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UDC: 821.111.09-31 Karter A.
821.111.09:305-055.2"19"**Andelka M. Gemović***

University of Novi Sad

Faculty of Philosophy

FROM CAPTIVITY TO BESTIALITY: FEMINIST SUBVERSION OF FAIRY-TALE FEMALE CHARACTERS IN ANGELA CARTER'S "THE TIGER'S BRIDE"

Abstract: This paper elaborates on Angela Carter's subversion of the fairy-tale genre in the tale from *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* titled "The Tiger's Bride". The method of research combines researching relevant theoretical literature and thorough text analysis. The primary concern of this paper is the subversion of female characters in fairy tales as a means of advocating feminist attitudes. Relevant passages are used to exemplify Carter's feminism, with special reference to the subverted roles of the heroine of the tale. The female protagonist's transition from being a captive to becoming a beast is analysed, and her reinvented roles discussed and compared to the traits of the heroine from the classic *Beauty and the Beast* story written by De Beaumont. This is done in order to uncover the multilayered structure of Carter's work and hopefully determine the author's genuine purpose in subverting the fairy-tale genre as well as the message she wanted to convey.

Key words: beast tales, *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*, Carter's feminism, *Beauty and the Beast*, women empowerment.

* andjelkagemovic@hotmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Angela Carter was an English novelist, short story writer, poet, journalist, professor and critic known for her feminist and nonconformist attitudes that she deliberately conveyed throughout her work. As a writer, she is primarily recognized for the use of magical realism as well as other prominent postmodern elements such as fantasy, intertextuality, the use of myth and Gothic elements. However, these elements do not serve as mere escapism. They are crucial aspects for comprehending the intended meaning and purpose of each individual work of Angela Carter. Her work is commented on as "the deconstruction of a form that has become appropriated by those who have a vested interest in upholding the status quo" (Gamble, 2008, p. 27). Moreover, her work can be seen as a tapestry of different genres and techniques that are to demonstrate the author's true intentions and their fulfillment in all of her novels, especially in the last one, *Wise Children* (1991). After her death in 1992, she became one of the most read, analyzed and respected authors in England and worldwide.

Regarding the topic of the paper, Angela Carter's feminism must be mentioned and elaborated on. She expresses her views on feminism in various works including novels and short stories, most of which are rewritten or incorporate certain elements of traditional fairy tales. Carter used her work as a means of women empowerment, as an invitation to fight against the male dominant society and for equal rights and freedoms.

The aim of this research is to provide an analysis of a short story from *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* titled "The Tiger's Bride" in order to focus on and underline Carter's feminist rebellion against deeply rooted patriarchy as well as her promotion of otherness and individuality. The analysis will be developed by comparing this tale to the original *Beauty and the Beast*, written by Madame de Beaumont. It is proposed in this paper that Carter intended to subvert the original character of Beauty into a wild and socially alienated creature in order to discard patriarchal double standards and express approval of, or even embrace, otherness, individuality and sexual freedom.

On one occasion Angela Carter claimed that she is "in the demythologizing business" (Carter, 1983, p. 74). She believed that fairy tales and myths are profoundly established in society and tradition and that they were, and still are, used for the purpose of politics and social "moral" (Carter, 1983, p. 74). Similar belief can be seen in the following comment by Jack Zipes about fairy tales. He claims that they "assume mythic status only when they resonate with the dominant ideology" (cited in Sellers, 2001, p. 13). Thus, Carter wanted to empower women by altering well-known fairy tales and discarding their patriarchal and predominantly male attitudes. Although this intention can be found in all of Carter's work, *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* is the best representative of the subversion of the fairy-tale genre with the aim of advocating womanhood in the society tailored by men.

All in all, this paper deals with the practical presentation of Carter's feminism in "The Tiger's Bride". Firstly, it discusses the concept of intertextuality and its relevance to Carter's fairy tale. Secondly, fairy tales and their features, as well as Carter's nonconformity regarding the genre, are presented. In addition, new, subverted and reinvented roles of the female protagonist are addressed in order to uncover the messages Carter wanted to convey. The conclusion is the last section of this paper where all the relevant information found during the research is additionally highlighted and the final thoughts on the topic provided.

