RECYCLING THE FAIRY IN ANGELA CARTER'S *THE BLOODY CHAMBER*

Wiem Krifa, PhD
Faculty of Arts and Humanities,
University of Sousse
TUNISIA

wimaksousse@yahoo.fr

Abstract. Angela Carter's rewriting of fairy tales is a backlash to the patriarchal folkloric heritage. Though her writings are firmly grounded in the original tales, Carter gathers the textual remnants to rebuild postmodern feminist plots that pay tribute to her heroines, who have been mispresented and victimized in the earliest male narratives. Whether in her collection of short stories: *The Bloody Chamber,* or other works, Carter re-reads a plethora of well-known traditional tales to probe beneath their latent patriarchal motif. The thematic transformations she brings to plots are meant to unveil the position of women as portrayed by male writers and to foreground a feminist postmodern revision of these fairy tales instead. Following a comparative approach, the study of Carter's fairy tales showcases her feminist postmodern modifications of the bygone patriarchal texts, though still based on the original plot. To take the example of *Beauty and The Beast*, Carter writes and rewrites it with different plots and characters in her book: *The Bloody Chamber*. Her primary focus while reworking Madame Leprince de Beaumont's *Beauty and The Beast* is to reveal the prevailing unjust gender relations and to show the patriarchal atrocity committed against females, while strengthening her heroines in contradistinction to the original folktales that have marginalized and victimized female characters. The issue of women's position and gender relations are at the heart of Carter's feminist project of fairy tale recycling. Both *The Courtship of Mr Lyon* and *The Tiger's Bride* unveil the writer's postmodern feminist attempts to deconstruct the initial tale by displaying the male role in undermining the female position, meanwhile empowering the latter. Besides, the way how Carter mingles traditional folkloric narratives with her postmodern feminist agenda yields a revolutionary text featuring long-established fairy tales rewritten from a feminist lens.

Keywords: Angela Carter, fairy tales, feminism, postmodernism, recycling, patriarchy

INTRODUCTION

The tradition of writing fairy tales[1] was first introduced by the French writer Charles Perrault and the German Brother Grimms, who inscribed written versions of traditional oral stories. With the advent of postmodern literature and the feminist revolution, new feminist attempts to rewrite fairy tales have emerged within the literary world to rewrite phallocentric stories from a feminist lens that seeks to alter the image of women, stigmatized as victims of patriarchal reign. Various feminist writers have embarked on retelling stories, neatly chosen from the fairy tales heritage, and endeavoured to reformulate, correct, and present them as postmodern ones. Angela Carter, Margaret Atwood and Marina Warner are among the feminist writers who have been interested in the rewriting of children's literature, seeking to highlight other levels of the stories, purposefully ignored by male writers. Margaret Atwood claims: "It wasn't our outer lives that Grimms' tales addressed; it was our inner ones. These stories have survived as stories, over so many centuries and in so many variations, because they do make such an appeal to the inner life - you could say 'the dreaming self' and not be far wrong, because they are both the stuff of nightmare and magical thinking" (qtd. in Winding 2017, 40). The patriarchal fairy tales' endings do not always meet our expectations and dreams and result in many questions kept unanswered within children's psyches. This very idea is stressed out by the African American writer Bell Hooks, as she avers: "Fairy tales were the refuge of my troubled childhood (…). Despite all the messages contained in them about being a dutiful daughter, a good girl, which I internalized" (Hooks 2012, 178). The influence of fairy tales on our childhood life and behaviour has been important, though they unfold various gendered regulations. Within this vein, this article attempts to study Angela Carter's rewriting of fairy tales' remnants to build a feminist postmodern text, rich in bygone intertexts, modified to ally the feminist spirit and the postmodern age. In his article "Angela Carter and the Literary Machen", Benson discusses

