

T.C.
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İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİMDALI
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**Angela Carter's Feminist Reconstruction Of
The Classical Fairy Tales**
(Yüksek Lisans Tezi)

Tezi Hazırlayan: **Evrin ASLAN**

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Aday:**Evrin ASLAN**

Angela Carter’ın Çağdaş, Yeniden Feminist Bakış Açısıyla Yorumlanmış Masalları

Tezi Hazırlayan:Evrin ASLAN

ÖZET

“Bir varmış, bir yokmuş...” erken çocukluk dönemimizden gelen hoş bir yankıdır ve güzel, erdemli prensesler, yakışıklı, cesur prensler ile çirkin, kötü cadılardan oluşan büyülü bir dünyaya ilişkindir. Bu gizemli dünyanın imgeleri çocukların kendi hayal güçlerini ve yaratıcılıklarını geliştirmelerine yardımcı olur. Ne var ki, masallar aynı zamanda, oldukça tehlikeli biçimde ‘ideal’ ve ‘kötü’ kadınlar hakkında imgeler ve yapılar yaratmak ve bunların genç beyinlere yerleşmesini sağlamak için en temel aygıtlardır.

Masallar geleneksel, ataerkil ve ermerkezli politikalara hizmet ettiğinden ötürü, yapıları ve kahramanlarının kişileştirilmeleri birbirinin neredeyse eşidir; masaldaki prenses hemen her zaman inanılmaz derecede güzel, zarif, erdemli, kibar, iyi yürekli, sıcakkanlı ve bağışlayıcıdır. Ancak, ilginç biçimde her zaman büyük bir sıkıntı veya sorun içerisindedir ve çaresizce pasif şekilde beyaz atlı bir prens tarafından kurtarılmayı beklemektedir. Gerçekten, sahip olduğu ‘niteliklerden’ dolayı bu prenses ideal erkek tarafından kurtarılmayı ‘hakeder’.

Ancak, 20. yüzyılın feminist yazarları bu arketiplere ağır şekilde saldırırlar ve kadının bireysel, toplumsal ve kültürel kimliğini yeniden tanımlamayı denerler. Kadınların, erkeklerin yardımına muhtaç, zayıf, boyun eğen, pasif, susturulmuş ve kontrol edilmesi gereken varlıklar olmadıklarını vurgularlar. Böylelikle gerçek deneyimler temelinde daha gerçekçi kadın karakterler yaratırlar. Bu araştırma çerçevesinde, masalların karakter betimlemeleri ve yapılarını da yeniden tanımlarlar.

Bu yazarlar arasında Angela Carter öne çıkan bir isimdir. Klasik masalları, özellikle kahraman tasvirlerine odaklanarak, dikkatlice yıkar ve yeniden inşa eder. Dişi karakterlerini, sahici tecrübeleri ile gerçek ve gerçekçi bir dünyaya taşımak suretiyle, masallarda klişeleşmiş olan ‘ideal’ ve ‘kötü’ kadın arketiplerini dolaylı olarak eleştirir. Böylelikle de kadınlığın, dişil tecrübenin ve kadınları belirli bir şekilde davranmaya iten özel etkenlerin ana doğasını sorgulamamızı sağlar. Klasik masalların kadın karakterlerinin yeniden inşa edilmiş imgesi belki de en iyi şekilde Angela Carter’ın Kanlı Oda adlı kitabındaki öykülerle örneklendirilebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Masal, Klasik, Geleneksel, Feminist, Gerçekçi

Angela Carter's Feminist Reconstruction of the Classical Fairy tales

Presented by: Evrim ASLAN

ABSTRACT

"Once upon a time ..." is a pleasant echo from our early childhood memories. It is associated with a magical world which is peopled with beautiful and virtuous. Fairy tales are the basic means to create and settle the major images and structures about 'ideal' and 'bad' women in the young brains and indeed in a very dangerous way.

Since fairy tales serve to traditional, patriarchal and man-centered policies, the characterization and the structure of the tales are almost always identical; the princess in the tale is always incredibly beautiful, elegant, virtuous, kind, mild, affectionate and forgiving. Yet, interestingly enough, she is always in a big trouble and she desperately *waits passively* to be saved by a white-horsed prince. Actually, because of her 'qualities', this princess 'deserves' to be saved and be married by an ideal man.

However, the feminist writers of the 20th century sternly attack these archetypes and attempt to redefine women's individual, social and cultural identity. They point to the fact that women are *not* weak, submissive, passive, muted and controlled beings in need of a male protection. So, they create more realistic female characters based on actual experiences. Within the framework of this search, they also redefine the characterization and structure of fairy tales.

Among these writers, Angela Carter is a prominent name. She carefully deconstructs and reconstructs the classical fairy tales, especially focusing on the characterization. She indirectly criticizes the clichéd 'ideal' and 'bad' women archetypes by carrying her female characters into a real and realistic realm with authentic experiences. Thus, she leads us to question the essential nature of womanhood, female experiences and the particular drives directing women to act in a certain way. The reconstructed image of classical fairy tales' female characters can perhaps be best exemplified with the tales in **Bloody Chamber** by Angela Carter.

Key Words: Fairy Tale, Classical, Traditional, Feminist, Realistic

OUTLINE

I. INTRODUCTION

II. CLASSICAL FAIRY TALES

- a. Definition
- b. History
- c. Structure
- d. Characterization

III. THE RECONSTRUCTION OF FAIRY TALES

- a. Feminist Studies
- b. Attempts to redefine female identity

IV. THE RECONSTRUCTED IMAGE OF FEMALE CHARACTERS IN FAIRY TALES BY ANGELA CARTER

- a. Angela Carter as a feminist writer
- b. Her attack on female archetypes as represented in classical fairy tales
- c. The reconstruction of perverted female images
- d. Three reconstructed fairy tales with renewed female images
 - 1. Bloody Chamber
 - 2. Snow Child
 - 3. Company of Wolves
 - 4. The Tiger's Bride

V. CONCLUSION

I. INTRODUCTION

I.I. Aim of the Study

The tales beginning with this phrase, “Once upon a time...” make an essential part of childhood. The phrase suggests a magical world which is full of beautiful and virtuous princesses, handsome, and courageous princes, ugly and wicked witches along with fairy godmothers, kings and stepmothers –who are generally portrayed as evil witches in mask. Classical fairy tales tell about magic, fairies and fantasies, which basically help children to improve their imagination and creativity. They also send direct or indirect moral messages which generally center on the struggle between good and evil in which the evil party is always defeated by the good one. Therefore, children are led to make discrimination between good and evil in a very simple way. Other than their moral function, fairy tales create and settle the major images and structures about ‘ideal’ and ‘bad’ women in young minds –and indeed in a very dangerous way- since almost all fairy tales focus on an unfortunate yet beautiful princess disturbed by some evil witch.

Almost all fairy tales start with “Once upon a time, there was a king who had a beautiful daughter...” and end with “... and they lived happily ever after”. The rest of the story follows a preplanned and well-defined structure within the conventions of a classical fairy tale. There is generally a conflict among the characters, because of the jealousy of the evil party; when the beautiful princess is upset, there appears a fairy godmother to help the beautiful princess in order to save her against the tricks of an evil witch or a malicious stepmother. At the end, the princess is finally saved by a prince from an evil dragon or from the curse of a wicked witch. So, there is always a happy ending –which is all expected since this result is well defined and settled in the minds of the young readers beforehand by the classical fairy tale tradition. The prince falls in love with the beautiful and virtuous princess who is already in love with him –since she has long been waiting for

him as the man of her dreams. He takes her to his castle where they get married and live happily “ever after”. In other words, with her “virtues” and silent patience, the beautiful princess “deserves” this “happy ending”, which is the typical ending of the fairy tales; a handsome prince and a happy marriage to last forever.

However, in another way, fairy tales can easily be perceived as a literary means to affect children, especially girls, negatively. In other words, they condition children to think in certain ways by promoting stereotypes. In such tales, the princess is always associated with helplessness and weakness in her patient and long waiting for the prince. It is as if all the purpose and meaning of her existence is to endure whatever is imposed on her in a submissive manner until the prince arrives. She does not need to look for a solution to her problems because the prince is to solve them for her when the time comes. It should be noted that most of the girls who read fairy tales identify themselves with the princess while and after reading. Since children are constant dreamers, little girls dream about being like princesses. And in time dreaming becomes believing. The danger of the situation stems from the fact that fairy tales promote traditional gender roles that lead to women’s oppression. Through depicting images and teaching attitudes or manners, fairy tales guide children. However, fairy tales do not teach children how to be wiser, more efficient, more talented, more influential or more sensitive to society; instead, they draw particular images of physical beauty and passivity of girls. Thus, they give message such as a really pretty girl is a slim one with beautiful long hair, delicate skin and pleasant features. Exposed to such messages, girls adopt these standards of physical beauty and if they do not conform to such standards, they become unhappy even in their adult lives. They also expect boys to treat them as if they are very special, if they have the physical qualifications, elegance and beauty of a princess as described in a classical fairy tale.

Furthermore, in the young and inexperienced minds of children, good and evil characters are severely discriminated depending merely on the physical features of the individuals because in all fairy tales the member of the 'good' party, the princess, the prince and the fairy mother are all good looking, sweet and smart people; whereas the 'evil' or 'bad' people are described as ugly or unpleasant looking beings like witches, monsters or old hags. There is a double jeopardy in this discrimination. First, children who have comparatively unpleasant physical appearances will be discriminated against by their peers and may be excluded from their groups. As a result, girls are very likely to develop an inferiority complex, and they will mourn –consciously or unconsciously- for the impossibility of achieving a good marriage to their white-horsed prince since they do not look like the princesses in the fairy tales. This causes children to develop an unhealthy self-image.

The messages given in classical fairy tales are socially dangerous, too. Within this framework in which physical traits are the basic qualification in the determination of personality, children are imposed on unfair value judgments and they are taught to associate physical beauty with goodness whereas unpleasant and ugly physical features are taken to be the signs of an evil character. In this way, from the early childhood, one tends to ignore the pleasant attitudes, manners, skills, behavior and nature of people who are considered unattractive; in contrast, he /she exaggerates qualities of beautiful or handsome people; that is, individual and social categorization of people are constructed in a shallow and even perverted way due to wrong value judgments depending on wrong standards of beauty.

Apart from exposing children to shallowness and patriarchal norms, fairy tales are based on strictly man-oriented and patriarchal values. They can even be defined as the most misogynist form of all literary genres. They are against feminist ideals as they impose

a harsh gender division. In fairy tales, women are never equal with male characters. They are depicted as weak, submissive, passive, inferior, and dependent characters or as the ugly witches or as the bad stepmothers. For example, 'good' and 'ideal' female characters are generally portrayed as the 'daughter' of a weak father dominated by a wicked woman. These passive female characters have to wait for a handsome and strong man who will save and protect them from the ill-treatment of evil stepmother. They therefore need a male to depend on because they always represent weak and muted beings in permanent need for male protection. The only way for the passive female to actualize herself is the appearance of the manly and handsome prince who saves her and marries her. On the other hand, male characters are also stereotyped; they are always handsome and brave. They are never evil –even the male executioner has a mild and kind heart. They are generally depicted as strong, good looking, smart, and kind-hearted characters who always kindly treat the female characters. From time to time, the males –and generally the father figures– are deceived by the ill-willed second wife and make mistakes. However, they never appear as inherently bad and wicked characters; in the end, they either regret and try to compensate for their mistakes or die of frustration just before or after the young girl is saved by the prince.

As it is seen, fairy tales are rooted in patriarchal mode of thinking. They are originated from an oral tradition. They convey clear moral messages about the eternal struggle between good and evil. Yet, furthermore, classical fairy tales define the 'desired' and 'proper' gender roles and gender identities with positive and negative examples. However, these definitions are entirely influenced since the female is portrayed as being inferior to male character. The classical fairy tales generally portray the images of 'good' and 'ideal' women as men would like to see them. Thus it can be said that classical fairy tales are designed to describe and actualize a familial, social, and cultural system in which

men are central while women are secondary. Women are always controlled and put into the patriarchal norms by 'stronger' and 'more able' males. Take Rapunzel, for example; she never resists or questions the deeds of the old witch who imprisons her into a tower until the physically and spiritually strong prince tells her that she should not stay there any longer. It seems that the purpose of her existence is to carry out the orders of the others without questioning or complaining. She, therefore, fits perfectly to submissive female role promoted in the fairy tales.

The fact that fairy tales serve traditional, patriarchal and male-centered norms is also reflected in the characterization and the structure which are almost always typical; the princess in the tale is always incredibly beautiful, elegant, virtuous, kind, mild, affectionate and forgiving. Yet, interestingly enough, she is always in trouble and she *waits passively* to be saved by a white-horsed prince. Actually, thanks to her "qualities", this princess "deserves" to be saved and be married an 'ideal' man who bravely saves her from her calamity. Accordingly, the prince is almost always portrayed as a charming, brave, attractive, strong, active and admirable young man who appears just at the right moment to *save and take the princess to his palace as his wife*. On the other hand, the witch, who is generally portrayed as an ugly, evil, unkind, corrupted, and unloving woman. She deceives the noble man and the poor princess with her cunning and foul tricks. She traps the innocent girl in order to prove her own superiority. Actually her real aim is to exterminate the princess who is a menace to her evil existence, so she always cooperates with evil forces. Actually, she does so because she is aware of the fact that it is a world in which only the fittest can survive and furthermore, the existence of the princess with her pure, innocent, mild, and kind nature shows her real nature and her ambition to gain power and control over the others. Yet, the ending is always the same; the evil witch is killed –and

usually in violent ways which are never proper for a child's imagination. Thus justice is achieved once everyone gets what s/he deserves.

It is possible to transform the negative qualities of the witch or the evil stepmother into positive; that is, we can define her as a strong, ambitious and determined woman. It is true that she is manipulative but she is also exciting. She even influences the father so heavily that the father cannot comprehend the danger into which his own daughter is thrown. The 'evil' woman, then, in most cases, is smarter than the rest of the characters – especially when she is compared to the beautiful princess. Yet such qualities are not desirable and appropriate in a world which is centered on the demands of men. The 'evil' woman characters of the fairy tales usually poses a challenge to men and the world ordered by them. Therefore, this woman *deserves to be punished* severely at the end of the story.

The feminist writers of the 20th century attacked on these archetypal female characters of the classical fairy tales in an attempt to question and redefine women's individual, familial, social, and cultural identities. They pointed out the fact that women were *not* weak, submissive, passive, muted, and controlled beings in need of male protection. Women are constructed as weak and passive by the patriarchal culture which is reflected in the classical fairy tales. They therefore challenged patriarchal norms in the classical fairy tales and demanded more 'down-to-earth' female characters involved in actual experiences. Within the framework of this quest, they also redefined the gender roles that arouse mainly in the fairy tales.

Among these writers, Angela Carter is a prominent name. Although she wrote novels, Carter is basically famous for her rewriting of fairy tales of different cultures and for her own reconstructed classical western fairy tales. She is one of the most challenging feminist writers of the 20th century in that she harshly criticizes the male-centered attitudes and patriarchal points of view reproduced in culture and literature.

In her modern fairy tales, Carter carefully deconstructs and reconstructs the classical fairy tales, especially focusing on the female characterization. She indirectly criticizes the clichéd “ideal” and “bad” women stereotypes by carrying her female characters into a more realistic realm with authentic experiences. These realms and experiences are reflected in the symbolic and magical frameworks of classical fairy tales. In other words, the titles and characters of her fairy tales seem familiar, but the nature, characteristics, responses, reactions, manners, and attitudes of the characters are changed by Carter. She completely shifts the message and the meaning of the classical fairy tale by introducing an entirely opposite perspective.

Carter especially changes the moral messages of the tales in her works. Her tales contain warnings for men who stand in the way of clever, intellectual, cunning and smart women. Men are not mentally, spiritually and psychologically equipped to cope with women in her tales. Carter’s fiction, then, has definitely a feminist agenda. Her main goal is to show men the realities about gender roles which have long been defined incorrectly, inappropriately and dishonestly by men in line with their own needs and demands. Her fiction then can be seen as an attempt to redress the wrongs done to women for centuries. As a writer she’s committed to re-place women to an equal level with men in social and cultural realms.

