral of the tale in the end: "Never again in your life will you stray by yourself into the woods when your mother has forbidden it" ("LRC", 1984/2019: 126), a moral that is exactly in line with the taste and the education style of the bourgeois class, indicating that if the child repeats the same mistake, she might not have a chance to be rescued for the second time.

"The Company of Wolves"

The second story of the "Wolf Trilogy" is "The Company of Wolves", which is perhaps the most erotic story of the three. It is in line with Carter's claim that pornography can be used in the service of women (1987). Right from the beginning, the story is sensed to be built upon sexual implications like: "The wolf is carnivore incarnate and he's as cunning as he is ferocious; once he's had a taste of flesh then nothing else will do" ("The Company", 1993: 110), and thus it is very different from both the first story of the trilogy and the classical versions of the "Little Red Riding Hood" fairy tale. Given the fact that the wolf represents man in a patriarchal society (in the first story), one feels that his insatiable lust "for flesh" will cause something sinister in the course of the story. Carter endeavours to

prepare the reader for all the possible ways a person might meet a wolf, with sentences like: “But the wolves have ways of arriving at your own hearthside” and “Fear and flee the wolf; for, worst of all, the wolf may be more than he seems” (“The Company”, 1993: 111). Again the same legend of men transforming into wolves and back into men continues in the second story of the trilogy:

> […] a wolf came slinking out of the forest, a big one, a heavy one, he weighed as much as a grown man and the straw gave way beneath him--into the pit he tumbled. The hunter jumped down after him, slit his throat, cut off all his paws for a trophy. And then no wolf at all lay in front of the hunter but the bloody trunk of a man, headless, footless, dying, dead. (“The Company”, 1993: 111)

Thus, for a few pages, Carter introduces the situation and rather gothic setting to the reader giving an account of the wolf legend and the superstitions and folk beliefs about it. She does not directly start the story of Little Red Riding Hood, but tells another story about a young woman marrying a man who leaves her on their wedding night, transforming into a wolf. The setting is same as the one in “The Werewolf”, “It is winter and cold weather” and again “The grave-eyed children of the sparse villages always carry knives with them […]” (“The Company”, 1993: 111). This opening is quite different from the almost abrupt opening of Perrault’s version. Perrault, after commenting on how much the little girl is loved by her mother and grandmother in a few lines, moves onto the dialogue between the mother and the daughter, as a result of which the mother sends her to the grandmother’s house, without warning her against the potential danger in the woods (“LRRH”, 1984/2019: 70), as mentioned previously.

In Grimms’s “Little Red Cap”, the opening is almost the same as Perrault’s opening, including the conversation between the mother and the daughter, with a slight difference that this time the mother warns the daughter to be “nice and good”, but not to be careful about the dangers lurking in the depths of the forest. Here, what distinguishes Carter’s fairy tale from the other two earlier versions is that, as Zipes emphasizes, “There are no logical and causal connections in Carter's narrative, and each scene has its hilarious aspect” (Zipes, 1998: 150). In other words, Carter’s fairy tales do not follow the structure or the logical order of the traditional “Little Red Riding Hood” stories. That explains the reason why the reader, at first glance, cannot understand if it is a “Little Red Riding Hood” fairy tale or not. Then, there occurs a transition from the wolf legends, superstitions, and folk beliefs to the tale of Red Riding Hood, almost on the fourth page of the tale, with the line “It is midwinter and the robin, the friend of man, sits on the handle of the gardener's spade and sings” (“The Company”, 1993:113). Since this line gives the setting, as in traditional Little Red Riding Hood tales by Grimms and Perrault, the reader understands that it is the beginning of the tale of Red Riding Hood by Carter.

In Carter’s second revision of the classical fairy tale, it is not the mother who bids the little girl to take food and drink to her grandmother, but the girl herself who persists in going to her through the wood:

> It is the worst time in all the year for wolves but this strong-minded child insists she will go off through the wood. She is quite sure the wild beasts cannot harm her although, well-warned, she lays a carving knife in the basket her mother has packed with cheeses.