INTERTEXTUALITY

Due to the correspondence between "The Tiger's Bride" and *Beauty and the Beast*, as well as Carter's deliberate reference to the latter, it is rather relevant to briefly present and define the notion of intertextuality. The term was coined by Julia Kristeva and was first used in her essay "Word, Dialogue and Novel" in 1966. Although this notion was not always referred to as intertextuality, a variety of philosophers and scholars including Plato, Aristotle, Horace, Bakhtin, Barthes, Riffaterre, Genette, Allen, Hutcheon, etc. (have) attempted to define it and elaborate on its usage. Despite the immense contribution of all the above-mentioned theoreticians to the interpretation of intertextuality, only several opinions are to be discussed due to the fact that intertextuality is a secondary matter to this paper.

Relying on Bakhtin's dialogic imagination, Kristeva explains that a literary word is "an intersection of textual surfaces" as well as that "each word (text) is an intersection of other words (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read" (1980, pp. 65–66). She further adds that "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (Kristeva, 1980, p. 66). As opposed to this point of view, Genette (1989, pp. 10–15) discards social, political and philosophical aspects. Instead, he focuses solely on the literary text and suggests a more complex classification which involves five overlapping categories: intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, archetextuality, and hypertextuality. He defines hypertextuality as a relation of the newly written text, hypertext, and the text it derives from, hypotext. Finally, he claims that no work of art is completely independent or isolated and that all texts refer, to a certain extent, to other texts, which proves that all texts are actually

hypertextual (Genette, 1989, p. 19).¹ However, it might be argued that Genette's comprehension of the term hypertextuality is similar, if not completely equal, to the notion of intertextuality. Allen (2000, p. 1) states that the process of reading is actually an act of "moving between texts" which takes us "into a network of textual relations" where we discover meaning(s) of a certain intended text. Namely, he claims that any text converts into an intertext when it moves into a network of textual relations by sharing the same meaning with other text(s) it refers or relates to. In her book, *Poetics of Postmodernism* Hutcheon (2004, pp. 125–126) additionally determines the intertext as a work of art that belongs to historical and literary archive. She claims that a text can be neither autonomous nor original since "only as part of prior discourses" it derives the "meaning and significance" (2004, pp. 125–126) and, consequently, becomes comprehensive and meaningful to readers.

From all of the above, it can be concluded that intertextuality plays an essential role in understanding the intentions of Angela Carter to subvert traditional fairy tales. Without the previous knowledge of *Beauty and the Beast* one would not be able to discover the reference to Beaumont's work and would, as a consequence, misinterpret or fail to recognize the genuine intention of "The Tiger's Bride". Therefore, in order to adequately interpret the author's genuine motives, intended implications, and intertextual references, their meaning and significance must be taken into account. Different critics discussed the issue of intertextuality in Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*, and thus, their opinions are to be briefly presented.

In his review article "Angela Carter and the Literary *Märchen*" Benson explores the use of intertextuality in this collection of stories. He claims that the "reason for viewing *The Bloody Chamber* as paradigmatic is that it stages the processes of intertextuality in the distilled form" (1998, p. 27). Hence, all the fairy-tale elements that Carter considered unnecessary and flawed were altered or even eliminated until the "distilled" version was achieved. Furthermore, in her meticulous study of what lies behind these rewritings, Bacchilega referred to Carter's work as a "metafolkloric or archeological project" (1997, p. 124) due to its tight relation (but also firm opposition) to folk narratives, their morals and the paradigm they subsume. When comparing Carter to her fellow rewriters, Rose states that "Sexton is an analyst of fairy tales and their cultural implications, while Broumas is an improviser, using the tales as a base for imaginative speculation. Carter is both" (1983, p. 222). Makinen comments on Carter's

¹"[N]o hay obra literaria que, en algún grado y según las lecturas, no evoque otra, y, en este sentido, todas las obras son hipertextuales" (Genette, 1989, p. 19)

subversions which she describes as an “ironic deconstructive technique” as well as “an oscillation that is itself deconstructive” (1992, p. 5). She adds that “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” (1992, p. 5). Bacchilega sees the process of fairy-tale rewriting as consisting of two layers. On one hand, it tends to highlight “the fairy tale’s complicity with ‘exhausted’ narrative and gender ideologies” (1997, p. 50) while, on the other, it promotes the variety of perspectives to discover those elements that “the institutionalization of such tales for children has forgotten or left unexploited” (1997, p. 50). The process of fairy-tale institutionalization led to common anticipation that they are actually, as Benson puts it, “self-apparent truth” (1998, p. 36). As a response, Carter subverts and creates intertextual references with the aim of questioning, and consequently neutralizing, the conventional narratives. McLaughlin regards the rewriting of fairy tales as a repetition prone to changes where a source narrative is transformed into its “uncanny return” (1995, p. 419), a story that reveals the genuine truth of the repressed and thus precisely uncovers the actual history. Kaiser advocates that Carter’s use of intertextuality can be regarded as an act of moving “the tales from the mythic timelessness of the fairy tale to specific cultural moments, each of which presents a different problem in gender relations and sexuality” (cited in Benson, 1998, p. 37).