Angela Carter questions the essential nature of womanhood, female experiences, and the particular drives directing women to act in a certain way. Women and their capacity have long been ignored or underestimated socially and culturally due to the dominance of patriarchal norms. Carter tries to restore the image of smart and capable woman who is by no means inferior to men. The reconstructed image of classical female characters of fairy tales can be seen in Angela Carter’s *Bloody Chamber*. The four stories

covered in this study are “The Bloody Chamber”, “Snow Child”, “The Company of the Wolves” and “The Tiger’s Bride”

I.II. Scope of the Study

This study is about the inferior image of women in classical fairy tales. The reconstructed fairy tales by Angela Carter subverts this image and replaces it with a positive one. This study first explores how classical fairy tales portray women as inferior beings; how these inferior images are used in the forming of the stereotypes of ‘good-ideal’ women and of ‘bad-evil’ women in young minds and how these stereotypes serve patriarchal, male-centered and traditional norms. Secondly, this study focuses on how the 20th century feminist writers attempt to destroy these long-standing and harmful images of women. Angela Carter’s reconstructed fairy tales are taken as case studies in an attempt to capture feminist struggle against traditional gender roles. Carter’s stories show the unfamiliar in the familiar, transforming patriarchal values into feminist perspectives in the form of reconstructed fairy tales.

Chapter I is designed for introductory purposes. It contains the aim, the background and the scope of this study. It gives an outline of the typical and deliberate structure and characterization of the classical fairy tales.

Chapter II introduces what a classical fairy tale is. The chapter offers a wide variety of descriptions of the fairy tale from different points of view. This part also follows the historical development of the classical fairy tales from the 5th century Arabic origins to the 17th century dining hall stories for adults, the 18th century morals for Victorian girls and the 20th century fairy tales characters animated by Walt Disney Studios.

Chapter III briefly describes the studies of the feminist female writers and feminist theorists of the 20th century. It is about the female writers attempts of redefining and

reconstructing the in depended and strong female identity which was suppressed in classical fairy tales. This chapter also reflects the ways in which feminist writers question the patriarchal and male-centered ideologies.

Chapter IV provides an application of this theoretical knowledge. It contains the views of Angela Carter about gender identities and gender roles as they are reflected in classical fairy tales. The chapter also examines Carter's deconstruction of basic female stereotypes in fairy tales as well as focusing on her attempts to reconstruct these stereotypical female images as they are represented in these tales. The reconstructed images of women appear in the three stories included in her book, *The Bloody Chamber*, namely "Bloody Chamber", "Snow Child" and "The Company of the Wolves". Carter creates her own myth of the female identity, representing the experience and attitudes of the women of the 20th century in a manner that opposes the traditional mold of classical fairy tales.

CHAPTER II

II. CLASSICAL FAIRY TALES

In olde dayes of the kyng Arthour,
Of which that Britouns speken gret honour,
Al was this lond fulfilled of fayrie;
The elf-queen, with hir joly compaignye,
Daunced ful oft in many a grene mede.

--CHAUCER.

II. I. DEFINITION

It is impossible to offer a single definition of a classical fairy tale. Different formulas of fairy tales have been created over the years and each offers a new insight and contributes to the previous definitions. Fairy tale is a literary genre that appeals to everybody regardless of age, sex, race or culture. So there are many different definitions of the classical fairy tales depending on the point of view of the particular person offering the definition. A variety of answers can be given to the question, "What is a fairy tale? According to G.K. Chesterton, "A fairy tale is a tale told in a morbid age to the only remaining sane person, a child. A legend is a fairy tale told to men when men were sane"(qtd. Opie 1992). There are many more definitions of the term, 'fairy tale'.

A fairy tale is "a story for children about fairies, or about magic and enchantment, a very improbable story, a lie" as it is defined in *The New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary of the English Language* (1990: 237). It is a product of oral tradition and it is generally associated with folktales in literary form. It is difficult to trace down the history of the fairy tale, because only the literary forms can survive. However, a browse through the history of humanity clearly shows that fairy tales have existed for thousands of years, although they were not named as a genre in the past.

A different definition of the fairy tales settles the difference between fairy tales and legends/epics:

A fairy tale is a story featuring folkloric characters such as fairies, goblins, elves, trolls, giants, talking animals and others. These stories often involve royalty, and modern versions usually have a happy ending. In cultures where demons and witches are perceived as real, fairy tales may merge into legendary narratives, where the context is perceived by teller and hearers as having historical actuality. However, unlike legends and epics they usually do not contain more than superficial references to religion and actual places, persons, and events although these allusions are often critical in understanding the origins of these fanciful stories. (www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairy_tales 2007)

That is, the setting and characterization of fairy tales are completely fictitious as mere products of a rich imagination; whereas epics and legends are generally settled onto real and actual geographical locations with references to actually existed characters though with exaggerated qualities and details. This definition is also supported by R.R. Tolkien, a writer of modern fairy tales, who insists that fairy tales should be taken seriously since they really contain a kind of magic:

The definition of a fairy-story -- what it is, or what it should be -- does not, then, depend on any definition or historical account of elf or fairy, but upon the nature of Faërie: the Perilous Realm itself, and the air that blows in that country. I will not attempt to define that, nor to describe it directly. It cannot be done. Faërie cannot be caught in a net of words; for it is one of its qualities to be indescribable, though not imperceptible. It has many ingredients, but analysis will not necessarily discover the secret of the whole. Yet I hope that what I have later to say about the other questions will give some glimpses of my own imperfect vision of it. For the moment I will say only this: a "fairy-story" is one which touches on or uses Faërie, whatever its own main purpose may be: satire, adventure, morality, fantasy. Faërie

itself may perhaps most nearly be translated by Magic - but it is magic of a peculiar mood and power, at the furthest pole from the vulgar devices of the laborious, scientific, magician. There is one proviso: if there is any satire present in the tale, one thing must not be made fun of, the magic itself. That must in that story be taken seriously, neither laughed at nor explained away. (1965: 31)

According to Tolkien, although they seem to be simple stories for children on the surface, fairy tales may function in a variety of ways such as satires, moral stories, fantasies or adventure tales. Physical or psychological, even the slightest component in a fairy tale should be considered critically because these tales carry the underlying meanings of human existence. They are the representation of the world as Tolkien observes,

Faerie contains many things besides elves and fays, and besides dwarfs, witches, trolls, giants, or dragons: it holds the seas, the sun, the moon, the sky; and the earth, and all things that are in it: tree and bird, water and stone, wine and bread, and ourselves, mortal men, when we are enchanted" (1965: 38)

Another definition is offered by Marcia Lane who also makes the crucial distinction between a fairy tale and a myth/legend. According to Lane, the most drastic trait which differentiates a fairy tale from the other literary forms of myth, legend, and fantasy is that a fairy tale never conveys a religious message even though it may sometimes contain spiritual aspects. Lane states that

A fairy tale is a story-literary or folk-that has a sense of the numinous, the feeling or sensation of the supernatural or the mysterious. But, and this is crucial, it is a story that happens in the past tense, and a story that is not tied to any specifics. If it happens "at the beginning of the world," then it is a myth. A story that names a specific "real" person is a legend (even if it contains a magical occurrence). A story

that happens in the future is a fantasy. Fairy tales are sometimes spiritual, but never religious. (1993: 131)

Linda Dégh has also attempted to define fairy tales. According to her, a fairy tale is". . . a magic story which cannot be true" (qtd.in Bottigheimer 1986) and *is known by its audience to be untrue and impossible*. This distinguishes fairy tales from legends, which may be true. Perhaps the simplest, broadest definition was given by Murray Knowles and Kirsten Malmkjaer who claim that fairy tales are "narratives predicted upon magic" (qtd.in Bottigheimer 1986) which seems to be the simplest definition of the term. Jack Zipes also makes a definition of literary fairy tale and in his articles on the subject in *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* he expands the definition by claiming that fairy tale is not an independent genre, rather they can be explained as a part of folklore as a subgenre of folklore along with myths and legends. According to Zipes,

In his first short monograph, [Jens] Tismar set down the principles for a definition of the literary fairy tale (das Kunstmärchen) as genre: (1) it distinguishes itself from the oral folk tale (das Volksmärchen) in so far as it is written by a single identifiable author; (2) it is thus synthetic, artificial, and elaborate in comparison to the indigenous formation of the folk tale that emanates from communities and tends to be simple and anonymous; (the differences between the literary fairy tale and the oral folk tale do not imply that one genre is better than the other; (in fact, the literary fairy tale is not an independent genre but can only be understood and defined by its relationship to the oral tales as well as to the legend, novella, novel, and other literary fairy tales that it uses, adapts, and remodels during the narrative conception of the author. (2000: 17)

It is notable that although they are named as fairy tales only a few tales contain fairies. Folklorist Stith Thompson (qtd.in Zipes 2000) states that "fairy tales" rarely contain actual

fairies, although they often contain other supernatural characters such as giants, witches, or brownies. J.R.R. Tolkien makes a similar observation: ". . . fairy-stories are not in normal English usage stories about fairies or elves, but stories about Fairy, that is Faërie, the realm or state in which fairies have their being" (1965: 132) So since "fairy tales" seldom have fairies, some scholars prefer the term, *Märchen* - German for "tale." In this context, a *Märchen* is "a tale of some length involving a succession of motifs or episodes, moving in an unreal world without definite locality or characters" in Thompson's words (qtd. in Zipes 2000).

The term, "fairy tale," was first used by Madame d'Aulnoy of France in the 17th century and even today there are many authors writing fairy tales, though sometimes in different forms and with different purposes as the following chapters reveal. The reason why these tales are called "fairy tales" is that the women writers in the France called these tales "contes de fees", which was translated into English as "fairy tales". Soon, because of the popularity of the French tales that it began to be used to describe similar tales such as those by the Grimms and Hans Christian Andersen.

The origin of the word "fairy" is the Latin "fatum" meaning "to enchant." The word was derived directly from the French form of the root, "fee" referring the term "illusion". A similar word, "fata" meaning "magic" also existed in Italian. 'Fee's were supposed to do charms and to know the power and virtue of words, of stones, and of herbs by which they kept their youth and beauty and in riches (Bottigheimer 1986: 9-14). However, after the time of Chaucer and after the appearance of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, the name of the real fairies was transferred to "the little beings who made the green, sour ringlets whereof the ewe not bites" (Bottigheimer 1986: 21). Especially in poetry, fairies were identified with nymphs and elves. Particularly Shakespeare's fairies effected this transformation. In his

“Midsummer Night's Dream” he has integrated most of the fairy tradition known in England at his time.

According to some scholars, the primary goal of fairy tales is to amuse and the moral message is just a by-product. However, the reality cannot be this simple because in every reaction, the children take these interesting characters in fairy tales as a model and they learn from them right and wrong attitude. Fairy tales give direction to children personality. So, as Kready claims, the choice of fairy tales is of great importance:

Because of the important aesthetic and ethical bearings of this form of literary experience, the fairy stories must be rightly chosen and artfully told. In no other way can their full worth in education be realized. They are tools which require discrimination and skill (1946: 33).

Basically, a fairy tale has a peculiar place in the training of children in contrast with some rigid scholars who believe that education can only be achieved through logical science, and who condemn the imaginative fairy tales on the ground that they lead children into groundless and irrational fantasies. They consider fairy tales as the telling of pleasant lies, which are wasteful and even harmful since they consume precious time since they tend to measure the worth of all teaching in terms of strictly intellectual products. However they seem to have missed the point that life is more than accurate information; it is fancy and accomplishment. The fairy tale is a literary achievement. It is about feelings. Iona and Peter Opie further explain this idea as follows:

It matters little that the facts alleged in the story never were and never can be. The values and ideals which enlist the child's sympathy are morally worthy, affording a practice to those fundamental prejudices toward right and wrong which are the earliest acquisitions of a young soul. The other characteristics of the tale-the rhythmic, the grotesque, the weird, and the droll-are mere recreation, the abundant

playfulness which children require to rest them from the dangers and terrors which fascinate them. (1992: 17)

That is, fairy tales offer children acceptable dreams in which the child is expected to discriminate between good and evil at an early age. At the same time, the children are introduced to the possible dangers of life in symbolic forms. The very idea is repeated by Henry Suzalla in the following words:

The fairy tale, like every other literary production, must be judged by the fitness of its emotional effects. Fairyland is the stage-world of childhood, a realm of vicarious living, more elemental and more fancy-free than the perfected dramas of sophisticated adults whose ingrained acceptance of binding realities demands sterner stuff. The tales are classics of a particular kind; they are children's classics, artful adaptations of life and form which grip the imaginations of little folks. (qtd. In Kready 1946: 153)

Each fairy tale is a new adventure for the listener with its fascinating atmosphere and endless possibilities of magic. Rather than being the amusement of single moment, each fairy tale touches deep down to the soul of the listener. It provides the listener with a possibility of a dream world into which s/he can settle himself/ herself as a traveler to enjoy the riches of dreams. Tolkien points out the importance of the imaginary world of fairy tales:

The realm of Fairy story is wide and deep and high and filled with many things: all manner of beasts and birds are found there; shoreless seas and stars uncounted; beauty that is an enchantment, and an ever-present peril; both joy and sorrow sharp as swords. In that realm a man may, perhaps, count himself fortunate to have wandered, but its very richness and strangeness tie the tongue of the traveller who

would report them. And while he is there it is dangerous for him to ask too many questions, lest the gate should be shut and the keys be lost. (1965: 67)

The same idea is repeated by Teri Windling who also defines the experience of reading of a fairy tale in terms of a journey:

The fairy tale journey may look like an outward trek across plains and mountains, through castles and forests, but the actual movement is inward, into the lands of the soul. The dark path of the fairy tale forest lies in the shadows of our imagination, the depths of our unconscious. To travel to the wood, to face its dangers, is to emerged transformed by this experience. Particularly for children whose world does not resemble the simplified world of television sit-coms ... this ability to travel inward, to face fear and transform it, is a skill they will use all their lives. We do children--and ourselves--a grave disservice by censoring the old tales, glossing over the darker passages and ambiguities. (qtd. in Lane 1993: 205)

Finally, for Angela Carter, fairy tales are “the soap operas” (1990: XX) of the ancient times.

II.II. THE HISTORY OF FAIRY TALES

What is perfectly clear about the theories on the origins and history of the fairy tales is that they are part of an oral tradition; tales are told, rather than written down, and handed down from generation to generation, and they are narrated by illiterate people without any records of them, which makes the history of their development complicated and doubtful. There are many theories about the origin of fairy tales. Some claim that “the tales originated during the childhood of man, and that the traits found in them of cannibalism, metamorphism, and totemism, must be expression of primitive thought” (Opie 1992: 17). According to others, they are nothing but “the reminiscent of ancient superstitions and rituals” (Bottigheimer 1986: 204). There is another group believing that

“the tales are of Aryan stock, and have all made their way from India” (Warner 1994: 287). A different theory depends on the idea that “each tale has arisen spontaneously in a number of separate places throughout the world whenever man was passing through a particular stage of development” (Zipes 2000: 118). For some fairy tales are the reflection of “a mythology that accounted for the course of the sun and other celestial bodies” or they “stemmed from ritual celebrations of the seasons and initiation rites” (Bottigheimer 1986: 206). It is also suggested that the tales are “dream sequences, the products of psychological difficulties, and particularly... of complexes that are sexual” (Zipes 2001: 87). Von Franz argues,

The fairy tales were primitive man's experience with nature in days when he could not distinguish between nature and his own personality, when there was no supernatural because everything was endowed with a personal life. They were the poetic fancies of light and dark, cloud and rain, day and night; and underneath them were the same fanciful meanings. These became changed by time, circumstances in different countries, and the fancy of the tellers, so that they became sunny and many-colored in the South, sterner and wilder in the North, and more home-like in the Middle and West. To the Bushmen the wind was a bird, and to the Egyptian fire was a living beast. Even *The Song of Six-Pence* has been explained as a nature-myth, the pie being the earth and sky, the birds the twenty-four hours, the king the sun, the queen the moon, and the opening of the pie, day-break (1995: 201-202)

The abundance of theories about the origin of fairy tales can be clearly seen. Whatever the origin might be there is an unchanging truth about them; they exist in every period of humanity in every culture, though sometimes in different forms.

