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‘No, she’s not going anywhere’: Subversions of Virtuous Passivity and Condemned Agency in Modern Retellings of ‘Little Red Riding Hood’ and ‘Snow White’.

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Abstract

This thesis examines how the depictions of femininity found in traditional versions of the fairy tales ‘Little Red Riding Hood’ and ‘Snow White’ are challenged in modern retellings from the 20th and 21st centuries. Analysing Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm’s version of these tales in their historical context, this thesis details how portrayals of femininity are reduced to the archetypes of the passive angelic heroine and the villainous assertive woman, to fit a socialisation process by the German middle class. Comparing Angela Carter’s *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (1979) and Soman Chainani’s *Beasts and Beauty: Dangerous Tales* (2021) with the traditional tales demonstrates two vastly different approaches to using retellings as a mode to criticise the virtuous association to passivity and the punishment following an act of agency in female-led fairy tales. Carter uses erotic and pornographic elements to emphasise the imbalanced power structures between men and women seen in the traditional tales, whilst Chainani offers a more direct solution to the removal of the passive heroine with the inclusion of intersectionality and society’s role on the perception of identity.

The main theoretical framework consists of using Marxist literary criticism as argued by Jack Zipes and Terry Eagleton and feminist literary criticism by Toril Moi and Marina Warner. By giving an account of their theories on how literature reflects society’s plights and the desire to rise from exploitation and how this, in turn, shape expectations of gender roles, this thesis examines how the fairy tale retelling manage to portray these struggles using the fairy tale structures without the misogynistic archetypes.

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1 Introduction

> Fear isn't so difficult to understand. After all, weren't we all frightened as children?
>
> Nothing has changed since Little Red Riding Hood faced the big bad wolf.
>
> What frightens us today is exactly the same sort of thing that frightened us yesterday.
>
> It is just a different wolf.
>
> - Alfred Hitchcock[1]

Through this statement, filmmaker Alfred Hitchcock inadvertently captures how the fairy tale genre survives in different versions and forms because of its ability to portray the fears and struggles of contemporary society. Although the historical conditions and ideologies present at the time when the fairy tales became a literary genre have changed, the thematic core of many modern retellings has remained the same. The fear of meeting a strange predator when walking alone or the conflict caused by jealousy between two women remains present in modern retellings of the tales even as some of the structural elements have been altered. Following this argument, one might begin to ask why certain structural elements, such as specific characterisation of female characters, remain in modern retellings despite the many sociohistorical changes. The storylines of female-led fairy tales can differ immensely, but there tends to be little variation in the archetypes these tales portray, especially the old tales from the 17th and 19th centuries. The protagonist of the tales is often an innocent and naïve young girl who must overcome the obstacles created by the antagonist, who is either a threatening male beast set to take away her innocence or an evil older woman in the shape of an evil queen, witch, or stepmother (sometimes all three). Although the antagonist in these female-led tales can differ greatly, the protagonist usually shares the same attributions; they are innocent, physically beautiful and, most of all, passive characters. Passivity is a sign of virtue in these tales, as temptation away from it results in her being swallowed by the big bad wolf or becoming the wicked queen or stepmother in the story. Through tales such as 'Little Red Riding Hood' and 'Snow White', portrayals of femininity are reduced to the moral that

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[1] Quoted in Charlotte Chandler, *It's Only a Movie: Alfred Hitchcock: A Personal Biography*, 2005, 5.

the passive virtue rewards success and the driven woman is sentenced to death. The young girl must remain innocent and obedient and not give in to the temptation of her sexuality or be swallowed by the aggression of her male counterpart.

This thesis aims to examine how the female characters in the Brothers Grimms' versions of 'Little Red Riding Hood' and 'Snow White' are depicted through a definition of femininity prescribed by the French and later German bourgeoisie and how the characteristics of this gender definition still linger in modern retellings. I use two collections of fairy tale retellings to demonstrate the changes made to the gendered power dynamics and the lack of female agency from the 19th century: Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (1979) and Soman Chainani's *Beasts and Beauty: Dangerous Tales* (2021). Carter's collection has been widely analysed and praised for its feminist retellings, with female characters embracing their sexuality and doing the most with the limitations set by the structures of the traditional tales. However, this thesis examines whether Carter's focus on eroticised content might distract the readers from acknowledging the role of the active woman as villainous and the submissive girl as the norm. Comparing her tales with Chainani's collection demonstrates how feminist theory has changed beyond only concerning the struggle of white middle-class women and how the critique of patriarchal practices changes with it (Collins 7). Following the Marxist argument that the issues presented in literature relate to contemporary society's class struggles (Eagleton xi-xii), this comparison indicates how the oppression of female sexuality has changed, but not necessarily ended since the 19th century.

Chapter 2 of this thesis details the historical and theoretical ground which will stand as a backdrop to the analysis of the modern retellings. The entertainment aspect of traditional fairy tales and their retellings has been made evident through their role in popular media and the success of adaptations done by corporations such as Disney. The rise in popularity and adaptations has brought with it countless critics who have tried to decipher its educational purpose throughout history. Most prominently are the Marxist and feminist readings by Jack Zipes and Marina Warner. It is evident through their criticism of the fairy tale genre, detailed in Chapter 2, that the genre was used in a socialisation process in the 19th century through their depictions of gender and class conflict. As Zipes argues, fairy tales were used to 'stabilize, conserve, or challenge common beliefs, laws, values, and norms of a group' (*The Oxford Companion* xix), meaning that the tales were used as education of morals. Zipes argues that the texts mirror the historical and social conditions of society, but his analysis

does not limit itself to focus solely on the economic class struggle, but details how the ideologies presented in these fairy tales portray the expectations to fit into the bourgeoisie definitions of femininity and masculinity. Like Zipes, Warner views fairy tales as being a mirror to contemporary time, stating that '[i]t helps us to see the actual world to visualize a fantastic one' (*Once Upon a Time* 21); that no matter the fantastical elements, it is the real struggle of humanity – starvation, family relation, sexuality, and oppression – which is at the centre of the tales. Warner focuses on the dual attraction and risk associated with women in fairy tales, standing as storytellers and protagonists, villains and victims. Using Zipes' and Warner's accounts of the function of the old tales allows this thesis to analyse the modern retellings with a historical background in mind.

Finding versions of the tales that could stand as a backdrop for such an analysis, an original if you will, proves to be more difficult than one might presume. It has long been established by folklorists and historians alike that the concept of an original fairy tale is problematic because, as Zipes argues, 'the genre originated within an oral storytelling tradition' (*Subversion* 3). Since the oral tales might have differed depending on the storyteller's renditions, the geographical setting, and the changes made over time as it passed through generations, it is difficult to pinpoint an exact original version or even a place of origin. I have therefore made the decision to use what I have seen through the research for this thesis to be the most famous written down versions of the tales, as they represent the historical conditions present at the time they were written and popularised. I use Charles Perrault's version of 'Little Red Riding Hood' published in 1697 to detail the importance of recognising the changes made when the oral fairy tale was written down, but the remainder of the analysis will use Jacob and Wilhelm Grimms' versions of the tales from *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* published in 1812. Using both these versions, I detail how the gendered power dynamics in fairy tales occurred after the French bourgeoisie's socialisation process, demonstrated by Perrault's writing, and how it affected the Grimms' time of writing and therefore also implemented their version of the tales. Zipes argues that the civilisation process which occurred in France and England during the time of Perrault's writing 'coincided with an increase in socioeconomic power by the bourgeoisie … so that the transformed social, religious, and political views represented a blend of bourgeois-aristocratic interest' (37). Perrault's version of the tales demonstrates these interests in their depiction of women as sexually naïve and passive characters, which I argue is still a significant aspect of the Grimms' version. It is, however, the version the Grimms published with all the changes they

made that has primarily been used in retellings and adaptations, which is why I have chosen to compare their versions with the modern retellings. Since they cannot claim to be the original version and to avoid the problematic aspect such a term rouses, I use the term 'traditional tales' to distinguish them from the modern retellings.

The two following chapters each consist of an analysis of the modern retellings of 'Little Red Riding Hood' and 'Snow White' respectively. Although I analyse them separately, the comparative analysis starts to become evident during Chapter 4 as we move towards the conclusion. Each individual analysis includes an inspection of the depiction of passivity in the heroines and whether the passivity we associate with the characters is transformed into agency during the tale or if it remains unchallenged. Chapter 3 focuses on the concept of sexual agency and the creation of identity based on society's attitudes in Carter's writing and the layers of class conflict depicted in Chainani's tale. As we move into Chapter 4, the focus shifts to the development of the antagonist in Carter's tale, advocating for an analysis away from the heroine perspective we are familiar with. Chainani's tale demonstrates a transformation from passivity to agency whilst acknowledging the intersectional oppression which comes as a result of class conflict.

I use Carter's 'The Snow Child' and the tales from her wolf trilogy, 'The Werewolf', 'The Company of Wolves' and 'Wolf-Alice', from her collection of tales. I classify these tales as retellings, but Carter has stated that she does not see these stories as fairy tales: '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' (Haffenden 84). As the analysis in Chapters 3 and 4 demonstrate, Carter's tales can differ quite significantly from the traditional tales, but I argue that the amount of intertextuality she applies, and the reworking of familiar themes places them firmly as fairy tale retellings in the context of this analysis. In a style reminiscent of baroque prose poetry, with vivid imagery intertwining magic and horror, she picks up the archetypes found in fairy tales and turns the associations we have with their characteristics on its head to illuminate a feminist criticism of the traditional tales.

Carter has engaged with feminist literary criticism throughout her career, which is reflected in the changes she made to the traditional tales when writing *The Bloody Chamber*. One of Carter's most notorious critical works is her collection of essays in *The Sadeian Woman And the Ideology of Pornography* (1979). This book is a collection of essays in which

Carter analyses Marquis de Sade's literature through a feminist lens, with a focus on its pornographic elements. Carter argues for the role of the 'moral pornographer' in Sade's writing, which I elaborate on in Chapter 3, through an awareness of the social conditions at the root of pornographic production (*Sadeian* 20). Carter's criticism regarding her arguments on the gendered power structures presented in pornographic literature and ways to challenge that is prominent in her fictional writing, where she rejects the notion that women are complicit in their sexual oppression, whilst advocating that female sexuality must be considered equal to male sexuality.

Considering her literary criticism when reading *The Bloody Chamber* provides a new insight into the depth of Carter's modes of criticising the traditional tales. She argues for an agency in representations of female sexuality and arousal without villainization, making the characters embrace their desire and sexuality instead of remaining as passive objects of desire for the male sexual fantasy. Fighting against the passivity inflicted on female characters as seen in the fairy tales by Perrault and the Grimms, she opts for assertive characters who refuse to be made inferior by aggressive male sexuality or refuse to abide to the antagonist role which accompany such assertiveness. *The Bloody Chamber* does not necessarily change all the characteristics of the archetypes in the traditional tales but intensifies their differences to criticise the convictions of the historical injustice inflicted on women.

Whereas Carter's collection of tales has been established firmly in the discourse regarding fairy tale retellings, Chainani's work has not been subjected to the same amount of critical praise. Published over 40 years after *The Bloody Chamber*, *Beasts and Beauty* remains a relatively new text in a surge of modern retellings. The lack of literary criticism on his writing means that the analysis of his tales in this thesis will be heavily based on applying the criticism written about Carter's work to further my arguments. This collection of tales is not the first literary work in which Chainani rework themes and motifs from traditional fairy tales. He became a New York Times bestselling author with his young adult series *The School for Good and Evil* (2013) where he aimed to rework the archetypes of absolute good and evil in fairy tales to include a more nuanced understanding of the motivations behind human behaviour. In an interview with Connie Guglielmo, Chainani spoke of how Disney's adaptations of fairy tales influence his childhood and love for the genre but that their black-and-white forms of storytelling created 'this idea that we brand evil kids "the bad kids" without understanding who they are and what they're about' (Guglielmo). Where in traditional fairy tales, the villain's motivation can lack nuance and be blamed on their nature

as either beasts or jealous women, Chainani seeks to understand why villains are created and which social issues can be reflected in their descent in morals. The aim to develop a reason for evil and the reflection of society's problems is clearly visible in *Beasts and Beauty*. Chainani's writing also includes issues of race in the critique of gender representation, which Carter's writing ignores.

Like Carter, Chainani does not appear solely as the writer of one of the primary texts in this thesis, but as the writer of relevant literary analysis. His essay 'Sadeian Tragedy: The Politics of Content Revision in Angela Carter's "Snow Child"' (2003) has placed him firmly as an important 21st-century literary critic of Carter's work. In the essay, he uses *The Sadeian Woman* in analysing Carter's version of 'Snow White' to examine her success in dismantling the pornographic archetypes found in traditional fairy tales. It is vital to recognise Chainani's literary criticism of Carter because it adds insight into his own writing: we know for a fact that, even if his primary pretext is the Grimms' version, he is very familiar with Carter's tales and her approach to fairy tale revision. His portrayal of passivity and agency in his female characters can thereby be read as a revision of both the traditional tales and Carter's work, thereby furthering with the continuation aspect which is part of the core tradition of the fairy tale genre (Zipes 2)

An important distinction here is that every character in a fairy tale is capable of cruel behaviour, regardless of gender, hence the choice to include tales which consists of a female and male antagonist respectively. Women are not always the perpetrators of evil deeds, just as they do not always fall victim to them. However, many fairy tales centre around the horror inflicted by an evil stepmother or queen and the corruption of innocence in a naïve young girl. Thus, for this thesis, I primarily focus on the relationship between the female characters and how this reflect their interactions with the male characters. The main body of the thesis centres around the concept of femininity and how this is portrayed in the fairy tales in question. Mainly when I speak of femininity in this thesis, I relate to the French bourgeoisie's definition of gender and the following expectations. Zipes describes how the gender roles changed in Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries, stating that 'men became more closely associated with reason, temperance, activism, and sovereign order; females became more identified with irrationality, whimsy, passivity, and subversive deviance' (48). These are the traits that the traditional fairy tales employ and try to pass on to their readers, and they are the traits that I argue the modern retellings challenge. Therefore, I use these definitions of femininity and masculinity throughout my analysis, unless otherwise stated.

2 Literary Criticism and the Traditional Tales

Stories have existed in various societies around the world in one shape or another, with different versions of the same tale told in vastly different cultures. According to Jack Zipes, writing is 'part of a social process, as a kind of intervention in a continuous discourse, debate, and conflict about power and social relations' (*Subversion* 2). Using Marxist literary criticism, Zipes believes that studying literature and the history of literature gives us an insight into the morals and sociological building blocks of society at the time of writing. Studying how the oral fairy tales were changed when they were written down provides an understanding of how individual writers made those changes to include their own ideologies. By knowing how the tales originated in the lower class, only to be used in a socialisation process by the bourgeoisie, we can see that gender expectations were based on a matter of social control; using familiar struggles of the lower class with the promise of happy endings whilst subtly alluding to how both women and men should behave. Applying feminist literary criticism to this process can provide insight to how the gender norms inflicted by the bourgeoisie affect the perception and expectations of women, both concerning the male characters they encounter and especially their interaction and attitudes towards other women. The bourgeoisie expectations of women created that sense of passivity which I argue lingered in the Grimms' versions and remains in many modern adaptations. This chapter gives an account of the Marxist and feminist theory I apply to the analysis in Chapters 3 and 4 and the history that accompanies it, as it is essential for my analysis to understand the literary tradition Carter and Chainani build on with their retellings.

2.1 Marxist Literary Criticism

When applying Marxist criticism to literature, as Zipes does, we do so to discover what the morals and ideologies presented in the text can tell us about the society that produced it and how that might differ from our contemporary times. Terry Eagleton defines this literary criticism by stating that 'narrative Marxism has to deliver the story of the struggles of men and women to free themselves from certain forms of exploitation and oppression' (xi-xii). By recognising the limitations the characters of literary works face, we better understand the system that causes the oppression. As a mode of theoretical analysis, Marxist literary criticism aims to understand ideologies presented in literary works, but more precisely, how these ideologies shift with the changes in historical factors. Eagleton writes that 'Marxist criticism

analyses literature in terms of the historical conditions which produce it; and it needs, similarly, to be aware of its own historical conditions' (xi-xii). This relationship between analysing the historical context of the past and being aware that we are doing so through ideologies shaped by our own context mirrors how the fairy tale genre, with its continuous retellings, is constantly in dialogue with the past and the present. Historical conditions are set to change, so literary criticism rooted in the study of sociological contexts surrounding literary work is bound to change with it. Eagleton's explanation of this theoretical approach's connection to the past describes why it applies to the study of fairy tales: as we apply Marxist literary criticism to these traditional fairy tales and their modern retellings, we are acknowledging the constant interaction between the past and the present. The ideologies of the present affect how we analyse the ideologies of the past, which becomes more prominent once we move to the analysis of Carter's and Chainani's tales and see the evident use of late 20th-century feminism and 21st-century intersectionality.

Zipes uses Marxist literary criticism to detail the historical conditions under which the traditional tales emerged. He follows the path of other critics in the fairy tale discourse when he argues that the shift from oral to written tales aided a socialisation process benefitting the higher classes:

> Almost all critics who have studied the emergence of the literary fairy tale in Europe agree that educated writers purposely appropriated the oral folktale and converted it into a type of literary discourse about mores, values, and manners, so that children and adults would become civilized according to the social codes of that time. (3)

According to Zipes, the historical conditions under which the oral tales were turned into a literary genre demonstrate a class difference. The 'literary discourse about mores, values, and manners' (3) he argues was created by educated writers was able to exist freely without the resistance of the lower class where the tales primarily circulated because of the significant class difference, which limited the lower class's influence on production. Zipes' attention to how the economic limitation of the lower class meant lower social impact, as seen through the production of didactic literature, cannot be applied in the same manner to the contemporary texts analysed in this thesis, as the conditions of class difference have changed. However, I argue that understanding how the traditional tales emerged in the middle class gives a good understanding of how these morals and values were established, which we can then apply to

the modern retellings to see if the same morals linger despite the changes to the historical context.

When discussing the changes made as the oral became written, it is vital to understand that changes were made to the folktales as they were passed down generations long before they were marketed towards middle-class European children. According to Heide Göttner-Abendroth, the matriarchal motifs found in the earliest folktales had, by the Middle Ages, undergone stages of 'patriarchalization' (qtd in Zipes 7). Matrilineal family ties became patrilineal, and the active princess slowly became an active hero. Oral tales represent the struggles of humanity at the time they were told, and as the world changed with agricultural revolutions and the creation of capitalist societies, the motifs and worldview of the oral tales changed with it. Changes were already being made before writers of the seventeenth century got involved. However, the major socio-political shifts and favoured religious orthodoxy, which occurred in the 17th century, determined the attitudes towards a civilized society in Western Europe (Zipes 37). The main concerns of the patriarchal and feudal society with princes and princesses, kings and queens, supernatural beings and forces of nature, and the class conflict and struggle for power are still at focus through these changes. At the core of Zipes' argument is the notion that a Marxist interpretation of these tales can be applied well before the capitalistic society we are familiar with was incorporated because even with the changes the bourgeoisie brought, class struggle and resistance from oppression have been present from the start.