> There is a bottle of harsh liquor distilled from brambles; a batch of flat oatcakes baked on the hearthstone; a pot or two of jam. The flaxen-haired girl will take these delicious gifts to a reclusive grandmother so old the burden of her years is crushing her to death ("The Company", 1993:113).

Carter's heroine is in stark contrast with the heroines of the two earlier versions. Contrary to Perrault's innocent heroine and Grimms' obedient bourgeois girl, neither of whom are aware of the outer world and its dangers, Carter's heroine is strong-minded, and conscious of the danger in the wood and thus armed against it. Nevertheless, she is very self-confident, thinking that no wild beasts can harm her.

Then, Carter gives an overtly sexual description of the girl, which would be very unusual for the two earlier versions by Grimms and Perrault:

> Her breasts have just begun to swell; her hair is like lint, so fair it hardly makes a shadow on her pale forehead; her cheeks are an emblematic scarlet and white and she has just started her woman's bleeding, the clock inside her that will strike, henceforward, once a month.
>
> She stands and moves within the invisible pentacle of her own virginity. 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 membrane; she is a closed system; she does not know how to shiver. ("The Company", 1993: 113-114).

Carter stresses her virginity to point out both her inexperience ("an unbroken egg") and sexual attraction ("breasts have just begun to swell") as a young girl. Thus, this description signals the girl's upcoming sexual awareness and foreshadows what will happen at the end of the tale.

Unlike Grimms' and Perrault's classical fairy tales, in Carter's "The Company of Wolves", the girl meets a young man in the forest, not a wolf:

> When she heard the freezing howl of a distant wolf, her practised hand sprang to the handle of her knife, but she saw no sign of a wolf at all, nor of a naked man, neither, but then she heard a clattering among the brushwood and there sprang on to the path a fully clothed one, a very handsome young one, in the green coat and wideawake hat of a hunter, laden with carcasses of game birds. She had her hand on her knife at the first rustle of twigs but he laughed with a flash of white teeth when he saw her and made her a comic yet flattering little bow; she'd never seen such a fine fellow before, not among the rustic clowns of her native village ("The Company", 1993: 114).

Here, Carter, in describing the girl's meeting directly a handsome young man instead of a wolf, subverts the long-held tradition of making the girl meet a wolf, which is identified with a man in a male-dominated society. However, emphasizing phrases such as "a flash of white teeth" and "gleaming trails of spittle clung to his teeth" never allows us to forget that he is a wolf. It is just one of the many "ways" a wolf appears to someone, about which Carter has warned us previously. Neither "a wolf at all, nor of a naked man", but a very handsome young man with a rifle, who ironically seems to be a hunter; the protective, reliable male figure of the Grimms's and Perrault's versions, is thus subverted by Carter.

They walk together for some time "laughing and joking like old friends", but when the day darkens, it starts to snow, and it gives the boy an opportunity to offer to take her home more quickly using his compass: "He assured her this compass had taken him safely through the wood on his hunting trip, […] She did not believe it; she knew she should never leave the path on the way through the wood or else she would be lost instantly." ("The Company", 1993:114). Unlike the defenceless and innocent little heroines of Grimms and Perrault, knowing nothing about the outer world, Carter's heroine is not deceived by the young man (the wolf), and she insists on following her own path no matter how long it takes. Zipes describes Angela Carter as a "sly" and even "cunning" writer who "passed on this cunning quality to the heroines in her two fairy tales for children" (1998: 147). However, as is seen above, the heroines of her fairy tales for adults are also cunning.

Thence, they bet on who will reach the house first, and the boy offers to make an agreement that she will give him a kiss if he wins, a seductive offer, which seems to work "for she wanted to dawdle on her way to make sure the handsome gentleman would win his wager" ("The Company", 1993:115).