First, it seems necessary to discriminate between the oral folk tales and the literary fairy tales of Europe. Magical folk tales are an essential part of the storytelling tradition

with stories of fairies, witches, and people under spell. Folk tales are much more modest stories when compared to “the great cosmological myth cycles or long heroic Romances” (Carter 1990: XVI), and they had been handed down from generation to generation generally by women, peasants, slaves, and gypsies.

In contrast to folk tales, fairy tales are believed to have begun as an art form of the upper classes highly supported by technological and cultural improvements as printing methods and rising literacy. It is true that fairy tales are highly influenced by the oral folk tales of the peasant tradition; however the specific motifs in fairy tales are created and shaped in the author’s or narrator’s imagination.

The known history of fairy tales can be traced back as early as to the 5th B.C. However, in those times, it is in particular illiterate people who may have told long tales without keeping any records of them. The oldest known written fairy tales came from ancient Egypt, and fairy tales appear, now and again, in written literature throughout literate cultures, as in the *Panchatantra*, *Arabian Nights*, *Vikram and Vampire*, *Bel and the Dragon* and *The Golden Ass* in Eastern Literature but it is unknown to what extent these reflect the actual folk tales even of their own time. As it is obvious from these facts that fairy tales have ancient roots and the stylistic evidence also indicates that fairy tales are nothing but reworked folk tales into literary forms (Opie 1992: 21).

However, since this thesis aims to study fairy tale tradition in English literature, the center is focused on the history of fairy tales in Western tradition. Actually, fairy tale images appear plentifully in the highly literary works of all ages such as in Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*, and the plays of William Shakespeare. However, the earliest examples of European literary fairy tales are from 16th century Italy: Giovanni Francesco Straparola’s *Le piacevoli* (published in 1550-53) and Giambattista Basile’s *Il Pentamerone* (published posthumously in 1634-36) are the

earliest works known in the Western literature. Especially Basile's work is known as the source giving inspiration to the French fairy tale devotees in the following century; and his book contains the earliest known written versions of such classic tales as Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, Snow White, Puss in Boots, and many others. (Opie 1992: 25).

Yet the 17th century witnesses the dominance of female writers when the fairy tales are concerned. In Maria Leach's *Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Myth, and Legend* it is mentioned that women writers of 17th-century Paris create the heyday of the French fairy tale:

There was an already established and immensely popular fairy tale movement that had begun as early as 1670, among a group of nonconformist and somewhat scandalous upper-class women. Madame D'Aulnoy was famed throughout the city for the stories she told in her *rue Saint-benoit* salon beginning in 1685 . . . tales which she began to write down and publish in 1690. In all this derivative literature, the traditional stories served as a pretext to 'belle-lettres' according to the artificial tastes of the period; they were rearranged, developed, and pampered, yet became household familiars (1983: 197).

The writers of literary fairy tales, beginning from the 17th century onward, were generally the ones whose works are still widely read today: Charles Perrault (17th century France), Hans Christian Andersen (19th century Denmark), George Macdonald and Oscar Wilde (19th century England). Another name associated with the fairy tale tradition, The Brothers Grimm (19th century Germany), play an important role in the history of fairy tales; they confuse the line between oral and literary tales because they organize their German "household tales" as if they are narrated by peasants (Warner 1994: 221-227).

It is also notable that these canonized writers are all men, since this is a reversal from the oral storytelling tradition, historically dominated by women. Indeed, Straparola,

Basile, Perrault, and even the Brothers Grimm never hide the truth that their stories are largely or entirely inspired or originated from the works of women storytellers. However it is also clear that women are severely excluded from the history of fairy tales once they became a literary form. Towards the end of the 19th century, children's books became a prosperous and booming industry, and the French salon tales were considered as a cheap source of story material. The tales were shortened and simplified for the Victorian reader. Besides they were carefully decorated with Victorian morals, ideals and propriety. Then they were often published under the name of the anonymous and illiterate fictitious peasant woman known as Mother Goose, while the real women behind the tales were slowly disappearing. From then on, the only existing female character associated with the fairy tales in the background is an anonymous old peasant called Mother Goose, who basically began to function as a narrator to tell the stories.

It was only in the 19th century that the fairy tales were reformed so that they could be read to children. The Brothers Grimm in the first half of the 19th century focused mostly on eliminating sexual references; on the other hand, in many respects, violence, particularly when punishing villains, was increased with a concern to convey moral messages. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm Brothers rewrote the tales in later editions to make them more acceptable, which ensured their sales and the later popularity of their work. The work of the Brothers Grimm highly influenced other collectors. They inspired them to collect tales in a spirit of romantic nationalism that the fairy tales of a country were particularly representative of it. Among those, who were highly influenced by the Grimm Brothers, were the Russian Alexander Afanasyev, the Norwegians Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe, the English Joseph Jacobs, and Jeremiah Curtin, an American who collected Irish tales. Soon, though, fairy tales were taken within coverage of children's literature. Iona and Peter Opie describe the Grimms as follows:

The Grimms were the first substantial collectors to like folk tales for their own sake; the first to write the tales down in the way ordinary people told them, and not attempt to improve them; and they were the first to realize that everything about the tales was of interest; even including the identity of the person who told the tale. Thus, although they put forward ideas about the antiquity and significance of the tales . . . and although they did not always adhere to the high standards they set themselves . . . their collection stands as pre-eminent commendation of the traditional tale. (1992: 26)

Another great contribution to the fairy tales was made by Hans Christian Andersen in the 19th century. Unlike the collector Grimm Brothers, Andersen was a creator of fairy tales. He used conventional themes in his tales however he poured his own life and personality into his tales. Actually, Andersen was the first fairy tale writer from the humble middle class with his more than 150 tales. His books were translated into many other languages

At the turn of the 20th century, in Great Britain many old tales taken from tradition were included in the Welsh Mabinogion, Irish sagas, and Cornish Mabinogion. Celtic tales have been collected in modern times in a greater number than those of any nation. This has been due largely to the work of J.F. Campbell. Celtic tales are unusual in that they have been collected while the custom of story-telling is yet flourishing among the Folk. They are therefore of great literary and imaginative interest. They are especially valuable as the oldest of the European tales. The Irish tales of “Connla” and “the Fairy Maiden” have been traced to a date earlier than the fifth century and therefore ranks as the oldest tale of modern Europe. In modern times, the Folk-Lore Society of England and America has been established. Now almost every nation has its folk-lore society and folk-tales are being collected all over the world. Altogether probably Russia has collected fifteen hundred such tales, Germany twelve hundred, Italy and France each one thousand, and India seven

hundred. Furthermore the greatest contribution to fairy tales has been made by Walt Disney who has created sympathetic cartoon characters out of classical fairy tales in his Hollywood studios.

However, those great women and men narrators have not been completely forgotten. At the end of the 20th century, their history has been restudied by a new generation of fairy tale scholars. Their tales have been rediscovered, reappraised, and retranslated. Their tales have provided new insight and inspiration for a whole new wave of fairy tale authors, including Angela Carter, A.S. Byatt, Emma Donoghue, Margaret Atwood, Robert Coover, Tanith Lee, and Delia Sherman.

II.III. STRUCTURE OF FAIRY TALES

Generations after generations, children have been captivated by the magical atmosphere of fairy tales: the everlasting realm of giants and dwarfs, brave princes and beautiful princesses, helpful fairies and evil witches. Fairy tales have always been an essential part of childhood. Why and how can they be so popular among children for hundreds of years without being forgotten and lost?

Fairy tales have a matchless importance and influence on children's development. Throughout the history of humanity, folk tales have been told by people to one another for entertainment and education; the oral tales were shaped and reshaped in accordance with the demands of various audiences, cultures, and situations. When the tales began to be written down in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, they did not change much and were gradually transferred to the nursery as children's tales. It is not a coincidence that this shift was in parallel to the rise in literacy which led to the establishment of the middle class and to increasing discrimination between child and adult. By the middle of the 19th century, the fairy tale was definitely settled as a division of 'children's literature', even though many writers kept on producing fairy tales that appealed to all ages. Thus, the structure of

the fairy tales as a part of the 'children's literature' has also been settled into a well-defined framework. On the most fundamental stage, the typical fairy-tale plot structure follows the well-defined outline: "Description of the initial situation: Introduction of a conflict/complication/problem/task./ Hero(ine) attempts to handle the conflict/complication/problem/task./ Successful resolution" (Zipes 2000: 238). It is natural that there are differing elements, details, and variables within this basic and plain framework, but even these differences take place in the framework of predictable and conventional patterns. For instance, the hero(ine) typically has to leave home in order to solve the problem. However, the problem may take different shapes ranging from rescuing a princess from a dragon to finding a wife depending on the imagination of the narrator.

Fairy tales as the sub-genre of folktales involve enchanted, supernatural, grotesque or amazing events, characters, episodes, or symbols. Folktales are narratives which are not believed to be true, that is, they are completely fictional stories. They often have timeless settings in generic beginning with 'once upon a time'. They take place in unspecified places such as in 'the woods' or in 'a kingdom far and away'. Nevertheless, time and place are perceived to be closely related to the society from which the tale is originated from. The characters are one-dimensional; in other words, they are either purely good or completely bad. They are flat characters who never develop negatively or positively. They are just types rather than being the real characters. They serve to entertain, motivate, and illuminate us by exemplifying different situations from life. There is generally typically an implicit or explicit prohibition or restriction which highly influences the stream of the plot. The main characters are usually individuals who often follow a usually and classic pattern to handle the situation and the problem is generally solved partly by magic. There is also a kind of transformation which basically aims to reward the main character. This transformation can be physical as the turning of a beast into a charming prince or it can be

a character transformation as the ugly duckling turning into an elegant swan. Still, they appeal to many people because of the richness and effectiveness of symbolic and artistic elements within the plot and story.

Almost all fairy tales reflect and shape the culture they belong to. For example, the fairy tales which are recorded in the 12th – 15th centuries are shaped in “Christian era of patriarchy and wealthy elite so the motifs in those tales are similar in some pre-Christian epics, poems, myths, fables, etc” (Leach 1983: 96). On the other hand, the fairy tales composed in the 19th century are designed in accordance with the cultural assumptions of Victorian society about gender roles. Fairy tales, at the same time, echo universal themes, metaphors and symbols.

The themes of fairy tales are generally “indicative of socio-economic classes seeking power. At the same time, they also represent details of the civilizing process which humanity has gone through” (Warner 1994: 274). Among the most common themes and motifs of fairy tales are:

- * Escaping mighty and evil enemies
- * Accomplishing difficult tasks
- * Wisdom through suffering
- * Generosity, selfishness and pride, triumph of humility over greed
- * Triumph of the youngest, weakest, most oppressed
- * Animals: changing into animals, talking animals, animal helpers, companions and bridegrooms. (Bottigheimer 1986: 197-206)

When the fairy tales of oral tradition are considered, the emphasis is always on the plot rather than on the setting or the characters. In the most general sense, setting and characters are generic rather than being specific. Moreover, these tales are rather repetitive in plot because repetitious elements are believed to be engraved in memory better.

The fairy tales of written tradition, however, filled with the traces of the writer's purpose and the message s/he aims to convey. They are considered to be literary works so they have a more set form. They display more specific characterization and characters "often with greater interiority and developed personality" (Zipes 2001: 201). That is, they contain greater and more detailed description of individuals and of settings. Furthermore, repetition is minimized in order to avoid any distracting the reader from the flow of story. However, this characteristic may be less comprehensible than it first appears. Jack Zipes argues that

. . . neither genre, the oral folktale or the literary fairy tale. . . can be called 'purebred'. Rather, from the first appearance of fairy tales, oral storytellers have borrowed from written sources and literary writers have adapted oral "wonder tales" (yet another term for the folk fairy tale). The traditional association with the "folk" - if by "folk" one means the peasants and other poor, which often appears to be the sense of references to this group - is also suspect, since many of the best-known fairy tale collectors drew from middle-class or aristocratic tellers, rather than directly from the peasantry. (2000: 217)

Tolkien questions whether there is a real link between children's and fairy tales and claims that fairy tales have been become cut off from adult art and literature and "have been ruined. The value of fairy-stories is thus not, in my opinion, to be found by considering children in particular" (Tolkien 1965:36).

Another particular characteristic of fairy tales is that they inevitably lead to happy endings in which good is rewarded while evil is severely punished. For example, in the famous fairy tale "Snow White", Snow White is saved by her handsome prince while her wicked stepmother, the Queen, dies. Similarly, in "Little Red Riding Hood", both Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother, who have been devoured by a cunning wolf, are

rescued by a huntsman and the wolf is killed. These happy endings compensate for the frustrating, restless, and distressing feelings and they create confidence and hope both for the characters in the tale and for the reader. Furthermore, many people identify themselves with the main characters in the tales and they visualize that their own wishes and dreams come true when the tale character is restored to ultimate happiness. In other words, the happy endings of fairy tales can be seen as a substitute for the wishes and dreams of readers satisfying their spiritual demands.

All fairy tales begin with the popular classic opening words "Once upon a time". For example, the first sentence of "Little Red Riding Hood" is "Once upon a time there was a sweet little maiden", while that of "Snow White" is, "Once upon a time, in the middle of winter, when snowflakes were falling like feathers from the sky..." According to Kready, "This deliberate vagueness in the beginnings of fairy tales symbolizes that we are leaving the concrete world of ordinary reality" (1946: 62). That is, this classic opening establishes the fantasy world of fairy tales apart from the real world. Thus the reader can free his spirit from the materialistic real world into the cheerful, colorful, and innocent world of the fairy tale.

Another point about the structure of the fairy tales is the widespread and universal use of the number "three". It is very common that a fairy tale has three main characters, three incidents or three tasks. In "The Three Little Pigs", there are three lovely pigs. In "Cinderella", Cinderella's father has three daughters; Cinderella and her two stepsisters. In "Snow White", the Queen tries to kill Snow White three times. In *The Classical Fairy Tales*, Iona and Peter Opie explain this as follows:

In practice, the number "three" symbolizes perfection and completeness. For instance, the Holy Trinity is made up of three members: God, Christ and the Holy Spirit. In Geometry, a figure cannot be formed without three distinct points. Also,

"three" is broadly considered as the basic unit of a family — father, mother and child. (1992: 34)

Similarly, Leach defines the function of this interesting number saying that "The number gives security not only to the narrator, who relies on it and takes pleasure in making use of it, but to the listener, as well" (1983: 44). The number 'three' gives readers a sense of security because of its perfect and complete feature.

The heroes and heroines are vital elements in every fairy tale. They must struggle and overcome many difficulties, challenges and obstacles in order to victorious and deserve happiness. For example, in "Sleeping Beauty", the prince has to pass through many thorns before he can save the beautiful princess. Similarly, in "Cinderella", Cinderella has to do a lot of hard housework before she marries the prince and lives happily ever after. Those heroes and heroines convey to children an important message: in order to be successful and victorious you have to work very hard and struggle. Moreover, they are the model characters for young readers to imitate. Children can learn the courage, carefulness, determination and other virtues of the heroes and heroines. Fairy tales also teach children the naturally existing controversies in life depicting the opposites and extremes such as good and evil or wealth and poverty. These are very helpful to them before they get into society.