The concept that historical changes lead to changes in literature firmly places Zipes' and Göttner-Abendroth's arguments surrounding the development of folktales and fairy tales with Eagleton's account of Marxist literary criticism. Especially the oral tales demonstrate how the desires and fears of different cultures change as the cultural and historical conditions change because of the use of the oral storyteller. Marina Warner places a significant amount of importance on the storyteller's ability to change minuscule details to fit different cultures throughout time, arguing that it demonstrates the people's desire to articulate their fears and plights in stories in a way that fits their specific time and place when she writes that '[e]very listener is potentially a new storyteller' (*Once Upon a Time* 64). The tales travelled across borders and cultures because people could change the tales as they pleased, not being bound to a printed literary work. Regarding these travels and changes, Warner argues that 'many Russian fairy tales are unique, but again polyphony breaks out, as the stories echo with others from the circumpolar regions and the cultures along the Silk Road, intertwining with fairy

tales from India, Central Asia, the Middle East, and from among the Lapps and Tungus' (67). Elements from the tales were adapted to represent each culture's socio-political and geographical conditions, like changing the predators from the European versions of the tales to fit with the wild animals residing in Asia. However, many core elements and themes have remained the same, which is why Warner argues that a polyphony occurs.

Zipes' argument rests on that the historical conditions present during the circulation of the oral tales demonstrate the desire to rise out of poverty and out of the lower class, even before the presence of economic ownership of the tales. Warner's argument surrounding how the polyphony created by the multiple renditions in different cultures supports Zipes, as the changes again demonstrate people's ability to articulate their desire to escape oppression through oral fairy tales across borders and time. Their arguments provide a vital understanding of how the oral tales express Eagleton's first argument of how 'narrative Marxism has to deliver the story of the struggles of men and women to free themselves from certain forms of exploitation and oppression' (xi-xii), but the change from oral tales to written changed the trajectory of how we view the desires expressed in the tales. The historical analysis of the traditional tales in Chapter 2.3. demonstrates precisely how much control the educated bourgeoisie had over the production and consumption of the literary fairy tales, which meant that the desires Zipes and Warner argue were articulated in the oral tales were now produced and appropriated by the oppressive force the lower classes were trying to escape. I argue that applying Eagleton's argument regarding an awareness of how the historical conditions shape the production of literature and the way we analyse literature demonstrates how this shift from oral tale to economic product provides a better understanding of the exploitation demonstrated in the traditional tales, which both Carter and Chainani criticise in their modern versions.

The full extent of the exploitation Eagleton argues is at the root of Marxist literary criticism can only be achieved by acknowledging the limitations it often falls under. Especially feminist critics have criticised Marxism for excluding gender as a contributing factor in class difference and oppression, most notably Heidi Hartmann, who argued that while 'marxist analysis provides essential insight into the laws of historical development … the categories of marxism are sex-blind' (1). She argues that in the cases where Marxist critics do consider feminism, they treat it as less important than class conflict and as a contributing factor instead of an equally important factor (1). To close the gap between the two theoretical approaches, Zipes focuses on including how portrayals of gender norms in fairy tales are a

part of the oppressive forces contributing to class struggles. His attention is on how the portrayal of passivity in female characters contributed to creating expectations of women as submissive (41), thereby submitting women to the exploitation of both class and gender.

2.2 Feminist Literary Criticism

It is through the analysis of how the morals presented in fairy tales affect the perception of class *and* gender that feminist literary criticism is applicable. Gill Plain and Susan Sellers explain how feminist literary criticism came about as a response to 'second wave feminism' in the United States and Europe during the 1960s (2). As Eagleton argued concerning Marxism, the political is visible in the literary through the struggles the characters face and the desires they convey. Whereas Marxist literary criticism focuses on class struggle, feminist theory focuses on gender struggle, especially concerning the oppression of the female sex. Although the theoretical approaches might offer interesting insights into a literary analysis when used respectively, I share Hartmann's desire for the merging of the two. She writes,

> Both marxist analysis, particularly its historical and materialist method, and feminist analysis, especially the identification of patriarchy as a social and historical structure, must be drawn upon if we are to understand the development of western capitalist societies and the predicament of women within them. (2)

This merging, or marriage as Hartmann suggests (1), suggests that feminist discourse must also be aware of the historical conditions from which both the literary works they analyse operate within and which shape the ideology of the analysis itself, as Eagleton argued concerning narrative Marxism (xi-xii). Therefore, I argue that a historical account of the socio-political conditions that affected women when the traditional tales were written provides a historical context needed to understand the social implications of the gender norms presented in these tales and how the modern retelling criticises them. Besides looking at the historical conditions which shaped feminist discourse, I also apply Toril Moi's account of feminist texts compared to female texts to argue against the universality of the one female experience often argued for in works by critics such as Elaine Showalter, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar.

Moi's 'Feminist, Female, Feminine' (1989) aims to differentiate between feminist theory in relation to social power relations and the concept of a universal female experience.

She suggests that feminism, femaleness, and femininity have over time merged into one, but that this removes the political and theoretical issues feminist criticism was originally tasked with (117). Instead, she suggests that 'we distinguish between "feminism" as a political position, "femaleness" as a matter of biology and "femininity" as a set of culturally defined characteristics' (117). Moi establishes a clear difference between these terms, what sets them apart as political, social and biological factors, but she also explains how they have become interchangeable in time and why the universality this creates is false. She argues that 'there are no pure feminist or female space from which we can speak' (118), meaning that no female writers have not been influenced by the patriarchal ideology. However, it also speaks to the notion that there is no such thing as a pure *singular* female experience on which feminism can be based. In the same manner, being a female writer does not automatically create a feminist text, just like a female reader will not automatically read a text with feminist discourse in mind. Moi writes that if 'feminist criticism is characterised by its *political* commitment to the struggle against all forms of patriarchy and sexism, it follows that the very fact of being *female* does not necessarily guarantee a feminist approach' (120 italicised in original). I share Moi's scepticism regarding the automatic link between female and feminist, and I argue that acknowledging this difference allows for the merging of Marxist and feminist literary analysis Hartmann advocates for. It amplifies the political ideology of analysing the power dynamic between the sexes without the illusion that it is purely literature written by and for women, which excludes men from participating in the discourse.

Critics fall into the generalising universality of female experience and oppression throughout feminist literary discourse and feminist readings of fairy tales. Elaine Showalter's 'Towards a Feminist Poetics' (1979) focuses significantly on the difference between literature by male and female authors within the feminist discourse, stating that if we primarily analyse literature and literary criticism by male authors 'we are not learning what women have felt and experienced, but only what men have thought women should be' (223). Although Showalter's aim to include female authors and literary critics in the feminist discourse is admirable, it is essential to acknowledge Moi's argument that female does not automatically equal feminist, just as male cannot automatically equal sexist. Similarly, Showalter's gynocritics concept, which focuses on female identification through a reading of female-authored texts (224) becomes contradictory as it involuntarily falls into a generalising universality. Showalter remains focused on the experiences of the white, middle-class woman

as the standard female experience and how such authors can adequately describe the female experience as though there were such a thing.

Gilbert and Gubar fall into the same trap of universality in their feminist reading of 'Snow White' in *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979). Their analysis focuses on how the depiction of the evil queen as assertive demonstrates society's view of passive women as virtuous and assertive women as evil (36). Although their analysis offers an interesting starting point for a discussion of passivity in fairy tale heroines, they fall into generalisation and depict a universal treatment of women in patriarchy by excluding any sociohistorical context to ground their analysis. Femininity is based on social constructs, as argued by Moi, and so the lack of awareness of the historical and social conditions which produced such attitudes leaves their analysis to be speculative rather than historically grounded. Their analysis thereby also becomes focused on the experience of white middle-class women in patriarchy, without acknowledging how the queen's social class might affect her experiences but treating it as the universal standard. However, *The Madwoman in the Attic* does offer an analysis of how metaphors of power and sexuality shape the way we understand the relationship between women in fairy tales – at least for Western white middle-class women – which can open a discussion of vilified assertiveness in the queen. I argue that the arguments they raise in their analysis of 'Snow White' can be applied to a Marxist analysis of Carter and Chainani's tales, should the historical conditions be acknowledged.

Marcia Lieberman argues that studying the representation of female characters compared to male characters in fairy tales reveals patterns which suggest that success or happy endings are determined by the different behaviour of each sex. She writes that fairy tales 'present a picture of sexual roles, behavior, and psychology, and a way of predicting outcome or fate according to sex' (384). I read Lieberman's argument that studying the characters' behaviour in fairy tales leads to a prediction of the outcome as demonstrating the different treatment of male and female characters. Studying the character's behaviour aids an understanding of why they were either rewarded or punished, meaning that one can eventually predict the outcome of the tales based on the hero and heroine's actions. Even when they achieve the same happy ending in the form of matrimony, a historical context of the time when the traditional tales were written down demonstrates the different social connotations of such a marriage for men and women.

Although many fairy tales, regardless of the gender of the protagonist, end with the promise that the prince will get to marry the princess and live happily ever after, the prospects of marriage have different connotations for men and women. The concept of marriage for a middle-class woman in 19th century Germany was trading one submission for another, as Eda Sagarra argues in *A Social History of Germany 1648-1914* (1977): 'The unmarried girl or woman remained under her father's authority, the married woman exchanged it for that of her husband' (405). Although the happy endings in fairy tales might suggest that the prince and princess would marry because they were desperately in love after their first encounter, like in Perrault's Cinderella, the father's control over the daughter could lead to marriage being closer to an economic trade than to an exclamation of love (Sagarra 405). Whereas Zipes argues that the happy endings in fairy tales stemmed from the lower class's desire to believe that 'anyone could become a knight in shining armor or a lovely princess' (*Subversion* 7) and thereby rise out of their social class, I believe the same can be said for the promise of a happy marriage for women.

The happy endings do not necessarily represent reality since rising out of the lower class was not as given as the fairy tale genre would suggest and marriage did not always lead to a 'happily ever after' as the fairy tale promises. For many women, marriage meant obeying her husband's needs and wishes, and the husband could use physical force to demand it should she not comply, as stated by the Bavarian common law: '[a woman] is not merely subordinate and subject in domestic matters, but has an obligation to perform customary and proper personal and household services, as may be demanded of her by her husband, who may, if need be, chastise her in moderation' (qtd in Sagarra 405). What is important to note here is that not every woman in the whole of Germany in the 19th century suffered under an abusive marriage and protested the doctrinaire ideas about their sex being inferior and only there to please their husbands or fathers. Rahel Levin Varnhagen, for example, wrote: 'It is ignorant of people to imagine that our [women's] spirit is different and suited to other needs, and that we could live entirely upon the existence of a husband or a son' (qtd in Jacob-Dittrich 203-204). However, Varnhagen was part of the aristocracy, and aristocratic women were given more opportunities to take charge of their economy than women of the middle or lower class (Jacob-Dittrich 204). Therefore, her social and economic class and the small economic liberty it provided meant that marriage did not have the same connotations as for women of a lower class. Nevertheless, the differences between the social classes and the effect this had on the depiction of women in fairy tales can be traced through the alterations

authors like Perrault and the brothers Grimm made when they wrote their literary versions of the oral tales.

2.3 History and Analysis of the Traditional Tales

Whereas the changes made during different renditions of the oral tales were heavily based on the individualistic preference of the storyteller and the influence of geographical culture differences, studying the changes Charles Perrault made when he wrote *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* (1697) demonstrates his participation in the civilizing process through literature. Zipes argues that 'Perrault amalgamated folk and literary motifs and shaped them in a unique way to present his particular bourgeois view of social manners' (*Subversion* 43). Perrault took the themes from the folktales, which captured the trials and tribulations of the lower class and incorporated a manner of speech practised in bourgeois circles to demonstrate the proper way to converse and behave in society. He was not alone in this though, as Zipes notes that the French aristocracy to which Perrault belonged 'displayed a unique capacity to adopt and use the best elements from other classes' (36). Since fairy tales include both fantastical elements of magic and wonder and the problems of the working class, they were the perfect medium for the bourgeoisie to include their own language to influence the morals of the tales. Norbert Elias makes this connection between the classes clear when he writes that the social characteristic of the courtly bourgeoisie and aristocracy became the national character when the bourgeoise became a nation (36). Following Marxist literary criticism, the bourgeoisie had the means of material production and, therefore, control over it, so the opportunity to influence didactically through the production of literature was readily available. Turning oral tales into didactic literary texts is one of the precise instances of the result of the bourgeoisie's socialisation process through literature.

2.3.1 Perrault's 'Little Red Riding Hood'

The effect of the changes Perrault made to the oral tales can be seen in his version of 'Little Red Riding Hood'. As Zipes notes, it was not believed that Perrault took inspiration from an oral tale until the 1950s, but research by Paul Delarue, Marianne Rumpf, and Marc Soriano conclude that he took inspiration from a tale which circulated in France in the seventeenth century (44). Zipes corroborates Rumpf's research which details how there were a flourish of

men accused of being werewolves in the 16th and 17th centuries in France, which led to many werewolf trials (*Trials* 4). One of the most notorious cases were that of Pierre Bourgot and Michel Verdun, who admitted to having attacked and killed children after having 'assumed the shape of werewolves' (Zipes 4). These cases caused people of all ages in parts of France to be scared to walk through the woods alone, and Rumpf's research demonstrates that it was in these same regions that the oral versions of 'Little Red Riding Hood' were discovered (Zipes 4). Therefore, much like how the witch trials occurring around the same time inspired plays such as Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1606) and Thomas Middleton's *The Witch* (1616), the werewolf trials sparked a fear in the local population and inspired the use of the primitive beasts in the warning tales known as *Warnmärchen* (Zipes 4). Following Marxist literary criticism, which 'analyses literature in terms of the historical conditions which produce it' and which 'needs, similarly, to be aware of its own historical conditions' (Eagleton xi-xii), the warnings that came with the oral tales to not go into the woods alone and to not speak to strangers on the path directly describes the fears of the local population who witnessed the werewolf trials. As Zipes explains, the men accused of being werewolves were 'generally charged with having devoured children and having committed other sinful acts' (4). So, the oral tales expressed the fear parents had of their children getting hurt while walking alone in the woods.

As mentioned, it is difficult to proclaim one version of an oral tale, but Zipes includes a summarised version in *Subversions* where he states that the tale could have read as follows:

> A little girl goes to visit her grandmother carrying freshly baked bread and butter. On her way she meets a werewolf who asks her where she is going and which path she is taking, the one of needles or the one of pins. He takes the shorter path, arrives at the grandmother's house, eats her, and puts part of her flesh in a bin and her blood in a bottle. Then the little girl arrives. The werewolf disguised as the grandmother gives her the flesh to eat and the blood to drink. A crow scolds her for doing this. The werewolf tells her to throw each article of clothing into the fire since she will not be needing her clothes anymore. She gets into bed and asks ritual questions, the first one concerned with how hairy the werewolf's body is. When the werewolf finally reveals that he intends to eat her, she alertly replies that she has to relieve herself outside. He tells her to do it in the bed. She insists that she must do it outside. So, the werewolf ties a piece of rope around her leg and allows her to go outside to take care of her

> natural functions. However, she ties the rope around a tree and runs home. The deceived werewolf follows in hot pursuit but fails to catch her. (44)

Although the similarities between the tales are so prominent that there is little doubt about where Perrault got his inspiration from, the tales differ primarily in places where the original tale would have been too gruesome or the protagonist of the young girl too assertive for the upper class. Paul Delarue maintains that the elements which Perrault felt the need to change because they would have shocked the bourgeoisie society were its 'cruelty (the flesh and blood of the grandmother tasted by the child), their puerility (Roads of Pins, Roads of Needles), and their impropriety (questions of the girl on the hairy body of the grandmother)' (383). The warning telling children not to go into the woods alone and to stay away from strangers was still present, but the changes Perrault made created a story which suggested that the protagonist's behaviour is what needs to be warned against.

Perrault's protagonist bears the mark of the author's view on the socialising process of young girls, especially their lack of agency. Whereas the oral tale introduces a girl who is brave and manages to free herself from the dangers of the wolf without anyone's help, Perrault's protagonist appears both gullible and helpless and the tale ends with her death. Since the oral tales could differ depending on the teller and region, descriptions of the girl's appearance could have been present, but in the version summarised by Zipes, the focus is on the girl's wit and ability to escape the dangers before her by using her brain. The notion that the girl returns home safely suggests a possibility for change: she has learned from her encounter with the wolf and will be more cautious in the future. Perrault describes the girl as 'the prettiest you could see' (99) and notes how her mother and grandmother adored her. He writes how her grandmother gave her the red hood, something Zipes has argued refers to her 'spoiled nature' (*Trials* 9). She arrives much later at her grandmother's house than the wolf both because she takes the longer path and because she 'amused herself gathering hazel-nuts, running after butterflies, and making posies out of the flowers that she saw' (Perrault 99). Her focus is on her own amusement, instead of hasting to her sick grandmother, which depicts the criticism Perrault showed for young girls who acted on their desires instead of orders from others.

Perrault punishes his young protagonist for acting on her desires by having the wolf swallow her at the end of the tale. Whereas the girl's agency saves her in the original tale, Perrault creates a warning for young girls that if they act on their desires or their natural

inclinations, they will be punished. Perrault's protagonist appears naïve and culpable in how she does not stray away from the wolf in her grandmother's bed, no matter how different she finds his appearance from her grandmother's. He does not give the girl a chance to react once the wolf declares he wants to eat her: 'as he said these words, the wicked Wolf flung himself on Little Red Riding-Hood, and ate her up' (Perrault 103). The wolf's attack on the girl has been linked to both rape and murder by critics, such as Elizabeth Marshall, who compared the treatment of Little Red Riding Hood's rape to the contemporary discourse surrounding rape victims (268). Perrault depicts the girl as complicit in her own rape or murder because she acted on her desires. She told the wolf where her grandmother lived, got distracted on her way there, so she arrived late, got willingly into bed with the wolf and ignored the signs of danger. As Marshall argues, the depiction of Little Red Riding Hood's behaviour leads to what is in popular parlance usually faulted as 'Little Red "asked for it"' (268). The girl in the oral tale also falls for the wolf's deceit and gets into bed with him, but she uses her wit to escape and save herself. Perrault's girl is not allowed to act but to remain passive and must suffer the consequences of her (according to Perrault) bad behaviour.

The bad behaviour that Perrault criticises can be traced to the social norms that were inflicted during the socialisation process in the 17th century. Zipes writes about how children's literature was used to subliminally educate the public on what the bourgeoisie deemed good behaviour in society in hopes that the public would internalise the 'social norms and mores so that they would appear as second nature or habit' (*Trials* 12). Among the values regarding table and speaking manners which lure their way into the reader's mind through Perrault's use of language and conversation, he also seemed to focus a great deal on depicting – or criticising the lack of – virtues in women. Lilyane Mourey remarks how Perrault centred much of his reflection on the situation of women: 'The ideal "virtues" of a woman such as Perrault conceived them – beauty, sweetness, kindness, obedience to the husband, dedication to the maintenance of the home, lack of coquetry, and loyalty – are indissolubly linked with one another and reinforce one another' (qtd in Zipes *Subversion* 46). The young girl in Perrault's tale does not fulfil these virtues, especially in the sense of coquetry, as she continues entertaining the attention given to her by the wolf, so Perrault punishes her. Mourey argues that female coquetry upsets Perrault because 'it could be the sign of female independence [which] endangers one of the fundamental values of society – the couple, the family' (qtd in Zipes *Trials* 13). Perrault's protagonist is killed while she is in bed with a

predator, and Perrault does not allow her to escape but wants her to be punished for her role in the tale.