Carter's use of intertextuality in her collection of short stories: *The Bloody Chamber*. He avers that the "reason for viewing *The Bloody Chamber* as paradigmatic is that it stages the processes of intertextuality in the distilled form" (1998, 27). The rewritten stories are overwhelmed with bygone intertexts meant to reveal the ideological discrepancy between the texts and their reformulated versions. One appealing text in this collection of short stories is *The Courtship of Mr Lyon*, which draws from multiple traditional fairy tales of writers who anchored female passivity within their texts as natural. Carter challenges this ideology by rewriting the story, revealing the male role in defining the undermined female status and empowering her female heroine, who subverts the traditional narrative, to determine her own destiny. Textual remnants are used and abused by Carter to deconstruct a whole set of patriarchal ideologies that worked to foreground unbalanced gender relations, based on males' favouritism and superiority over females. As such, my work will target two main goals: sketching the fairytales' intertextual remnants in *The Courtship of Mr Lyon* and *The Tiger's Bride*, meanwhile studying Carter's feminist postmodern rewriting to deconstruct the omnipresent masculine doctrine which guides the earliest story. The concept of *intertextuality* was first used by Julia Kristeva between 1966 and 1974 to denote the fact that "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. (…) Intertextuality means, for us, textual interaction produced within the text itself. The apprehending subject understands the concept of intertextuality as an indicator of how the text reads history and locates itself in it" (Juvan 2008, 13). Carter's rewriting of fairy tales discloses her dependence on bygone intertexts seeking the deconstruction of the latter's ideological intent while retelling postmodern feminist discourse.

A. Revisiting *Beauty and The Beast* in *The Courtship of Mr Lyon*

Explicit and implicit intertextual allusions are embedded within the feminist postmodern version of the story, with a conspicuous

tendency to reveal the patriarchal abhorrent depiction of females as sexual objects. Despite "their extravagant sexism and ideological orientations, Carter seems to be moderate in her rewriting of these tales. Instead of rejecting them, she *reclaimed them for feminism*" (De la Rochére 2010, 133). The story of *The Courtship of Mr Lyon* is based on Madame Leprince de Beaumont's *Beauty and The Beast*, translated by Carter and edited in 1982 for her volume *Sleeping Beauty and Other Favourite Fairy Tales*. The very same fairy tale is rewritten twice by Carter under the titles of *The Courtship of Mr Lyon* and *The Tiger's Bride*, both within the same collection of stories labelled *The Bloody Chamber*. This particular tale unfolds the tension between canonical literature and postmodern literary innovation, textual imitation and feminist variation. Carter's "text relies heavily on intertextuality and pastiche[2] to claim its sense of belonging and simultaneously on anachronism and travesty to advertise its difference" (Vanrigh 1998, 117). The writer relies heavily on the original plot, though alluding in certain narrative instances to *Snow White*, *Cinderella* and *Beauty and the Beast* as secondary intertexts. A salient feature in Carter's rewriting is her oscillation between the original text and the reproduced one to highlight ideological differences between them. Hence, Carter's recycling of fairy tales "is an interplay of repetition, imitation and difference" (Vanrigh 1998, 116). Allusions to the original text are omnipresent, though the narrative is modified to stress the difference of the feminist text. What distinguishes Carter's fairy tale retelling from other feminist writers is her multiple intertextual allusions to various hypo-texts to the point of being accused of reinforcing the phallocentric ideology. To study *The Courtship of Mr Lyon*, we notice the writer's deployment of copious intertextual remnants that compete to the surface of the feminist text, though the prominent one is *Beauty and The Beast*. The story begins with the description of the setting which reminds the reader of *Snow White* and *Cinderella*. "Outside her kitchen window, the hedgerow glistened as if the snow possessed a light of its own (…). This lovely girl, whose skin possesses that same inner light so you would have thought she, too, was made all of snow, pauses in her

chores in the mean kitchen to look out at the country road" (Carter 2008, 144). Carter makes recourse to explicit quotations as intertexts taken from the source text, "emphasizing [their] presence as a hypo-text to [her] hypertext yielding thus, 'double textuality'" (qtd. in Martinez 1996, 280) as a distinctive feature of her rewritten version. What's noticeable is the coexistence of copious intertextual fairy tale remnants surfacing in the text to reveal the latter's metafictional nature. The physical characterization of the female character matches Snow White's, especially with the reference to her snow-like delicate white skin. The spatial setting, however, brings to mind Cinderella's tiring house chores and miserable conditions. Hence, exploring *The Courtship of Mr Lyon* as readers, childhood memories of various tales cross our minds. The feminist postmodern intertextual reliance on copious intertexts is meant to deconstruct the phallocentric writings that have spread the idea of female victimization under the patriarchal reign. The principle of literary originality is debunked, too, through the coexistence of multiple intertexts, none of them original, work to yield a recycled feminist postmodern text.