FAIRY-TALE GENRE

In order to discuss Angela Carter’s feminism in the given story, it is necessary to determine the very term of fairy tale and its original form and content. The term comes from a literal translation of the French term “*conte de fées*”. 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. However, initially, they were not told to children due to the fact that these stories involved horrors of difficult life and “symbolical and secular contents that (could) and might have given and still give children ‘wild ideas’ that their lives need not conform to the governing roles of society” (Zipes, 2006, p. 11). Gradually, fairy tales began being considered dangerous by religious and political groups and thus, with the rise of the middle class in 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 Leprince de Beaumont and later Charles Perrault, Madame d’Aulnoy and Brothers Grimm (Zipes, 2006, p. 11).

Steadily, these lessons and moral instructions became increasingly captivating and amusing and they delivered a great number of subliminal messages, attitudes, and opinions that gradually shaped the whole society. Fairy tales are full of stereotypes, conventional behaviors, characters, symbols, events, and plots. Moreover, they essentially deal with and include marvelous occurrences, shape-shifting, monsters, murder and, more importantly, clear representations of good and evil, pure and wicked, beautiful and ugly, wealthy and poor, etc. There is no grey zone between good and evil; the borderline is strictly drawn. In addition, the good always wins and the evil is punished. Furthermore, they almost exclusively involve a happily-ever-after pattern and certain stereotypical characters such as the wicked mother/stepmother, poor and innocent girl, envious stepsister, tempting Devil, etc.

Marina Warner (1995, p. 16) uses the term fairy tale to denote all those stories that have throughout oral tradition been called so, even if they do not have any fairy or magical features. She proposes that these supernatural features are irrelevant in comparison to the moral function of the fairy tales. She claims that "more than the presence of fairies, the moral function, the imagined antiquity and oral anonymity of the ultimate source, and the happy ending" (Warner, 1995, p. 17) define the genre of fairy tales.

The shape-shifting trait of fairy tales should be taken into consideration when discussing them and their relation to Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*. Shape-shifting elements are frequently found in fairy tales such as a pumpkin that changes into a carriage, a frog that changes into a prince after a kiss, a beast that turns into a handsome prince due to the kindness and love of a poor but honest girl, etc. Such a shape-shifting component can often be found in Carter's stories including "The Tiger's Bride".

The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories might be a product of Carter's close contact with the fairy-tale genre in the process of translating Charles Perrault's work into English. This collection of stories is seen as an adaptation of classical fairy tales meant to empower women and grant them the role of active heroines instead of passive observers. Thus, Carter's intention is to break the paradigm of fairy tales that emphasize sexual disparity and patriarchal double standards related to desire. Bryant recognizes the genre of fairy tales as "seductively familiar" (1989, p. 439) since its narratives constantly follow the same scheme while successfully concealing an "inherent binarism of desire" (1989, p. 439); as such, it opposes to, or even forbids, any possibility of characters' personal, individual accounts. The same author addresses Lauretis, who claims that Western culture and its fiction were established on the narrative paradigm of the myth of Oedipus (Bryant, 1989, p. 440). According to Lauretis, all fairy tales involve an element of "a transformation predicated on the figure of a hero, the mythic subject" (cited in Bryant, 1989, p. 440). As it is obvious

from the word “hero”, this type of character is restricted to men while the women are always considered secondary, peripheral, prevented from obtaining the central role in any story. Female characters in traditional fairy tales are, as mentioned, usually rigidly sorted in one of the following categories: a poor young and innocent girl, an evil old hag, a righteous and careful queen mother and a sly stepsister. For her kindness and good heart, a poor young girl always deserves the prince and wealth in the end. Therefore, female characters have always been provided with a predetermined behaviour which strictly involves either docility, purity, and sacrifice that eventually lead to “happily ever after”, or certain undesirable traits such as selfishness, sexual freedom or greed, which can result in being burned in an oven, stoned to death, punished to wear red-hot iron shoes, etc.