The warning in the tale is made explicit with the poem after the ending, titled 'The Moral of the Story' (Perrault 103). In this poem, Perrault warns 'pretty girls with charm' who '[d]o wrong and often come to harm / In letting those they do not know / Stay talking to them when they meet' (l. 2-4). Where the judgement Perrault places on the women in dangerous situations is more hidden throughout the story, disguised as plot, it is never told as directly as in this end poem. It is clear here that Perrault deems that it is the women's fault for entertaining the strange men they meet with conversation when they should be reserved, and therefore it is their fault that these men take advantage of them. The connection between wolf and man is also made evident in this poem, as Perrault writes: 'I call them wolves, but you will find / That some are not the savage kind, / Not howling, ravening or raging; / Their manners seem, instead, engaging, / They're softly-spoken and discreet' (l. 9-13). Whereas the oral tale functioned as a warning against the dangers that lured in the woods, supernatural beliefs of primal beasts, and an encouragement to use one's wits in dangerous situations, Perrault's take on the tale serves as a warning for young girls not to entertain the advantages of strange men and not to follow one's own natural desires as it will lead to punishment.

2.3.2 Grimms' 'Little Red Cap'

Perrault's version of Little Red Riding Hood demonstrates how the higher social classes infiltrated stories from the lower class to socialise readers based on their values and virtues. However, none demonstrate this quite like the changes the Brothers Grimm made to the tale. The assumption was for a long time that the Grimms only used folktales gathered from old Germanic and wrote them down identically to how they were said by the old lower-class women who allegedly told the tales to them, but this has been proven to be inaccurate by critics such as Zipes. He cites the German scholar Heinz Rölleke who established that the Grimms heard the story from Marie Hassenpflug (*Trials* 14). Zipes writes that Marie 'came from a family with a German and French Hugenot background and she was raised in the "French spirit"' (14) and, therefore, she had probably heard Perrault's story. The elements of French bourgeoise Perrault included in his version to clean up the story to be fit for the upper class were further altered to fit the socialisation process in 19th century Germany.

Knowing where the Grimms got their sources from is vital to understand how the political influences and the attempt at socialisation managed to sneak its way into what became some of the Western world's most famous fairy tales. The Grimms proclaimed that the folktales they collected were the voice of the true Volk in Germany, something Jacob argued for: 'it is important that these items should be gathered faithfully and truly, without decoration and addition and with the greatest possible precision and detail, from the mouths of the storytellers, where practicable in and with their own authentic words' (qtd in Warner 57). This quotation makes it seem like the Grimms refused to edit the tales told to them to fit the upper class, and therefore the tales would not be an attempt at socialisation like in France a few centuries prior. According to Zipes, these assumptions were believed until the 1970s when it was proven that the brothers Grimm 'gathered their tales primarily from petit bourgeois or educated middle-class people, who had already introduced bourgeois notion into their versions' and that they 'expanded them and made substantial changes in characters and meaning' (*Subversion* 61). Not only were some of the tales they were told already filled with bourgeoise influence, stripped from the original meaning like Perrault's 'Little Red Riding Hood', but the Grimms edited them even further so they would be more fitting for the political climate in Germany, disguising the tales as a true representation of the Volk.

The Volk were to the Grimms the common people, working class, and the tales were thought of as belonging to them through their oral tales, according to Donald Haase. He writes: 'As the product of the German folk, the tales were thought to contain the scattered fragments of ancient Germanic myth, which – when collected – would provide the German people with a magic mirror in which they could discern and thus reassert their national identity' (Haase 385). The changes the Grimms made to the stories before publication indicate that this national identity they were searching for could not be just a representation of the people. As Zipes points out, we cannot say that this was done with a cruel intention on the Grimms' part, rather 'they wanted the rich cultural tradition of the common people to be used and accepted by the rising middle classes' (61). The tales were not meant to be enjoyed by the lower class, and they could not be since many members of the lower class did not receive the education of the upper and middle class nor did they have the funds to purchase the anthologies (Zipes 68). The tales were originally theirs, passed down through the oral tale, which was far more accessible due to the lack of education leading to many being illiterate. Zipes writes that reading printed fairy tales 'was conducted mainly in bourgeois circles and nurseries' (68), which became the Grimms' target audience. That the tales were primarily

aimed at members of the bourgeoisie might explain the justification of the alterations to the tales beyond the desire to educate the public on manners and virtues. Whereas the lower class might rejoice and be inspired by the tale of a young girl outwitting the villain and saving herself from danger, the sight of an intelligent and active woman would have been too far from the values the middle class was familiar with, as previously argued with Perrault. The fact that reading was mainly accessible to the middle and upper classes would mean that they were closer to hegemony with a few variations on interpretation.

However, those of the lower class who could read were 'not only acquiring a skill but also acquiring a value system and social status, depending on their conformity to norms controlled by the bourgeois interest' (Zipes 68). This means that there were members of the lower class who could read the Grimms' fairy tales should they access them, which disrupted the hegemony of interpretation if they did not comply with the bourgeoise norms presented in the tales. Reading was, according to Zipes, 'the passport into certain brackets of society and the measure by which one functions and maintains a certain place in the hierarchy' (68) after the Enlightenment. Whereas reading can be presented as a challenge to social values when another class is introduced, they also have a didactic purpose of controlling the new classes and perhaps changing their perspective. Zipes argues that '[t]o become literate means to learn how to operate within the laws of literacy that are class determined' (68) and the class determining the literature in 19th century Germany was the bourgeoisie, who therefore conducted the literature to fit their values. The Grimms gathered their tales in the hope of capturing the 'national *Geist* (spirit)' (Warner 72 italicised in original). However, in adapting the tales to the written text, they altered the tales to fit with the laws of literacy determined by the bourgeoisie to the point where the previous meanings were overall changed. Where they claimed to not add to the story but write them as the storytellers told them, their alterations influence how the story is perceived.

One of the significant changes the Grimms introduced in their version of Little Red Cap was the happy ending where the girl gets rescued by a hunter. Whereas the wolf in Perrault's version kills both the grandmother and the girl, the Grimms' version introduces a male figure to save them both by carving them out from the beast's belly. They do not let the girl outwit the wolf herself like in the oral tale Perrault took inspiration from, but it appears they found Perrault's ending too gruesome. The young girl is portrayed as even more naïve and helpless than in the French version, and there are more instances of her disobeying her mother, furthering the virtues Perrault established centuries before. At the start of the tale,

Little Red Cap is given instructions by her mother: 'when you're out in the woods, look straight ahead like a good little girl and don't stray from the path' (149). Little Red Cap promises her mother to be obedient, and when she does stray from the path after her encounter with the wolf, it is a direct break of a promise and a show of disobedience to her elder. However, to retain the notion of a happy ending, the promise that one can learn from mistakes and rise in society again, the Grimms introduced the male character of the hunter to rescue them. A male patriarch comes in, whose occupation is maintaining and controlling the forces of nature and wild animals. His occupation directly accompanies his role in the story, which is to establish that control is safety. To understand the effect this has, we need to look at the sensual temptations Little Red Cap falls for and the bourgeoise notion to restrict a child's sexuality.

Although the temptation to act on Little Red Cap's desires is more explicit in the Grimms' tale, Wilhelm and Jacob edited and toned down the sexual tone from Perrault's tale. Michael Foucault referred to this process among the middle class in the 19th century as a 'pedagogization of children's sex' (104), meaning that children are prone to indulge in sexual activities but that such behaviour presented moral and physical dangers (104). Therefore, '[p]arents, families, educators, doctors, and eventually psychologists would have to take charge … of this precious and perilous, dangerous and endangered sexual potential' (104). The Grimms removed some of the blatantly sexual aspects seen in Perrault's tale, especially the one where she gets undressed and gets into bed with the wolf, in an attempt to discourage the sexual potential in children Foucault writes about. The young girl in Perrault's tale gets punished right after she gets into the bed, suggesting a punishment for acting on her sexual desires. However, the Grimms' changes suggest an unwillingness to acknowledge the explicit sexual aspect.

The wolf vocally tempts Little Red Cap to go and enjoy her pretty surroundings and pick some flowers instead of just focusing on the path like her mother had told her to. Instead of obeying her mother, the girl goes off the path to pick flowers and 'each time she plucked one, she believed she saw another one even prettier and ran after it further into the woods' (151). She lets her natural desires take over, allowing the wolf to sneak off to her grandmother's house. Whereas the wolf tricks Little Red Riding Hood in Perrault's tale into taking the longer path to her grandmother's house, it is Little Red Cap's diversion which allows the wolf to reach the house first in the Grimms' tale. This furthers Perrault's argument that it is the young girls who disobey or act on their desires' fault when they are punished for

it. Zipes notes how this was a part of the conservative bourgeois sense of morality in Germany at the time, how a young girl 'must learn to fear her own curiosity and sensuality' (*Subversion* 66), and how if you stray from the path, 'if you are not orderly and moral […] then you will be swallowed by the wolf; that is, the devil or sexually starved males' (66). If young girls do not do as they are told, then the consequence is being the victim of the actions of grown men.

The wolf as the devil and sexually starved man and the temptations he provides for the young girl who has been given instructions on how to behave also indicate a struggle between the wilderness of nature and the control over the mind. In *Trials*, Zipes describes the wolf as not only symbolising the devil meant to punish but 'a representative of the human wild side, of wilderness' (16). Using Zipes' notion of the wolf as a sexually starved man and a representation of wilderness we can link sexual desires to nature and primal instinct, something the Germans of the 19th century rejected as part of the French expression (Zipes 17). Zipes writes about how the Grimms wrote this fairy tale when the hostility between the Germans and French was at a high, with the French invasion of the Rhineland during the Napoleon wars: 'Although the French had been welcomed at the beginning of the century, the Germans came to resent French domination and expressed great relief and joy after the retreat of Napoleon's troops in 1813' (17). The hostility between the nations is best expressed in the opposites of nature and school, instinct and reflection, according to Zipes: 'the conflict between freedom/wilderness/nature on the one hand versus school/straight path/order on the other is set up very early in the narrative to illustrate a socio-political situation' (17). The wolf tempts the girl to stray away from her knowledge and the path to enjoy the freedom of nature and wilderness, which is associated with the Enlightenment period in France. The socio-political situation is therefore portrayed in the tale in how the wolf represents a danger to the girl by being the temptation towards her own wilderness and that such sensual desires denounced by the norms of the bourgeoisie will have to be punished.

2.3.3 Grimms' 'Snow White'

The Grimms were equally as prominent in their changes to their version of 'Snow White' as to 'Little Red Cap'. However, tracing the tale to see where the Grimms got their inspiration for the different versions has, despite scholarly efforts, proven to be more difficult than with 'Little Red Cap'. Christine Shojaei Kawan argues that the Grimms claimed 'Snow White'

was one of the best-known folktales at their time of writing, but that other sources, such as the writing of Albert Ludewig Grimm, suggest that such a folktale was characterised by strong variations (332). The number of different versions of the tale might be one of the reasons why the Grimms went through so many different versions of 'Snow White' in their manuscripts and different publications. However, the editorial changes the Grimms made to their own versions of the tale demonstrate the same socialisation process present in 'Little Red Cap'. Kawan argues that the tales presented in the Grimms manuscripts of 'Snow White' underwent significant changes from 1810 to 1819 (334), and Zipes makes the same claim in *Subversion*. He compares the 1810 and 1812 versions of the tale and argues that the inclusion of domestic labour for Snow White in the 1812 version demonstrates how the Grimms had a socialisation process in mind when editing the tale: 'Snow White is given instructions that are more commensurate with the duties of a bourgeois girl, and the tasks that she performs are implicitly part of her moral obligation' (66). He argues that the notion that the woman's role was in the home with domestic labour was a part of bourgeois circles more than in the lower class or aristocracy (66-67). Therefore, the changes the Grimms made in this version include clear instances of adding social norms of the bourgeoisie to educate its readers on expected behaviour. However, this socialisation is perhaps most evident in the tale's depiction of the two women.

Looking at the treatment of different women in traditional fairy tales demonstrates how the passivity of the young, innocent girl is encouraged whilst acting on her own desires and acknowledging her maturity is discouraged. 'The male acts, the female waits' (*Subversion* 41) is how Zipes describes the difference between Perrault's heroes and heroines, and I would argue that based on the similarities between the representation of gender roles in Perrault and the Grimms' fairy tales, this can well enough apply to the Grimms' tales. This quotation functions as a description of how many of the characters acted in these traditional tales and as a didactic assignment of gender roles and rewards for correct behaviour. We root for the hero and heroines in the tale, and by proxy, we believe that their good behaviour will be rewarded towards the end. The active hero will get the gold, and the patient heroine will be rescued by her prince. With this argument, we could expand Zipes' description: 'the good male acts, the good female waits'. If we consider how fairy tales serve a didactic purpose not necessarily to depicture gender roles as they are, but as the author wishes they could be, the opposite of the hero's behaviour would be considered villainous. The role of the female antagonist – the wicked stepmother, witch, or evil queen –becomes everything that the heroine is not; active,

and emotionally and physically mature. Since the heroines must be rewarded for good behaviour, the villain must be punished for exemplifying the opposite behaviour.

Snow White's innocence can be seen through both associations with her physical descriptions and her behaviour when faced with trouble. She is named after one of the colours characterising her beauty – 'white as snow, red as blood, and black as ebony' (Grimm 249) –a colour often associated with innocence and purity. However, Maria Tatar remarks that the term 'snow' in the name implies a deeper meaning to her innocence: 'Snow suggests cold and remoteness, along with the notion of the lifeless and inert, yet it also comes down from heaven' (246). The passivity, which might be associated with coldness and lifelessness, is rather associated with heaven through Tatar's reading. Therefore, according to Tatar, the epitome of the reward of passivity is seen when Snow's lifeless but beautiful body lies in the glass coffin and the prince is awestruck by her. The argument that it is just Snow White's passivity which allures the prince seems too simplistic. Since her beauty is described as the 'fairest ever seen' (Grimm 256), her beauty has probably played a key role in his adoration. However, she lies there so lifeless and passive that she cannot behave in a manner which would destroy or taint the perception of her beauty. She cannot disobey or even resist his actions and orders. Her inability to resist him leads to the same rape association as we saw in Perrault's 'Little Red Riding Hood': a young, innocent girl unable to resist against the actions of men.

Both Snow White and the queen are described as beautiful, even if none of the queen's descriptions entirely match the passive associations like Snow White, so it is their different behaviour and the reward for such behaviour which truly sets them apart. Snow White does not harm or hurt anyone else, nor does she do anything purely out of her own ambitions except run away when the huntsman lets her go into the forest (251). When she enters the dwarfs' cottage, she says her prayers and falls asleep, which is a small but significant way the Grimms made their fairy tales didactic, like a manual of manners. When she wakes up the next day, the dwarfs say she can stay with them as long as she performs her domestic labour, which a wife or mother might typically perform: 'If you keep house for us, cook, make the beds, wash, sew, knit, and keep everything neat and tidy, then you can stay with us, and we will give you everything you need' (254). The domestic labour Snow White is expected to maintain in trade for a place to stay and everything else she needs mirrors the economic position many middle-class women in Germany had in the 19th century (Sagarra 405). If they keep the house, everything will be provided for them by the patriarch of the family – first

their father and eventually their husband. This contract between Snow White and the dwarfs is an early indication that good behaviour will be rewarded with protection and shelter. To which Snow White agrees to 'with pleasure' (254).

Snow White disobeys the dwarfs' orders when they tell her not to let anyone in the house when they are gone, which is when the safety of the house disappears. Like Little Red Cap is punished for disobeying her mother's warnings and instead acting on her own desires, Snow White ignores the dwarfs' warning and lets the queen disguised as a peasant woman inside the house. Snow White's violation results in punishment, as such behaviour must be discouraged. The punishment for disobeying her providers' warnings is instant as the queen cuts her breath off with lace, and Snow White is presumed dead (255). Once the dwarfs come back and rescue her, they warn her again not to let anyone in the house when she is alone. The connotation here is that Snow White as a young girl cannot protect herself from the cruelty of others who might take advantage of her without her protectors, meaning she cannot save herself should something happen. This has already been demonstrated earlier in the tale when the huntsman takes Snow White out in the woods to kill her. She does not attempt to run away, but instead she cries and pleads for him to spare her life should she promise to go into the woods and never return (251). Her 'beauty and innocence' make the huntsman spare her life, thinking that the 'wild animals will devour [her] before long' (251). It is not Snow White's actions which save her life, but rather the huntsman's choice to let her go based on pity and the assumption that other creatures will kill her instead. She does survive through the woods, but not because she cleverly avoids dangerous paths or animals, rather the wild 'beasts hovered around her at times, but they did her no harm' (251). The Grimms have written Snow White's journey to the cottage as if it is simply luck and the kindness of others which led her to safety instead of her actions.

In contrast, it is the queen's actions that the Grimms condemn as unfitting and cruel. The Grimms describe the queen as 'a beautiful lady, but proud and domineering' (250). Domineering is not a trait found in many heroines of fairy tales, and if we apply the feminist critique Showalter wrote about, we see how the traits showcased in the heroine demonstrate how the Grimms thought a woman should be, and the traits of the villain were those they associated with evil women. The queen drives the narrative in the tale; without the presence of a male villain, it is the queen who uses her own ambition and desires to create a story. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar analysed the concept of the passive woman as angelic and the assertive woman as the monster in their feminist literary criticism book *The Madwoman in*

the Attic (1979). According to Gilbert and Gubar, the central theme of the tale is the relationship between these two women and how it represents a contemporary Western view of women. Resisting the so often used Oedipal complex to speak on the sexual rivalry between mothers and daughters for the father's attention, as made famous by Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment* (1976), Gilbert and Gubar argue that the tension between the two demonstrates the bipolar image of women imposed by patriarchy (17).

The queen who advances the action in the tale by not giving up on her mission to murder Snow White. Gilbert and Gubar argue that the queen is actually 'witty, wily, and self-absorbed as all traditional artists are' (38-39), rejecting the conventional interpretation which focuses on the queen as purely evil. The fact that the queen is plotting to murder an innocent young girl to achieve her dreams and desires to become the most beautiful woman in the land and get the recognition of the magical mirror makes her the obvious villain in the story and for a good reason. Even with a contemporary view of the morals presented in traditional fairy tales changing through the ages, murder has been and still is viewed as morally wrong. However, Gilbert and Gubar's argument that the contrasts between the assertiveness of the queen and the passivity of Snow White are what leads to a harsher judgement of the queen beyond the murderous act towards persecution on the sake of being an assertive woman makes for a more complex reading which I apply to the analysis in Chapter 4.