As expected, the young man arrives at the house before her, with "a faint trace of blood on his chin", an indicator that he has been feasting on his prey on his way to the house. Here, there is a return to the well-known scene of the earlier versions: He knocks on the door pretending to be the granddaughter and then enters the house. Upon entering, he starts to strip off his clothes in order to transform into a wolf again: "A crisp stripe of hair runs down his belly, his nipples are ripe and dark as poison fruit but he's so thin you could count the ribs under his skin if only he gave you the time. He strips off his trousers and she can see how hairy his legs are. His genitals, huge. Ah! huge." ("The Company", 1993:116). This scene of stripping off the clothes is, without doubt, one of the erotic scenes unique to Carter's version of the tale, which would definitely have been censored by Wilhelm Grimm if he had had a chance to read it. Thus, it solidifies the analogy between the act of eating and the act of rape disguised in the earlier versions of the tale. After devouring the edible parts of the grandmother, he clears away the remnants, gets dressed and waits for the girl, reassuming his young man shape, but wearing grandmother's nightcap. Upon her arrival, he pretends to be the grandmother as in the classical versions and calls her in: "[…] perhaps she was a little disappointed to see only her grandmother sitting beside the fire. But then he flung off the blanket and sprang to the door, pressing his back against it so that she could not get out again" ("The Company", 1993: 116). She understands that she is in danger but cannot reach out for her knife because of his fixed looks on her. Aside from the danger inside the house, she sees the threat outside, the company of the wolves: "Ten wolves; twenty wolves—so many wolves she could not count them, howling in concert as if demented or deranged" ("The Company", 1993: 117). Therefore, instead of trying to escape, she decides to stay and behave in her own way. "She closed the window on the wolves' threnody and took of her scarlet shawl, the colour of poppies, the colour of sacrifices, the colour of her menses, and, since her fear did her no good, she ceased to be afraid" ("The Company", 1993: 117). With this new type of brave, self-assertive heroine in "The Company of Wolves", Carter attempts to build/create new models of female behaviour. From then on, comes the most erotic part of the story:

> What shall I do with my shawl? Throw it on the fire, dear one. You won't need it again. […] What shall I do with my blouse? Into the fire with it, too, my pet.
> The thin muslin went flaring up the chimney like a magic bird and now off came her skirt, her woollen stockings, her shoes, and on to the fire they went, too, and were gone for good. The firelight shone through the edges of her skin; now she was clothed only in her untouched integument of flesh ("The Company", 1993: 117-118).

While writing her version of the fairy tale, for this erotic striptease scene Angela Carter interestingly draws on even an earlier version of the tale, prior to Perrault's. It is Paul Delarue's version of "Little Red Riding Hood", recorded about 1885 and entitled "The Story of Grandmother":

> 'Undress yourself, my child,' the werewolf said, 'and come lie down beside me.'
>
> 'Where should I put my apron?'
>
> 'Throw it into the fire, my child, you won't be needing it anymore.'
>
> And each time she asked where she should put all her other clothes, the bodice, the dress, the petticoat, and the long stockings, the wolf responded: 'Throw them into the fire, my child, you won't be needing them anymore.' (qtd. Zipes, 1984/2019: 5-6).

As Zipes interprets, most probably Charles Perrault was familiar with that version (Zipes, 1984/2019: 5), but in order to adapt the tale to the expectations of the period, he did not employ most of those sexual elements. However, Carter most probably reads this earlier version and decides to utilize it to subvert the classical versions written by Perrault and Grimms.

Then, almost at the end of the tale, as the girl starts to take off his clothes, comes the traditional dialogue between the girl and the wolf starting with: "What big arms you have. All the better to hug you with." ("The Company", 1993: 118) and it proceeds between the kisses and caresses of the two until the final part of the dialogue: "What big teeth you have! She saw how his jaw began to slaver and the room was full of the clamour of the forest's Liebestod but the wise child never flinched, even when he answered: All the better to eat you with. The girl burst out laughing; she knew she was nobody's meat" ("The Company", 1993: 118). As one of the "cunning" heroines of Carter, she uses her mind and decides not to be prey to the wolf/man this time. She is self-autonomous and does not need anyone to save her; but finds her own way in order to survive. In Zipes' words, "She deftly illustrates how a 'strong-minded child' can fend for herself in the woods and tame the wolf. The savagery of sex reveals its tender side, and the girl becomes at one with the wolf to soothe his tormented soul" (1984/2019: 44-45).

Zipes' expression of "the savagery of sex" above can be renamed as "pornography", which is generally considered a negative term. However, for Angela Carter:

> The moral pornographer would be an artist who uses pornographic material as part of the acceptance of the logic of a world of absolute sexual licence for all the genders, and projects a model of the way such a world might work. A moral pornographer might use pornography as a critique of current relations between the sexes (1987: 19).