Fairy tales at first glance may seem simple but actually they may well be complex and may have violent endings as well as happy ones. That's why other model characters in classic fairy tales are the evil ones. A controversial topic is the influence of their sadistic, brutal, cruel or vile deeds which lead them to horrifying and on children's psyche. In "Hansel and Gretel", for example, the witch wants to cook Hansel and Gretel and eat them, but finally she is burned to death. In "Little Red Riding Hood", the wicked wolf swallows Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother, and then his belly is cut violently by a

hunter. Especially, in the old classical fairy tales, tyranny and cannibalism seem to be ordinary events. In the old Brothers Grimm's version of "Cinderella", the eyes of two stepsisters are plucked off/out by white doves. On the contrary, in the Walt Disney film, "Cinderella", they are not mentioned in the ending and seem to escape without punishment. In *Off with their Heads!*, Maria Tatar points out that

Although revenge can be as sweet as love for the heroes and heroines of fairy tales, today it is almost always brief in its interpretation, with the punishment occupying only a single moment in time and a single point in space. We are far removed from the festive violence. (1992:169)

Many experts studying fairy tales and child psychology tend to deny the negative effects of the evil deeds on children's psyche. One of the certain features about the evil character that is s/he is inevitably punished in the end. Their tragic consequence warns children not to do bad things; otherwise, they will also be punished. Also, their punishments satisfy children's needs for justice. As Bottigheimer suggests "In the traditional fairy tale, the hero is rewarded and the evil person meets his well-deserved fate, thus satisfying the child's deep need for justice to prevail" (1986: 144). Ingrid Riedel, who is a popular fairy tale researcher, was a child when she experienced the Second World War. In the air-raid shelter, while the bombs were exploding all around, she found that she could control her fear after reading fairy tales and she gives the following remark:

Fairy tales seemed to me at that time to be personal adepts for dealing with evil. I experienced them as protective powers, allied with me against chaos. They helped me to get through my fear, to keep my composure even when external danger and human panic prevailed around me. (qtd. in Kready 1946: viii)

This is a perfect evidence of the fact that fairy tales and the messages of they contain deeply influence the psychology of children, sometimes in very unexpected ways. They

may produce hope, admiration, and wonder as well as fear, astonishment and a sense of injustice. Thus children can easily get the message that anything can happen any time in the universe and they may improve opposing attitudes, which are necessary to survive such as stabilizing, conserving or challenging common beliefs, laws, values, norms. So, according to Zipes, the function of fairy tales can be to “awaken our regard for the miraculous condition of life & to evoke profound feelings of awe and respect for life as a miraculous process, which can be altered and changed to compensate for the lack of power, wealth, and pleasure that most people experience” (2000: 848-9). The fairy tales are always narrated in third-person. Usually the only time the narrator speaks in the first person is at the end of the tale. Moreover, the Past Tense is the only tense used in the narration of fairy tales. Actually it is perfectly natural that everything that comes after “once upon a time” should be in the form of the past tense. As in the beginning of the tale, at the end of it, too, formulaic lines are used. The best known lines in English-language fairy tale formulas are, of course, "once upon a time" at the beginning while "... and they lived happily ever after," in the end.

II.IV. CHARACTERIZATION IN FAIRY TALES

The characters in fairy tales are actually easily identifiable and specialized ones associated with particular social classes, desires, professions, assignments. Characters are easily categorized according to their specific functions. Basically, it is possible to categorize fairy tale characters as good and evil.

Good characters are always the hero and heroine of the fairy tale. S/he is usually humble, simple, naïve, untainted and s/he believes in the miracles and dreams. S/he does not resist the flow of events; rather s/he wants to keep process of natural change flowing in order to achieve happiness. A character in a poor position like Cinderella or Rapunzel is

automatically defined as good. A hero/heroine, the character is at the mercy of someone more powerful and cruel.

The protagonist of a classical fairy tale is generally the youngest member of the family. S/he is either already an orphan or s/he is about to be deserted. This protagonist is threatened by an exclusion or prohibition that s/he violates which leads to her/his departure or banishment. S/he takes or is given task related to this exclusion or prohibition which determines her/his qualification as an archetypal character. Then, s/he is on a kind of journey or quest during which s/he performs her/his social function by crossing boundaries. All through this journey, the character experiences significant encounters with enemies or friend; the enemy –antagonist- is often a witch, ogre, monster, or evil fairy whereas “friend” is usually a mysterious creature or character who gives the protagonist gifts. Towards the end of the tale, a miraculous or marvelous change or transformation occurs endowing the protagonist with gifts. At the end of the tale, the hero(ine) achieves a great success which is generally defined as marriage, acquisition of some fortune, survival, wisdom or combination all. Peter Opie *et al* argue that

Usually the tale is about one person or one family, having to cope with a supernatural occurrence or supernatural protagonist during a period of stress. The hero is almost invariably a young person, usually the youngest member of the family, and if not deformed or already an orphan, is probably in the process of disowned or abandoned. (1992: 15)

On the other hand, the evil character --so called, the villain-- uses power to exploit the others. Villains frequently have a high social status or a privileged social rank just like the wicked step mother in Cinderella or the evil queen in Snow White. S/he wants to control, mesmerize, imprison, and destroy the good ones intentionally for personal benefit because s/he has no respect or consideration for nature and other human beings. So, s/he seeks to

abuse magic for personal gain which leads her/him to total self destruction. The villain generally appears twice: once in the opening of the story, and a second time as the person sought out by the hero for revenge or punishment.

Fairy-tale heroines and heroes are ordinary human beings. They may meet supernatural or magical creatures, and may use magical objects. However, they do not have innate or inherent supernatural or magical powers since they are not the off-springs of fairies or divine beings.

Fairy tale characters are either nameless or they just have simple and generic names. The reason for this is that they are types representing particular aspects in human nature rather than being multi-dimensional real characters. These characters are often referred to in terms of their profession, social position, or familial relation to other characters such as prince, princess, king, queen, husband, wife, son, daughter, brother, sister, youth, old man, old woman, merchant, peasant, priest, or blacksmith. Tolkien notes that

Fairy tale characters are referred to by generic or descriptive names, as “Jack”, “Beauty”, “Snow White”, “Silver Hair”, “Tom Thumb”, “Red Ridinghood”, “Cinder Girl”. Fairy tales are more concerned with situation than with character.

They are the space fiction of the past. (1965: 147)

Characters' inner lives, inner thoughts, emotions or psychology are not important. In other words, the listener does not care about what the tale character feels in certain situations because “what happens” is much more important than the character feels; in other words, plot is more important than the character. The listener only cares about what the character is going to do next. That is why the characters in fairy tales are always clear-cut as good and evil since goodness and wickedness are often defined by situation, not by the

character. In the same way, characters' life stories before and after the tale are unimportant which is called "depthlessness" (Leach 1983: 37).

A final point about characters in fairy tales is about female figures. In many classic fairy tales, female figures dominate the most important roles. Snow White, Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Rapunzel, Beauty and the beast, Sleeping Beauty and Gretel are major characters in the stories. However, they all have their antagonists who are usually in the form of another female character. Therefore, there are two basic female archetypes almost in every fairy tales. Rather than being actual characters they are like the symbols of two opposing world views.

Most of the classical fairy tales turn around these two female characters; the good young girl and the wicked older woman. It is notable that the young girl is almost invariably incredibly beautiful --which is generally the cause of the confrontation and jealousy between the two major female characters--, virtuous, kind, good-hearted, and honest. She is loved by everyone around her, yet it is very rare that she is heard speaking in the tales. She usually depicted as a silent --almost muted-- passive and submissive character in need of protection by a strong man. She is so naïve, inexperienced, and innocent that most of the time she fails to understand the hostile attitudes and clear plots committed by the wicked one. She is more than willing to forgive anybody who has committed a crime even against her. She is purely good and most of the time incredibly good willed. These are all positive traits which help her gain her reward at the end of the story; she is saved by the white-horsed prince; taken to his palace as his wife, and lives happily ever after.

The elder woman, on the other hand, is much more experienced, clever, active and strong, and perhaps these are the reasons why she is never liked by the others in the tale. She generally practices witchcraft; she has a wicked heart; the evil in her heart is reflected

on her face so she is generally rather ugly which shows underline her unpleasant nature. She attempts to exterminate the young girl but she always fails. Naturally, she is always severely punished in the end in order to pay for her wicked deeds.

A significant effect of these two opposing female figures is that they strengthen feminist approaches in the contemporary society as is shown in the following chapter. Many feminists criticize fairy tales claiming that women rights are ignored in these stories and arguing that these fairy tales are used by men in order to impose patriarchal norms and men-centered strategies upon societies.

CHAPTER III

III. THE RECONSTRUCTION OF FEMALE IMAGES IN FAIRY TALES

One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.

--Simone de Beauvoir

III.I. FEMINISM

Historically, “feminist politics have relied on the assumed sameness among all women” (Nicholson 1990:12). Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that feminism can stand for the benefit and welfare of all women because, after all, “women are all alike in being women” (Nicholson 1990:13). The subject of feminist politics, thus, “is a paradigmatic gender identity in which all women are united to the extent that it is assumed to be representative of women kind” (Roth 2004:3). Feminist politics also serves as a gender direction that represents a basic gender identity. Of course, women are different from one another when their races, classes, ages, sexual orientations, cultures are concerned; however, these differences have been regarded as less important than the sameness of sex and gender.

Feminists have recently protested the idea that these differences count just as much to one's identity as one's sex. They claim that “privileging the purportedly shared sex of women is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of the identities of actual women”(Cott 1977: 32). Women are not and cannot be all the same and their differences from one another cannot be perceived just as irrelevant and trivial coincidences. So, many feminists are now arguing that things like race, class, and sexual orientation make the concept of a common gender identity a complex fact. This also impacts feminist politics which is a much more complicated issue than it seems.

When we study the social and cultural history of women's movements, we see that such history slowly leads to feminism. Actually, the very beginning of this history can be traced back to the dates when women notice and demand their rights as humans. In its most general form, women's rights refer to the social and basic human rights of women. One of the first steps in achieving women's rights was the "Declaration of Sentiments" which was signed in 1848 by sixty-eight women and thirty-two men, following the form of the United States Declaration of Independence. It was organized as the first women's rights convention, in Seneca Falls, New York, known as, 'the 1848 Women's Rights Convention'. The chief author of the Declaration of Rights and Sentiments was Elizabeth Cady Stanton (Foner 1992: 49-50). The Declaration document was considered to be the "grand basis for attaining the civil, social, political, and religious rights of women" (Foner 1992: 51).

Following this, with the influence of the abolition movements, which was a political trying looking for to stop the practice of slavery and the worldwide slave trade, women became more and more aware of the male dominance and suppression over them. These two events can be taken as the most important historical moments when women began to struggle for equality.

Thus, the history of feminism goes far back before the 18th century, but the roots of the feminist movement are found in the second half of that century. The earliest studies about the "woman question" comment on and criticize the limited role of women in individual, familial and social life. In the UK, The feminist movement starts in the 1800s and continues to the present day. In France, Simone de Beauvoir became a prominent name with her works in which she writes a detailed analysis of women's oppression in the early 20th century. The late 1960s and early 1970s witness the big sexual revolution which considerably changed women's position in the Western world.

Indeed, the history of feminism is the backbone of the Feminist Movement. The emergence of the Feminist movement is in the late 19th century. Some critics protest the idea of limiting the history of feminism to the history of the modern Feminist Movement since it may mean to ignore women's opposition to patriarchy and male-centered social and cultural norms in the previous ages. When we studying, the history of feminism we must also consider the fact that the term, “feminism” came to be used in the late 19th century as a self-conscious and systematic ideology.

Apart from the history of Feminist Movement, there's also feminist history which is totally different fact than the history of Feminist Movement. Feminist history basically refers to the “re-reading and re-interpretation of history from a female perspective” (Pedersen 1995: 84). It highly differs from the history of feminism, which “outlines the origins and evolution of the feminist movement” and it is also different from women's history which “focuses on the role of women in historical events” (Pedersen 1995: 87). The feminist history aims to study and enlighten the female perspective of history by rediscovering the ignored or minimized female writers, artists, philosophers, and so forth. In this way, it recovers and supports the importance of women's voices, choices and experiences in the past. Feminist history also struggles against the male-dominated norms and structures which attempt to reject women from the historical, cultural, and philosophical traditions. Besides, it also struggles against the negative characterization of women in different aspects of social and cultural life. Cott points out that

If we take feminism to be that cast of mind that insists that the differences and inequalities between the sexes are the result of historical processes and are not blindly “natural,” we can understand why feminist history has always had a dual mission — on the one hand to recover the lives, experiences, and mentalities of women from the condescension and obscurity in which they have been so

unnaturally placed, and on the other to reexamine and rewrite the entire historical narrative to reveal the construction and workings of gender. (1977: 93)

Susan Bordo states that the dilemma of the twentieth-century feminism is “the tension between the preservation of gender consciousness and identity (as a source of political unity and alternative vision) and the destruction of 'gender prescriptions' ... which limit human choice and possibility” (1993: 129). That is, feminists in the 20th century are torn between two paradoxical choices: on the one hand, they struggle against prescribed gender identities and on the other hand, they have to make use of gender descriptions to claim a gender consciousness and identity.

Basically, a “gender role” is a set of behavioral norms associated specifically with males or females, in a given social group or system. It can be a form of division of labor by gender. It can be explained plainly as

. . . a focus of analysis in the social sciences and humanities. Gender is one component of the gender/sex system, which refers to the set of arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity, and in which these transformed needs are satisfied. (Reiter 1975: 159)

Most societies have a particular gender/sex system although the elements, mechanism and workings of this system differ widely from one society to the other. For many feminists, the “gender roles” are cruel and domineering formulaic expectations imposed by the male-dominated, traditional and patriarchal society in order to fit women into a desired shape.

Furthermore, it cannot be said that there is a big tolerance and acceptance for all female gender roles - there is some permanent prejudice and discrimination against those who prefer to hold on to traditional female gender roles despite feminism. In the same way, some certain religious groups almost condemn women who choose to go after careers and

higher education often accusing them of “trying to become a man” and “abandoning their children” (Tasker 1998: 112).

Most scholars claim that the specific behavior of individuals is an outcome of both socially created rules and values, and individual nature, regardless of its being genetic, unconscious, or conscious. As there happen changes in the social and cultural rules and values over time the way identities are formed also changes. Cultures and societies are not static so they are highly apt to improve and change, and their definition of gender roles changes too. As a result people have extensively contradictory views about how much gender depends on biological sex.

A person's gender role is supposed to be made up of several elements and can be expressed by means of clothing, behavior, manner and attitude, choice of work, personal relationships and many other factors. These elements are generally not easily identified or defined ones and they change through time as in the case of women's wearing trousers widely, especially in the second half of the 20th century, although it was almost a shame in the 20th century.

In the past, gender roles were conventionally divided into strictly feminine and masculine gender roles. However, today these roles vary into many different acceptable male or female gender roles. Yet, gender role norms for women and men can be different considerably from one country or culture to another, and even within a country or culture. It can extremely change in accordance with the social group to which a person belongs or the subculture with which he or she identifies his or her cultural identity.

Feminists nevertheless argue that traditional gender roles are suppressive for women. They believe that the female gender role is shaped as an opposite to the male role, and helps to carry on and spread traditional patriarchy. In other words, the world of males and females are totally separated with well defined gender roles and identities through

which women are put into an inferior position. Within this framework, female existence belongs to the domestic world where she is responsible for child-care, cleaning, cooking and other daily works about the household while male is the bread-winner who belongs to the outer world and somewhat is freer than the other partner. Female is supposed to play the part of the weak, submissive, muted, passive, controlled and inferior being voluntarily; whereas the male is the strong, dominant, directing, active, controlling and superior party. As De Beauvoir explains, male settles himself as “the norm, the ideal” thus by putting the female as “the other” (1989: 74) insultingly. In short, women are expected to play the “angel in the house” (1989: 121) in order to serve better the needs and demands of the male figure in the house. It means that women should do the unimportant works while the men have the authority and make the decisions. Looking back on the 1860s, Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote:

We would warn the young women of the coming generation against man's advice as to their best interests their highest development. We would point for them the moral of our experiences: that woman must lead the way to her own enfranchisement, and work out her own salvation with a hopeful courage and determination that knows no fear nor trembling. She must not put her trust in man in this transition period, since, while regarded as his subject, his inferior his slave, their interests must be antagonistic. (qtd. in Cott: 1977)

As it is seen, for more than the last 100 years women have been fighting for the same rights as men and have been able to make changes to the traditionally accepted and purposefully imposed feminine gender role. However, as many feminists still point out, there are still a lot to be done.