2.4 Intertextuality and Fairy Tale Retellings

Both Marxist and feminist literary criticisms are in constant recognition of the relationship between the present and the past conditions which influence their ideology and the same goes for fairy tale retellings. The fairy tale genre invites this connection between the past and the present due to the number of different versions of the same tales. Marina Warner argues that the 'necessary presence of the past makes itself felt through combinations and recombinations of familiar plots and characters, devices and images; they might be attached to a particular well-known fairy tale' (xx). If one is familiar with a version of a fairy tale, like the Grimms' 'Little Red Cap' or Disney adaptation of 'Snow White', any other version consisting of the same themes or motifs draws the reader back to the version they are most familiar with. Because of this comparison, it becomes difficult to discuss the analysis of fairy tale retellings without intertextuality.

An intertextual analysis of fairy tale retellings is very aware of the relationship between the primary text and the versions which precede it. Most critics agree that Julia Kristeva coined the term 'intertextuality' in the 1960s, as she combined Bakhtin's ideas of the social context of language with Saussure's ideas of language's systematic features (Martin 148). Kristeva wrote that intertextuality is 'a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another' (37), which I argue is compatible with Warner's concept of the relationship between different versions of fairy tales. A fairy tale retelling brings a new perspective on the themes or characters in another story, thereby transforming it into something new yet familiar.

However, which pretext is at the base for different retellings cannot necessarily be determined when it comes to the production or reading of fairy tale retellings. Vanessa Joosen argues that even when the text explicitly mentions a pretext, one cannot guarantee that the story will not create associations with another tale when reading it (10). She uses the example of Anne Provoost's *De Roose en het Zwijn* (1997), where the author writes that she based her story of 'The Pig Prince' by Giovan Francesco Straparola, but 'the content of the novel runs … more parallel to the now better-known version of "Beauty and the Beast" by Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont' (10). The author's intertextual knowledge might not transcribe to the reader, even when such knowledge is stated.

The intertextuality in this analysis presumes the Grimms' versions of the tales as the pretext in both Carter's and Chainani's versions. This is not necessarily because the authors themselves have stated that it was the Grimms' versions they relied on because, as stated earlier, such a statement does not automatically change the pretext the readers will associate with the tales. However, the ground for my analysis is based on whether the depiction of women in fairy tales, which was shaped by the socialisation process at the time of the Grimms' writing, has changed in these modern retellings. As seen in the historical analysis of these tales, the Grimms' tales acutely demonstrate these norms and expectations of gender, which I argue these retellings challenge, hence the comparison.

3 Reimagining the Erotic within Little Red Riding Hood

Whereas the Grimms edited 'Little Red Cap' to exclude much of the erotic or otherwise sexual aspects of Perrault's tale, women writers of the 20th and 21st centuries worked to make the sexual aspect explicit in their retellings. Collections such as Hillary Rollins' *The Empress's New Lingerie and Other Erotic Fairy Tales* (2001), Nancy Madore's *Enchanted: Erotic Bedtime Stories for Women* (2003), and Joan Elizabeth Lloyd's *Naughty Bedtime Stories* (2005) to name a few, are modern retellings of traditional fairy tales well known to the Western world, with a focus on erotic content for women. Few male writers have reached the same success with these erotic tales, aside from Michael Ford's *Once Upon a Time: Erotic Fairy Tales for Women* (1996) and *Happily Ever After: Erotic Fairy Tales for Queer Men* (1996). None of the collections mentioned above seem aimed at heterosexual men. Critic Kimberly J. Lau argues that the lack of heterosexual male audience as a target 'underscores all of these collections' interest in rewriting the dominant patriarchal erotic at the heart of the traditional tales' (79). Lau's remark suggests that the focus on women's and queer men's sexual pleasure was used as a tool to dismantle the sexual and social power positions of straight men in a patriarchal society. This chapter compares the explicit erotic content in Carter's tales to the exclusion of sexual agency in Chainani's tales to examine if the sexual agency dismantles the gendered power positions established in the traditional tales.

Carter's *The Bloody Chamber* includes many stories where the female protagonists undergo a sort of sexual awakening or empowerment. Carter places the erotic content in her tales in uncomfortable settings with disturbing descriptions of bestiality, rape and incest. She creates tension with the hegemonic erotic, creating tales which are, according to Cristina Bacchilega, 'doubling and double: both affirmative and questioning, without necessarily being recuperative or politically subversive' (22). Instead of positioning her work as the answer to the issues of unequal gendered power structures seen in the traditional tales, I argue her tales push the erotic to the extreme to create further questions regarding depictions of gender and sexuality. More than striving for female pleasure, Carter's tales push the reader into discovering the disturbing aspect of sexual power.

In the first tale, 'The Werewolf', the sexual power inequality seen in the traditional tales between the young girl and sexually predatory man is challenged. A young girl is attacked by a wolf in the woods and cuts off its paw before it can kill her. She brings the paw to her grandmother's house, only to discover that it has turned into a human hand, one she

recognises as her grandmother's. The grandmother, who previously appeared sick and weak, jumps up as though possessed and tries to kill the young girl. Neighbours chase the grandmother away, and she is stoned to death, leaving the young girl to live in her grandmother's house. Although 'The Werewolf' does not offer as explicitly an erotic alternative to the tale as the other two stories do, it does set the analytical ground for how Carter treats gender and the revision of this familiar tale.

'The Company of Wolves' explores pornographic elements more visibly. After detailing some lore surrounding the werewolves and how they transform, Carter tells the story of a child who goes through the woods to get to her grandmother's house. The child brings a large knife with her but is not afraid as she feels protected by the 'invisible pentacle of her own virginity' (133). The child meets a handsome stranger who walks with her, telling her he knows a shortcut to her grandmother's house and the child challenges him to see who arrives first, promising a kiss should he win. The child walks slowly, wanting the kiss, and the stranger arrives at the house, turns into a big wolf and eats the grandmother. Once the child arrives, she realises that the wolf has eaten her grandmother but discards her fear of him. She gets naked and seduces the wolf. The argument critics such as Lau have offered to this tale is that Carter attempts to dismantle 'a world of sexual absolutes' (Lau 86), granting the girl sexual agency and disrupting our concept of who yields the power in the final scene.

The progression of sexual desire as wild animalistic desire is completed in the last story, 'Wolf-Alice'. Wolf-Alice is stuck on the outside of humanity and animality: not quite human nor wolf. The socialisation process demonstrated earlier is brought to attention in this tale again as some nuns find Wolf-Alice and bring her to their monastery in an attempt to civilise her. They realise they cannot change her and hand her over to the Duke, an old werewolf living in a mansion and who no longer has a reflection in the mirror. Wolf-Alice grows up and starts to menstruate and simultaneously develop more humanity. The story and development of the characters peak when the Duke is shot in the shoulder after an attack from humans, and Wolf-Alice licks his wounds clean. Through Wolf-Alice's compassion and care, the Duke's image appears in the mirror, causing a form of rebirth.

Chainani's tale, the first one in his collection, shares similarities with Carter's writing. However, the pornographic element of the sexual desire of his characters is minimised, which resembles the traditional tales by becoming more implicit than explicit. Instead, his tale seems to focus on how gender-based oppression and class-based oppression are connected. Chainani

writes about a town that sacrifices the prettiest girls and sends them into the woods to be taken by the wolves each year. Once the wolves decide which girl is chosen, no one can resist them. Chainani's protagonist is chosen but is not afraid of the beasts and brings a knife with her in her grandmother's basket. When the wolves surround her, she tricks them into believing that her sister is far more desirable and that they should go for her. She sends them in the opposite direction and runs to her grandmother's house. The girl and her grandmother trick the wolves once they arrive at the house and kill them all. The town still believes they must send a girl into the woods, not knowing that the wolves are gone and that they are sending girls to live together in the grandmother's house, protecting each other.

The different levels of pornographic or erotic register moves like a constant metamorphosis through these tales, and so the question becomes whether we see a shift in the depiction of social expectations imposed on young girls regarding sexuality and submissiveness from the traditional tales. Carters gives her female characters a sense of sexual agency, but is that enough to counter the passivity as a virtue the bourgeoisie of 17th century France and 19th century Germany depicted in their tales? The socialisation process shown in the traditional tales was decided by the class in charge of literary publication and the class who could afford to publish their ideologies in literary forms. However, can we say the same for the didactic purpose of these retellings? Whereas we saw, through Zipes' argument, the clear indication that fairy tales were used to lecture a nation on the 'correct' manners and behaviours as according to the dominant economic class, Carter's and Chainani's tales focus on depicting a critique with these descriptions of morals. They attempt to question the effect of these principles and thereby showcase the desire to see the literary fairy tale as transformative, away from the notion that fairy tales compose an inherently misogynistic and classist genre.

3.1 Revisiting the sexual predator: 'The Werewolf'

Although 'The Werewolf' is the shortest tale in the wolf-trilogy, Carter uses it to set the tone for the treatment of intertextuality between her own tales, the written literary fairy tales by Perrault and the Grimms, and the oral folktales. In her introduction to *The Old Wives' Fairy Tale Book* (1990), Carter makes a distinction between the anonymous and fluid oral tradition of folklore, resulting in 'the perennially refreshed entertainment of the poor' (ix) and the literary male-dominated fairy tales, which transformed the oral tradition into middle-class

commodities (ix). Her analysis of the change in the fairy tale tradition as it became a literary genre mirrors Zipes' argument of the role of the bourgeoisie in shaping the traditional tales we know today. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, turning these tales into literary art forms not only allowed for the middle class to introduce their morals and turn the tales from *Warnmärchen* to didactic aids in the socialisation process, but they also created a universality within the tales. Because of this, as argued by Marina Warner, the fairy tale genre lacks complex characters and build upon archetypes, making characters such as Red Riding Hood and the wolf rich symbols of virtue and villainy, removed of any ambiguity. Therefore, the lack of a historical analysis of the conditions which produced these tales automatically leads to the same universality which traps the traditional tales in their structures. She writes how the historical interpretation of fairy tales 'reveals how human behaviour is embedded in material circumstance, in the laws of dowry, land tenure, feudal obedience, domestic hierarchies and material dispositions, and that when these pass and change, behaviour may change with them' (*Beast to the Blonde* 24). Warner includes the domestic changes that occur with a change in the economic sphere and social classes' influence. According to Warner, the material and economic changes directly affect the characters' behaviour. She uses Carter's works to demonstrate how '[e]vidence of conditions from past social and economic arrangements co-exist in the tale with the narrator's innovations' (25), noting how Carter's Beauty in her version of 'Beauty and the Beast', 'The Tiger's Bride', is lost to the Beast through a card game, which Warner argues is the modern version of fathers giving away their daughters in a marriage based on economic terms without consulting them (25). I argue that Warner's plea for a historical and social context for analysing the texts will help us understand the full extent of Carter's critique of the concepts of gender norms and oppression of female sexuality in relation to its economic benefits from the 19th century.

Carter acknowledges her tales' connection to the past with the associations to myths and old folk beliefs in the opening of the 'The Werewolf'. She never states precisely where or when her story is set, an ambiguity reminiscent of the traditional 'once upon a time' openings often associated with the fairy tale genre. However, the connection to the past is still made evident through Carter's description of the folk beliefs the people in this 'northern country' (127) have. To them, the Devil is a known figure to believe in, as are werewolves, vampires and witches. Carter's opening might make one believe this will be a tale about witches since that is what she uses as an example of how the northern people deal with matters of the supernatural: 'When they discover a witch … they strip the crone, search for her marks, for

the supernumerary nipple her familiar sucks … Then they stone her to death' (126). However, the transition soon occurs to the familiar setting of 'Little Red Riding Hood', so more than foreshadowing which folk beliefs this tale incorporates, Carter uses these first few paragraphs to connect the tale to its historical roots. Nevertheless, an acknowledgement of the connection between these mythical creatures cannot be ignored as they signal different associations between masculine and feminine beings.

Much like the werewolf trials detailed in Chapter 2, witch trials occurred throughout the 16th and 17th centuries in Europe (Mackay 1). Similarly, just as the werewolf trials affected the folk tales surrounding the lower class in France, cultivating in *Warnmärchen* warning people of the predators residing in the woods on a far more literal than symbolic level, the witch trials cultivated the same fear towards older women who could be imagined residing with or aiding the Devil. *Malleus Maleficarum* (transl. Hammer of Witches) by Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger, published in 1487, was one of the critical texts which took existing fear of those working for the Devil and created a handbook for investigating and persecuting witches (Mackay 1). Texts like the *Malleus* demonstrates the understanding that witchcraft stems from a carnal lust they believed was insatiable in women (Mackay 170). The tension between the masculine association with werewolves as sexual predators and the feminine association with witches as women acting on their 'carnal lust' is explored through Carter's twist of expectation in 'The Werewolf'.

The association to the traditional tale is first present after Carter establishes her tale's connection to myth. Reminiscent of the start of both Perrault and the Grimms' tales, Carter writes:

> Go and visit grandmother, who has been all sick. Take the oatcakes I've baked for her on the hearthstone and a little pot of butter. The good child does as her mother bids – five miles' trudge through the forest; do not leave the path because of the bears, the wild boar, the starving wolves. Here, take your father's hunting knife; you know how to use it. (127)

The mother's order for the girl to walk through the woods alone to tend to her sick grandmother mirrors the Grimms' version, but the traditional tale focused on the punishment meant for the young girl for disobeying her mother's orders to 'look straight ahead like a good little girl and don't stray from the path' (149), demonstrating the bourgeoisie influence

on the submissive expectations of young girls. However, Carter's tale speaks of no such warning. Instead, the mother tells the girl to carry her father's hunting knife with her should she encounter danger. The fact that the mother tells her that 'you know how to use it' (127) demonstrates how Carter's protagonist is not as passive in her own protection as Grimms' heroine. She is ready to fight back against the dangers she encounters.

Carter's protagonist's father is not in this tale in any shape other than the knife she brings into the woods. Whereas the Grimms introduced the huntsman to the tale to represent the patriarchal figure designed to rescue Little Red Cap, the father figure's presence in Carter's tale is through the symbol of her protection. Before we are told that the werewolf is her grandmother, the historical and vernacular traditions of werewolves – Old English 'wer' or 'were' means man (Lau 82) – suggest to us that she meets the symbol of a predatory man. What she has to protect herself against his physical advantage is her father's hunting knife. Remembering Warner's argument about the father losing Beauty to the Beast in a card game mirroring the tradition of fathers marrying off their daughters for economic prospects without their consultation, we can draw the line between the father being the only protection the girl has. Eda Sagarra's argument that the unmarried woman moves from her father's authority, and therefore economic safety, to her husband's in 19th century Germany (405) creates an interesting connection between the ambiguous male characters in this tale: the father's knife as a source of protection can symbolise this battle between who holds authority over the woman in question. The threat in the traditional tale is that Little Red Cap will succumb to the wolf's sexual temptations, so her virtue will be destroyed. Rather than focusing on the morality of a young girl's desires, Carter creates a story that visualises the struggle women of 19th century Germany faced as a pawn between the economic and authorial transactions between men.

Whether the girl in Carter's tale subverts the passive role of the fairy tale heroine we are familiar with must be seen in the light of her call to action faced with dangers and her willingness to use the resources she has. On the one hand, the girl does not let the wolf tempt her like in the traditional tales but stands ready to charge at the sound of its arrival: 'When she heard that freezing howl of a wolf, she dropped her gifts, seized her knife and turned on the beast' (127). Whereas Grimms' protagonist seems annoyingly naïve towards the wolf's advances, Carter's protagonist senses the dangers associated with the wolf before it has a chance to attack her. She protects herself as the wolf 'went for her throat' (127), using her father's knife to slash off the wolf's paw, sending it on its way. Using the aids at her disposal,

she frees herself from the threat of the wolf, saving her own life and changing her fate. On the other hand, it is easy to assume that the passivity is restored when Carter continues the plot changes made by the Grimms by including the rescue by her neighbours. However, unlike Grimms' protagonist, who cannot resist when the wolf swallows her and must wait for the huntsman, Carter's protagonist does not stop fighting: 'the child was strong, and armed with her father's hunting knife; she managed to hold off the grandmother down long enough to see the cause of her fever' (128). Passivity is described in the Oxford English Dictionary as '[a]bsence of activity, involvement, participation, or exertion' (OED), and following this definition, Carter's protagonist's resistance removes the passive virtue of the traditional tales, even as she needs the assistance of others.

Critics, such as Merja Makinen and Kimberly J. Lau, have praised Carter for her explorations of gender norms in her revised tales, and 'The Werewolf' is no different. Much of the discourse surrounding the tale has favoured a psychoanalytical reading to expose the feminist ideologies behind her tales, like Lau, who argues that Carter creates a *phallic mother*, borrowing the term from Jane Gallup and Julia Kristeva, in writing the grandmother as the werewolf (82). Lau writes that the phallic mother is 'the supposed omnipotent master of the child's desire and the child's eventual initiation into language and the symbolic order' (82) and that since the phallus is symbolic within the phallic mother, she poses a bigger threat as though the hidden is more dangerous than the obvious (83). Therefore, according to Lau, Carter's protagonist can use her father's knife – a symbol of her own phallic power – to reveal that the predator she sees is actually her grandmother: she renders her grandmother impotent because she reveals the symbolic aspect of it. Because the girl does not kill the grandmother, much like in the traditional tale, she needs outsiders to come in and rescue her, but she reveals her true colours, starting the decline of her sexual authority over her.

Although Lau's interpretation of the tale offers a fascinating insight into how Carter considers the phallus as a symbol of authority and moves her analysis swiftly over to an oedipal reading, she glosses over what I argue is an essential part of the exploration of gender studies and its connection to authority in the tale: the grandmother cannot remain a wolf but must turn into a witch. As previously stated, our associations with both werewolves and witches are heavily based on perceptions of gender in the 16th and 17th centuries. Werewolves were primarily men accused of mistreating children and performing violent acts, thereby acting on the primal wilderness within them and not according to society's expectations of a middle-class man. In Carter's tale, the traditionally masculine werewolf

changes into a witch once the neighbours see her: ‘they knew the wart on the hand at once for a witch’s nipple’ (128). Carter changes the sexualised predatory aspect of the wolves by turning the wolf into the grandmother – meeting one’s grandmother in the woods has different connotations to meeting a strange man – which perhaps changes the tale from being about femininity faced with masculinity into a generational struggle against the experienced older woman and the maturing young girl. Karen Ya-Chu Yang argues that this tale ‘illustrates the young girl’s need to banish her wolf-woman ancestor and have her killed off before she can prosper’ (67). I argue this relates to Carter’s subversion of expectations within these tales. Whereas she subverts our expectation of the gendered symbolism of the wolf as a male aggressor, she does not allow for such a revelation to linger long. Instead, she labels the older woman as the witch, returning to the binaries of traditionally masculine and feminine creatures. Although the female characters in *The Bloody Chamber* can achieve sexual agency, as will be revealed in ‘The Company of Wolves’, Carter does not allow them to stay as sexual aggressors.