It seems that in "The Company of Wolves", Carter herself becomes the moral pornographer who uses pornography to create "a world of absolute sexual licence for all genders".

Hence, in this world, she uses pornography as a subversive strategy for the "critique of the current relations between the sexes" and to overturn the accepted gender roles in the patriarchal society.

Thus, Carter subverts the traditional endings of both Perrault's version, in which the little girl is eaten by the wolf, an apparently deserved ending according to Perrault, and Grimms' version, where the girl, together with her grandmother, is redeemed and learns a lesson. In Carter's story, the heroine is neither the victim of the male-dominated society nor a helpless child in need of a male-figure any longer. She is now the courageous, self-autonomous young girl defending herself against the dangers of the patriarchal society. As Donald Hasse states, Carter uses "subversive strategies to contest the idealized outcomes of the fairy tales and their representations of gender and female identity" (2000: 32). In the end, by taming the wolf, Carter's heroine changes the ending of the (earlier versions of) tale on her behalf: "See! sweet and sound she sleeps in granny's bed, between the paws of the tender wolf" ("The Company", 1993: 118).

"Wolf-Alice"

While Angela Carter gives us lengthy accounts of legends and superstitions about wolves in her two previous fairy tales, "The Werewolf" and "Company of the Wolves", in her third fairy tale, she introduces us directly to a wolf-girl, namely Wolf-Alice sucked up by wolves. Kimberly J. Lau says that with the use of such a heroine Carter "gestures toward other narrative traditions- to legends of feral children, to myths of famous children raised by wolves, Romulus and Remus, for instance- […]" (2008: 89). She is the Little Red Riding Hood of Carter's third story. However, she is not described as a sweet or beautiful girl like the ones in the two previous fairy tales: "Wide shoulders, long arms and she sleeps succinctly curled into a ball as if she were cradling her spine in her tail. Nothing about her is human except that she is not a wolf; it is as if the fur she thought she wore had melted into her skin and become part of it, although it does not exist" ("Wolf- Alice", 1993: 119). Although not physically described as a wolf, she appears to be one in her behaviour. Therefore, she cannot be compared to the obedient girls of Grimms's and Perrault's classical fairy tales: "Yet she always seemed wild, impatient of restraint, capricious in temper; […] she arched her back, pawed the floor, retreated to a far corner of the chapel, crouched, trembled, urinated, defecated--reverted entirely, it would seem, to her natural state" ("Wolf- Alice", 1993: 120).

Since Carter allocates quite a lot of space for such descriptions of the heroine at the beginning of the fairy tale, again one cannot say that it is like the openings of the classical "Little Riding Red Hood" fairy tales. Besides, the tale itself does not seem to be an obvious variant of "Little Red Riding Hood" as, in the beginning, there seems to be no wolf in the story other than the girl herself, who is delivered to a Duke's "bereft and unsanctified household" after spending nine days in the convent she has been taken to ("Wolf- Alice", 1993: 120).

Then, Carter introduces the Duke with his dry and pale skin, having "a bedroom painted terracotta, rusted with a wash of pain, like the interior of an Iberian butcher's shop, but for himself, nothing can hurt him since he ceased to cast an image in the

mirror." ("Wolf- Alice", 1993: 120). Through this quotation, one understands that Carter continues to draw on the narrative tradition of the wolves. The Duke's dry, pale skin, his "gloomy mansion", a bedroom like a "butcher's shop" and his having no image in the mirror, his leaving his bed "at sunset", his howling and leaving paw-prints all indicate that he is something between a vampire and a wolf. Therefore, instead of the girl and wolf in the previous two tales and also in the classical versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" by Grimms and Perrault, one meets a wolf-girl and a Duke transforming into a vampire-like wolf during the nights: "Spilt, glistering milk of moonlight on the frost-crisped grass; on such a night, in moony, metamorphic weather, they say you might easily find him, if you had been foolish enough to venture out late, scuttling along by the churchyard wall with half a juicy torso slung across his back" ("Wolf- Alice", 1993: 121). Given the physical and the personal traits, and actions of the two, one can say that they are like two outsiders cast out of a society, which is "normal" according to the standards of the others, and forced to live together. However, for a long time in the story, Carter does not even state for once that they have encountered each other although they live in the same house.