Carter voices her heroines and empowers them to draw their own paths and destinies rather than being controlled by male power, as is the case with the original fairy tale. Though, the fictional plot and characters mirror the original text, the change in the level of characterization is noticeable and, subsequently, affects the events of the story. Carter's ideological, textual and narratorial modifications are deep and succeed in triggering the readers' interrogations by opening the text to many interpretations of the original source materials. Carter's account of the fairy tale brings to mind various possible hypo-texts. Her description of the beast with his "head of a lion" and "golden hair of great paws" (Carter 2008, 148), for example, differs from Beaumont's portrayal of a mere monster, similar to various previous literary works, notably like the one created by Victor's in Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein* and not a lion as the postmodern text describes. However, it is worth mentioning the parallel between Carter's lion and the leonine mask, Jean

Cocteau designed for Jean Marais in his screen adaptation of *Beauty and The Beast* (Vanrigh 1998, 118). The writer's inspiration from the film is clear to the reader through her reference to the lion's shape. Hence, Cocteau's film makes part of the intertext as well. "Pastiche and intertextuality speak for imitation, while textual intrusion, anachronism and reversal speak for difference" (Vanrigh 1998, 118-19). The postmodern text exhibits certain imitations together with some twisting of events and reversals of the heroines' destinies. The fact of deploying contemporary textual references within the story jolts the reader to consider its postmodern facets. Words such as "telephones, a twenty-four-hour rescue service, a taxi, a slow train" (Carter 2008,145), all work to pull the reader far away from the original into acknowledging Carter's feminist postmodern style. At this level, comparing both versions of the fairy tale seems to be a necessary step to grasp the writer's ideological messages.

Dissimilarities at the level of characterization are also noticeable and urge study. Carter's female heroine is more daring, courageous and determined than Beaumont's passive, bashful and weak beauty. Besides, the selflessness and naivety of the original beauty are "replaced by the thoughtfulness and narcissistic egoism of Carter's beauty, oblivious of her promise" (Vanrigh 1998, 118) to visit the lion before the end of winter. Carter's beauty rejoices at her father's newly recuperated wealth and enjoys the "resplendent hotel[s]; the opera, theatres, a whole new wardrobe for his darling so she could step out on his arm to parties, to receptions, to restaurants, life was as she had never known it" (Carter 2008, 130). Her visit to the beast's palace is meant to recuperate her father's properties and save her material interests.

The narrative fluctuates between postmodernity and tradition to yield a postmodern hypertext aiming to stress gender equality instead of patriarchal dominance, as is the case with the original tale. Ironic gender reversals are displayed in Carter's version of the fairy tale. "Carter's *Beauty* is initially made to serve coffee to the beast on their first evening together in the best tradition of the woman, to her well-disguised dismay, she found her host, seated beside the fire

with a tray of coffee at his elbow from which she must pour" (Vanrigh 1998, 149). This modification at the level of the plot is very significant since it empowers the heroine to impose her female subjectivity by taking over a powerful woman to a submissive silent male monster. "He forced himself to master his shyness, which was that of a wild creature, and so she contrived to master her own -to such effect that soon she was chattering away to him as if she had known him all her life" (Carter 2008, 149). Carter's monster and Beauty heroine sever with the bygone rigid gender relations and differ, conspicuously, from Beaumont's traditional characters. The story unfolds a new male character who cuts with the traditional patriarchal one and a revolutionary heroine who cannot fit into the category of submissive females. Both characters stand for the feminist postmodern new woman and new man. Contrary to Beaumont's beauty, Carter's is talkative. "Small talk had never, at the best of times, been Beauty's forte" (Carter 2008, 149). She voices herself and liberates her inner self by dominating the conversation. The writer's intent through this modified version is to foreground her new woman who, in opposition to Beaumont's beauty, does not abide by patriarchal rules. In opposition to the submissive female who is silenced during the patriarchal era, Carter's new Beauty is insurrectionary and aims for gender equality. She seems to be sexually aware compared with Beaumont's innocent female character. "These strange companions were suddenly overcome with embarrassment to find themselves together, alone, in that room in the depths of the winter's night" (Carter 2008, 149). The sexual emancipation of the new woman is stressed out *via* her daring beauty who fulfils the beast's desire willingly. "She flung herself upon him, so that the iron bedstead groaned, and covered his poor paws with kisses (…). When her lips touched the meat-hook claws, they drew back into pads and she saw how he had always kept his fists clenched but now, painfully, tentatively, at last began to stretch his fingers" (Carter 2008, 153). The differences between both female characters are made clear since Beaumont's heroine is presented as an innocent girl with no sexual awareness, contrary to Carter's