3.2 Pornography and Uncomfortable Female Empowerment

An understanding of Carter’s attitudes towards pornography enlightens the depth of her criticism of both pornography and the fairy tale genre. Carter published her book *The Sadeian Woman* the same year as *The Bloody Chamber*, where she explores what she terms the ‘moral pornographer’:

> A moral pornographer might use pornography as a critique of current relations between the sexes. His business would be the total demystification of the flesh and the subsequent revelation, through the infinite modulations of the sexual act, of the real relations of man and his kind. Such a pornographer would not be the enemy of women, perhaps because he might begin to penetrate to the heart of the contempt for women that distorts our culture even as he entered the realms of true obscenity as he describes it. (19-20)

I quote Carter at length here to demonstrate exactly how much *The Sadeian Woman* provides an account of the theoretical feminist criticism Carter engages with in the wolf trilogy and the rest of *The Bloody Chamber*. Carter condemns pornography as one of the great bastions of repression because it ‘serves to defuse the explosive potential of all sexuality’ (18). Most

pornography, according to Carter, remains rigid and constant, unlike sexuality which changes according to social conditions. She argues that pornography's effect 'depends on the notion that the nature of man is invariable and cannot be modified by changes in his social institutions' (16), and the negative power structures it portrays do not change even when it claims to be targeted towards women because of its invariable nature. The beginning of pornography directed at women in the 1970s did not mean an increase in 'sexual licence' but showed an increased liberal attitude towards masturbation (Carter 18). The moral pornographer is created out of the conjunction of pornography and art when literary elements such as plots and characterisation seep its way into the fantasy of pornography.

Carter's attitude towards the moral pornographer speaks more about her attitude towards an awareness of the production and consumption of a medium. Whereas pornography on its own demonstrates the invariable fantasy of male sexuality, as argued by Carter, the moral pornographer uses this fantasy to create criticism. Carter's moral pornographer interrogates sexual acts in light of their historical and material context. It appears then that the moral pornographer must be aware of the historical and social conditions which produced pornography as we know it, along with the power structures at hand and the damage they do. Carter's collection of tales and the pornographic elements they include function as moral pornography through Carter's description, with the traditional text encoded within her retellings, creating a consistent look between the associations with the traditional tales and the depictions in the new ones.

Various critics have disagreed with Carter's notion of the moral pornographer and her aim to use fairy tales to challenge the perception of female sexuality in the erotic. Most notable are Patricia Duncker and Avis Lewallen. Duncker commends Carter for her intentions but claims that despite her efforts, Carter is 're-writing the tales within the strait-jacket of their original structures' (227). These structures are, according to Duncker, the same structures of gender hierarchy Zipes argued were shaped in the literary production of the traditional tales. Duncker argues that '[i]dentity continues to be defined by role' (227) in Carter's tales and that the added confessional narrative 'merely explains, amplifies and re-produces rather than alters the original, deeply, rigidly sexist psychology of the erotic' (227). 'The Company of Wolves' offers an insight into the thoughts of desire inside the protagonist leading up to the sexual act, but Duncker argues that the narrative does nothing to give power to the female protagonist besides forcing her to try to enjoy the assault she knows will come.

Whereas Carter argued that a moral pornography could be achieved through an awareness of the conditions which produced pornography, Duncker argues that it is precisely these conditions which ensure that the erotic in Carter's tale cannot escape this misogynistic structure. She writes that 'male sexuality has too long, too tenaciously been linked with power and possession, the capture, breaking and ownership of women' (228). Pornography, at least in Carter's tale according to Duncker, uses this language of male sexuality. It is through this language that Avis Lewallen locates her biggest concern with Carter's writing. Lewallen argues that 'The Bloody Chamber' is one of the tales in Carter's collection which is most troublesome in terms of representing female sexuality (151). She writes that this is largely because of the seductive quality of the writing in a story which details distinctive power difference between men and women: 'As readers we are asked to place ourselves imaginatively as masochistic victims in a pornographic scenario and to sympathise in some way with the ambivalent feelings this produces' (151). The male sexuality, which has defined the pornographic structures for so long, ensures this ambivalent feeling Lewallen describes. She argues that because of these structures, the 'heroine's own subsequent recognition of total manipulations' (151), or the 'inner confessional narrative' as Duncker describes it (227), does not do enough to remove Lewallen's unease.

Duncker and Lewallen's criticism of *The Bloody Chamber* suggests that Carter's female characters are trapped within what we can argue is similar to Laura Mulvey's concept of the male gaze within cinema. Mulvey writes that the sexual imbalance in the world makes pleasure in looking split between 'active/male and passive/female' (1959). As a consequence of this passivity, 'women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*' (1959 italicised in original). Because the cinema was predominately written, financed and produced by men, they had the luxury to create whatever image and portrayals they wanted on screen. Mulvey uses Freud's concept of scopophilia, the pleasure in looking, associating it with 'taking other people as object, subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze' (1957). She argues this can lead to so-called Peeping Toms, who retain sexual satisfaction from watching an objectified other (1957). Since men created cinema, they could produce this aspect of the male sexuality – watching an objectified other and seeing women as passive being subjected to the male agency, as argued by Duncker, on screen, turning it into the norm. Mulvey argues that although films are created to be seen, 'conditions of screening and narrative conventions give the spectator an illusion of looking on a private world' (1957).

Although Mulvey focuses on early 20th-century cinema, the same argument can be made for producing and consuming literary pornography (and pornography as a whole). The concept that we are looking into a private affair, the power structures presented in such a scene could easily be interpreted to represent authenticity, a true reflection of the power structures in society. The issue with pornography, like the scopophilia created in the production of cinema, is that it was also produced mainly by men and therefore dominated by the male sexual fantasy, which dominates and oppresses women as argued by Duncker. As Mulvey argues, the male gaze is forever present in the objectification of women within the history of male sexuality in literature. Viewing women as a signifier of the male other within the phallocentric order, which both Mulvey and Duncker seem to argue for, casts a view reminiscent of scopophilia on women, objectifying them through the desire for authoritative control. Pornography is dominated by the male gaze, so even with the narrative suggesting a focus on female pleasure, the fairy tale retellings by Carter does nothing to remove the patriarchal power relations or give the female protagonists agency.

Critics such as Makinen and Lau have raised their concerns with Duncker's and Lewallen's criticism of Carter, with Makinen blaming the critics for their inability to see beyond the sexist binary opposition Carter's pornographic elements questions. She posits that Duncker does not give enough credit to the intertextuality and the role of the reader when it comes to the morality presented with erotic fairy tales: 'These are late twentieth-century adult fairy-tales conscious of their own fictive status and so questioning the very constructions of roles while asserting them' (5). Duncker argues that since the production of pornography was primarily controlled by men who could project their male sexuality and the implications that had on the oppression of women as objectified beings, Carter's heterosexual erotic cannot escape the history and norm of the pornographic. However, Makinen argues that it is precisely an awareness of this history and an awareness of the reader's role in the late 20th century which creates the core critique of patriarchal structures within the tale. Reminiscent of Carter's moral pornographer, the depiction of roles within pornography can be used to criticise them should an awareness of the powers which produced it be made clear. The male gaze in pornographic literature has a long-standing tradition, which Makinen is aware of, but she argues that one must be able to critique it whilst remaining within the genre by making the reader aware of the intertextuality within the tale. Although the author must make such a distinction clear, it seems like the difference between Duncker and Makinen's argument falls on the reader's role.

Whereas Duncker saw the imbalanced gendered power structure in Carter's tale as mirroring the traditional tales and therefore failing to challenge them, Makinen argues that the tales' acknowledgement of the reader is precisely how they challenge these norms. Makinen writes that in order to make an argument, you need two things: 'something to argue *against* (something to be overturned) and someone to make that argument *to* (a reader)' (6 italicised in original). Carter is, according to Makinen, able to make this argument because of her ability to draw on feminist discourse and connect this tale to its traditional model, thereby trusting the reader to acknowledge what they find troubling with the erotic scenes in *The Bloody Chamber* and exactly *why* they find it troubling. The ending of 'The Company of Wolves' is one of the focal points for discussion surrounding the female agency portrayed in the tale. Makinen argues that the story reads 'with the original story encoded within it, so that one reads of *both* texts, aware of how the new one refers back to and implicitly critiques the old' (5 italicised in original). The intertextuality becomes a mode of critique on its own when we read that final scene. Using Makinen's argument for the role of intertextuality and the reader, we read: 'The girl burst out laughing; she knew she was nobody's meat' (Carter 138), and the girl's reaction to the wolf's threat almost mocks the association we have with the passive terror of being eaten demonstrated in the traditional tales. The intertextuality makes us expect this passivity in the rape scene, the wolf's familiar 'all the better to eat you with' (138) suggests to us that the girl will be eaten by the wolf, only to be saved by the huntsman. This is also poignant when reading this tale immediately after 'The Werewolf', where the wolf does try to eat the girl, and she must be rescued by the neighbours. By breaking our expectations of how the girl will react to such a threat, from passive terror to assertive mockery, Carter makes us aware of the damaging inscriptions of femininity presented in the traditional tales and how those accounts for the girl's fate. Although Makinen also recognises the uncomfortableness of the ending because of this association with a willingness to participate in the sexual act, which has so often been compared to rape, she argues that the mockery it portrays leaves it to be considered a happy ending compared to its traditional tale (5).

The coexistence of the rape analogy we recognise from the traditional tale with the sexual liberty suggested by Carter's tale does not necessarily suggest a change to see the ending and the wolf's advances as something to be desired. Duncker argues that the ending only demonstrates how the girl knew the wolf was going to eat her and forced herself to enjoy it in attempt to take control over a situation where she has none (228). Duncker's argument raises important questions regarding the subversion of a scene associated with rape to that of

assumed pleasure, but I share Makinen's concern that Duncker is not seeing the intertextuality at play for the critique it is. Rather than offer a solution to the oppression found in the pornographic elements in Grimms' 'Little Red Cap', Carter's text questions whether these norms should raise conflicting emotions. Her texts seem instead to engage the reader through assumptions and recognitions based on the traditional tale in her retellings. This amplifies the role of the reader in the concept of moral pornography within fairy tale retellings, as the understanding of the intertextuality at hand must be understood in its correct terms.

Therefore, the role of the moral pornographer, I argue, cannot exist without the moral consumer. The pornographer might demystify the flesh and 'use pornography as a critique of current relationship between the sexes' (Carter 19), but this cannot be achieved without the reader's active participation. The same goes for Carter's critique of female sexuality in traditional tales in 'The Company of Wolves'. The tale, along with *The Bloody Chamber* as a whole, draws on feminist discourse, but is the effect the same if the reader is uninformed by feminism and feminist literary theory? The feminist artist Mary Kelly argued that 'there is no such thing as a homogenous mass audience. You can't make art for everyone. And if you're enjoyed within a particular movement or organisation, then the work is going to participate in its debates' (xiii). Kelly suggests that art is used as an exchange between artist and consumer to produce discourse, but that who consumes your art is not something you can control. Should it find its place in the intended discourse (if art is at all produced within an intended discourse), then it will be analysed and discussed under said discourse's terms. However, as Kelly states, not every audience member will be informed by this discourse and so not everyone will interpret the art how the artist might have intended it or apply the same theory the art uses for its critique.

The feminist discourse surrounding *The Bloody Chamber* and 'A Company of Wolves' especially depends heavily on the reader's knowledge of such discourse, which is why Duncker and Makinen mainly stand at different ends. Makinen's main issue with Duncker is that she does not consider the knowledge of the reader, how they might be well versed within the feminist discourse. Even if they are not, Carter alludes to the traditional text enough through plotting and characterisation that the intertextuality will force the reader to consider the impact of the changes she makes to her female characters. However, Makinen argues that 'if a feminist writer is to remain a feminist writer (rather than a writer about women) then the texts must engage, on some level, with feminist thinking' (6). Makinen's argument is reminiscent of the concept of feminist writing versus feminine writing, as argued

by Toril Moi: 'If feminist criticism is characterised by its political commitment to the struggle against all forms of patriarchy and sexism, it follows that the very fact of being female does not necessarily guarantee a feminist approach' (120). One might assume that the very fact of describing a woman's experience makes a text automatically a feminist act, but this is often not the case. On the one hand, rendering women's experience visible to the mainstream public can be an anti-patriarchal act, by allowing previously silenced voices to come into the mainstream media. On the other hand, however, said experiences can be presented in an alienating or degrading way, and one woman's experience is scarcely the experience of all. Just like Kelly argued that the homogeneous audience does not exist, the same thing goes for femininity: there is no such thing as a universal experience.

The consumer of Carter's tales must recognise the attack on stereotypes within the tale, beyond seeing them as applying the same characteristics from the traditional tales. Whereas Carter argues for an acknowledgement of the role of production behind pornography, similar to Mulvey's argument for the importance the production side of cinema had on the development of the male gaze, I argue the same applies to how her work is sold on the market. Are Carter's feminist criticism of fairy tales available to the mainstream audience, or are they confined to the feminist imprint, thus limiting it to feminist readers only? Just as the traditional fairy tales of Perrault and the Grimms were mainly distributed to the middle and higher classes since reading was a luxury not typical in the lower class (Zipes *Subversion* 68), does the label 'feminist writing' exclude mainstream readers from accessing the texts? When it comes to *The Bloody Chamber*, I do not think so. Makinen wrote about how feminist fiction impacted mainstream publishing and argued that writers such as Carter brought feminist writing out to the broader public (7). This, in large, has to do with which publishers distributed her work. From the beginning of her writing career, Carter has been published by mainstream publishing houses, with Gollancz first publishing *The Bloody Chamber* under its 'Fantasy' series before Penguin issued a version in 1981 (Makinen 7).

Writing that engages with a feminist discourse does not necessarily have to be confined to be consumed by feminist critics alone but can be placed into the mainstream media for both consumption and critique. The positive with this is that it introduces the feminist discourse within the text to a broader audience, allowing for an opportunity to reread the traditional tales that still circulate in mainstream media with the added intertextuality Carter's tales bring. The negative, however, is that the feminist critique of patriarchal systems and the ironic distance Carter portrays can be lost on the readers, leading to criticism like that

of Duncker and Lewallen. Now, I do not argue that Duncker and Lewallen are not inversed enough with feminist literary criticism to see Carter's critique of the traditional attributions to femininity. Rather, their concern with Carter's writing demonstrates how readers might miss certain aspects which other critics, like Makinen, find essential to understanding Carter's fiction.

Both Duncker and Lewallen fail to realise that even though the vision of female sexuality which Carter depicts, one born from violence and perversion, does not necessarily fall under their own experience of femininity, it can still be an accurate account. They fall under the same trap Showalter has been criticised for, and Moi argues heavily against, which is construing the female experience under one homogenous experience. I read Lewallen's argument dismissing the machoism in *The Bloody Chamber* as too disturbing for comfort, 'my unease at being manipulated by the narrative to sympathise with masochism' (151), as being a particularly good example of how the pervasion in Carter's writing suggests that she writes outside from the homogenous female experience Showalter believes exist. Although Carter sticks to a heterosexual exploration of female sexuality in her werewolf trilogy, which Duncker criticises her for (229), the uncomfortable associations we get from seeing women willingly have sex with figures we associate with being sexual predators create a pervasion within female sexuality readers were not used to seeing when Carter released these tales in the late 1970s.

More than simply arguing against a homogenous audience and a homogenous female experience, the pervasion within Carter's tale and the subversion of expectations creates a clear stance against the passivity and sexual naivety portrayed in the female characters in the traditional tales. We might find ourselves uncomfortable with the agency Carter creates within her characters, having the protagonist of 'The Company of Wolves' get into bed with the man who intended to rape her, but the uncomfortable aspects of it do not take away the fact that, by definition, her protagonist does achieve a sense of agency by the tale's end. A close reading of the changes Carter brought to the tales will enlighten the agency within the protagonist, where I argue that her tale does not lecture or provide morals on how women should behave like the traditional tales, but rather critiques those attributions of femininity seen as universal from the 19th century Germany.

3.3 'The Company of Wolves' and Straying from the Path

Carter introduces 'The Company of Wolves', like 'The Werewolf', by stressing one of the critical elements of the traditional tales: following traditions and not straying from the path. She writes, '[y]ou are always in danger in the forest, where no people are … if you stray from the path for one instant, the wolves will eat you' (130). Whereas 'The Werewolf' emphasises the importance of listening to one's elders, with the protagonist's mother telling the girl not to stray from the given path, 'The Company of Wolves' insists that such is a universal truth. It is the omniscient narrator who tells us the stories of instances of werewolves within this world and the common knowledge on how to spot them: 'Before he can become a wolf, the lycanthropy strips stark naked. If you spot a naked man among the pines, you must run as if the Devil were after you' (132). The advice to stay on the path or, in this case, run away from strange naked men is not given by a worried or strict parent but appears to be general advice or knowledge in this town.

Carter also makes the connection between man, wolf, and sexual threat clear in this warning in her tale. As previously stated, the werewolf has long been a symbol of a sexual predator, so the narrator's warning that the man must strip naked to become the wolf further suggests the sexual aspect of the werewolf. Even in Perrault's tale, with the end poem connecting the wolf to the man, versions of 'Little Red Riding Hood' usually use this symbol of the wild animal to connect wilderness to sexuality. Looking back at the argument made in Chapter 2 that the Grimms were able to tone down the sexual implications of Perrault's version whilst keeping the discouragement to act on one's natural instincts or wild desires, we can see the same instances of nature versus civilisation in Carter's tale. However, whereas the Grimms' tales illustrate the socio-political situation during the Napoleon war in 19th century Germany, which caused the resentment of portrayals of nature/wilderness, favouring instead following the created path (Zipes *Trials* 17), Carter subverts the connection between sex and nature to demonstrate the restraints the German tales produced, by using the pornographic tropes to aid her characters' agency.

The pornographic elements in 'The Company of Wolves' is made explicit in the introduction to the protagonist, where Carter uses pornographic tropes of the young girl, sexually naïve yet sexually desirable, often found in both fairy tales and pornography. I argue that the naivety can be seen in Little Red Riding Hood's inability to see the dangers ahead of her in both Perrault's and Grimms' versions of the tale when she is the wolf's presence. Even

though Grimms' protagonist does not physically get into bed with the wolf, she gets devoured before she has time to realise the danger she is in. As described in Chapter 2, she lets herself be distracted by the wolf because even with her mother's warnings, she does not realise the sexual threat that the wolf represents. Her sexual naivety protects her from fearing the wolf because she does not have the knowledge of sex and does not understand what he plans to do to her. Kayleigh Quarterman argues that a young girl's elders would not educate her on sex because the patriarchal culture depended on sexual naivety: 'the less a girl knows about sex, the least likely she is to "lose" her most valuable commodity: her chastity; therefore, the patriarchal authority suppresses feminine sexuality in order to preserve its possession of such a priceless item' (154). Quarterman's argument can be joined with Sagarra's account of marriage's economic and social importance for women in 19th-century Germany (405). If her chastity is a part of her most important 'commodity', it would be an essential aspect of what would secure her a good marriage.

Carter introduces her character with the pornographic tropes and the assumed security of her virginity to secure the reader's assumptions of the gender roles in place and how they make the implicit descriptions in the traditional tales explicit. She writes,

> this one, so pretty and the youngest of her family … Her breasts have just begun to swell … and she has just started her woman's bleeding, the clock inside her that will strike, henceforward, once a month. She stands and moves within the invisible pentacle of her own virginity … she is a closed system; she does not know how to shiver. (133)

It is clear through this description that Carter's protagonist is relatively young, with her breasts just developing and her first menstruation occurring not too long ago. Carter uses the imagery of a girl's first period to suggest sexual maturity throughout *The Bloody Chamber*, especially the wolf trilogy. Whereas the Grimms' version distinctly classifies the protagonist as a child, Carter only refers to her as 'the girl', but the descriptions suggest either a very late bloomer or a young girl. Never does Carter refer to her as a woman, not even when she has sex with the wolf at the end of the tale. It could be suggested that the protagonist believes that her virginity protects her from predators, but I argue that the only thing her virginity protects her from is the *fear* of sexual predators instead of the sexual predators themselves. Ignorance is bliss, so to speak. She is not afraid because she does not know exactly what to fear beyond scary naked men in the woods.