Since Carter advocated individuality and otherness, it can be concluded that she was both provoked by and drawn to these tales. By subverting, questioning and ironizing the old stories, Carter provides a change of perspectives offered in traditional fairy tales and proposes liberation and different point of view depicted in *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*. She is known to have supported sexual liberation in women and therefore her heroines are strong-willed, intelligent and cunning characters who are often ready to enjoy as well as use their sexuality in order to progress in life. Regarding sexuality, this aspect of female characters was always omitted in fairy tales since they were meant to improve and influence children’s moral, whereas sex was considered immoral. However, Carter changes these elements and introduces erotic events, sexual pleasures, and descriptions similar to pornographic content. Wild, animal instincts and sexual desires are especially noticeable in “The Tiger’s Bride” alongside an exotic beast, a tiger, as one of the main characters. It is possible that Carter cared to depict suppressed, shaming and dark urges in human beings. The female protagonist is not hopelessly romantic and passive. Rather, she feels animalistic, raw lust which often drives her against her own will.

SUBVERSION OF FEMALE CHARACTERS IN “THE TIGER’S BRIDE”

As mentioned before, Madame de Beaumont’s *Beauty and the Beast* served as an inspiration for Angela Carter’s subversion tales “The Courtship of Mr Lyon” and “The Tiger’s Bride”. Although both stories explore the nature of men and women, their relationship, as well as the notions of civilization, society, patriarchy, and wilderness, this paper will only elaborate on “The Tiger’s Bride” since I would argue it bluntly and precisely portrays Carter’s feminist attitudes.

In *Beauty and the Beast*, the woman is seen as the one who tames and civilizes the man. Beauty makes a decision to save her father and move to the Beast’s castle.

Although it seems like an individual decision, she completely relies and depends on her father and feels under obligation to do so. Regardless of the reason for her decision, Beauty in the original story is terrified and repelled by the Beast. "The monster asked her if she had come of her own free will and, trembling, she replied that she had" (De Beaumont, 1999, p. 37). Gradually, Beauty's kindness helps the Beast discover his own. He becomes more sophisticated and noble in her presence and even gives her gifts as a sign of affection. The Beast imitates Beauty's behavior and kindness and thus she civilizes and "improves" him. When she refuses to marry him by gently explaining that she respects their friendship, he repays her courtesy with allowing her to see her dying father "I would rather die myself than cause you pain. I will send you back to your father" (De Beaumont, 1999, p. 39). The moral of the story is that her generosity, kindness, and sacrifice taught the Beast to become a better person and were rewarded with good fortune and a happily-ever-after ending.

Therefore, it is obvious that Beauty manages to tame the Beast. At the beginning of the story, he is ready to murder the girl's father; he is demanding, violent and controlling. He also ceaselessly asks Beauty to become his wife although she has rejected his offer several times. Towards the end of the story, she accepts to marry him and states that "it is too bad he is so ugly, for he is so kind" (De, Beaumont, 1999, p. 38). It can be concluded that she lacks sexual attraction for him but passively agrees to marry him because of his character since that is what humble, modest, well-behaved girls do. The girl marries in conformity with her kindness and sympathy for the Beast. She thinks to herself: "Aren't I terrible for causing grief to someone who has done so much to please me?" (De Beaumont, 1999, p. 40). However, their relationship is "founded on virtue" (De Beaumont, 1999, p. 42), not on bestial, sexual attraction and thus she is, in the end, rewarded with his transformation into a handsome prince. He acquired her passivity and dependence while he patiently waited for her to come back, which freed him of his animal form and turned him into a man. This fairy tale serves as a lesson to children, especially female ones, to be patient, submissive, understanding, gentle and kind regardless of circumstances because such behavior will eventually be compensated.

The original story depicts an extremely strong bond between Beauty and her father. Rowe (1979) claims that their bond might be such due to the lack of an evil stepmother who competes with the daughter for father's love. Also, the author speculates that these circumstances could cause a young girl to develop certain feelings for her father:

The tale suppresses intimations of incest; nevertheless, it symbolizes the potent, sometimes problematic oedipal dependency of young girls. Complementary to the natural mother's role [...] the natural father's example of desirable masculine

behavior likewise shapes her dreams of a savior and encourages the heroine's later commitment to the prince. (Rowe, 1979, p. 244)

Moreover, in the original story, Beauty insists on saving her father by willingly and independently committing herself to the service of the Beast. However, it must be taken into account that, as the story develops, she becomes more and more subordinate to his will and loses her genuine independence. Rowe explains that:

The Beast's transformation rewards Beauty for embracing traditional female virtues. She has obligingly reformed sexual reluctance into self-sacrifice to redeem the Beast from death. She trades her independent selfhood for subordination. She garners social and moral plaudits by acquiescing to this marriage. (Rowe, 1979, p. 244)