beauty who defies the patriarchal delineated sexual codes. Beauty, in Carter's story, is portrayed as a daring woman who metamorphoses the beast into a human being. She reveals her sexual emancipation, equal to the Beast's before transforming him from a bestial creature to a handsome man. Carter's use of intertextuality is constructive in that she rewrites a postmodern fairy tale from the remnants of traditional children's stories and, deconstructive at the same time, takes into consideration her subversion of the patriarchal ideology embedded within the original one. Hence, the fact of referring back to intertextual remnants is deployed as a double-edged weapon to attain her feminist agenda; as she asserts: I'm writing "a book of stories about fairy stories" (Carter 1983, 72). Her intertextual reliance on Beaumont's *Beauty and the Beast* is meant to revisit the tale from a feminist perspective rather than enhancing the original internalized ideology. Her project of rewriting it twice is in itself a revolutionary self-narrative deconstruction, in that beauty: the heroine of the *Courtship of Mr Lyon* is not the same as Beauty in *The Tiger's Bride*, though both versions bare the textual traces of Beaumont's story.

The writer is conscious of the literary textual and metafictional features of fairy tales and tends to enhance them while embarking on her feminist project of patriarchal deconstruction. Still, the patriarchal objectification of beauty is omnipresent despite the writer's efforts to emancipate her heroine by debunking the internalized image of the violent male monster. Carter's handling of *Beauty and the Beast*, at this level, is criticized, for instance, by Patricia Duncker because of the partial failure to completely deconstruct the patriarchal fairy tale elements like domesticity and the objectification of the female body (qtd. in Snowden 1997, 169). A more moderate view is provided by Lucie Amitt, who "insists that Carter's work should not be dismissed as anti-feminist. Instead, she suggests that Carter's work deals with the complexities of female desire and sexuality within patriarchal contexts" (Amitt 1997, 169). This view restricts Carter's success to entirely debunking the original fairy tale's patriarchal background.

B. *THE TIGER'S BRIDE*: A FEMINIST POSTMODERN DECONSTRUCTION OF *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST*

Part of the writer's deconstruction project is revealed through her rewriting of the same story from two different perspectives. *The Tiger's Bride* works to deconstruct both Beaumont's original story and *The Courtship of Mr Lyon*, highlighting the way ideology governs literary texts. In the first, Carter presents a totally different character of Beauty, who is aware of the patriarchal commodification of females. The story starts with Beauty's words: "My father lost me to the beast at cards" (Carter 2008, 147), which signifies her consciousness of being objectified in a typical patriarchal world. This beginning alludes to many intertexts, mainly *Bluebeard's Castle* and *Snow White* as explicit ones, in addition to the main intertext of *Beauty and The Beast*. The reader is invited to compare and contrast his/her childhood fairy tales' memories with Carter's postmodern modified story to grasp her feminist revision of gender relations. Much like Snow White, the heroine is as beautiful as her dead mother. She informs the reader: "Since I could toddle, always the pretty one, with my glossy, nut-brown curls, my rosy cheeks. And born on Christmas Day - her 'Christmas rose', my English nurse called me. The peasants said: 'The living image of her mother', crossing themselves out of respect for the dead. My mother did not blossom long" (Carter 2008, 148). Suddenly, the narrative twists into another fairy tale, reminding the reader of its purely intertextual nature. This brings to mind Kristeva's view that any literary text is a mere "intersection of textual surfaces [and] each word (text) is an intersection of other words (texts), where at least one other word (text) can be read" (1980, 65-66). Though the writer re-introduces the same intertexts as in *The Courtship of Mr Lyon*, still this version defies the traditional norms of fairy tale writing, mainly through the heroine's maturation process and deconstruction of the long-established patriarchal power.