And what the wolf-girl does in his house is that "she sweeps up the hairs, vertebrae and phalanges that litter his room into a dustpan, she makes up his bed at sunset, when he leaves it" ("Wolf- Alice", 1993: 121), which also justifies our previous notion about Duke's being something between a vampire and a wolf, as the following sentence does: "the grey beasts outside howl, as if they know his transformation is their parody, […] had the Duke been a wolf, they would have angrily expelled him from the pack, he would have had to lollop along miles behind them" ("Wolf- Alice", 1993: 121).

Just like the heroine of the previous story of the trilogy, "The Company of Wolves", Alice-Wolf is also depicted erotically: "Her panting tongue hangs out; her red lips are thick and fresh. Her legs are long, lean and muscular. Her elbows, hands and knees are thickly callused because she always runs on all fours. She never walks; she trots or gallops. Her pace is not our pace" (*Wolf- Alice*, 1993: 119). Also, like the Little Red Riding Hood of the former tale, she enters puberty after starting her woman's bleeding. And that is when, one night, she starts prowl[ing] the empty house looking for rags to sop the blood up; she had learned a little elementary hygiene in the convent […]" ("Wolf- Alice", 1993: 122). In the course of these prowlings, she discovers the mirror in the Duke's bloody chamber, and seeing her own image in the mirror and thinking that there is a girl on the other side of the mirror looking like herself, she starts to go to the room more frequently to befriend her. "Then her sensitive ears pricked at the sound of a step in the hall; trotting at once back to her kitchen, she encountered the Duke with the leg of a man over his shoulder" ("Wolf- Alice", 1993: 122). Still, one has no sign or proof that the Duke has noticed her during that encounter. The following clause, "the den where she and the Duke inhabited their separate solitudes" also confirms the fact that they have never encountered each other in the castle. Therefore, this tale by Carter is similar neither to her previous two stories nor the earlier versions of "Little Red Riding Hood", where the girl and the wolf encounter abruptly, just after the beginning of the tale. It seems that it is one of the narrative strategies that renders this story more mysterious than the others.

However, the little girl's growing up into a young woman seems to indicate their approaching encounter: "She would spend hours examining the new skin that had been born, it seemed to her, of her bleeding. She would lick her soft upholstery with her long

tongue and groom her hair with her fingernails. She examined her new breasts with curiosity; […] she found a little diadem of fresh hairs tufting between her thighs" ("Wolf-Alice", 1993: 124). Thus, she starts to gain sexual awareness like the heroine of "The Company of Wolves".

Then, together with the realization that "her companion was, in fact, no more than a particularly ingenious variety of the shadow she cast on sunlit grass", come the feelings of disappointment and loneliness again, and she starts to indulge herself in the activity of trying the different dresses in the Duke's bloody chamber. "In the mirror, she saw how this white dress made her shine." ("Wolf- Alice", 1993: 125). Then, she decides to add a new activity to her lonely nights at the castle: "She goes out at night more often now; […]" ("Wolf- Alice", 1993: 125). On one of these nights, she sees the Duke, who is "intent on performing his cannibal rituals" ("Wolf-Alice", 1993: 125). However, they are both unaware that on the same night, the husband of a dead bride, whose corpse the Duke had previously carried to his castle, plans to take revenge by shooting him. Before the Duke is shot, she has already sensed something: "And if her nostrils flare suspiciously at the choking reek of incense and his do not, that is because she is far more sentient than he." ("Wolf-Alice", 1993: 125). Here, unlike the writers of classical versions of "Little Red Riding Hood", Grimms and Perrault, Carter gives Wolf-Alice superiority over the Duke because although she cannot speak and she has bad eyesight, she has the ability to smell, owing to which she feels the danger before the Duke himself. In Kimberly J. Lau's words, "[…] Carter contrasts their sensory awarenesses in an explicitly gendered way so as to overturn hierarchy that insists on the ocular over the olfactory; Wolf-Alice's orientation to the world through smell clues her in to the villagers' proximity, the scent of fur alerting her to the danger they bring with their guns, whereas the werewolf- Duke remains oblivious until hit by a bullet" (2008: 91). Thus, contrary to the classical version of the same fairy tale by Grimms, in which the male figure (the hunter) is presented as saviour or redeemer, in Carter's story, Alice-Wolf as a female figure becomes the redeemer because "When they saw the white bride leap out of the tombstones and scamper off towards the castle with the werewolf stumbling after, the peasants thought the Duke's dearest victim had come back to take matters into her own hands. They ran screaming from the presence of a ghostly vengeance on him" ("Wolf- Alice", 1993: 125) and they stop following the Duke, who, after being hit by a bullet, finds the opportunity -owing to Wolf-Alice- to reach his castle with difficulty.