After hearing 'the freezing howl of a distant wolf' (134) and preparing to defend herself from what she expects the wolf to look like, the girl is tricked by the smart appearance of the handsome young and fully clothed man. Expecting to see an actual wolf or the naked man the narrator warned against, the apparent civilised man makes her relax and not suspect the danger he poses. Carter demonstrates her innocence and lack of life experience through her astonishment with the man's compass. The compass signals both the progressive technology which could steer the girl away from the path she has been told to follow in a literal and symbolic way, and it provides her with the knowledge that there exists more than one. The girl, however, does not believe any path beside the one she has been taught to follow can exist or be safe for her, and so she is not tempted to stray off the path like in the Grimms' tale: 'She did not believe it: she knew she should never leave the path on the way through the wood or else she would be lost instantly' (134). She knows she *should* never leave the path, but the thought has been planted.

Her hesitation to stray off the path with him leads to a wager on who can get to the house first, with the promise of a kiss should he make it before she does, and Carter puts her protagonist as the sexual nymphet in this flirtatious exchange:

> Is it a bet? he asked her. Shall we make a game of it? What will you give me if I get to your grandmother's house before you do?
>
> What would you like? she asked disingenuously.
>
> A kiss.
>
> Commonplaces of a rustic seduction; she lowered her eyes and blushed. (135)

The image of the complete naivety surrounding sexual desire, which we recognise from the traditional tales and which Carter might have alluded to in her initial introduction of this character starts to crack during this exchange. Although he suggests the kiss as a reward, her way of asking 'disingenuously' and how she takes a long time moving towards her grandmother's house hoping that he will arrive before her suggests that this girl is well aware of the sexual temptations the strange man represents. Lau argues that Carter writes her Little Red Riding Hood protagonist as a sexual agent, far from the innocent version seen in the traditional tales (86). Of the early case in the tale where the girl knows that her father might forbid her to walk alone through the woods if he was home, but that 'her mother cannot deny

her' (133), Lau argues that it demonstrates the girl's phallic power due to her assumed innocence: 'Despite (or perhaps because of) her alluring innocence, Little Red Riding Hood shares her father's power, participates in his authority over her mother' (86). Whereas the Grimms' version included punishment for disobeying one's mother and, therefore, the needed rescue from a patriarchal figure, Carter's protagonist seems to be under less obligation to follow her mother's orders. Since Carter also excluded the warning from the mother to not talk to strange men but kept the warning in the impersonal narrator, acting on her sexual desires seems to be disobeying society's attitudes towards proper feminine behaviour instead of her mother's.

The stranger arrives at the grandmother's house, where Carter shifts the pornographic gaze from looking at her protagonist's appearance and behaviour to that of the wolf. He begins to undress in front of the grandmother and is briefly the object of the gaze: 'He strips off his shirt … A crisp stripe of hair runs down his belly, his nipples are ripe and dark as poison fruit … He strips off his trousers and she can see how hairy his legs are. His genitals, huge. Ah! huge' (136). Although Carter describes the physicality of a grown man in this scene, he is still described as a wolf, so the symbolic symbiosis between the two is further established. The narrator follows the grandmother's gaze as she views the naked man, but whereas the pornographic gaze directed towards the women in this tale mimics the scopophilic tendencies derived from the male gaze in pornography, the descriptions of the naked male body evoke fear. There is no pleasure derived from the grandmother's view of this man, and the reader's associations with the traditional texts ensure that we know that the grandmother is about to die. 'The last thing the old lady saw in all this world', Carter writes, 'was a young man, eyes like cinders, naked as a stone, approaching her bed' (136). The rape analogy of this scene is as present as in the traditional tales, if not more. Whereas the Grimms' tale never describes the wolf as anything but a wolf and allows for the comparison between wolf/man to be made by the reader, Carter spells it out for us. Although the 'wolf is carnivore incarnate' (136), it is the naked man who nears the grandmother's bed and who discards her bones once 'he had finished with her' (136).

The instance of the pornographic gaze shifted to view the male, leads to the association of male sexuality with fear since it ended with the grandmother's death. Once the girl arrives at the house, Carter is swift to shift the focus back on the girl and her agency within the scene that is about to happen. Whereas the grandmother was confined to her bed in her old age because she 'succumbed to the mortality the ache in her bones promises her and

[was] almost ready to give in entirely' (135), the girl signifies the virility of youth and can influence the projection of the scene more. When she realises the wolf has eaten her grandmother, she is temporarily scared but decides it will do her no good and ceases to be afraid. She starts undressing in front of the wolf, although he has not told her to do so. Whereas the wolf commands the girl to strip in Perrault's version of the tale, Carter's wolf only tells her where to discard her clothing. Once the girl has finished her willing strip, she stands naked as she moves on to remove his clothing. The recognition of the wolf as a sexual temptation, which started with the girl slowing down her walk to the house in hopes of him arriving first, is actualised 'as she freely gave the kiss she owed him' (138). Carter gives her Little Red Riding Hood character sexual agency by having the girl initiate the strip, the first kiss, and the sexual act itself. However, the threatening backdrop to this sexual agency is the depiction of male sexuality as aggressive. At least aggressive when resisted.

The wolf's different treatment of the grandmother and the girl has to do with Carter's notion of meat versus flesh and how it relates to the aggression of male sexuality and the objectification of female sexuality. The narrator speaks of the wolf's desire for flesh twice throughout this tale: 'The wolf is carnivore incarnate … once he's had a taste of flesh then nothing else will do' (129) and 'only immaculate flesh appeases him' (138). Using the word 'flesh' instead of meat signals the duality of the wolf's desire; more so than consumption of food to survive, it speaks to a need for sexual satisfaction. In *The Sadeian Woman*, Carter writes about the difference between meat and flesh: 'In the English language, we make a fine distinction between flesh, which is usually alive and, typically, human; and meat, which is dead, inert, animal and intended for consumption' (137). The grandmother serves no sexual gratification for the wolf, she does not possess the innocence and sexual purity which appeases the wolf, and so he consumes her for her meat. The girl, however, 'knew she was nobody's meat' (138), but instead accepts the consumption of the flesh, of her sexualised body, for both their satisfaction.

The transformation from seeing the girl as meat for the wolf's consumption is changed when she freely meets his sensuality. The joining of the wolf and girl in the same bed, and the libido she exhibits, transforms the meat into flesh: her assertiveness in the scene transforms her from the inert dead meat intended for consumption to the alive and human flesh able to provide satisfaction. This reading does assume that the wolf cannot fully achieve his satisfaction without viewing his victims as human and must be confined to consume meat until the willingness of the female libido also changes him. He is transformed from 'carnivore

incarnate' (129) to 'the tender wolf' (139). Instead of the wolf being the opposite of the girl – masculine where she is feminine, sexually informed where she is sexually naïve – one can read them as complementary rather than contradictory. Makinen advocates for the reader of Carter's tales to '[r]ead the beasts as the projections of feminine libido' (12). Such a reading would assist the understanding of the feminine desire with wilderness, something denied by the phallocentric culture, seen in the metamorphosis of wolf and girl throughout the wolf trilogy. Whereas Duncker argues that Carter cannot paint an 'alternative anti-sexist language of the erotic' (228) simply because she does not have a conception of women as having autonomous desire, viewing the wolves as projections of feminine libido does just that. 'The Werewolf' started this journey by having the grandmother, the girl's elder and a symbol of her future, be the wolf. 'The Company of Wolves' continued the merging as the girl's acceptance of her sexual drive leads her to sleep 'sweet and sound … between the paws of the tender wolf' (139), uniting them in peace.

3.4 Complete Metamorphosis of the Sex: 'Wolf-Alice'

Carter uses the story of 'Wolf-Alice' to draw together the concepts of metamorphosis, phallocentric language and dominant erotic seen in the first two tales. 'Wolf-Alice' is perhaps the tale furthest away from the plot similarities of the traditional 'Little Red Riding Hood' tale: there is no mention of walking through the woods, no grandmother, no red cloak or hood, and the protagonist is in many ways closer to being a wolf than a human, at least in behaviour. Whereas I argued that 'The Werewolf' functions as a sort of introduction to the intertextuality and themes of feminist criticism Carter applies in her wolf trilogy, 'Wolf-Alice' serves as a sort of conclusion, proposing a take on the creation of identity away from the structures created by a patriarchal society.

If we read the beasts as 'the projections of female libido' (12), as Makinen suggests, and the protagonist in 'The Company of Wolves' acts on desires unfitting with the patriarchal concept of femininity, then the protagonist encapsulates full animalistic desire in 'Wolf-Alice'. Because of Wolf-Alice's upbringing, she is not quite a human child or a wolf: 'Nothing about her is human except that she is *not* a wolf' (141). Whereas the werewolf seen in the two previous tales can be read as a complete merging of animalistic desires and human consciousness or morality – the narrator constantly shifts between describing them as wolves and men because they are so close together in symbolism – Wolf-Alice is the product of what

remains outside of this merging. Whereas the werewolf is *both* man and wolf, she is neither: not human nor wolf but trapped outside of these binaries. The narrator uses zoomorphic descriptions to create this distance between Wolf-Alice as the Other and society: 'Her panting tongue hangs out … She never walks; she trots of gallops. Her pace is not our pace' (140). Quarterman argues that 'Wolf-Alice' becomes a tale of society's expectations creating a collective identity and the individual's sense of self through the narrator's separation of Wolf-Alice and 'us' (155). The narrator puts the implied reader together with the collective identity of society, which pressures Wolf-Alice to conform to one or the other. The narrator parallels human behaviour with animalistic ones when describing Wolf-Alice, making her start the tale as an Other, unlike Carter's other protagonists throughout *The Bloody Chamber,* who might instead learn to lean into the Otherness of their male counterparts.

The lack of pressure from society to conform to established notions of femininity means that Wolf-Alice can recognise her sense of self away from the gender norms. Even if she were to recognise herself as female, comparing herself to her foster mother or the other pups, she would not have a concept of femininity as we do. As Moi argues, 'feminine' has been seen to collapse into the meaning of 'female', much to the frustration of feminist critics (123). Whereas 'female' refers to the biological aspects of sexual difference, Moi poses that feminists want to 'make "feminine" (and "masculine") represent *social constructs* (patterns of sexuality and behaviour imposed by cultural and social norms)' (122 italicised in original). The social constructs associated with femininity which Carter argues against are those Zipes argues were established in the creation of the literary fairy tales, as discussed in Chapter 2. The creation of the submissive and passive virtue associated with femininity merged into an expectation for *all* women. Moi argues that patriarchal oppression then imposes 'certain social standards of femininity on all biological women, in order precisely to make us believe that the chosen standards for "femininity" are *natural*' (123 italicised in original). The social constructs associated with femininity are depicted as natural and biological traits of all women, and so female and femininity become intertwined. Following Moi's argument that these constructs of femininity are presented as biological factors of womanhood, I argue that Carter's use of the individual's concept of self, removed from the pressure of society, emphasises the difference between biological and social constructs.

Wolf-Alice's interactions with other people demonstrate how the image of the self is created through a reflection of others. Her first encounter with civilisation is with the nuns who try to civilise her after the death of her foster mother. The people mistake her for a pup

before they realise that she is human, but that concept of humanity is quickly stripped away when they see her behaviour: 'she snapped at her would-be saviours with her spiky canines until they tied her up by force' (141). The humans around her in the tale are the only ones who try to force her to do anything or behave in a particular way to fit their picture of what makes a human and a wolf. Carter is here suggesting that, beyond the construction of gender norms, *humanity* is based on concepts of civilisation. When Zipes writes about why the gender norms we recognise in traditional fairy tales were established, he refers to it as a 'socialisation' or 'civilisation' process, which I argue is also the key concept which built humanity. Search the word 'humanity' on the Oxford English Dictionary website, and it will provide you with definitions relating to qualities or behaviours associated with the word, such as 'kindness, benevolence' or 'matters that concern human beings or appeal to human sensibilities' (OED), only mentioning a collective species as the fourth definition: 'Human beings collectively; the human race' (OED). Associations of humanity are based on a lot more social constructs of behaviour than on the collection of a species. What makes a human beyond biology mirrors the question of what makes a woman beyond biology. The different treatment of female sexuality demonstrated through Carter's tales suggest a critique of the concept of the homogenous female experience, as argued by Kelly as non-existent. With the different depictions of associations to species and gender in 'Wolf-Alice', Carter seems to argue that the two are intertwined.

What is evident through Wolf-Alice's time at the convent is that Wolf-Alice builds her concept of 'self' outside of the human language and the sexed ideologies which follow. The nuns are able to teach her 'a few, simple tricks' (141), and they essentially treat her as if she was a dog to be domesticated, which seems to slowly but surely work. However, when the Mother Superior tries to teach her to 'give thanks for her recovery from the wolves' (141) and forcing Wolf-Alice back into human language and all its connotations, thereby making her a speaking subject, she 'arched her back, pawed the floor, retreated to a far corner of the chapel, crouched, trembled, urinated, defecated – reverted entirely, it would seem, to her natural state' (141). Wolf-Alice's natural state is not something one would associate with a scared human child but that of a wild animal. The absolute repulsion towards human language and becoming a speaking subject is also the repulsion to be judged thereafter. Kristine Jennings argues that Carter's tale 'depicts an experience of body to a large extent undetermined by linguistics, that is, symbolic, constructions and repressions of the gendered subject and thus reveals the possibilities of a subject for which self is not merely a reflection in the eyes of

others' (91). Much like the depictions of femininity were based on the virtues attributed to it by society, such as the submissive part of the Bavarian law and the passivity portrayed didactically in literary fairy tales, concepts of the self are also built on society's influence on how you should behave. Either one's identity reflects others through a likeness and submission to socially acceptable behaviour or as a rebellion against such norms. Jennings argues that 'Wolf-Alice' offers a possibility for what might occur should all such concepts, symbols and associations of human language be removed.

Wolf-Alice's resistance to language and how she shapes her identity away from sexed ideologies are mainly present in her interactions with the Duke. The Duke is a corpse-eating werewolf, and although he and Wolf-Alice encapsulate that of being an Other to mainstream society, they lead entirely separate lives. Carter alternates between telling stories of the Duke's affairs and the development of Wolf-Alice as she wanders alone in the castle to situate the unnatural essence of their coexistence at this point in the tale. As Ya-Chu Yang argues, 'the Duke is hybrid by nature whereas the girl is hybrid by nurture' (70). Although they are both outcasts of their societies, both human and wolf, they are not the same, demonstrating Carter's argument against universalisation in all aspects.

The first incident leading up to a union of the two creatures occurs when Wolf-Alice receives her first menses, bringing her into contact with the mirror. Searching for 'rags to sop the blood up' (144), where she finds old ball gowns and the clothes of his victims, she 'bump[s] against that mirror over whose surface the Duke passed like wind on ice' (145). This discovery is a crossing point for the two narratives. Beyond the fact that they live in the same castle, they do not see each other or interact in any way, but they both interact with the mirror. The Duke's interaction with the mirror is the lack of reflection he sees. His solidarity and otherness have caused him to no longer cast an image in the mirror; his sense of self is not even recognisable to himself. If the self is 'a reflection in the eyes of others' (Jennings 91) but 'Wolf-Alice' offers an alternative to seeing this subjectivity, then the lack of reflection might symbolise the Duke's distance from mainstream society's norms.

On the other hand, Wolf-Alice finds a companion in the mirror, not realising that it is a reflection of herself at first. She finds joy in an assumed companionship: 'she was lonely enough to ask this creature to play with her, baring her teeth and grinning; at once she received a reciprocal invitation. She rejoiced' (145). So far, the person in her reflection is the only one since her foster mother who has not attempted to change her, and more importantly,

the only other person who reassures her when her body starts changing: 'She examined her new breast with curiosity … She showed it to her mirror littermate, who reassured her by showing her she shared it' (146). Trapped outside of humans and wolves, Wolf-Alice has no companionship reminiscent of herself. Her childhood was based around creatures she acted like, but did not physically resemble, and her time in the convent showed her people she might look like but whose actions caused repulsion. Her time in the castle left her in the presence of another Other, who did not fit into the binaries of wolf and man but left her in solitude.

Over time as her body changes, she realises that the image in the mirror is a reflection of herself, forcing her to seek companionship elsewhere and go into the world. Many critics, such as Jennings and Quarterman, have linked this moment to Lacan's theory of the mirror stage, in which the child identifies with their image. However, I argue that beyond seeing herself and recognising herself for the first time, this moment signalises her awareness of her entrapment within the castle. When she first finds the mirror and sees her reflection as a friend, she wonders if she is trapped inside 'some kind, possibly, of invisible cage' (145). Although both are depictions of an Other, the Duke can walk outside the castle walls, but it never occurred to Wolf-Alice that she could venture outside before she saw herself trapped in the mirror. Comparing misogyny to a cage has been done by feminist critics after Carter's publication of *The Bloody Chamber*, with Marilyn Frye's comparison between women suffering under oppression to living in a bird cage in 1983 (4). Although Wolf-Alice sees herself as others have seen her, seeing her reflection does not cause her to see what others believe to be wrong about her. She does not see the nakedness that the nuns in the convent wanted her to cover up, the lack of manners associated with humans, and it does not immediately provide her with human language. She has already spent 'hours examining the new skin that had been born, it seemed to her, of her bleeding' (146), so one can assume she was somewhat aware of what her body looked like at least. The recognition of herself in the mirror symbolises the loss of fantasy, of the desired companionship she has never had and a recognition of her surroundings, more so than the appearance of a sense of self.

The physical union of the two creatures occur after the villagers have shot the Duke and Wolf-Alice tends to his wounds. He lies there 'locked half and half between such strange states, an aborted transformation, an incomplete mystery' (148). Beyond the lycanthropy as a symbol of Otherness, his state as he lies on the bed visualises the same estrangement between the association of the species as Wolf-Alice has depicted throughout the tale. He is caught

between two, battling between conforming to one side or the other. Wolf-Alice notes that his wounds do not smell like her own, recognising her difference from him, but sympathises with what she at first fears and meets his pain with comfort instead of disgust. She 'leapt upon his bed to lick, without hesitation, without disgust, with a quick, tender gravity, the blood and dirt from his cheeks and forehead' (148). The Duke appears to be dying from his gunshot wound, much like her foster mother, but Wolf-Alice's licking is, beyond a moment of compassion for that which has been cast out from society and feared by others, a sense of rebirth. As she continues to lick his wounds, the image of the Duke appears in the reflection in the mirror: 'as vivid as real life itself, as if brought into being by her soft, moist, gentle tongue, finally, the face of the Duke' (149). The mirror is the first connection of their narrative path, and the joining of their physical union is further established through the presence of the mirror. However, Wolf-Alice's disappointment from realising her friend in the mirror was just a projection of herself is replaced by the presence of another Other: the Duke.