The oscillation between the bygone fairy atmosphere and modern daily life contexts strikes the story's intertextual

postmodern tendency. One salient feature of Carter's intertextual reference to her own rewritten version of *Bluebeard's Castle* is her emphasis on the beast's strong scent much like Bluebeard's. The presence of both males is characterized by their intense scent. As Beauty wonders in *The Tiger's Bride*: "My senses were increasingly troubled by the fuddling perfume of Milord (…). He must bathe himself in scent, soak his shirts and underline in it" (Carter 2008, 148). At this level, we come across a conspicuous literary overlapping between *Bluebeard's Castle* and *The Tiger's Bride*, explained by the writer's heavy reliance on multiple textual remnants, recycled to yield a mosaic postmodern feminist story. Both tales "first draw out and condense the gendered ideologies at the heart of the [fairy tale] and then critically reimagine the phallocentric systems of power and privilege that determine and define their beastly subjects" (Webb 2017, 320). The feminist reformulations of the phallocentric literary heritage bear, indeed, purely ideological purposes working, subtly, within the folds of the narrative to alter the reader's internalized view of fairy tales and subvert the latter's culturally created patriarchal supremacy over submissive females. Hence, one should decode the ideological level of feminist postmodern rewritten fairy tales for the sake of making the difference between the multiple textual versions.

Carter's writing has always been ideologically self-reflective, guiding the reader to unravel her feminist message. In *The Tiger's Bride*, for instance, the heroine seems to be mature and conscious of the cultural nonsensical nature of fairy tales, though still an inexperienced adolescent female. In this context, she cogitates: "Old wives' tales, nursery fears! I knew well enough the reason for the trepidation I cosily titillated with superstitious marvels of my childhood on the day my childhood ended. For now, my own skin was my sole capital in the world and today I'd make my first investment" (Carter 2008, 150). The heroine severs completely with Beauty in *The Courtship of Mr Lyon*, as well as with Beaumont's heroine who stands as an emblem of female innocence and passivity. *The Tiger's Bride* represents Carter's best model of the new woman,

aware of her sexual objectification and who embarks on deconstructing the traditional dichotomy between males and females by achieving her aim for gender equality. Henceforth, as is the case with other books written by Carter, heroines end by achieving the writer's feminist postmodern project. One important characteristic of Carter's rewriting of this particular fairy tale is the continuation between both versions of the story. *The Tiger's Bride* is a more mature, determined and revolutionary version of *The Courtship of Mr Lyon*'s heroine. Part of the writer's project of female subjectivity acquisition process is to reveal the heroine's subjugation to patriarchy prior to her insurrectionary growth that culminates with her status as the new woman equal to the new man. According to Makinen: "Carter's tales do not simply 'rewrite' the old tales by fixing roles of active sexuality for their female protagonists - they 're-write' them by playing with and upon (if not preying upon) the earlier misogynistic version" (Makinen 1992, 5). The uneven gender relations are deconstructed and the previously taken-for-granted powerful male is undermined to be superseded by the new man. In *The Tiger's Bride*, Carter slightly preserves the plot of Madame de Beaumont while introducing a huge textual transformation that fits her deconstructive feminist pedagogical project. To refer to Marina Warner's words, Carter's attempt to subvert the internalized cultural precepts about female sexuality and gender is defined as the "suspect whiff of femininity [in fairy tales]" (qtd. in Snowden 2010, 160). What's appealing to the reader is the mixture of copious intertexts within a dominant innovative feminist one, which results in debunking the ideology embedded within the original text while liberating the postmodern one from the crippling patriarchal paradigm.