Another essential, yet striking element from the original *Beauty and the Beast* is related to the very name of the girl. Since she has always been graceful and appealing, as a young girl she was named Little Beauty which points to the faulty standards of a patriarchal society where a woman's identity is tightly related to her appearance. However, Carter deliberately chooses not to name her female heroine in "The Tiger's Bride". Rather, she refers to her as "the girl" or "the young lady" and thus avoids sexual references associated with the name Beauty. On the contrary, she is "carving out her own life-story, and in resisting the story which literary and cultural traditions have patterned for her, her narrative becomes an alternative model for the female subject's desire" (Bryant, 1989, p. 448).

In "The Tiger's Bride", an influential change and advancement of the main female character are noticeable. Beauty's father is a gambler who loses her in a card game to an exotic being, the Beast. The creature defeats the father and takes all the material possessions he had. Once the father is left with nothing, the Beast proposes to him to gamble on "the girl" (Carter, 1979, p. 54). Careless as well as desperate, the father decides to gamble on his daughter. From the very beginning, the reader is aware that the girl is passive and dependent on her father and male figures in general. As Bernhardt (2019, p. 48) observes, unlike the original Beauty, Carter's heroine recognizes her father's flaws and blames him for the situation she finds herself in. Although she accepts to repay the debt, the same author suggests that she does not do so out of a sense of obligation but rather because she is able to comprehend the way the poverty could affect her in the male-dominated society.

Regarding her new "owner", the Beast, it must be emphasized that he is not a prince turned into an animal but rather a genuine animal, "a great, feline, tawny shape" (Carter, 1979, p. 56). He essentially remains a tiger even though he wears a mask with a human face as well as luxurious clothes and exquisite perfumes. He tries to fit into civilization but the readers soon become aware that despite his efforts, he only has a bestial, wild side. He does not feel human and thus he does not follow typical

patriarchal procedures like asking for Beauty's hand. However, he does send a bunch of white roses "as if a fit of flowers would reconcile a woman to any humiliation" (Carter, 1979, p. 55). Firstly, white roses imply an intertextual connection to the traditional fairy tale. Secondly, this sentence denotes Carter's feminist attitude since Beauty in her story is sarcastic and she parodies a patriarchal perspective. She sees flowers as a gift which only allegedly hides the Beast's real intentions. Unlike her mother, the girl rejects to be objectified and passed from one man to another. She considers herself similar to the white rose, "unnatural, out of season" (Carter, 1979, p. 53) and thus rejects consenting to patriarchal principles of courtesy. In addition, the act of ripping the rose apart "petal by petal" might reflect her own process of self-discovery, especially in terms of independence, dominancy, and sexuality. When asked to leave one white rose to her father as a sign of forgiveness, she pricks her finger and lets it bleed over the rose as a symbol of defloration aiming at causing remorse and guilt rather than granting pardon. Carter deliberately emphasizes the contrast between this heroine and two other heroines, the one from the original *Beauty and the Beast* and the heroine from "The Courtship of Mr Lyon", who both passively accept their fates and do not show any sign of humiliation or disapproval. The father in "The Tiger's Bride" betrays and objectifies his daughter, which transforms her into a sarcastic persona who shows no fear when she comments on the tiger:

[M]y senses were increasingly troubled of the fuddling perfume of Milord; there was a crude clumsiness about his outlines; and he has an odd air of self-imposed restraint; he wears a mask with a man's face painted most beautifully on it. (Carter, 1979, p. 53)

The girl decides to take advantage of the situation and claims that her "own skin was her sole capital in the world" and that it was time she had made her first "investment" (Carter, 1979, p. 56). Once she is finally summoned to meet the tiger, she dismisses all the teachings about being well-behaved and obedient. Instead, she listens to her inner self, her id, and consequently, she bursts out laughing. The girl claims: "I let out a raucous guffaw; no young lady laughs like that! But I do. And I did." (Carter, 1979, p. 58). Moreover, she offers to have sexual intercourse with the tiger if he is willing to pay for her the service as if she were a prostitute. By suggesting such a deal, she rejects her father's fortune and background and shows that she is independent of male dominance as well as capable of making her own money and sustaining herself. In doing so, she would become equal to men as well as self-sufficient and sovereign. She further emphasizes the vulgarity of the whole situation in order to embarrass the tiger. Since the tiger is obviously affected by her humiliation and he might feel remorse for his actions as well as shame for his appearance and bestiality, he sheds a tear, a sign of weakness characteristic of human beings rather than animals. However, the girl

becomes even angrier and more explicit. After being asked to denude and show “the sight of the young lady’s skin that no man has seen before” (Carter, 1979, p. 61), she replies: “I wished I’d rolled in the hay with every lad on my father’s farm, to disqualify myself from this humiliating bargain. That he should want so little was the reason why I could no give it; I did not need to speak for the Beast to understand me” (Carter, 1979, p. 61).