Thus, it is not surprising to see that many feminists have found themselves on opposite sides with one another when the question of the meaning and purpose of the

woman's existence is considered. However, there is a general essence assigned to women by men. Feminist theorist Sandra Harding argues that

Women are, indeed, like each other by virtue of their sex and also by virtue of the otherness that men assign to women. Of course, they differ by race, class, culture, and other important social features; in important respects, they are more like men in their own class, race, culture than like women in other races, and so on. But ... [feminist] theory does not require any kind of feminine essentialism.... It *analyzes* the essentialism that androcentrism assigns to women, locates its historical conditions, and proposes ways to counter it.... [We] constantly call for more vigorous feminist analysis of and politics against these forms of oppression. (qtd. in Heywood&Drake: 1997)

According to Harding, women are seen as the “other” by men. When one starts with the social practice of categorization related to sex and gender roles, it is easy to see the essence attributed to women.

It should be noted that different subject matters has historically been given to the various essentialisms assigned by androcentrism; a close study of the historical variations in statements about women can show us how women are classified. As all the old texts and works prove, women are always drawn as stereotypes rather than being individuals and they are almost always defined with particular characteristics such as “emotional”, “illogical” or “passive” and so on. These attributes are generally used to perform and justify the oppression over women by men. So, it is notable that women do not only share a common categorization but also the essentialism that androcentrism gives to women, which results in the limiting of women. So, it is not a coincidence that many women occupy socially limited positions which is justified by the appeals to their sex. As Susan Bordo defines,

. . . marginalization on the basis of sex and gender is one thing that all women *qua* women share even though some women might also be marginalized, or might even be privileged, with respect to race or class” Of course, the idea that marginalization is what makes women can be objected. But that is exactly the point: “women are indeed a marginalized group but it is social conditions, and not nature, that marginalize them. In other words, marginalization is not the ontological essence of women. Rather, it is a socially constructed, and hence, contingent essence” (1993; 107)

Androcentrism perpetrates its dominance over women by strictly defining what a woman is and by marginalizing her.

III.II. FEMINIST ATTEMPTS TO REDEFINE FEMALE IDENTITY

Girls can wear jeans
And cut their hair short
Wear shirts and boots
‘Cause it’s okay to be a boy
But for a boy to look like a girl is degrading
‘Cause you think that being a girl is degrading
But secretly you’d love to know what it’s like
Wouldn’t you
What it feels like for a girl

--Madonna “What it feels like for a girl”

Commonly, feminism can be defined as a political concept with three parts: “an analysis which tries to explain why and how women are oppressed; a vision of a society in which women are liberated and sex role stereotypes are deleted; a belief - that the oppression of women is a primary disagreement in society” (Reiter 1975: 203). Feminism, as a whole, has been divided into three “waves” each of which dealing with different points of the same issues. Basically, the first wave refers to the feminism movement of the 19th through early 20th centuries, which predominantly centers on the Suffrage movement. It is a by-product of the anti-slavery and abolitionist movements because, while fighting for the

rights of blacks in the United States, women come to understand that they themselves want the rights they were fighting for others (Roth 2004: 87-89). The second wave, which covers years between 1960s and 1980s, focuses on the inequality of laws, as well as inequalities between men and women (Roth 2004: 132-135). The Third wave of feminism (1990s-current), is a continuation of the Second wave, but is “a response to the perceived failures of the Second-wave” (Heywood & Drake 1997: 21). All three waves are started by women who attempt to act politically being a part of the major reform movements of their days, and who see that just because they are women, they cannot achieve very much at all. They realize that they are isolated from positions of decision-making, and instead they are supposed to do things men do not like to carry out such as typing, meeting-organizing, etc. while men make the decisions and get the recognition and appreciation.

First-wave feminism is a period of feminist activity throughout the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, between 1835 and 1920, in the United Kingdom and the United States. It was born out of the principal reform movement of the mid-nineteenth century which is called abolitionism. Women working in abolition realized that their full and equal participation in political activity was not especially wanted. Everything would be fine for them as long as they worked within “woman’s sphere”, which was well-defined and deeply rooted in the patriarchal structure of society. But if they preferred to exist in another way, they were severely warned by their abolitionist brothers. Thus, these 19th century females discovered that the political world in which they moved was “dedicated to equal justice for all is perfectly content to put up with by the rules for “proper feminine behavior” that the outside, less politically sophisticated world provides” (Tasker 1998: 47). In the UK, the publication of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in 1792 by Mary Wollstonecraft, who is regarded as the grandmother of British feminism, gave a start to

feminist movements in this country. She claimed the social and moral equality of the sexes, which shapes the ideas of the Suffragettes (Walker 1995: 37-45).

In the United States, the movement is mainly led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, “who each campaigned for the abolition of slavery prior to championing women's right to vote” (Walker 1995: 51-53). Anthony and Stanton claim that the root of the evil was men’s political control over women through marriage, family and property laws as well as social control through the popularized thought of true “womanliness” (Walker 1995: 51). First-wave feminism includes a wide range of women from very different social, cultural, political and ethnic backgrounds. Generally, the end of first-wave feminism is often associated with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution in 1919 which gives women the right to vote. This is considered a victory of the movement which also includes reforms in higher education, in the workplace and professions, and in healthcare (Pedersen 1995: 86-89). Following this early movement, women who work in the civil rights and peace movements takes a jump towards a new feminism.

The process has almost been the same for the feminists of the second wave who think that women are oppressed in the same way as their counterparts experienced a few decades and a few ages ago and that the oppression of women exists even within the coverage of the most radical political movements of the day. Then, they also pose questions about the oppression of women and the “proper spheres” or “stereotyped roles” of men and women. Roth describes this process as follows:

So, like the feminists of the 19th century, we have gone the separatist route and formed a movement of our own. We work in women's liberation because we are not permitted to function fully in other movements for social change and because, if we don't demand our own liberation, no one else will (2004:101)

The second wave feminists commit themselves to a radical political movement called “the New Left”. They want to search for the basic explanations of all aspects of the materialist and capitalist society in which they have to lead their lives. Those women, within the ideological framework of The New Left, devote themselves to equal justice for all, although they often feel that they are not being treated as political equals. The movement thus encourages women to conceptualize the different sides of their own individual lives.

The beginning of the third-wave feminism is described by Kinser in her article as follows:

In the fall of 1991, President George H. W. Bush nominates Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court. During the Senate Judiciary Committee hearings, Anita Hill, an African-American law professor from Oklahoma, comes forward and says that she was sexually harassed by Thomas almost a decade earlier, while she had been employed under him. In response to the Thomas hearings, Rebecca Walker published an article titled “Becoming the Third Wave” in a 1992 issue of *Ms.* in which she declared, “I am not a post-feminism feminist. I am the Third Wave.” (Kinser 2004: 131)

Thus, the third-wave feminism is generally identified with several different struggles of feminist activity and study taking place in the early 1990s. The movement is said to have risen as a response to perceived failures of second-wave feminism. It is also seen as a reaction to the hostile responses against the movements started by the second-wave. It avoids the second wave's “*essentialist*” definitions of femininity made by the second wave, which often centers on a universal female identity and over-emphasizes the experiences of upper middle class white women (Heywood & Drake 1997: 61-64).

The third wave feminists often write about different forms of gender representation. They are also against the second wave’s dogmas about what is or is not good for females.

Ideals and debates of the third-wave feminism are generally reflected in the popular culture of the 1990s and 2000s.

Along with these three steps (phases) of feminism, there are many feminist theories, each of which can be the subject of many studies. Still, it seems useful to mention a few remarkable theories briefly as they help illuminate the meaning of the reconstructed fairy tales of Angela Carter in the following chapter.

The first one, Marxist feminism, is a theory which focuses on the shattering affects of capitalism as a way to give women liberation. According to Marxist feminists, capitalism is the principal reason of “economic inequality, dependence, political confusion and ultimately unhealthy social relations between men and women” (Cott 1977: 176). Consequently, it is capitalism which lies at root of oppression practiced on women.

Marxist theory introduces the idea that the individual is shaped by class relations in capitalist societies; in other words, capacities, needs and interests of individuals are determined “by the mode of production that characterizes the society they inhabit” (Cott 1977: 169). Accordingly, Marxist feminists believe that the inequality between genders mainly results from the capitalist mode of production: “Gender oppression is class oppression and women’s subordination is seen as a form of class oppression which is maintained (like racism) because it serves the interests of capital and the ruling class” (Pedersen 1995: 184).

Another theory, Ecofeminism is a social and political movement which brings together two seemingly unrelated concepts, environmentalism and feminism, with some contemporary trendy streams combining deep ecology and feminism. Ecofeminism, or ecological feminism as a term is introduced by Françoise d'Eaubonne in 1974 (Reiter 1975:86). It is a basically a philosophy and movement uniting feminist and ecological issues. According to ecofeminists, “the social mentality that leads to the domination and

oppression of women is directly connected to the social mentality that leads to the abuse of the environment” (Pedersen 1995: 129). Ecofeminists argue that a relationship exists between the oppression of women and the degradation of nature, and explore the intersectionality between sexism, the domination of nature, racism, specieism, and other characteristics of social inequality (Roth 2004: 140).

Ecofeminists claim that there is a natural relation between women and nature which originate from their shared fate and history of suppression by the traditional and patriarchal western society. Actually, this relationship leads to the positive identification of women with nature. Vandana Shiva explains women’s privileged relation to the environment through her daily interactions:

Women in subsistence economies, producing and reproducing wealth in partnership with nature, have been experts in their own right of holistic and ecological knowledge of nature’s processes. But these alternative modes of knowing, which are oriented to the social benefits and sustenance needs are not recognised by the [capitalist] reductionist paradigm, because it fails to perceive the interconnectedness of nature, or the connection of women’s lives, work and knowledge with the creation of wealth. (Heywood & Drake 1997:198)

Finally, Postmodern feminism appears as an approach to feminist theory that “incorporates postmodern and post-structuralist theory” (Nicholson 1990: 27). What makes this theory different from the other branches of feminism is that postmodern feminists claim that “sex is itself constructed through language” (Nicholson 1990:31). The prominent name of this group, Judith Butler, in her 1990 book, *Gender Trouble*, attacks on the “distinction drawn by previous feminisms between (biological) sex and (socially constructed) gender” (Pedersen 1995: 167). She states that such an approach obstructs the criticism of essentialism and that there is no single cause for women’s subordination, and that there is

not a single approach to deal with the issue. This however has led to a criticism of postmodern feminism for offering no clear way to action.

Thus, according to this approach human experience is shaped “inescapably within language” (Tasker 1998: 217) because “Power is exercised not only through direct coercion, but also through the way in which language shapes and restricts our reality”(Nicholson 1990: 43) However, since language is multi-dimensional and is always re-interpretable, it can also be used to struggle against this deliberate formation and restriction, and so it is a potentially productive and rewarding aspect of political struggle.

As all these studies and struggles show the history of feminism is actually the history of a strong and passionate struggle achieved by daring and heroic women who make their lives by seeking and claiming equality and independence and who challenge the long-settled patriarchal norms given to them into a secondary level of existence. The feminist writers of the 20th century also try to carry on the struggle by redefining the stereotypical gender roles and identities in their revolutionary works. These new definitions are actually helping the feminist studies towards becoming a respectable discipline among human sciences.

Among the 20th feminist these writers, Angela Carter has a prominent place with her reconstructed fairy tales in which she deconstructs and reconstructs both male and female gender roles, identities, experiences, and natures from a perfectly new and different point of view.

CHAPTER IV

IV.THE RECONSTRUCTED IMAGE OF THE FEMALECHARACTERS IN THE FAIRY TALES IN ANGELA CARTER’S STORIES

In the mythic schema of all relations between men and women, man proposes, and woman is disposed of.

--Angela CARTER

IV.I. ANGELA CARTER AS A FEMINIST WRITER

Angela Olive Stalker, known as Angela Carter was born in Eastbound in 1940. As the daughter of socialist parents, Carter grew up in South London. All of her immediate female relatives were strong women of striking candor and pragmatism. And yet, paradoxically, while living in Yorkshire with her maternal grandmother, Carter fought to overcome teenage anorexia caused by low self-esteem. Following in the footsteps of her father, she at first worked as a journalist on the *Croydon Advertiser*. During the same period, Carter attended the University of Bristol to study English literature. She was always deeply interested in the problems of the lower class due to her “pro-active” (Hoffenden 1982; 18) personality. She reacted against the closing of mines and the breaking of mining strikes in the 1960s, and over the failures of the socialist revolution in general. While she was still a student at Bristol College, Carter participated in poetry readings in sidewalk cafes and at smoky backroom. Carter also studied psychology and anthropology.

The influence of her mother can intensely be seen in Carter’s writings. She is highly fascinated by the matriarchal, oral, storytelling tradition as is evident in her rewriting several fairy tales for her short story collection *The Bloody Chamber*, including

“Little Red Riding Hood”, “Bluebeard”, and two different re-workings of “Beauty and the Beast”. Carter married twice; her first husband in 1960 was a man named Paul Carter with whom she was married for twelve years. In 1969 Angela Carter used the proceeds of her Somerset Maugham Award to leave her husband and travel to Japan, living in Tokyo for two years, where, she claims, she “learnt what it is to be a woman and became radicalized” (*Nothing Sacred* 1982). She wrote about her experiences there in articles for *New Society* and a collection of short stories, and evidence of her experiences in Japan can also be seen in *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* (1972.)

She explored different places in the world such as the United States, Asia and several parts of Europe where she spent much of the late 1970s and 1980s as a writer in residence at universities, including the University of Sheffield, Brown University, the University of Adelaide, and the University of East Anglia. In 1977, Carter married again, to her second husband, Mark Pearce.

As well as being a productive writer of fiction, Carter contributed many articles to *The Guardian*, *The Independent* and *New Statesman*, collected in her *Shaking a Leg*. She also wrote for radio, adapting a number of her short stories for the medium, and two original radio dramas on Richard Dadd and Ronald Fairbank. Two of her works have been adapted for TV: *The Company of Wolves* (1984) and *The Magic Toyshop* (1987). She was actively involved in the adaptation of both films, her screenplays for which were published in the collected dramatic writings, *The Curious Room*, together with her radio-play scripts, a libretto for an opera of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, an unproduced screenplay entitled *The Christchurch Murders*, and other works. Angela Carter died of cancer aged 51 in 1992.

Her novels are *Shadow Dance* (1966), *The Magic Toyshop* (1967), *Several Perceptions* (1968), *Heroes and Villains* (1969), *Love* (1971), *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* (1972), *The Passion of New Eve* (1977), *Nights at the Circus* (1984), *Wise*

Children (1991). Her short fiction includes *Fireworks: Nine Profane Pieces* (1974), *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (1979), *Black Venus* (1985), *American Ghosts and Old World Wonders* (1993), *Burning Your Boats: The Collected Short Stories* (1995). Her poetry books are *Five Quiet Shouters* (1966) and *Unicorn* (1966) while the children's books she writes are *The Donkey Prince* (1970), *Miss Z, the Dark Young Lady* (1970), *Comic and Curious Cats* (1979), *The Music People* (1980), *Moonshadow* (1982), *Sea-Cat and Dragon King* (2000). Finally, her non-fiction works are composed of *The Sadeian Woman and the Ideology of Pornography* (1978), *Nothing Sacred: Selected Writings* (1982), *Expletives Deleted: Selected Writings* (1992) and *Shaking a Leg: Collected Journalism and Writing* (1997).

Angela Carter is regarded as, one of the most distinguished writers of the post-World War II period. Magic Realism, Surrealism, Fantasy, Science Fiction, Gothic, Feminism, Post-modernism are some of the categories she applies separately in her works. As Sage observes these categories “are one-dimensional in their application to Carter; none of them, with the possible exception of Surrealism, encompass the full spectrum of her accomplishments” (1992; 253).