Whereas the sensual act in 'The Company of Wolves' plays upon established power structures and the subversion of those, the erotic aspect of 'Wolf-Alice' does not exist on the same grounds because both characters inhabit human and animalistic traits. Despite their differences – the Duke being older and more experience out in society whose fear causes him also to be more detached, whilst Wolf-Alice is still exploring moving outside the castle walls and recognises her identity without the opinion of society – they encapsulate the essence of not conforming to one state of being. Wolf-Alice is not the symbol of sexual naivety or purity as we have seen in other Little Red Riding Hood tales because the animalistic features associated with sexual desire have been made clear with her from the start of the tale. More so than the animalistic traits due to her upbringing around the wolves, Wolf-Alice has not been influenced by the sexed ideologies of human language. She is free from the preconceived definitions of what she should be, with only a glimpse seen in her interactions with the nuns. The attempt to civilise her into society fails as they send her off to live with the Duke, the other creature who does not conform to the binaries presented.

Although Wolf-Alice is still presumed to be relatively young, with only a few menstruations mentioned and the beginning of a changing body, it was never the youth of the Little Red Riding Hood characters that was the issue when presented with erotic themes. Perrault and the Grimms' version of the tale focuses on the proper conduct of a woman as prescribed by 17th-century France and 19th-century Germany, using the wolf as both temptation and punishment for succumbing to temptation. The wolf is not threatening because

he is older than their young protagonists, but because of the temptations he represents: the stray from the path of virtuous behaviour. These roles as the sexual aggressor and sexually naïve are not challenged in 'The Werewolf' or 'The Company of Wolves' even with the protagonist in 'The Company of Wolves' accepting and leaning into her sexual desires. Her sense of sexual agency does not necessarily change the roles. Wolf-Alice never established these roles when building her identity, and so the tale becomes a redemptive vision of the power balance between the two when they are excluded from the patriarchal ideologies.

Wolf-Alice's care for the Duke creates a rebirth of his reflection, but one still removed from the sexed ideologies created through language. Jennings argues that if it is her tongue that creates this rebirth, 'one could say that she "speaks" him into existence – but hers is a language of the body' (103). Their union becomes an acceptance of each other and communication on mutual grounds. Carter's protagonists throughout the Wolf trilogy use their tongues to aid their safety and progression: the protagonist in 'The Werewolf' whose scream alerts the neighbours leading to her rescue; the protagonist in 'The Company of Wolves' laughing in the face of the wolf's threat; and finally, the tongue of Wolf-Alice creating a rebirth in her new companion outside of the pressures of the linguistic society.

3.5 Revising the Revised: 'Red Riding Hood'

Society's precedence in building identity and perceptions of gender roles is a pivotal aspect of Chainani's tale 'Red Riding Hood'. The traditional tales limit their characters to the presence of the protagonist, the wolf, the grandmother, and the huntsman. Although Carter starts 'The Werewolf' and 'The Company of Wolves' by establishing mythology surrounding werewolves with details of how they affect the population, thereby affecting society's perception of werewolves, the inclusion of the wider society is removed once the Little Red Riding Hood character is introduced, and the familiar plot begins. 'Wolf-Alice' includes more of society's input, including the nuns and how Wolf-Alice's identity is shaped outside of societal norms. The traditional tales' only mention of any humans outside the main characters is the mention of the parental figures of Little Red Riding Hood. However, Chainani creates a discussion of communal opinions versus individual desires in his version of the tale.

Chainani establishes the community's role in shaping the girls' identity in the village by having the members of the town be the physical force which drives her into the woods.

Although it is the wolves who mark the girl who must be sacrificed, '[t]hey warn the town which girl they want, slashing the door to her house and urinating on the step' (1), they do not go physically into the town to remove her from her family. Instead, the concept of sacrificing a girl seems so ingrained into their culture, thereby shaping their view on the value of women, so they do not resist, but usher her out of town. 'Fail to deliver her', Chainani writes, 'and worse things will come than the loss of a pretty girl, though no one knows what these worst things could be' (1). They do not know what will happen to the town if they resist the wolves, so the idea that they have ever tried resisting seems improbable. It has become essential to their established society, creating their identities around that fear.

The difference between the humans in the town and the wolves is reminiscent of a dominating class subjecting a lower class to oppressive forces. They usher the girl out into the woods because, to them, it seems like they have no other choice. Zipes writes that the narrative perspective in folktales reflects 'the limitations of feudal life where alternatives to one's situation were extremely limited' (*Subversion* 8). His argument relates to the issues of class struggle in folktales and how they can be seen in traditional fairy tales as well. He writes, 'the magic and miraculous serve to rupture the feudal confines and represent metaphorically the conscious and unconscious desires of the lower classes to seize power' (8). Using Zipes' argument, one can read the wolves in the woods not as wild beasts but as a metaphor for the oppressive authority forcing the lower class to submit to their cruelty. This goes further than simply acknowledging the class difference between symbolic wolves and humans: Chainani makes it evident that one must include the oppressive aspect of gender relations in the discourse surrounding class oppression as well.

The women in Chainani's tale are subjugated to a life of submission or death, depending on the value of their outer beauty. Whereas the Little Red Riding Hood character in Carter's tales is the only girl whose fate is detailed, being both an individual and a representation of many, Chainani details the long tradition of women suffering under the oppression of men from higher socioeconomic class and within the same class through detailing the tradition of the sacrifice as timeless. Like Carter's outlining the myth of the werewolf at the beginning of 'The Werewolf' and 'The Company of Wolves' to establish how the long tradition of believing and fearing such creatures has rooted itself in the culture of a community, Chainani's tale manages the same. There is no questioning how, why, or when it started just that '[o]n the first day of spring, the wolves eat the prettiest girl' and that 'once a girl is chosen, she is theirs' (1). This assumed long tradition contributes to the creation of

identity, especially gender identity, within the town's characters and the attributions they put to femininity and masculinity. Whereas we saw in 'Wolf-Alice' the creation of identity outside of the sexed ideologies created in a linguistic society, 'Red Riding Hood' makes it evident how the traditions and customs of a community influence how they create a sense of self and how it is reflected in their treatment of others.

The women in the town are depicted through two categories: those who inhabit the desired beauty and therefore know they will be sacrificed, and those who are unattractive enough to survive but who will be forced to submit to the authority of their husbands for the rest of their lives. The behaviour of the pretty girls suggests that they know they are doomed from the beginning, 'skulking furtively about town, avoiding the eyes of those that would sacrifice them' (5). In a sense, they are never free because they know the fate awaiting them; they know how the town will eventually cast them out to be eaten to save their own lives. 'They knew, these sisters', Chainani writes, '[l]ong before the wolves came. They knew they were meat' (5). Their roles are set in motion from a very young age, creating expectations of what they will do with their lives long before the wolves actually choose them. Like raising them for slaughter. Likewise, the roles of the girls remaining in the town, those not pretty enough to be sacrificed, are doomed to a life of obedience and submission to their husbands:

> It's not just the beauties who suffer. The other girls are tainted by the wolves too. The girls who weren't picked. Boys rake through them like leftovers. It's why any girl who marries one cleans up after him without complaint. She's lucky to be alive, they tell her in their grunts and growls. Lucky her beauty isn't worthy of beasts. (5-6)

It is evident in this passage that the wolves' presence looms over everyone in the town, subjecting them to constant fear and oppression. The women beautiful enough to be sacrificed will meet the physical beasts in the woods, while the remaining girls will be subjugated to comply with their husband's orders without complaints. There is a doubling down on the women who remain: the intertextuality which follows the fairy tale retellings makes the reader aware of how beauty has always been equivalent to virtue in fairy tales and so the notion of not being beautiful enough to be sent out also signals that they are less virtuous. Since virtue is such a vital aspect of the attributions given to femininity within fairy tales, the lack of such signals a lesser value as a woman and less value as a human. As Moi argued concerning the feminine melting into the female, social constructions which create attributions of femininity can often be seen as essential to being a woman and this is the issue

often presented with women in fairy tales being classified as either passive and virtuous or assertive and evil. Even as the protagonist tricks the wolves into letting her go, she thinks that she cannot go home because the community will not think lightly of how she strayed from the path she was given: 'She can imagine her mother's and father's faces upon her return, first joy, then pity, for who would want such a girl – the town's offering, sent in sacrifice, sent in submission, but too willful to play the part. Bad girl, they'll whisper' (11-12). Instead of praising her for escaping the wolves, the town will see it as an act of defiance, an act of agency beyond what is expected and permitted, and therefore as something bad. 'Other girls might get ideas' (12) Chainani writes, signalling the biggest issue with the girl's return: the start of a rebellious thought, and that agency will inspire agency.

The creation of female identity is built on the duality of either being attractive enough to be sacrificed to the wolves or living in constant submission to one's husband. However, masculinity within this story is equally created as a reaction to the sacrificial tradition. The wolves in the woods hold a masculine presence, even before the protagonist sees their shapeshifting forms, due to the intertextuality of the werewolf in the traditional tales. The werewolf has long been connected to men, and Chainani exemplifies this comparison through his use of 'boys' and 'wolves' interchangeably when dealing with the beasts in the woods. When the protagonist first meets the wolves, they are described as being '[b]oys in breeches of black leather, their chests bared, their forearms taut with veins' (7). For a moment, she imagines that they were never wolves to begin with, but 'only boys marking a girl for themselves' (7). Following the reading of wolves as the masculine energy in this tale and their shapeshifting into actual 'human' boys does make this statement partially true: they do mark a girl to have for themselves, to consume rather than control like the ones in the town.

Following Terry Eagleton's definition of Marxist literary criticism as that which 'has to deliver the story of the struggles of men and women to free themselves from certain forms of exploitation and oppression' (xi-xii), Chainani does so by demonstrating the different levels of oppression which can be seen in the class struggle, throughout different classes. Carter's critique was primarily on the gendered power structures created as a consequence of class differences through the focus on her main characters. However, Chainani's focus on society's role in creating such an identity leads to a bigger critique of the class difference as a whole, incorporating exploitation between humans and genders. Instead of basing such a difference on the class struggles of 17th century France and 19th century Germany, where the production of literary works automatically excluded the lower classes from participating in

the debate because they lacked the literary and educational knowledge to consume it and the economic aids to purchase it, Chainani's class struggle can focus on the differences within the classes themselves. Even the pack of wolves have a community of their own, with most of them suffering under the rule of one leader. Whereas the other wolves are starved, to the point where the girl can see their ribs, the leader stands in the shadows, 'arms crossed, chest full, the one who isn't famished at all … his beauty so unmatched by the others' (8). Although it is evident that the power balance in this pack is as unequal as between the wolves and the town, the other wolves do not resist but follow their leader's biddings, which eventually leads them to their death. Although the tale's beginning might hint at a clear oppressor versus submissive, Chainani details how the oppressive force of the wolf pack has an imbalanced power structure within it, also causing exploitation, and how the pressure from the wolf pack creates tension and imbalance between the genders in the town. Power structures go beyond the male/female binaries seen in Carter's tales, but the gender aspect of class difference cannot be ignored, which Chainani demonstrates through his depiction of the town's men.

Just as the identity of the remaining girls is built on their lack of being the chosen girls, the boys in the town's identity seems determined by the fact that they are not wolves. However, their behaviour is at times described as animalistic. Although it is the wolves in the woods who eat the pretty girls, the boys in the town 'rake through [the remaining girls] like leftovers' (5-6), insinuating a form of consumption for them as well as how they see the girls as nothing but 'leftovers', as meat. They talk to them in their 'grunts and growls' (6), noises often associated with animalistic sounds, the growls primarily associated with that of the wolf. The constant switch between the terms 'boys' and 'wolves' for the beasts in the forest also leads to question whether 'man' and 'animal' are interchangeable with the men in the town. Whereas Wolf-Alice's identity was, in a sense, described as what she is not – '[n]othing about her is human except that she is *not* a wolf' (141 italicised in original) – the boys' identity seems to be shaped around the merging of man and wolf and what occurs when the same creatures appear in different social status.

The boys in the town do not have the power that the wolves have to pick the girls they want but must instead 'spend their lives yearning for the one they can't have. The girl devoured by wolves. Now they've trapped with second-best' (6). The lack of power leads to resentment among the boys, but the unhappiness is not directed towards the wolves but rather towards the women. In his study on the motivation behind violence, James Gilligan concluded that 'the basic psychological motive, or cause, of violent behaviour, is the wish to ward off or

eliminate the feeling of shame and humiliation … and replace it with its opposite, the feeling of pride' (1154). When defining shame and it's causes, Gilligan proclaims that it includes 'feelings of inferiority, inadequacy, incompetence; feelings of being weak, ugly, ignorant, or poor' (1155), among other things. Although Gilligan's study centralises its case studies on prisoners in a US prison, he does refer to multiple cases of shame being the cause of violence in writing, such as two cases in the Bible, the Trojan war described in the Iliad, and seen in the philosophy of both Aristotle and Aquinas (1156-7) and his conclusion can serve an exciting ground for interpretation of how the boys in the town's treatment of the women are caused by a chain of shame from the higher class. The boys are inferior to the wolves on many levels, both physically weaker, socially submissive and, according to the girl's description of how the leader of the wolves is 'beauty incarnate' (8), less attractive. It is far more difficult to take out their frustration and shame on their oppressors, and so they take it out on those they can themselves oppress: the women. Similarly, once the wolf leader realises he has been played for a fool by the grandmother and the girl, he turns aggressive after the narrator describes him as 'a boy shamed' (15). The grandmother knows this shame will transform into violence as he will 'kill and kill until he's drunk' (15).

The protagonist of Chainani's tale escapes both the boys in the town's resentment, and she manages to trick the wolves into letting her go by playing on both assumptions of the expectations of her gender and theirs. The wolves ask the girl to choose which will eat her, giving her the allusion of agency, the false idea that she has any form of control over the situation. She cannot decide whether or not she will die, as she is expected to follow the path laid out for her, but she can decide who will send her to her fate. Thus, the illusion of agency is not an agency for her but a choice which will only affect others. Only the option is false because the leader of the pack has consistently been chosen and will always be chosen. Therefore, it is not only the girl who is presented with a false sense of agency but the rest of the wolf pack as well. However, the girl recognises this falsehood: 'Play along, she thinks. Survival comes not in resistance to the game but in winning it' (7). Just like the boys in the town can never be satisfied because they cannot get the prettiest girl, the wolf pack's leader will never be satisfied when the temptation of better prey is put before him. The girl recognises this difference and tricks him into believing she has a sister who lives with her grandmother across the river. Subverting the known fairy tale trope of the wolf tempting the girl to stray from the path, it is the girl who is able to tempt the wolf to leave her alone in the search for her sister.

The girl arrives at the house long before the wolves do and creates a plan with her grandmother to stop them, a strict contrast to the traditional tale where the wolf arrives first and consumes the grandmother. The grandmother is described as having 'a fat scar under her eye' (13), reminiscent of the wound the wolf made on the girl's cheek. Whether this means that the grandmother was also a target of the wolves or the target of one of the shameful boys is not specified, which is another instance of the melting of identities between the man and wolf. It does not matter which of the two gave her the scar, because they are both beasts. The wolf leader transforms back into a man as he approaches the grandmother's house, unaware of the plan they have created. He is described as 'the perfect gentleman caller' (14), like the charming men Perrault warned against in the poem at the end of his tale and the descriptions of the handsome stranger in 'The Company of Wolves'. However, the grandmother knows his tricks and will not be fooled by him. Instead, they subvert the known fairy tale dialogue where the little girl comments on the physical appearance of the wolf pretending to be the grandmother to the wolf commenting on the physical appearance of the grandmother pretending to be the younger sister. The traditional dialogue focuses on physical attributions associated with masculinity, like loads of body hair and muscular arms. Chainani's dialogue centres around the often-negative attributions associated with old age in women: wrinkled skin, cloudy eyes and shriveled lips (15). He sees everything he does not want to see in his victim, again asserting youth and innocence as virtuous. However, the association he leans on which causes his downfall is the underestimation of agency – or perhaps, the assumed passivity – with the two women. He does not check his surroundings for any threat because he is the ultimate threat in his world. Therefore, he does not see the girl as she leaps from the rocking chair and stabs him in the heart with her father's knife. He notes how the girl is wearing a 'hood red as his blood' (15) which is the first of the tales in this thesis which does not compare the red colour to the girl's blood – her menses or virgin blood – but to signal male pain.

The girl in Chainani's tale changes the story's outcome by using her wit and intelligence instead of leaning into her sexual desires like in Carter's tales. The erotic aspect is not as present in Chainani's tale but falls closer to the implicit nature of the traditional tales. The intertextuality draws us back to Perrault and the Grimms' versions, and one can quickly draw the connection between the sacrificing killings and the rape of young girls, but it seems that the focus of Chainani's tale is instead to highlight the layers of oppression within communities and how it affects everyone who is not at the absolute top. His tale is hopeful,

however, that resistance to power is possible, following the traditions of folktales as symbolising the aspirations to rise out of class struggle (Zipes *Subversion* 8). Through this focus, the ending is cast in a bittersweet light, demonstrating that while one might save many, one cannot save them all. The rest of the town has assumed that the howls from the dying wolves were the howls of triumph, and the surviving girl continues to mark the door of a pretty girl every spring so the town will send her to the woods. This creates a new pack, a pack of women, '[b]eauties who've left beauty behind' (16). There does not seem to be a leader of this pack, at least not one who thrives at the expense of others. It is simply girls who have been rescued from meeting the wolves and can now live together in peace, away from all sorts of beasts.

However, since Chainani shows throughout the tale how the presence of the wolf affects the social order in the town and the treatment of the remaining girls, the happily-ever-after aspect of the ending is bittersweet. The girls in the grandmother's cottage might live together in peace, but since nothing has changed in the town's perception of the power positions, one can assume that the situation remains the same for the girls in the town. The boys still assume that they are submissive to a higher social class, and even though that power is now a pack of women, one cannot see it as a feminist victory because the women in the town continue to suffer. Chainani's tale demonstrates the solution to the issues of female agency leading to liberation for *one* group of women, the beauties who were sent into the woods to die. The girls who remain are not so lucky to be ascribed agency in the same manner and are therefore stuck in the submissive role of the fairy tale woman.

4 Reimagining the Wicked Woman in Snow White

Few literary fairy tales have received cultural attention like that of the Grimms' 'Snow White'. Besides their version, the most famous adaptation of the story is Walt Disney's animated film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), which Kay Stone argues might have even surpassed the Grimms' written version (1). The tale of the young girl persecuted by the wicked queen has been subject to many different variations of literary analysis, like the psychoanalytic favouring an Oedipal reading and feminist literary analysts looking into the implications of passivity and agency within the tale. The retellings of this familiar traditional tale are subjugated to the same amount of widespread analysis. In this chapter, I focus primarily on an analysis away from the heroine-centred perspective to see how these Snow White retellings deal with the motivation behind the antagonist's actions. I analyse how the passivity in the heroine is portrayed in both stories and how this is reflected in the agency of the antagonist. Through such an analysis, I demonstrate how, instead of simply prescribing agency to their female characters, Carter and Chainani subvert the expectations of the implications of passivity and agency in the fairy tale genre.