Similarly to the original tale, the Beast is in control at the beginning of the story, he owns her, while she is repelled by his ridiculous appearance. The kindness typical of Beaumont’s Beauty is purposefully rewritten as “a willingness to accept the animal” in the tiger as well as “the privileging of the girl’s own desire, itself an aspect of human animality” (Webb & Hopcroft, 2017, p. 320) in a society which forbids even the thought of such behavior and considers it rebellious and abnormal. As opposed to the original Beauty, who is merely polite and docile, Carter’s protagonist realizes that the acceptance of the animal in herself is not just “utility but also commodity” (Webb & Hopcroft, 2017, p. 320). Hence, as Carter’s Beauty ceases to be frightened, although still a captive, the Beast gradually loses his dominance over her. Contrary to De Beaumont’s version, Beauty in Carter’s tale becomes almost immediately sexually attracted to the Beast. She does not intend to civilize him but is eager to discover more about his beastly side. It might be concluded that the girl expects and secretly longs for different, more intimate request from the Beast than to simply denude. She might want him to yearn for her as she does for him. She desires his body and his bestiality while she gradually uncovers the animalistic side of herself as well. She shows regret about having restrained herself from all the sexual pleasures she could have enjoyed in the past. Clearly, by portraying such a stream of thoughts in the female character, Carter supports and deliberately emphasizes women’s sexuality and urges, presenting them as natural and necessary to all, regardless of gender, social hierarchy, and background. As time goes by, Beauty recognizes she has more in common with the Beast and gradually loses interest in humanity that chained her wild spirit. In addition, she realizes that she has “nothing to lose and everything to gain” (Carter, 1979, p. 56) and by doing so she strips herself of her clothes as well as her appointed role in society. She stops being enslaved and controlled and chooses to accept her own nature and inner bestiality.

Once she finds her powerful side and frees herself from the grasp of patriarchy, she willingly unifies with the Beast. The girl describes: “I felt I was at liberty for the first time in my life” (Carter, 1979, p. 64). Although she regains her freedom by taking off her clothes, she chooses to stay with the Beast. Carter allows her Beauty to develop sexually as well as in terms of personal advancement. She becomes bold and gains control of her body and fate, which the Beast, representing male dominance, has had the whole time. In Carter’s tales beasts represent otherness, which is especially in contrast to the rational mind of humans. The author creates a balance between female and male

characters and by doing so empowers women to accept their uniqueness, liberate their sexual desires and demand or even impose equal rights and roles in all aspects of life.

The girl taking off her clothes is described as "white, shaking, raw, approaching him as if offering [...] the key to a peaceable kingdom in which his appetite need not be [her] extinction" (Carter, 1979, p. 67). Once the beast starts licking her skin, she feels that "each stroke of his tongue ripped off skin after successive skin, all the skins of a life in the world, and left behind a nascent patina of shining hairs" (Carter, 1979, p. 67). Beauty's metamorphosis takes place and she also becomes a beast. In this way, Carter wants to underline the equality between the genders as well as to dismiss the meaningless influence of the patriarchal society which instructs men to be dominant, cold and reserved while requiring women to be modest, patient, obedient and subordinate. Moreover, Carter subverts the traditional flow of fairy tales where the prince is freed from the animal body in order to live as a human. She transforms her heroine into a beast and by doing so, the author celebrates variety, individuality, freedom of choice and otherness. As a self-sufficient and sovereign woman, the girl manages to transform her sacrifice into leverage by rejecting her humanity and embracing both her own and the Beast's non-humanness in mutual desire. By emphasizing the contrast between nudity and being dressed, Carter might want to imply that the only thing that separates humans from wild and untamed beasts are the clothes which can be seen as a determining factor of belonging to society. After finally liberating her inner, bestial self, Beauty decides to send her father a mechanical maid dressed in her clothes. The mechanical puppet also symbolizes her previous role in society – to be controlled, directed, suppressed and treated as property. She chooses emotion and instinct over reason when she refuses to return home. The act of sending a clockwork doll enables her to be an agent while she uses the mechanical maid as a means to escape her father's objectivization. Furthermore, she claims the right to choose her alternative self and at the same time rejects the norms established in fairy tales.