She had a deep admiration for Rimbaud, Racine and for French literature in general. She was also devout atheist who first dabbled in poetry and journalism. Her travels to Japan and Russia greatly fed and influenced her creativity, imagination and fiction. Lorna Sage thinks that Carter seems to have lived her life out of the normal order: Angela Carter's life – the background of social mobility, the teenage anorexia, the education and self-education, the early marriage and divorce, the role-playing and shape-shifting, the travels, the choice of a man much younger, the baby in her forties – is the story of someone walking a tightrope. It's all happening on the edge in no man's land, among the debris of past convictions. By the end, her life fitted her more or less like a

glove, but that's because she'd put it together by trial and error, bricolage, all in the (conventionally) wrong order. Her genius and estrangement came out of a thin-skinned extremity of response to the circumstances of her life and to the signs of the times. (1982; 126)

Another critic, Duncker, who seems to have a rather negative attitude towards Carter, describes her and her literary personality as follows:

Angela Carter was a thumber of noses, a defiler of sacred cows. She loved nothing so much as cussed – but also blithe – nonconformity. Her books unshackle us, toppling the statues of the pompous, demolishing the temples and commissariats of righteousness. They draw their strength, their vitality, from all that is unrighteous, illegitimate, low. (1984; 98)

In Stableford's words, there is "a sturdy, non-didactic Feminism" (1983; 59) at the heart of her fiction. Few writers have "as successfully told stories within stories, created dense, baroque prose, and still, in the end, delivered on an emotional level" (Bettelheim 1989; 201). Carter herself claims that she is "a feminist in everything" (Bristow 1997; 11). She represents the ideal feminine through her characters in her works as self-made beings, triumphantly inventive of their own identities. She states that "a free woman in an unfree society will be a monster" (1994; 27), so she creates free and extraordinary female characters who stand against all the prejudices imposed by patriarchal norms in her tales while at the same time attempting indirectly free the societies from the traditional boundaries concerning gender roles and identities. As Lucie Armitt points out, Carter is evidently fascinated "with the exploration of female sexuality through images of passivity, violence, bestiality and sado-masochism" (Bristow 1997; 88), while at the same time she also deals with the social side of femininity as an active supporter of Women's Movement.

IV.II. ANGELA CARTER'S ATTACK ON FEMALE ARCHETYPES THAT EMERGE IN THE CLASSICAL FAIRY TALES

It cannot be denied that Angela Carter has had a profound effect on the study and interpretation of folklore and fairy tales. Generally, most writers are realists who describe commonplace, contemporary characters surviving in contemporary urban settings. Only a few writers dare to lead the reader with representing reality exactly as it is as the photographer captures it. Like most of her feminist counterparts, Carter, too, thinks that fairy tales are the “most misogynistic literary genre” (Bristow 1997; 17).

Angela Carter's short stories challenge the way women are represented in fairy tales, while at the same time maintaining an atmosphere of tradition and convention by means of her intensely descriptive prose. For example, in the opening tale “The Bloody Chamber” which is a retelling of ‘Bluebeard’, Carter rewrites well-known fairy tale, playing on the plot and characterization cunningly to convey her own message. In Carter’s version, instead of the heroine being rescued by the stereotypical male hero, the heroine is rescued by her mother. Indeed, the heroine is by no means the innocent and submissive young girl of the original tale. As Bristow suggests “Carter’s heroines are ‘self-made’ beings, triumphantly inventive of their own identities. They are consciously precarious, contingent, self-improvising creatures” (Bristow 1997; 18).

Her stories center on the themes of women’s roles in relationships and marriage, their sexuality, coming of age and corruption. Stories such as “The Bloody Chamber” and “The Company of Wolves” deal with the frustrating or exhausting aspects of marriage and/or sex and the balance of power within such relationships.

Her stories are carefully carried into more modern settings. The exact time periods are not directly given, but the approximate time is clearly and cleverly implied intentionally for those who are clever enough to deciphering the underlying messages. For

example, in “The Bloody Chamber,” “the existence of transatlantic telephone implies a date 1930 or later. On the other hand, the mention of painters such as Gustave Moreau and Odilon Redon, and of fashion designer Paul Poiret (who designs one of the heroine's gowns) all suggest a date before 1945” (Warner 1993; 117). “The Lady of the House of Love” takes place on the eve of the First World War, and the young man’s bicycle on which he arrives at the tradition-bound vampire’s house is a “symbol of the encroaching modernity which fundamentally altered European society after 1914” (Warner 1993; 119).

Traditionally, sexually aware women are a risk over the patriarchal order and Carter, in her reconstructed fairy tales, show that they really exist and they threat and even destroy the male-centered norms.

IV.III. THE RECONSTRUCTED FAIRY TALES WITH RENEWED FEMALE IMAGES

The Bloody Chamber contains short stories by Angela Carter in which she reconstructs the classical fairy tales in a revolutionary way from a feministic point of view. It was first published in the United Kingdom in 1979 and won the Cheltenham Festival Literary Prize. All of the stories in the book share a common fact of being closely based upon fairytales or folk tales revealing a rather unexpected structure. Angela Carter says that My intention was not to do “versions” or, as the American edition of the book said, horribly, “adult fairy tales”, but to extract the latent content from the traditional stories. (Warner 1993; 54). Therefore, Carter’s aim is to unsettle the traditional formulas by giving them a modern frame.

Carter’s work contains ten stories, which are “The Bloody Chamber”, “The Courtship of Mr. Lyon”, “The Tiger's Bride”, “Puss-in-Boots”, “The Erl-King”, “The

Snow Child”, “The Lady of the House of Love”, “The Werewolf”, “The Company of Wolves” and “Wolf-Alice”.

According to Bettelheim, Carter’s *The Bloody Chamber* is a milestone in her career and it is also “a reinvention that would follow a path through the tangled knots of folklore, a bastard genre that must have appealed to her sense of the low and the illegitimate” (1989; 177). *The Bloody Chamber* updates and expands the fairy tales of Western Europe in a sensual and feministic way: “Carter’s evocative use of archetypes to recreate original stories” (Bettelheim 1989; 172). Her stories firmly engrave themselves upon the public and critical imagination with the inverted images of classical fairy tales.

The reader may have been introduced to ‘Little Red Riding Hood’ through Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, or a Disney cartoon; that is, almost every potential reader of *The Bloody Chamber* is probably familiar with the classical forms of the fairy tales in one or other ways. Such tales are engrained in the collective unconscious of the western societies, so they can never be truly new to western readers; at best what a writer can do is renovate or redecorate them so that they regain some of their original vigor and intensity. However, Carter aims to update, twist, deconstruct and reconstruct the classic fairy tales in her own feministic way. Carter personally feels that “such a salvage job must include redefinition through feminism or strong female characters.” (Dunker 1984; 48). It is a known fact that Perrault and the Brothers Grimm took these tales from the oral tradition. As Manheim points out,

They had been largely rural and matriarchal in vision and conception. Perrault, a contemporary of nobility at Versailles in the 1600s, first codified most of the tales Carter uses as the foundations for her own pieces, and his versions added morals already explicitly laid out in the fairy tales themselves (1977; 13)

In the same way, “the Brothers Grimm, in the early 1800s, preserved many oral traditions that might otherwise have floundered or disappeared entirely, but at the expense of sacrificing the matriarchal content of such tales” (Manheim 1977; 14). In this context, Carter's reconstruction of the fairy tales from a feminist point of view restores the tales to the original matriarchal point of view while “adding the more sophisticated elements of the modern psychological short story.” (Warner 1993; 97). Like Perrault, however, Carter also includes a last note which is not directly given: “Beware of men, beware of becoming subservient to men.” For example, in her different versions of ‘Little Red Riding Hood’, men are intentionally drawn as sexual predators – “the worst wolves are hairy on the inside” (Carter 1986; 109). This role is in parallel with the one in Perrault's version but, in Carter's story, the men's role is far removed from the actual origins of the tale, which can be seen as a literal warning both for girls and men against going out into the woods at night without protection and alone.

The number of versions of different tales in *The Bloody Chamber* may cause some confusion. “The Courtship of Mr. Lyon” and “The Tiger's Bride” are both the variants on “The Beauty and the Beast” which is first written down by Madame Le Prince de Beaumont in 1757; “The Werewolf” and “The Company of Wolves” are the Carterian versions of “The Little Red Riding Hood” and the ending of “Wolf-Alice” is peripherally connected to “red cap” as well.

Actually, all critics do not agree that Carter has done a good enough job of rewriting the tales with a feminist agenda; particularly, Patricia Duncker argues that “Carter envisages women's sensuality simply as a response to male arousal. She has no conception of women's sexuality as autonomous desire” (1984). Duncker claims that Carter uses the sado-masochistic language of men and does not subvert the symbolism to serve purely female causes:

Carter chooses to inhabit a tiny room of her own in the house of fiction. For women, that space has always been paralyzingly, cripplingly small. I think we need the "multiplying ambiguities of an extended narrative." To imagine ourselves whole...We need the space to carve out our own erotic identities, as free women. And then to rewrite the fairy tales – with a bolder hand (1984; 101)

Duncker's argument may perhaps be justified on the ground that Carter could have instead created characters who are still bound by the real pressures of a male-dominated society, but have done this much and who have been made self-aware of their condition of imprisonment. Her stories and novels always examine the ways men treat women and her characters are forever escaping, socially, mentally, or physically, the traps laid by men. If she deals with established stereotypes in *The Bloody Chamber* rather than fully-fleshed out characters, then this is because fairy tales are always identified with and defined through stereotypes and archetypes.

The Bloody Chamber is often wrongly described as a group of traditional fairy tales given a subversive feminist twist. In fact, these are new stories, not re-telling of the old ones. In other words, these are deconstructed and reconstructed stories with renewed plot and characterization to convey Carter's messages about gender and sexuality although they make use of the mold and structure as a disguise. She is aware of the fact that she is drawn to "Gothic tales, cruel tales, tales of wonder, tales of terror, fabulous narratives that deal directly with the imagery of the unconscious" (Hoffenden 1985; 205). She determines an exact distinction between what she describes as "those fragments of epiphanic experience which are the type of the 20th century story", and the "ornate, unnatural" (Warner 1993; 87) style and symbolism of her favorite genre, the tale, especially fairy tales.

Fairy tales have been described as the science fiction of the past; certainly Carter also takes them in this light and she uses them as a way of exploring ideas of how things

might be different. She admires much science fiction with its utopian perspectives and speculative thinking which she expresses as “It seemed to me, after reading these writers a lot, that they were writing about ideas, and that was basically what I was trying to do.” (Stableford 1983; 164). It seems that according to Carter, the indirection and metaphor of fantasy found intensely in fairy tales can highly be helpful when presenting controversial subject matter, so she uses the forms of fantasy and fairy tales with conscious radical intent to reflect harsh realities in the form of fantasies as she clearly states in a letter she wrote to her friend Robert Coover that “I really do believe that a fiction absolutely self-conscious of itself as a different form of human experience than reality (that is, not a logbook of events) can help to transform reality itself” (Sage 1982; 237).

While she is using fantasy to discuss reality, she highly makes use of the landscapes and imagery of fairy tales and legends. Gothic elements such as bloodstains and ravens’ feathers on snow, moonlight on a dust-grimed mirror and graveyards to stimulate her imagination. Accordingly, the stories in *The Bloody Chamber* are prominent with deep and unmistakable imaginative pleasure. There is also an amazingly vivid materiality to this alternative world she creates. Like the candle which drops hot wax on to the girl's bare shoulders in "The Tiger's Bride" she loves to describe charming scenery in an elaborate language.

As Carter herself states, "sign and sense can fuse to an extent impossible to achieve among the multiplying ambiguities of an extended narrative" (qtd. in Duncker 1984). She finds that "though the play of surfaces never ceased to fascinate me, I was not so much exploring them as making abstractions from them"(Warner 1993; 254).

Carter expresses her objection to long-settled beliefs about the gender roles and gender identities formed by the patriarchal and traditional patterns of the past. In *The Bloody Chamber*, Carter shows that passivity is never a virtue, in fact, even--especially

not-- in women. Some of their most brilliant passages in the stories are accounts of metamorphoses. For example, in "The Tiger's Bride", where this time Beauty is transformed by Beast - "And 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 shiny hairs. My earrings turned back to water and trickled down my shoulders; I shrugged the drops off my beautiful fur" (1986; 84 - 68). The heroines of these stories struggle against the identities and roles given to them by history and ideology and biological essentialism. Carter says that "there's a story in *The Bloody Chamber* called 'The Lady and the House of Love', part of which derives from a movie version that I saw of a story by Dostoevsky. And in the movie ... the woman, who is a very passive person and is very much in distress, asks herself the question, 'Can a bird sing only the song it knows, or can it learn a new song?' Have we got the capacity at all of singing new songs? It's very important that if we haven't, we might as well stop now." (qtd in Bettelheim 1989; 189-190).

In 1980, the year following publication of *The Bloody Chamber*, Carter says in an interview, "The short story is not minimalist, it is rococo. I feel in absolute control. It is like writing chamber music rather than symphonies" (Sage 1982; 93). Her tone here reveals a sense of mastery. Each story in *The Bloody Chamber* contains similar themes such as death, love, sexuality and beauty. In just about every story, roses grow somewhere, plant surrounded by death. Sexuality is sometimes the salvation of the female protagonists, all of whom are portrayed as strong, intelligent women. Set in old, castles and mysterious woodland cottages, each story has an interesting setting and dark atmosphere. The stories attempt to examine sexuality for women within a misogynistic society carefully. It seems that Carter's transformation of such classic fairy tales as those 'Beauty and the Beast', and 'Little Red Riding Hood', is her attempt at bringing into light traditional and patriarchal ideas that have always existed within those tales yet have never been understood. Carter

tries to show that the society appreciates and hands these fair tales down to following generations for a particular reason, and it's not because of the handsome prince, beautiful princess or happy endings; but rather to secure the traditional and patriarchal norms and structures that assign males and females particular roles and identities.

As Hoffenden also observes, Carter “makes it a point in her stories to convey her ideas using nature” (1985; 43). The stories in *The Bloody Chamber* represent Carter's conviction that human nature is not immutable, that human beings are capable of change. In the story ‘The Werewolf’, for example, a rewriting of ‘Little Red Riding Hood’, Carter suggests that a woman achieves sexual maturity by affirming her own sexuality through identifying with her (grand) mother. At that point, the “scar” that marks our separation from nature can finally begin to heal, and our self-understanding will be vastly improved.

iv.iii.i. The Bloody Chamber

This story tells the story of a young woman who marries an older, French aristocrat, a talented pianist. Yet, she also has an affair with a blind piano-tuner. The woman's husband leaves her alone for a short time and forbids her to enter one particular room while he is away. However, the young woman enters the room in his absence and unveils his perverse and murderous tendencies when she discovers the bodies of his previous wives. She is saved at the end of the story by her mother.

The story, “The Bloody Chamber”, is set in a castle on sea-girt Mont St Michel in fin-de-siècle France. This story is a Carterian version of the famous ‘Bluebeard’, a fairy tale that appeared in Perrault's collection, where a new bride unlocks the forbidden room in her husband's castle to find the murdered corpses of his former wives. Perrault drew the moral that female curiosity leads to retribution, “though in the France of his time, where death in childbirth was commonplace and four-fifths of the resultant widowers remarried, the bloody chamber might surely have been seen as the womb” (Manheim 1977; 88). In

Carter's 20th-century version, the menace is located not in the difficulties of childbirth, but in the darker side of hetero-sexuality, in sadomasochism and the idea of fatal passion. Carter writes about the story in a letter to a friend:

I wanted a lush fin-de-siècle décor for the story and a style that ... utilises the heightened diction of the novelette, to half-seduce the reader into this wicked, glamorous, fatal world. It is a deliberate homage to Colette. Its unnamed 17-year-old heroine wears a schoolgirl's serge skirt and flannel blouse, just like the eponymous heroine of Colette's Claudine novels, and there is more than a little of Colette's first husband, that cliché of a roué, Monsieur Willy, in the unnamed Husband character. (qtd. Bettelheim 1989; 172)

The original story, 'Bluebeard', portrays of a mysterious and dark man related to dark secrets with a blood-stained key and a number of slaughtered wives. In the same tale, too, a young woman marries a rich man with blue beard who is extremely rich. Soon, the Bluebeard leaves on a journey by warning his young wife not to enter the little room at the end of the long corridor. He still leaves her the key, though. Yet, as soon as he leaves, the young woman breaks her promise and enters the room to find the floor covered with mutilated body parts of the previous wives suspended from the walls. In panic, she drops the key which is stained with blood and cannot be cleaned. The Bluebeard returns earlier than expected and condemns his wife to death like the previous ones, yet when he is about to cut off her head, her two brothers come and kill the husband. Thus saved from a terrible end the young wife shares his wealth with her brothers and marries a good and worthy man who makes her happier than ever.