In contradistinction to Beauty in *The Courtship of Mr Lyon* - who eagerly rejoins her father and succumbs to her objectification, the tiger's bride wilfully shuns her paternal abode and chooses the tiger's. In Madame de Beaumont's story, Beauty accepts to marry the beast by the end, stating: "It is too bad he is so ugly, for he is so kind" (De Beaumont 1999, 38). In the case of *The Courtship of Mr*

Lyon and *The Tiger's Bride,* the physical description of the beast, though alluding implicitly to the original beast of Madame de Beaumont, differs from it in many ways. Carter's heroine sarcastically describes the tiger as follows: "Oh, yes, a beautiful face; but one with too much formal symmetry of feature to be entirely human: one profile of his mask is the mirror image of the other, too perfect, uncanny. He wears a wig, too, false hair tied at the nape with a bow, a wig of the kind you see in old-fashioned portraits. (…) He is a carnival figure made of papier mâché and crêpe hair; and yet he has the devil's knack at cards" (Carter 2008, 150). To Beauty's dismay, the beast is not the same creature as her nurse's account during her childhood. The emphasis on the mask is conveyed as an omnipresent intertext between the film fairy tale and Carter's rewritten versions. In Carter's case, intertexts draw the reader's attention to contrast and compare the different texts, whereby to grasp the feminist pedagogical gendered message. The artificial nature of the beast is highlighted to reflect the origin of fairy tales, which are culturally constructed to enhance the gap between females and males. The ironic use of "carnival figure" and "papier mâché" is meant to mirror the illusionary nature of the beast; the representative of the patriarchal institution within the story.

Carter's parodic depiction of the beast provokes laughter rather than fear and aims to subvert the phallocentric writings. In this context, critic Hermione Lee identifies Carter with "a feminism which employs anti-patriarchal satire, Gothic fantasy, and the subversive rewriting of familiar myths and stories, to embody alternative, utopian recommendations for human behaviour" (qtd. in Snowden 2010, 162). Carter's fairy tales tend to provide a more natural and logical narrative that takes into consideration the specificities of human beings whether females or males without any discrimination. She engages "in the demythologizing business" (Carter 1983, 74) by disclosing the political, cultural and gendered mythic orientations of the original texts and substituting them with more transparent and neutral narratives.

Not only does the father treat his only daughter as a bargain

object and offers her to the tiger, but the latter too exercises on her innocent female body his male bestial gaze[3] and denies her female subjectivity. All that he aspires for through her imprisonment is to watch her virgin body. "My master's sole desire is to see the pretty young lady unclothed nude without her dress and that only for the one time after which she will be returned to her father undamaged with bankers' ordered for the sum which he lost to my master at cards and also a number of fine presents such as furs, jewels and horses" (Carter 2008, 153).

The objectification of the female body is at stake and is explicitly discussed. The writer criticizes male voyeurism *via* the beast's character, who seems to be obsessed with discovering the heroine's body. Despite the omnipresent intertextual remnants within the postmodern version of the fairy tale, the writer's patriarchal deconstructive intent is still at work. The heroine's response to the tiger's request is to laugh. "I could scarcely believe my ears. I left out a raucous guffaw; no young lady laughs like that! my old nurse used to remonstrate. But I did. And do. At the clamour of my heartless mirth, (…) I felt that I owed it to him to make my reply in as exquisite a tuscan as I could master" (Carter 2008, 153). The nurse's warning conveys a subtle criticism of the traditional woman's model, who is forbidden to laugh as a way of abiding with the patriarchal inflicted female moral codes. The young lady does not adhere to the category of passive females and reveals her revolutionary nature as the new woman, who is empowered enough to metamorphose the beast from the patriarchal typical male to a more tolerant new man.

Her firm determination stirs the beast's emotions to the extent of shedding tears. "How pleased I was to see I struck the beast to the heart! For, after a baker's dozen heartbeats, one single tear swelled, glittering, at the corner of the masked eye. A tear! A tear, I hoped, of shame" (Carter 2008, 154). Madame de Beaumont's beast has never witnessed a metamorphosis similar to Carter's beast who goes through a passage from bestiality to humanity. The new woman succeeds in transforming him from the mythic patriarchal image to a postmodern new man who, honestly, considers gender

equality by unmasking himself to beauty after her refusal of his request. He obliges her to see his true animalistic face without a mask. Carter's gender reversal is made clear through the fact of unclothing the monster instead of Beauty. The writer ironically puts the monster under the female gaze rather than submitting her to his voyeurism. It must be taken into account that Beaumont's original story shows a tight paternal bond between Beauty and her father, contrary to Carter' rewritten version, in which Beauty mocks her father's regret and lamentation and ends by staying with the beast rather than joining him. Regarding these differences at the level of Beauty's characterization, it should be highlighted that they make part of the writer's deconstruction of patriarchy. Carter, deliberately, distinguishes the tiger's bride from the other two previous heroines who passively surrender to their destiny and male ascendancy. She transforms the beast into a more humane creature who feels remorse for his desire for "the sight of the young lady's skin that no man has seen before" (Carter 1979, 153).