The most erotic scene of this tale comes in the end, as in "The Company of Wolves", when they reach the castle. As she goes after the Duke, she finds him lying "on his black bed in the room like a Mycenaean tomb, howl[ing] like a wolf with his foot in a trap or a woman in labour, and bleed[ing]" ("Wolf- Alice", 1993: 126). At first, she hesitates to touch him, fearing to hurt him. However, gradually she approaches him: "She prowled round the bed, growling, snuffing at his wound that does not smell like her wound. Then, she was pitiful as her gaunt grey mother; she leapt upon his bed to lick, without hesitation, without disgust, with a quick, tender gravity, the blood and dirt from his cheeks and forehead" ("Wolf- Alice", 1993: 126). This scene is not only erotic but also quite tender. With this tenderness, it bears a great affinity to the scene of the taming of the wolf in "The Company of Wolves". The Duke, having been deemed an outsider, an enemy so far, let aside being shown affection, calms down upon being shown such tenderness without

a trace of hesitation or disgust. In the closing scene of the story, he is observed to have undergone a transformation, in a way:

> The lucidity of the moonlight lit the mirror propped against the red wall; […] As she continued her ministrations, […] Little by little, there appeared within it, like the image on photographic paper that emerges, first, a formless web of tracery, the prey caught in its own fishing net, then in firmer yet still shadowed outline until at last as vivid as real life itself, as if brought into being by her soft, moist, gentle tongue, finally, the face of the Duke ("Wolf- Alice", 1993: 126).

Eventually, the Duke's image, which he could never see in the mirror until now, is reflected in it, pointing to the fact that he (re)gains his identity, owing to her (affection towards him). It is the reverse of what is generally given as a message in classical fairy tales: a woman being saved and gaining identity through the male (generally a prince figure). "Carter's fairy tales are filled with women like this: fearless, erotic, cunning, hilarious, and with a gargantuan capacity for taking delight in all aspects of life (Zipes, 1998: 152). Contrary to the classical fairy tales, including Grimms's "Little Red Cap", where the female figure is depicted as a helpless, vulnerable being who is in need of help and support from a male figure, the hunter, in Carter's tale, the Duke gains his image, and thus his identity through the help of a female figure, Wolf-Alice, and her affection towards him.

Conclusion

Fairy tales have always been altered, rewritten, and reshaped according to the taste of the reading public and, in particular, of the expectations of the male-dominated society. Therefore, while Charles Perrault's "Little Riding Red Hood" managed to convey sexual implications for adult readers and, at the same time, a moral lesson for children, Grimms found his version "still too cruel, too sexual and too tragic" and edited and sanitized it according to the taste and expectations of the bourgeoisie. However, Angela Carter rewrote three versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" for adults with different plot structures and endings while relying on the same narrative tradition of werewolves, which are more sexual and erotic variants of Perrault's and Grimms's versions. While writing her own versions, mostly drawn from an earlier version of the same fairy tale prior to Perrault, Angela Carter aimed to change or rather subvert the ideal gender roles already tailored for both women and men and expected from them in the patriarchal society. Thus, she demonstrated women's striving for freedom and their desire to change their position in patriarchal society in her fairy tales, which also reflects a demand for the alteration in contemporary women's expectations. In other words, what we see in the form of fairy tales, through Carter's versions, is, in fact, the embodiment of women's expectations in the contemporary era.

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