In "The Bloody Chamber", Carter changes the meaning and the message, although she is rather faithful to the plot of the original story. Nearly all her writing is full of cultural and textual references, but this story is extremely so. It is artfully constructed through

allusions and clues. The Marquis, as he is called (suggesting, of course, the Marquis de Sade), is a “parodic evil aesthete and voluptuary with his monocle and beard, his gifts of marrons glacés and hothouse flowers” (Carter 1986; 8), and has a tendency for “quoting the juicier bits of Baudelaire and De Sade” (Carter 1986; 9). On the walls of his castle hang paintings of dead women by Moreau, Ensor, and Gauguin; he listens to Wagner (specifically “Liebestod” - “love-death” - in *Tristan und Isolde*); he smokes Romeo y Julieta cigars “fat as a baby’s arm” (Carter 1986; 19); his library is stocked with graphically- described sadistic pornography and his dungeon chamber is full of mutilated corpses and instruments of torture. According to Bacchilega,

Carter contextualizes and complicates the female protagonist’s victim role, reflects ambiguously back on the process of initiation, and highlights the seductive socio-economic dynamics of sex-gender oppression. Reproducing the tension between doubling and duality already active in “Bluebeard”, Carter increases it until the tale’s dualistic resolution can only be seen as a temporary disentanglement from doubling. (1997; 119)

The unnamed first-person heroine of “The Bloody Chamber” at first seems to be a sacrificial virgin in a white dress. Indeed, she marries an ugly man just for money whom she does not love. Actually, the husband’s intention is evident from the attending the opera on the evening of her wedding,

That night beginning when the young woman, the narrator, recalls her memory as a seventeen-year old at the opera comes back to me even now . . . the white dress; the frail child within it; and the flashing crimson jewels round her throat, bright as arterial blood. (Carter 1986; 11)

She is the virtuous and unconsciously willing victim of the husband and his sado-masochistic tendencies. Even their wedding night with the girl wrapped in white muslin

and red ribbon presented to the husband “bare as a lamb chop” (Carter 1986; 15) and the Marquis kissing the rubies of her choker, not the girl herself, is the reflection of the real nature of their marriage from the very beginning. Actually, the girl is depicted as a figure who is prepared for the wedding ceremony. The narrator says that, “On his arm, all eyes were upon me. The whispering crowd in the foyer parted like the Red Sea to let us through” (Carter 1986; 10) and “The light caught the fire opal on my hand so that it flashed, once, in a baleful light, as if to tell me the eye of God was upon me” (Carter 1986; 29). Thus she presents herself to be the one favored by God while indirectly assigning her husband to the role of devil as her antagonist.

During her husband’s absence, she also unlocks the forbidden room and finds the corpses of the three previous wives; the first is embalmed naked; the second is in an Iron Maiden, pierced and bleeding; and the third is crowned by a bridal veil and white roses. She immediately comes to understand that the ritual her husband wishes to act is sadism more than love-making and she is obviously the fourth victim. From then on, she still plays the virtuous and innocent angel with her patient and submissive attitudes; when the Marquis discovers that she has unlocked the room he orders her “Bathe yourself; dress yourself. The lustratory ritual and ceremonial robbing; after that, the sacrifice” (Carter 1986; 37). She returns wearing the “white muslin shift, costume of a victim of an auto-da-fé” (Carter 1986; 37). and the red choker displaying herself as a saint or martyr. As she later admits retrospectively to the piano-tuner “I’ve done nothing” (Carter 1986; 37) other than expecting to be saved by someone else. She believes that she has lost like Eve the “charade of innocence and vice” because her husband has engaged her in a “game in which every move was governed by a destiny as oppressive and omnipotent as himself” (Carter 1986; 34).

The critical shift of Carter's version of the tale arrives here; instead of the brothers, the avenging angel arrives as the mother to save her daughter and puts "a single, irreproachable bullet" through the husband's head "without a moment's hesitation" (Carter 1986; 40). Unlike in a classical fairy tale where the heroine has to send a black dove to inform the others about the danger she is in, Carter's heroine cries to her mother on the phone about gold taps and the mother's interference restores her daughter to life. Encouraged by her mother's presence, the passive victim-to-be even rushes to help her struggling "lover" unbolt the gate and let the avenger in. Bacchilega comments on the scene as follows:

Her Medusa like wildness is a mythic match for Bluebeard's mastery. When confronting each other, they look like two lions, one white-maned and the other black-bearded. An eerie resemblance also haunts the seemingly antithetical husband and lover" (1997; 120-121)

Actually, the characterization of the female figures is what sets the tale apart from the classical and original one; there are three main female figures –the unnamed narrator (the bride), the old-nurse and the mother. Although they are very different from one another, the bride gradually discovers that she has inherited her mother's "nerves and will" (Carter 1986; 28) as well as her courage and strength. The mother, on the other hand, is already a very strong character with her "eagle-featured" (Carter 1986; 7) appearance and spirit strong enough to "shoot a man-eating tiger" (Carter 1986; 8). Only the old-nurse resembles an original fairy tale character with her vices and virtues; she keeps "back copies of society magazines" (Carter 1986; 10) in a trunk under her bed as well as the "little store of holy books" (Carter 1986; 28) composed of "woodcuts of the martyrdom of the saints" (Carter 1986; 28); she indirectly expresses how jealous she feels to see the bride as a "little Marquise" (Carter 1986; 9) by marrying the "richest man in France" (Carter 1986; 38); she

prepares the bride for the ceremonial sacrifice; and she aptly dies scandalized upon hearing that the bride has been rescued by the mother by “interrupt(ing) milord in his honeymoon” (Carter 1986; 40).

However, the mother is in no way a real fairy tale mother; on the contrary, she does not want her daughter to marry this rich and noble man. As the daughter of “a rich tea planter” (Carter 1986; 7) from Indo-China, she leads a rather unconventional, and exceptional life. She carries the revolver of her late husband in her bag since she takes violence for granted in daily life; her eccentricity and the revolver are actually the keys to her success against the Marquis. She is the unyielding, mature and wise woman who can be a model for the females to follow. Indeed, the story, from this point of view can be seen as the fundamental bond and interdependency which should essentially exist among woman.

Another message underlying the story is that both male and females are creatures of the flesh and they are equally rooted in and driven by bodily impulses. If men underestimate the existence of women as they are and reduce the female existence into “angel in the house”, they have to be ready to be exterminated in a way; spiritually, psychologically or physically like the Marquis. Day expresses her idea about it as:

One of the morals of this tale is that we have to strip away existing cultural definitions of sexuality in order to reach a base level from which to begin building representation a new (1998;147)

Thus, “The Bloody Chamber” can be taken as a reconstructed fairy tale from a feminist point of view which reinterprets female sexuality and disobedience within the boundaries of marriage in which women are supposed to play the roles designed by the husband.

iv.iii.ii. The Snow Child

This is the shortest story of the collection and is about a Count and Countess who go riding in midwinter and the Count's wishes cause a beautiful young girl to appear; which makes the Countess jealous. The girl picks a rose but is pricked by a thorn and dies, after which the Count rapes her corpse.

Although "The Snow Child" is only a page long, it is the most shocking piece of all with its incestuous rape and murderous sexual rivalry. It is based on a variant of "Snow White". Indeed there are many different versions of the fairy tale but the most popular tale is the one which the Brothers Grimm collected.

The original and classical Snow White may well be defined as an innocent heroine of the classical fairy tales with her passively subdued character. In the Brothers Grimm version, a queen wishes for a child with skin as white as snow, with lips as red as blood, and with hair as black as ebony. She then dies at childbirth. The stepmother is a witch with a magic mirror which tells her that the child is to be the most beautiful. As a matter of fact, the mirror "simply externalizes the natural process of life and change" (Bacchilega 1997; 33), reflecting the inner fears of any and every woman to fade away and be replaced by a younger, fresher and more charming beauty. Thus the envious and wrathful stepmother orders a huntsman to kill the child, but the man pities Snow White and sets her free. Snow White is taken care of by the seven dwarfs in return for housework and cooking. Learning that Snow White is still alive, the queen plots to kill the girl three times by succeeding in the third. Dwarfs put her in a glass coffin where a passing prince falls in love with her. While carrying the coffin, one of the prince's servants trips and she is restored to life to marry the prince. Whereas the wicked queen is sentenced to dance in red hot shoes until she dies.

Carter's tale also begins with the season is "Midwinter-invincible, immaculate." (Carter 1986; 91). It is indeed a transitional period pointing the desire of the Count to end a cycle --probably with the aging Countess--and to start a new one. Carter explains that her choice of setting and the time "does not . . . encompass the possibility for change, . . . as if sexual relations were not necessarily an expression of social relations, as if sex itself were an external fact, one as immutable as the weather, creating human practice but never a part of it" (Carter 1994; 3-4). The snow child exists as the fantasy creation of the Count. Actually, she is a mirror image of male desire. The Count's three wishes reflect the elements of the landscape; the surrounding is completely white; there is a hole in the snow full of blood; and a raven is seated on a leafless bough. This picture with rather unpleasant details is almost completely the reverse of the mother's description of the child in the original tale. He speaks aloud the fantasy formula to create what he desires in accordance with the oral tradition of fairy tales: "As soon as he completed his description, there she stood" (Carter 1986; 91) with white skin, red mouth, black hair and completely naked. The snow child is in fact created to be consumed like a delicious food to satisfy the Count's desire.

The Countess, the other female character of Carter's tale, represents "human dynamics covering the inequity of patriarchal relations" (Bristow 1997; 38). She wears black furs indicating her social status with "high, black, shining boots with scarlet heels and spurs" (Carter 1986; 91) and rides beside the Count. The moment the Snow Child materializes, "the Countess hated her" (Carter 1986; 91) instinctively because she perceives her as a natural rival. Then, the Countess drops her glove and asks the girl to pick it up; her real intention is to discard the child so that she could wander off and find the dwarfs as the traditional story. However, the Count stops this by saying "I'll buy you new gloves" (Carter 1986; 91). As soon as he utters these words, "the furs sprang off the

Countess's shoulders and twined round the naked girl" (Carter 1986; 91). When the Countess attempts to cause the girl, she becomes "bare as a bone and the girl furred and booted" (Carter 1986; 92). At that the Count feels pity for his aging wife which gains her an advantage. As Bettelheim observes, "Any shift in the Count's affections is immediately reflected in the relationship of the two women, whose socio-economic fortunes mirror each other in reverse – as the one gains, the other loses – and depend entirely on the Count's words" (1989;225). Then, the Countess demands the girl to pick up a rose for her, which the Count does not object to. Thus, as in classical fairy tales, the heroine is given a task to complete. While picking up the rose, a thorn pricks her finger, then she "bleeds; screams; falls" (Carter 1986; 92). This symbolizes the way she is sexually violated by the Count. According to Warner,

By plucking the rose, the eternal symbol of femininity in both its sexual and its mystically sacrificial connotations, she comes of age – she bleeds- and then she fulfills her function as passive object of the Count's desire. In this case however, the shallowness of this initiation which amounts to her death, rape and fetishizing becomes painfully visible (1993; 166)

She is raped by the Count while dead, which does not bring rebirth or revival as in the classical version. When the Count satisfies his desire on her dead body, the snow child turns into her symbolic constituents; a black feather, a bloodstain, and a rose. When the Count gives the rose to the Countess who is fully dressed again, she drops the flower crying out "It bites!" (Carter 1986; 93). In this way, Carter seems to imply that the only possible relation between women is rivalry; that is, women must struggle against one another in order to survive in the patriarchal system into which they are born and which is hostile to their needs and desires. In this story, therefore, Carter questions the deception of gender. As Bacchilega puts forth,

Although no mirror appears in Angela Carter's "The Snow Child" published in "The Bloody Chamber", the story itself mimics the logic and strategies of mirroring to expose the intertwined reproduction of narrative and gender in "Snow White". Carter's own essays mock myth and "mythic versions of women" as "consolatory nonsenses" dealing "in false universals, to dull the pain of particular circumstances" (1997; 36).

iv.iii.iii. The Company of Wolves

This tale is the reconstructed version of the classical fairy tale, "Little Red Riding Hood". In this story, a girl meets and flirts with an evidently attractive young man while she is passing through the forest, going to her grandmother's house. They decide to make a competition in which the girl is the willing loser. He arrives at her grandmother's house before her and kills her grandmother. The girl manages to seduce the young man, removing and burning his clothes so that he cannot return to his previous form.

In Carter's story the wolf is an evident metaphor for the sexual predator, and cannot be believed as a wolf "hairy on the outside." An original fairy tale must work on a non-allegorical level first and must have a happy resolution in order to achieve a sense of catharsis in the reader. The Brothers Grimm version is more widely known: a hunter comes along and cuts open the wolf's belly while it sleeps, freeing Red Riding Hood and her grandmother. The wolf then dies from the stones Red suggests the hunter put into his stomach before he sews it back up. Bettelheim much prefers the Grimm version because it fits with his interpretation of the Red Riding Hood fairy tale, specifically, "crucial problems the school-age girl has to solve if oedipal attachments linger on in the subconscious, which may drive her to expose herself dangerously to the possibility of seduction"(1989 75-81). The hunter represents the good, fatherly side of men and the wolf is the dangerous seducer.

Carter combines the Perrault and Grimm versions and also to makes the hunter/wolf duality Perhaps her most brilliant invention is that of combining hunter and wolf by means of the werewolf. Thus, the “hairy on the inside” wolves are symbolically complete people. Bristow explains this idea as follows: “Red Riding Hood can reject the werewolf (wolf) and embrace the werewolf (hunter) – dealing with her repression of sexuality, her fear of it – both at the same time” (1997; 37). “The Company of Wolves” begins with a wonderful description of wolves:

One beast and only one howls in the woods by night. 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...if a wolf's eyes reflect only moonlight, then they gleam a cold and unnatural green, a mineral, a piercing color. If the benighted traveler spies those luminous, terrible sequins stitched suddenly on the black thickets, then he knows he must run, if fear has not struck him stock-still. (Carter 1986; 108)

The beginning of the tale therefore reflects fears, the popular beliefs, prohibitions, and clichés about the wolves. The werewolf and the reader are addressed as “you” like a child who should be trained. Red Riding Hood, in this story, is the youngest of the family and has just begun her “woman's bleeding, the clock within her that will strike, henceforward, once a month.” She is “an unbroken egg; she is a sealed vessel...she is a closed system; she does not know how to shiver. She has her knife and she is afraid of nothing” (Carter 1986; 109). When she's going to her Granny's house, she meets a young man in the woods. He is strangely charming and he influences the girl with a “magic object”, a compass, which is an up-dated element in parallel with the reconstructed form of the fairy tale. The man is actually a werewolf and might be dangerous. The girl underestimates her mother's warnings about attractive strangers and challenges the young man. The young man claims that he can reach her grandmother's house by a short cut before she can reach it by the

trodden path. The reward is “A kiss. Commonplaces of a rustic seduction” (Carter 1986; 110). Indeed, the girl lingers on the way since she wishes to lose the bet willingly to be kissed by the attractive stranger.