It can be concluded that Carter deliberately emphasizes and directly depicts a gradual development of her female protagonist towards "abandonment of conventional rationality" as well as "acceptance of the animal Other as natural" (Webb & Hopcroft, 2017, p. 315), which can be regarded as yet another antithesis to Beaumont's version of the tale. Unlike in traditional fairy-tale narratives, transformation is not a means of achieving success in the patriarchal society but rather a liberation from it. It is also relevant to point out that the girl combines her Western background and the rational techniques common to humans when evaluating her position and possibilities as a mere commodity in a patriarchal economy. In doing so, Carter evokes the reader's sympathy for the girl and invites them to acknowledge her critique of the male-dominated economy in which women are, similarly to children and animals, just devices, and as

such, traditionally considered inferior and hence only useful as a possession. Besides, Carter's intention to criticize the narrative paradigm of fairy tales is rather obvious from the very beginning since the critique is articulated by a well-educated girl from a higher social class who is forced by her father, but also expected by the society, to take the position of a victim.

The girl's thoughts have a purpose not only to criticize and challenge patriarchy but also to pose the question of the value of humans and animals. "I had always held a little towards Gulliver's opinion, that horses are better than we are, and, that day, I would have been glad to depart with him to the kingdom of horses, if I'd been given the chance" (Carter, 1979, p. 36). By referring to Jonathan Swift's opinion, she suggests that horses, but also other animals, are logical, rational and graceful creatures while humans are brutal and destructive. Therefore, similarly to Gulliver, she willingly chooses to escape from society and unifies with nature.

Carter accepts and advocates natural urges and equality in behavior in both men and women. As Bettelheim explains, beasts and animals symbolize "untamed id" (2010, p. 300), including our sexual desires and impulses. According to him, this retold story is important since *Beauty and the Beast* and similar stories "undo the repression of sex" (Bettelheim, 2010, p. 300). He claims that children at one point need to discover that "what we had experienced as dangerous, loathsome, something to be shunned, must change its appearance so that it is experienced as truly beautiful. It is love which permits this to happen" (Bettelheim, 2010, p. 300). Carter obviously shares this point of view and advocates that there is nothing shameful and vicious in sexual intercourse and pleasure. She aims to change the attitude towards sexual urges, especially in women, and to turn them from being considered repugnant to marvelous and natural.

CONCLUSION

This paper elaborated on Angela Carter as an influential novelist who, throughout her work, advocated a belief in sexual liberation and genuine individuality as well as pointed to all the faulty elements of patriarchal society. As Brooke observes, "fairy tales exist across generational and geographical lines, explaining, instructing, and prohibiting social customs and natural phenomena. Often such tales work to constrain women in particular from breaking cultural barriers" (2004, p. 84). Carter's feminism manifested through subversions of female fairy-tale characters rejects socially dictated categorization while encouraging the introduction of sexuality, multiplicity of repressed voices and individuality into traditional narratives. In *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*, she reversed and subverted the genre of fairy and folk tales in order to

demythologize everlasting social myths and paradigms. She aims to inspire a social change that literature might have the power to achieve.

Carter was not acknowledged nor supported by all the Second-wave feminists due to the fact that many of them disapproved of her rewritings of fairy tales as well as her perspective on pornography. She fought for an unsuppressed image of women as well as their liberation, especially in terms of sexual urges (Muždeka, 2016, p. 165). For that reason, her heroine in "The Tiger's Bride" pursues her needs, accepts her natural, dissocialized self and embraces the inner bestial side of her personality. By pointing out the fact that society treats animals and women as objects designed for men's satisfaction and commodity, Carter criticizes the ongoing process of social acceptance of dehumanization among humans, which is portrayed through powerful images of mechanical maids and carnival figures of men. The author aims to reconstruct the socially accepted system of predetermined male and female, owner and property, roles in order to demonstrate the futility of such divisions based on sex. Therefore, her feminism does not merely reinforce women but empowers all those marginalized individuals who do not fit into the patriarchally established paradigms which are depicted in the transformations of both male and female characters in the analyzed tale.