The metamorphosis of the beast into a kind fellow and the emergence of Beauty's animal side are metaphoric illustrations that symbolize the bestial side of human beings regardless of their gendered inclinations. As such, the feminist postmodern fairy tale challenges preconceived notions about traditional male storytelling. Aidan Day explains that Carter "uses the image of animals to signify a libido that has been culturally repressed in some women and which needs recognizing and articulating in order that they may define autonomous subject positions for themselves. A recognition of the materiality of the flesh is not the same as attributing particular essences of the flesh" (1995, 147). Carter reverses the fairy tale' mainstream narrative, which emphasizes the beast's transformation into a human being, by revealing Beauty's animalistic level as a natural human instinct. The girl, freely, takes off her clothes and indulges in experiencing her female sexuality as an independent subject, regardless of her father's patriarchal authority. Though the beast allows her freedom to return to her father, she spurns his decision and prefers to send back a dressed mechanical puppet,

instead, to play the role of the obedient passive daughter. The puppet also represents her previous passive female status in society as an emotionless, objectified and guided obedient daughter. Beauty decides to "dress her [maid] in [her] own clothes, wind her up, send her back to perform the part of [her] father's daughter" (Carter 2008, 155). It can be deduced that Carter deploys the puppet as another pertinent intertext from Hoffman's *The Sandman*, referring back to the puppet Olympia[4] as an object of male gaze and control. Being deprived of her free will, the puppet - as a mechanical object - complies with her master's orders. Beauty severs her role in society as subjugated to male power and voyeurism by liberating her instincts and previously limited sexuality. The heroine of *The Tiger's Bride* develops smoothly from one level of female identity to another while unclothing her female body. She undergoes a self-metamorphosis from being clothed to uncovering her skin. Meanwhile, the Beast - the representative of the new man - licks "skin after successive skin, all the skins of a life in the world and left behind a nascent patina of shining hairs" (2008, 167).

Beauty's metamorphosis into an animal, as well, embodies her liberation from the crippling patriarchal prison. Her newly born fur symbolizes her animal side, which has been repressed by the social codes within her parental abode. Her removed skins stand for the dogmatic ideological precepts surrounding her innocent female body and sexuality. Emancipating her sexuality, she expresses: "I felt I was at liberty for the first time in my life" (Carter 2008, 167). The heroine frees herself from restrained moral norms imposed on her adolescent body. At this level, her decision to stay with the beast is not imposed, as is the case with the other two female characters, since she defies the beast's order as well as her father's. Beauty goes through a process of maturity from the obedient daughter who conforms with the patriarchal tenets to a revolutionary new woman, exhibiting her animalistic desires, equally to the beast.

Though the writer intentionally overburdens her story with copious intertexts, borrowed from various sources, she still clings to her feminist project of patriarchal deconstruction that yields the

birth of the new woman and man, symbolized by the tiger and Beauty in her second rewritten version of *Beauty and the Beast*.

CONCLUSIONS

The above analysis has traced back to Carter's feminist postmodern rewriting of Madame le Prince de Beaumont's fairy tale *Beauty and The Beast*. What inspires Carter to embark on this literary project is the patriarchal spirit dominating the original story. Being well-known for her feminist appeal for patriarchal deconstruction, gender equality, and female sexual emancipation, she transmits her beliefs into her stories, though preserving various traditional fairy tales' intertexts. As mentioned above, her attempt to write two successive versions of *Beauty and the Beast* is meant to show the self-deconstructive nature of literary narratives despite the fact that she keeps various bygone intertextual remnants, meant to be recycled within her postmodern feminist deconstructive fairy tale. To start with *The Courtship of Mr Lyon*, Carter strives to deconstruct the male ideology embedded within Beaumont's fairy tale by strengthening her heroine who does not match the original beauty. Despite prevalent intertexts, the narrative transformations and differences at the level of characterization distinguish Carter's deconstructive message from Madame Leprince de Beaumont's story, which aims to reinforce patriarchal mythic ideology. Conveying the intertextual nature of all literary texts, and debunking a whole set of internalized patriarchal ideologies are Carter's intents through her rewriting of traditional fairy tales. Through her deconstruction of the past literary heritage, she embarks on building new female and male status, based on balanced gender relations rather than the ascendancy of males over females, as has always been the case in the phallocentric mainstream literature. Her deconstructive plan, all along the fairy tale, though intelligible, has been limited since Carter's beauty falls into the trap of patriarchy by accepting her commodification and succumbing to her father's authority. This,