The young man--the werewolf--reaches the house and devours the grandmother because the “aged and frail” and “pious” old woman is an easy victim for the young and strong man/werewolf (Carter 1986; 115). Then, he begins to wait for Red Riding Hood with eyes “the size of saucers, saucers full of Greek fire, diabolic phosphorescence.” (Carter 1986; 112) When she enters the house, the werewolf “doffs his grandmotherly disguise” (Carter 1986; 112) and bars the door. The girl immediately realizes that not only has she lost the bet, but also she has lost her grandmother. She also rationalizes that she cannot reach the knife in the basket carried by him to the cottage. Although afraid, she is a wise child and “since her fear did her no good, she ceased to be afraid” (Carter 1986; 115). She can hear the sad voices of the wolves like a “concert” and see their eyes shining “like a hundred candles” (Carter 1986; 117). She makes up her mind and takes off her shawl and throws it into the fire. She continues this game of strip-tease until she is completely naked. Now, the cannibalistic game of the werewolf has been turned into a game of seduction:

What big teeth you have!

She saw how his jaw began to slave and the room was full 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. She laughed at him full in the face, she ripped off his shirt for him and flung it full into the fire, in the fiery wake of her own discarded clothing. (Carter 1986; 118)

By mastering her fear, the girl overcomes the werewolf, who feeds upon her fear. Thus overcome, he is no longer fearsome, but merely twinned to her in the triumph of libido

over repression. Both are naked and as Bacchilega observes “the girl offers herself as flesh, not meat. The “carnivorous” nature of their counter is transformed” (1997; 64). That is, the girl willingly offers her body as a sexual object, not as a nutritious food. The result is unexpected: “It is Christmas Day, the werewolves’ birthday, the door of the solstice stands wide open; let them all sink through. See! Sweet and sound she sleeps in granny’s bed, between the paws of the tender wolf” (Carter 1986; 118). According to Bacchilega, this girl is a “new Eve” (1997; 65) who completely changes the long settled assumptions about female role and identity in the renewed version of a well known fairy tale. The roles and identities are reversed in the least possible way of patriarchal norms and assumptions. As Day also observes:

The opposition of subject versus object, active versus passive, is transcended so that each individual in the encounter may be at once both. Just as the girl refuses to be “meat”, refuses to play the part simply of object of consumption or victim, so the wolf, traditionally solely the aggressor, is described at last as “tender”. (1998; 149)

Such representation of the female in the fairy tales from a feminist perspective seeks to reassign women to their deserved place in the familial, social and cultural spheres. Carter overturns the traditional formula which always urges women into negative or submissive roles as victims or predators. Bristow comments on this tale as follows:

Carter’s self-aware and sexually active young woman defuses the nightmarish situation by recognizing the beast in herself and the man in the beast. In this story, Little Red Riding Hood does not find the werewolf –the customary figure of sexualized horror- either terrifying or potentially engulfing. Together, both her sense of sexual power and her fine sense of humor undercut his status as a mythic figure of horror. (1997; 125)

Carter, at the same time, reminds us that werewolves are not merely devilish and wicked creatures who intensely practice cannibalism and witchcraft; but they are also miserable creatures whose “canticles” hold a “vast melancholy” (Carter 1986; 116). As the tale reveals, these poor beings cannot convert and liberate themselves because “grace could not come to the wolf from his own despair, only through some external mediator, so that, sometimes, the beast will look as if he half welcomes the knife that dispatches him” (Carter 1986; 112).

Thus she indirectly points the changing indeed roles of male and female in a relationship, and she attempts to arouse fear, pity and sympathy towards the damned – embodied as a male in a never changing Carterian way- in order to indicate the superior and controlling position of females in the system in contrast with the long-settled social and cultural norms shaped by prejudiced and subjective patriarchal demands of male-centered systems.

iv.iii.iv. The Tiger’s Bride

This story is centered on a woman who moves in with a beastly creature after her father loses her to him in a game of cards. The end of this story reveals the heroine’s inner bestial nature. “The Tiger’s Bride” is a reproduction of the “Beauty and the Beast” and the animal groom cycle in general. In the classical fairy tale, the animal groom cycle represents the highest level of sexuality and love. As Bruno Bettelheim explains in *The Uses of Enchantment*, “the oedipal love of Beauty for her father, when transferred to her future husband, is wonderfully healing” (1989; 245). However, whereas in most of these tales the beast is transformed into a man through love of a woman, Carter wonderfully reverses the structure. Here the beast hides behind the mask of man: “only from a distance would you think The Beast not much different from any other man, although he wears a mask with a man’s face painted most beautifully on it” (Carter 1986; 153). Beauty and her

spendthrift father go to Italy where “the deathly, sensual lethargy of the sweet South infects the starved brain” (Carter 1986; 152). The father is invited to play a game with the Beast and he loses his daughter to the Beast:

“My father. . . was left with nothing.”

“Except the girl.”

Gambling is a sickness. My father said he loved me yet he staked his daughter on a hand of cards. (Carter 1986; 156)

The narrator is the young and virgin daughter of a rich merchant. Indeed, the situation is a perfect reflection of the role of women as items of exchange -- a way of materialization of females and femininity-- in a patriarchal order and system, which is supported by the fact that Beauty’s mother had been “bartered for her dowry to such a feckless sprig of Russian nobility that she soon died of his gaming” (Carter 1986; 155). The daughter may be an inexperienced virgin who had learned from the “giggling nursemaids . . . the mysteries of what the bull did to the cows” (Carter 1986; 158) and still struggle to define herself, but she is not a fool. She is aware of her state of existence as a female: “You must not think my father valued me at less than a king's ransom; but, at no more than a king’s ransom” (Carter 1986: 153). She knows that she is “Lost to the Beast!” (Carter 1986; 158). Therefore, she behaves in accordance with her status “as an object, as a commodity, her only status in the world; that her flesh was the only purchase she had upon the world” (Day 1998; 140). The narrator expresses her feelings:

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 1986; 159).

Thus she arrives at the Beast's "palazzo" with childhood knowledge of sexuality together with superstitions about it and a fear of the Beast combined with an awareness of her status as a commodity. She is taken to her room in The Beast's palace. A valet tells her that if she reveals herself naked to The Beast, she will be taken back to her father. As she considers this offer, she remembers the tales told to her by her nurse about the tiger-man who "if this young lady was not a good little girl...would put on his big black traveling cloak lined with fur, just like your daddy's...and ride through the night straight to the nursery and – Yes, my beauty! GOBBLE YOU UP!" (Carter 1986; 59).

At first, she refuses The Beast and stays in her room, attended to by a mechanical maid of which she notes, "if she did not see me...peel down to the cold, white meat of contract...then so much more like the market place, where the eyes that watch you take no account of your existence." (Carter 1986; 60) Yet the maid turns out to be "a marvelous machine" (Carter 1986; 162) and she is a perfect caricature of a woman:

The door swings open and out glides a soubrette from an operetta, with glossy, nut-brown curls, rosy cheeks, blue rolling eyes; it takes me a moment to recognize her, in her little cap, her white stockings, her frilled petticoats. She carries a looking glass in one hand and a powder puff in the other and there is a musical box where her heart should be; she tinkles as she rolls towards me on her tiny wheels. (Carter 1986; 162)

Actually, this machine is not only a perfect servant; she is the representative of the domestic position of women in patriarchy and it does not take a long time for the Beauty to understand that "this clockwork" machine is "twin of mine" (Carter 1986; 162) within the framework of the traditional and patriarchal order. And, later she clearly conceptualizes and openly expresses that "I was a young girl, a virgin, and therefore men denied me

rationality just as they denied it to all those who were not exactly like themselves, in all their unreason” (Carter 1986; 163).

This is the point when the Beauty “refuses to be an object in a patriarchal contract” (Peach 1998; 28). That is, she refuses to play the part the society determines her to act out as a woman. She does not want to be a mechanical maid in the service of patriarchal demands. She finds new definitions for herself which does not fit to the ready-made prescriptions of the patriarchal culture decisively refusing the role of the submissive victim --rather a lamb for the tiger. She experiences freedom, confidence and self-esteem. She decides to run with the tiger --not behind him, which is symbolically achieved while they are going riding with the Beast:

The tiger will never lie down with the lamb; he acknowledges no pact that is not reciprocal. The lamb must learn to run with the tigers.

I . . . now unfastened my jacket. . . Yet I was clumsy and blushed a little, for no man had seen me naked and I was a proud girl. Pride it was, not shame, that thwarted my fingers so.

. . . I felt I was at liberty for the first time in my life (Carter 1986; 166).

In the end, Beauty has the choice of being alone and remaining sexually repressed, or of meeting The Beast on her own terms, of taming him, and of loving him. Thus, she becomes a beast – becomes real, no longer artificial, no longer the double of the artificial woman. It does not mean that she has given up her autonomy or become a slave to the beast. According to Day,

When Beauty returns to find the Beast in “The Tiger’s Bride”, Carter’s tale once again seeks to exorcise a cultural definition of the female as passive victim, a definition which attributes libidinal desire only to the male and associates the female with being merely the inert object of that desire (1998; 144)

At the beginning, The Beast, posing as man, is a sexual predator, but now the beast is no longer predator, but pussycat: "...a tremendous throbbing, as of the engine that makes the earth turn, filled the little room; he had begun to purr" (Carter 1986; 167). Now, they are equal in nature. The Beast comes to her and begins to lick her:

He dragged himself closer and closer to me, until I felt the harsh velvet of his head against my hand, then a tongue, abrasive as sandpaper. 'He will lick the skin off me!' And 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 shiny hairs. My earrings turned back to water and trickled down my shoulders; I shrugged the drops of my beautiful fur." (Carter 1986; 168)

Once they leave aside the limitations and the obligations that the society imposed upon them, her fears abandon her along with her sense of oppression. They are free beyond the social and cultural constraints assigning them particular gender identities and gender roles. Day comments on the ending of "The Tiger's Bride" as follows:

The ending of "The Tiger's Bride" contradicts the endorsement of patriarchal power in the original "Beauty and the Beast" fable as it envisages a liberation from cultural misrepresentations of male and female through an exposure of an animal equality between the sexes. (1998; 145)

CHAPTER V

V. CONCLUSION

Comedy is tragedy that happens to other people.

--Angela Carter

Fairy tales with their fantastic characters are one of our earliest companions from childhood. Every child is somewhere in the past is influenced by the beautiful princess, the handsome and brave prince, the helpful fairy, the wicked step mother, or the evil witch by identifying herself/himself or someone around her/him with one of the characters in these tales. It is common that their pictures and figures decorate the children's rooms in different forms. Furthermore, these figures are the early representation for childhood imagination of the eternal struggle between good and evil in which the evil is always doomed to be defeated and destroyed whereas the good always wins.

However, on a second thought, the fairy tales' realm is far beyond this simple and surface message. These classical fairy tales also inscribe the images and traits of "ideal" female characteristics into young brains. Interestingly enough, the traits and "qualifications" are the ones defined and required by male-centered, traditional and patriarchal strategies; in other words, classical fairy tales highly serve to patriarchal systems to create passive female characteristics in the service of their male counterparts.

When we think of the female characters in classical fairy tales, it is possible to determine two main types: the good princess and the wicked stepmother/witch. Indeed, they are stereotypes rather than being real human representations; the princess is the representative of the "good" with her angelic nature whereas the stepmother/witch stands for the "evil" to be punished and destroyed. Thus, it is natural that the young children --the girls in particular-- identify themselves with the princess while attempting to adopt the characteristics, virtues and personality of her.

Here comes the menace when we consider the personal traits of the fairy tale princess; she is incredibly beautiful, young, inexperienced, naïve, extremely virtuous, helpless and yielding to her fate unconditionally. She is passive and almost muted; she rarely utters a few words when necessary or she is urged to. She patiently endures whatever is acted upon her and she is in need of a male protection of any kind. She waits for the white-horsed prince –though never stated directly. And finally she is saved by the Prince Charming “deservingly”. As a reward for her virtuous and patient nature, she is taken to the castle of the prince as his “wife” and lives there “happily ever after”.

This is the image and personality which the young girls are expected to adopt in order to “deserve” the reward - a handsome husband and a happy marriage. This is what makes the classical fairy tales the most misogynistic of all literary genres. The female characters which the classical fairy tales point as the “ideal” are the inferior, weak, controlled, muted and disabled beings ready to offer themselves as easy and useful tools to the service of men, who are, in this case, are the norm and central identities strong, superior, able, and controlling. It is clear that this picture is designed by patriarchal orders and systems in parallel with the needs, desires and demands of the males..

This is exactly the role objected to by all the feminist groups. It should also be noted here that this is the situation of women in every aspect of social life including family, society and professional life-if any allowed- until the very end of the 19th century, and even later.

Therefore, it should not be surprising to see that most of the feminists attack on the gender roles and gender identities represented in fairy tales. Many feminist writers of the 20th century are against the fairy tales for their subjective, prejudiced, highly traditional and deliberate representation of female characters serving the patriarchal strategies of the male-centered societies by imposing peculiar roles and identities upon females from the very early ages in symbolic yet strong and persistent ways.

Among these feminist writers Angela Carter has an outstanding place. Carter is harshly against all the traditional molds and norms urging women into peculiar representations, roles and identities, which find its expression in her revolutionary works. Although she has written many novels, perhaps she is best remembered for her reconstructed fairy tales, in which she reinterprets plot, time, and setting of the classical and well-known fairy tales; however these reconstructed fairy tales are basically prominent with their female characterization. In other words, Carter deconstructs the classical famous fairy tales and reconstructs them in a feministic and revolutionary way which is rather in opposition to the norms and expectations of male-centered societies. In Carter's fairy tales, females are represented in a more realistic way revealing the very real nature of women which is equal to that of men in every aspect of existence.

Carter's heroines subvert the passive and muted types of the classical fairy tales; since, they are strong, expressive, lusty, and aggressive characters with high libidinal powers. They are either stronger than or equal to their male counterparts in every aspect of their lives. Rather than being weak and needy girls in need of a male protection, they are independent agents with a strong free will and high self-esteem and they determine the way of their lives as they wish. They act rather than being acted upon by emphasizing the idea that they are not lesser or inferior beings of a male dominated system.

"The Bloody Chamber" is Carter's one of the best known works in which she compiles her own reconstructed versions of classical fairy tales. This study covers four of them namely "The Bloody Chamber", "The Snow Child", "The Company of Wolves" and "The Tiger's Bride".

The Bloody Chamber is the Carterian version of "The Blue Beard". While the original tale reflects the passivity of the Blue Beard's wife who is coincidentally saved by

her brothers in the end, Carter's tale is the story the struggle between the sadistic Marquis and the mother/daughter as equal forces in which female unity defeats the Marquis.

"The Snow Child" is the re-writing of "Snow White" which ends with the brutal incestuous rape of the Count to his own made Snow Child of lust and desire.

"Little Red Riding Hood" finds a new meaning in "The Company of Wolves" which mirrors a new type of "Red" girl who seduces the poor and tender wolf who is in a deep need for affection.

Finally, "The Tiger's Bride" is a new type of "Beauty and the Beast" tale through which the young wife of the beast discovers the beast within her rather than the man in the Beast. She gradually turns into the beast on her own choice a free and confident attitude.

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ÖZGEÇMİŞ

30 Nisan 1979 tarihinde doğdum. Eğitim hayatıma İstanbul'da ilkokulu Özel Evrim Lisesinde okuyarak başladım, Ortaokul ve Liseyi Özel Boğaziçi Lisesinde tamamladıktan sonra, Bilkent Üniversitesi, Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümüne kaydoldum. Bu bölümden 2003 yılında mezun olduktan sonra, aynı yıl Hacettepe Üniversitesinde İngilizce Öğretmenliği için pedagojik formasyon eğitimi aldım. 2004-2007 yıllarında İstanbul'da Uluslararası okulda İngilizce ve sınıf öğretmeliği yaptım. Ayrıca 2004 yılında, Beykent Üniversitesi, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalında yüksek lisans eğitimine başladım.

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Aday: **Evrin ASLAN**