Furthermore, as stated, this paper elaborated on "The Tiger's Bride" in relation to Carter's subversion of Beaumont's *Beauty and the Beast*. The tale is reconstructed in order to express Carter's feminist and humanist attitudes that deal with women's sexuality, individuality, and acceptance of otherness. Her rewritten tales abound with radical ideas and elements of violence, unruly libido, and rebelliousness employed as means of renouncing the contemporary patriarchal paradigm in favor of inhibited voices that have been repressed by the well-established and socially approved narratives. All the heroines in *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* are captives of a patriarchal society and thus Carter depicts their struggles and ways to free themselves from the chains of male superiority. They employ their sexuality and instincts to determine and differentiate right from wrong instead of merely confining themselves to social constructs of reality and appointed predetermined behaviors. Traditional fairy tales present women as pure, liberated from any sexual desire, submissive and passive, which are behaviour models children are taught from a very early age. Contrary to this, Carter celebrates sexual urges in women as well as their necessity to live according to their personalities instead of artificially created roles. Her heroines manage to endure physical and mental abuse, constant objectivization as well as humiliation in the society which limits their individuality, subjectivity, and freedom to choose their own life path. According to Brooke, they survive not only "within their narrative" but also within "our collective cultural experience" (2004, p. 68). The same author advocates that Carter managed to "destabilize the artificially restrictive categories" as well as "to undermine

the lingering presence in contemporary cultural presumptions” (2004, p. 69). She assigns to her heroines a set of characteristics such as violence, aggression, rebellious nature and disobedience. Moreover, they are self-confident, self-sufficient, fulfilled and free. By doing so, Carter empowers her female characters, and through their image the whole human race, to pursue their individual needs and rebel against societal constraints.

It can be concluded that Carter does not aim to completely discard reality in order to propose a matriarchal society. Instead, she questions and subverts social attitudes with the aim of emphasizing their meaninglessness and dysfunctionality. By rewriting the original *Beauty and the Beast* twice, in “The Courtship of Mr Lyon” and “The Tiger’s Bride”, Carter underlines the necessity of multiple perspectives and otherness in order to celebrate the uniqueness of each individual and their right to choose their path rather than be portrayed through predetermined roles and behaviors. She furthermore proposes that by deconstructing the social paradigm, new, improved relations and categories can be created (Muždeka, 2016, p. 164) among people, which might be seen as the main reason for her subversion of the fairy-tale genre.

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ANDELKA M. GEMOVIĆ

OD ZAROBLJENICE DO ZVERI: FEMINISTIČKO PODRIVANJE ŽENSKIH LIKOVA IZ BAJKI U PRIČI „TIGROVA NEVESTA“ ANDŽELE KARTER

Rezime: Rad se bavi istraživanjem jedinstvenog pogleda Andžele Karter na feminizam i društvene nedaće svog i, kako se ispostavlja, našeg, modernog doba. Analizom priče „Tigrova nevesta“ iz zbirke *Krvava odaja i druge priče* može se zaključiti da Andžela Karter svojom subverzijom heroína iz tradicionalnih bajki upućuje na kompleksnu problematiku u društvu. Reč je o problemima nejednakosti polova, potisnute seksualnosti, netolerancije, nemogućnosti očuvanja jedinstvenog identiteta i drugosti, koji se vrlo često zanemaruju ili smatraju opšteprihvaćenim stavom zajednice, a zapravo su utkani kako u kolektivnu tako i u individualnu svest u velikoj meri zbog sadržaja i subliminalnih poruka tradicionalnih bajki. Stoga, Karter teži da se bori protiv ovih nametnutih, najčešće patrijarhalnih standarda stvarajući nove, nezavisne, hrabre i dovitljive heroíne koji prihvataju ali i koriste svoje seksualne potrebe i divlju, životinjsku stranu kako bi odbacile besmislene i nefunkcionalne društvene norme i prihvatile svoje istinsko „ja“. Odbivši predodređene i nametnute uloge, Lepotica iz „Tigrove neveste“, nasuprot onoj iz *Lepotice i zveri*, potpuno se odvojivši od društva koje ju je posmatralo kao predmet, slavi zver i drugost u sebi. Ipak, Andžela Karter ne kritikuje isključivo muškarce i patrijarhalni sistem, već i žene i njihovu pasivnost u njemu. Pričom „Tigrova nevesta“, ali i celom zbirkom *Krvava odaja i druge priče*, ona nastoji da utiče na svoje čitaoce da ruše mitove, bajke i celokupnu društvenu paradigmu kako bi se stvorio novi sistem u kom polovi nisu podeljeni na zarobljenice i zveri, i gde su drugost i prihvatanje individualnosti uzvišeni cilj.

Ključne reči: feminizam, subverzija ženskih likova, tradicionalne bajke, rušenje društvenih normi, dekonstrukcija mitova.

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