certainly, led many critics to condemn the writer's attachment to phallocentric writing and her acceptance of patriarchal dominance, despite her efforts to convey the opposite through her revisited fairy tale.

In *The Tiger's Bride*, Carter brings drastic changes in the story by twisting the narrative, designing postmodern characters who fit her models of the new woman and new man and ends by attaining her planned feminist deconstructive project. Right from the beginning, Beauty is depicted as mature enough to be aware of her sexual objectification, despite her young age. In contradistinction to other previous *Beauties* who cling to their fathers, the tiger's bride bears a grudge against her father who loses her to the beast to save his material interests. She is described as Carter's archetype of the new woman, who succeeds in taming the beast and imbuing him with humanity. She defies his prior desire to fix her virgin body under his male gaze and treat her as a bargain object between him and her father. Instead, she metamorphoses him into a tolerant creature by imposing her female will. The heroine liberates her sexual instincts and chooses to stay with the beast rather than join her father. Carter succeeds in conveying female sexual freedom by liberating Beauty's desires and depicting the beast's gender reversal. Although copious fairy tale' intertexts are deployed, the story is still presented as purely innovative, bearing Carter's feminist deconstructivist plan. Carter's reformulations of fairy tales in general, whether by Beaumont, Brother Grimms or Charles Perrault, rely heavily on implicit and explicit textual remnants oriented to write new postmodern fairy tales, guided by feminist spirit, and similarly to deconstruct the inherent patriarchal ideologies omnipresent in the original texts.

NOTES

1. Fairy tales represent a shared experience of a certain culture and have been collected and recorded in order to pass wisdom, history and moral lessons to children (…). Gradually, fairy tales began being considered dangerous by religious and political groups and thus, with the rise of the middle-class 17th century Europe and North America, they were altered and adapted in order

to strengthen the dominance of religious and political systems. This is when moral codes were installed in fairy tales written by François Fénelon, Sarah Fielding, Madame Le prince de Beaumont and later Charles Perrault, Madame d'Aulnoy and Brothers Grimm (Zipes 2006, 11).

2. Pastiche: "During most of the nineteenth century the literary pastiche developed in France was viewed by critics in the wake of Marmontel's negative assessment of pastiche as an imitation of a superior model copied primarily by adopting its weaknesses. It is finally Proust's Pastiches et mélanges, written at the beginning of the century and published in 1919 that yields the important redefinition of the status of the genre relevant for criticism today. For Proust, according to Denis Hollier, the pastiche is not so much writing but reading—pastiche is the ideal form of creative critical activity, as Auseinandersetzung, the coming to grips of a writer with the works of revered authors. The Proustian pastiche is seen by Hollier as constituting the intertextual play that is literature" (Hoesterey, 496)
3. "Gazing as a concept was popularised by the French psychoanalyst Jacques. According to Lacan, gazing makes an individual conscious of his/her appearance, often to the extent of anxiety and shame. The gaze, as argued by Lacan, is presented to us in the form of a strange contingency which in turn generates unrealistic anxiety. It surprises and disturbs the individual subjected to the gaze and often reduces him/her to a feeling of shame. In other words, an individual subjected to someone's gaze (whether real or imaginary) turns him/her into a self-conscious being, thereby losing a degree of autonomy upon realising that he or she is being viewed" (Rai 50).
4. In Hoffmann's book *The Sandman*, Dr Coppelius manufactures Professor Spalanzani's puppet-daughter as a blind female in order to tighten the patriarchal grip on her female body.

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