'The Snow Child' is the shortest of the tales in *The Bloody Chamber*, barely two pages long. In the tale, Carter takes most of her inspiration from an unpublished version of Snow White instead of the most familiar version (Simpson xvi). 'The Snow Child' follows a Count and Countess as they ride through a snowy landscape. The Count wishes for a child based on the landscape around him, and a naked girl fitting his wish appears by the roadside. He desires her, and the Countess immediately despises her and wants her gone. She throws a glove on the ground for the child to pick up, but the Count intervenes, stating he will buy her new ones. The Countess' furs come off her to warm the girl. The Countess throws her diamond brooch into the ice-cold water and commands the girl to fetch it, but again the Count dismisses her, which makes the Countess' boots leap off her feet and onto the girl's. As a last attempt, the Countess commands the girl to pick her a rose, to which the Count agrees. However, the girl pricks her finger on the thorn and dies. The Count gets off his horse and rapes the corpse while the Countess watches. Once he is finished, the girl's body melts into the snow until nothing is left but a raven's feather, a bloodstain and the rose she plucked. The Count gives the rose to his wife, but when she takes hold of it, it bites her.

Carter's tale focuses significantly on the role of the associated antagonist, the Countess, whom we recognise as a symbol of the wicked Queen from the traditional tales

through intertextuality. The analysis in this chapter moves from the specific heroine focus and her concept of self-creation to the relationship between the two women and the motivations of the Countess. The father figure is also more physically present than in the traditional tales, where he disappears after the remarriage. Although critics such as Gilbert and Gubar have asserted that the judgemental voice of the father, meaning the patriarch, resides in the mirror (38), Carter has discarded the symbol of the mirror altogether. Instead, the voice of judgement comes through the patriarch, the Count, whose attention determines the fate of the two women.

Chainani's 'Snow White' is significantly longer than 'The Snow Child', and more closely follows the published Grimm tale. Chainani starts the tale by detailing how Snow White's mother married a prince who loved her very much, but because of her skin colour, the public despised her, so the hatred grew in the prince as well. She wishes for a daughter and soon after Snow White is born. She has the same black skin as her mother and so her father despises her as well, meaning the only person she has to protect and love her is her mother. However, her mother soon dies, and the King marries another woman who despises Snow White and treats her like a servant as she grows up. Once Snow White is a few years older and her beauty becomes apparent, the queen bribes a huntsman to kill her in the woods, but he lets her go. She finds the house belonging to the dwarfs, the only people except her mother who shares her black skin tone. They take her in, but when the queen learns of her survival through the magic mirror, she creates a disguise and goes to the house to kill Snow White. She tricks her to use a poisoned comb, but Snow White survives yet again. In a final attempt, the queen poisons an apple and gives it to Snow White, but she has learned from her mistakes and manages to poison the queen instead, having given her bread baked with the poison from the comb. A prince arrives and he is first enchanted by the queen's beauty but falls in love with Snow White upon seeing her. Chainani ends the tale with a passage identical to the tale's beginning, with the public not liking Snow White's appearance, causing the prince to dislike her as well. However, whereas her mother died sometime after giving birth, Snow White survives the illness through the help of the dwarfs. The tale ends on a hopeful note, suggesting the possibility of change for Snow White's daughter.

Chainani's tale focuses more on the generational intersectionality seen in the Snow White figure and her mother. Whereas the wicked queen's actions are still in focus for much of the tale's middle, the beginning and end shift the focus from the queen and back to the Snow White characters. Like with his Red Riding Hood tale, Chainani shifts the focus to

include the physical presence of society and to demonstrate how the action in the tale affects characters throughout history. Like Carter's tale, 'Snow White' leads to an analysis away from the heroine-exclusive focus to see both the queen's motivations and society's role.

4.1 Shifting the Heroine Analysis

Whereas the Aarne-Thompson index has been used to establish different fairy tale retellings, the typical imagery such an index privileges is less prevalent in joining the retellings than the thematic core. Steven Swann Jones believes that the Aarne-Thompson index where 'motifs such as red as blood/white as snow, the magic mirror, the compassionate executioner, the dwarfs, the poisoned lace, comb, and apple, the glass coffin, and the red hot shoes are a crucial part of the narrative' (167) is unsuitable when analysing Snow White retellings because the tales that do not include these motifs are left out even as they portray thematic elements similar to the traditional tale. Jones offers instead to look for nine dramatic events he argues are expected in the Snow White narratives: origin, jealousy, expulsion, adoption, renewed jealousy, death, exhibition, resuscitation, and resolution (167-69). These nine events do not include the presence of the mirror or the colour symbolism we are familiar with but centre themselves around the core thematic presence of female jealousy.

Although Jones' new narrative typology refines the Aarne-Thompson index and allows for more of a thematic analysis, his hypothesis remains focused on the heroine's point of view. He writes that the range of versions of Snow White 'illustrate the psycho-social development of the heroine, an outline of the normal process of maturation, as she passes through different stages in her life' (179). His psychoanalytical approach is reminiscent of Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment*, whereas the child's development into adulthood is analysed through the anxieties represented in these fairy tales. Their focus on how the themes and other characters' behaviour affects the child means that the psychology of the parental figures is hardly paid any mind other than concerning the child to aid this 'complex process of maturation' (39). Cristina Bacchilega's *Postmodern Fairy Tales,* which has become a staple piece of criticism within the fairy tale genre, details the issues at stake for the postmodern revisions of fairy tales. However, she also primarily focuses on the heroine archetype, like in the generalisations in her analysis of the postmodern Snow White stories: 'Snow White is a constructed child woman whose snow-white features and attitudes are assumed to conform to nature in a powerfully metaphoric way … Postmodern revisions of

“Snow White” acknowledge the power that such a metaphor has had' (35). Viewing the heroine’s development can provide a thought-provoking account of the socioeconomic conditions occurring during the text’s production by analysing which behaviour is rewarded and punished. However, in a tale such as ‘Snow White’, which bases so much of its thematic core on the jealousy between the two women in the text, reducing the antagonist to a narrative device to aid the heroine’s development is limiting the interplay between the characters.

Gilbert and Gubar attempted to shift the focus from a heroine-centred analysis based on these typologies to include the psychology of the antagonist in their analysis of ‘Snow White’ in *The Madwoman in the Attic*. They argue that the tale should be renamed ‘Snow White and Her Wicked Stepmother’ because the ‘central action of the tale – indeed, its only real action – arises from the relationship between these two women’ (36). Whereas other fairy tales, like ‘Little Red Riding Hood’, centre around issues the lower class faced, such as poverty, the desire to escape the oppression of the higher classes and beasts in the woods, ‘Snow White’ tales usually do not concern themes other than that of female jealousy, an appreciation for the passive woman and a villainization of the assertive woman. At least, these are the primary thematic cores if one should follow Jones’ narrative typology and focus on the heroine. If one opts to open the analysis to include the motivations of the stepmother beyond an archetypal one-dimensional evil, the thematic core shifts from jealousy between women, fitting an Oedipal reading, to a struggle for social power in a phallocentric society.

An analysis of the antagonist in the tale allows for a further understanding of the relationship between the female characters as mother and daughter figures rather than opposite archetypes, as the one’s Gilbert and Gubar suggested. The analysis focusing on what sets the two women apart – young/old, passive/active –creates an enticing argument for what was desired in women at the time of writing and what was deemed villainous. However, analysing them through a maternal lens provides an interesting account of the generational judgement of women and how damaging the notion of the sexually naïve and innocent young girl is, because she cannot remain like that throughout her life. The indication of marriage after the ’happily ever after’ suggests the removal of such innocence and a move towards the maternal role leading her to either become the good mother or the villainous stepmother. Biological mothers are seldom present for long in the Grimms’ fairy tales, as they predominately kill them off early to introduce the wicked stepmother. There is, according to Christine Shojaei Kawan, no evidence to suggest that the Grimms invented the archetype of the wicked stepmother (240). However, one cannot argue they did not continue this

villainization through their edits. As Marina Warner pointed out, the early versions of 'Hansel and Gretel' had the father send the children out into the woods, whilst later revisions, mostly done by Wilhelm Grimm, introduced a stepmother who corrupted the poor father into abandoning his children despite his plea (*Once Upon a Time* 27). Different unpublished versions of the Grimms' 'Snow White' include different types of relations between the two women in the tale, stretching from stepmother/daughter to sisters to an unknown relation (Kawan 240). However, the stepmother/daughter relationship seems to have lingered in popular Western culture, which might lead back to the popularity of the Disney film. They are not necessarily opposites in every aspect of their portrayal, as Gilbert and Gubar's analysis can suggest, but there is a real possibility that they are a 'before' and 'after': a mother figure and a daughter figure. Analysing the relationship between the women in the tale seems equally essential as analysing how their behaviour affects the heroine.

As this chapter's analysis will demonstrate, Carter and Chainani approach the shift from the focus on the heroine in different ways. Carter's short tale is able to do so by shifting our expectations of who we automatically assume to be the antagonist in the tale. She gives the patriarchal figure a visibly clear role whilst detailing how much social and economic power he holds over the two women in question, thereby situating them both as victims of a much larger societal problem. Chainani follows the lead he took in 'Red Riding Hood' by explicitly including society's role in the judgement of the two women. The queen's motivations are shaped by her fear of losing her social position. However, despite the depiction of society's judgemental voice, Chainani does not attempt any redemption for the queen. The inclusion of intersectionality in the form of race and class, plus the subversion of the passive/assertive roles throughout the tale allows for removal of the association of passive as fundamentally good and agency as fundamentally wrong, which linger from the traditional tales.

4.2 The Removal of Power in 'The Snow Child'

Although Carter has removed many elements of both Aarne-Thompson's and Jones' typology indexes in her short revision of the Snow White tale, she manages to place the stepmother's hatred in a social context of economic power. Bacchilega comments how the opening line of the tale – 'Midwinter – invincible, immaculate' (105) – plays with mimesis by situating the symbolic elements of nature in the text. She writes that 'midwinter ritually marks the end of a

cycle and the beginning of another, thus externalizing and generalizing a specific event from "Snow White": the Queen must die for Snow White to be born' (36). I argue that the notion that the Queen must die can be seen in two instances: that the biological mother of Snow White, the original Queen, usually dies right after Snow White's birth so that the wicked stepmother can come in and create the action in the tale; and that Snow White cannot mature or develop into her sexuality if the (wicked) Queen is alive to discourage such behaviour.

As seen throughout Snow White-type tales, the biological mother must die to include the stepmother. The notion of the evil stepmother has, as mentioned earlier, been criticised for establishing a damaging portrayal of stepparents, but it is not without reason that the stepparent (primarily stepmothers) functions as a natural antagonist in many fairy tales. Bettelheim argued that the introduction of stepmothers in fairy tales functions as a way to preserve the image of the good mother – loving, protecting, kind – whilst allowing for the angry feelings one might feel towards a parent who disagrees with you to coexist without the interference of the relation with the good mother who is supposed to protect the child (69). He writes: 'the fairy tale suggests how the child may manage the contradictory feelings which would otherwise overwhelm him at this stage of his barely beginning ability to integrate contradictory emotions' (69). The child does not, according to Bettelheim, understand how the good mother can suddenly be cross, so the inclusion of the stepmother allows for the anger created by the situation to be explored without the guilt of taking it out on a blood relation. Bettelheim argues for an analysis focused on the fairy tale's effect on the development of children, but the image of the wicked stepmother has become such a staple in the fairy tale genre that they are still present in the modern retellings aimed at adults, like Carter's tale.

The creation of the stepmother in Carter's tale is not done through the death of the good biological mother but through the Countess' exclusion from the birth of the child. As the Count and the Countess drive through the wintery landscape, it is the Count who, upon seeing fresh snow, a hole in the ground filled with blood, and a raven, wishes for 'a girl as white as snow … as red as blood … as black as that bird's feather' (105). The Countess is only a witness to the father figure's desire, so when the naked child appears by the side of the road, the Countess is still without maternal predilections. She is not a part of the creation of the child like a biological mother would be, nor is the creation of the child her wish, and so she automatically becomes a sort of stepmother. Following the stepmother trope we are familiar with from the traditional tales, the rivalry between the two women is immediately established:

'she was the child of [the Count's] desire and the Countess hated her' (105). The role of the good mother Bettelheim argued for does not exist within this story, as is established by the instant hatred for the girl who will consume the Count's attention. Chainani points out in his study of the correlation between Carter's *The Sadeian Woman* and 'The Snow Child' that the hatred the Countess feels seems to preexist the story because of the conjunction 'and' instead of 'so' in this phrase (225). The Countess does not hate the girl only because she is the child of her husband's desire, but the two exist simultaneously.

His approach is an attempt to locate the Countess' hatred for the girl inside the perimeter of the text, unlike Gilbert and Gubar who place the Queen's hatred in Grimms' 'Snow White' outside of the text in the shape of the critique of the patriarchal voice (38). They argue that one of the most popular rationales for the conflict between the young heroine and the Queen is 'that the mother is as threatened by her daughter's "budding sexuality" as the daughter is by the mother's "possession" of the father' (38), but that this analysis does not take into consideration the depth of the Queen rage. Bettelheim falls under the category of placing the attention of the father at the true centre of the story, even as the father is absent from the Grimms tale: 'We are told nothing about her relation to her father, although it is reasonable to assume that it is the competition for him which sets (step)mother against daughter' (203). Bettelheim focuses on how the competition for the father's attention stems from an Oedipal conflict between the daughter and stepmother (203). However, one could also analyse how the father stands as a patriarch and that the struggle for his attention is actually a struggle to survive in a patriarchal and phallocentric world. Gilbert and Gubar argue that the two women in this fairy tale will never bond because 'women almost inevitably turn against women because the voice of the looking glass sets them against each other' (38). In their analysis, the voice of the looking glass is the judgemental voice of patriarchy. The mirror functions as a mode of viewing identity through its reflection: that the way others see us is the way we are, in the same way that we see ourselves reflected in others.

Gilbert and Gubar's understanding of the voice within the mirror become too universal as a concept, without a recognition that they are working within the perimeters of a Western society. Even then, I share Chainani's concern that their argument bases itself on a hypothesis without any historical context (217). Moreover, the notion of the universal patriarchal voice in the mirror and how it ensures no women can coexist in harmony because of it, leads to another case of stating there is such a thing as a universal female experience. We cannot fault this solely on their argument being a statement of the feminist discourse in the 1970s, because

it was precisely during this time Carter wrote both *The Bloody Chamber* and *The Sadeian Woman*. This is not to say that Carter's writing is not affected by the limitations of 1970s feminism, but the subversion she applies to her tales suggests a stance away from universalisation, as argued regarding 'Wolf-Alice' in Chapter 3. Even if we accept that the mirror is a symbol of patriarchy, women's experience and their interactions with each other are not all the same. The women living in Germany during the 19th century did not all view marriage as the economic trade it was, nor were they all abused by their husbands, as demonstrated in Chapter 2 by Rahel Levin Varnhagen's letters. Jacob-Dittrich established how Varnhagen's class made her experiences different to that of lower class women (204), and that is not even counting for the experiences of women of colour or with disabilities, as an intersectional approach would include. Gilbert and Gubar include neither class or race in their analysis, nor do they acknowledge the limitations focusing on a Western middle class version of patriarchy. Without such a disclaimer, their argument becomes too vague and too universal to stand on its own.

Although Chainani faults Gilbert and Gubar's analysis of the tale for being too hypothetical (217), I argue their assertion against the total villainization of the queen in Grimm's 'Snow White' can be applied for the analysis of 'The Snow Child'. Although Carter continues the archetype of the stepmother as the clear antagonist compared to the naked girl in the snow, the contextualisation refuses to permit the reader to rest in such a characterisation. Instead, Carter explores how fairy tales' villainous women are also victims and how such characterisation can exist simultaneously. She does so through the placement of the Count between these two women. Whereas the sources from the unpublished version of Grimms' tale Carter uses suggest that although the Snow White figure was the father's desire, he does not intervene as the stepmother tricks the girl into picking up her glove and drives away from her (Chainani *Sadeian Tragedy* 218), Carter's Count directly stops the Countess from succeeding. The socioeconomic position he holds over the women is established through how much the shift in his attention affects the physical clothing of the women. Bacchilega notes how '[a]ny shifts in the Count's affection 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 depends entirely on the Count's words' (37). When the Count tells the Countess he will buy her new gloves, 'the furs sprang off the Countess's shoulders and twined round the naked girl' (105). The second attempt to end the girl's life leaves the

Countess as ‘bare as a bone and the girl furred and booted’ (105), and suddenly the roles have shifted.

The Countess’s clothes have left her body, and she is now the powerless figure, whilst the girl in the snow demonstrates social power through the expensive furs that cling onto her body. Edith Rogers argues that clothes can be used to explore the relationship between female sexuality and power, stating that ‘clothing is a favorite symbol of sexuality’ (294), not nakedness. Clothing signals power, both social power and economic prosperity, therefore establishing power and identity. The loss of clothing signals a loss of dignity, status and, with it, a loss of oneself (Rogers 271). The Countess is not just literally stripped of her clothes, she is also figuratively stripped of the symbol of her sexuality and the material prospects her marriage to the Count entails, considering that the traditional texts Carter is working with are set in a time in Germany where the opportunity for women to be economically independent was minimal (Sagarra 405). The intertextuality she shows throughout *The Bloody Chamber*, setting the tales in similar fairy-tale-esque surroundings, demonstrates this economic disposition and submission in the stripping of the Countess. She becomes vulnerable without the financial security the marriage to the Count gives her, represented by her clothing.

On the other side, the girl who appeared naked at first becomes more and more fully clothed as the Countess is stripped. Her sexual maturity grows as she becomes more covered. Her initial nakedness is not presented as something inherently sexual; a naked child is not the sexual agent in the story, but this changes once she dresses in an adult woman’s clothing. Her sexual maturity is finished once the Countess is fully naked and asks the girl to pick a rose for her. At this point, the Count takes pity on his wife and allows the girl to do as the Countess bids. Bacchilega’s note about how the trajectory of the women’s fates is based on the Count’s words is especially prominent as the Countess stands naked. Seeing his wife be reduced to the vulnerability of the naked woman makes him take pity on her, and his allowance of the picking of the rose is what eventually dooms the snow child and gives the Countess her clothing and symbolic power back. However, the Count’s control over the trajectory of the Countess’s power signals to the reader that although we might recognise her as the evil stepmother from the traditional tales, she is also a victim of the social structure that places her husband above her. As long as the Count holds the power to change the women’s fates, the girl and the Countess are doomed to endure either death or submission. Carter’s tale seems to suggest that the actual antagonist of the story is the Count or the system which provides him with power, rather than the assertive woman.

A significant demonstration of how the girl's and the Countess's fates are connected is seen through the red boots of the Countess. In the published traditional tale, the evil queen is punished by being forced to dance to death whilst wearing hot red shoes (Grimm 261). Carter's tale signals this intertextuality and the assumptions of the wicked woman's fate with the introduction of the Countess's clothes, which are a clear colour contrast to the white background: 'she wrapped in the glittering pelts of black foxes; and she wore high, black, shining boots with scarlet heels, and spurs' (105). The comparison between her and the Snow White character is established already in the Countess's introduction through the colour symbolism: against the white backdrop, the two women depict black and red/scarlet. So, even though his wife already encompasses these colour traits, the Count desires someone new and younger. However, the scarlet on the Countess, her boots, serve as a reminder that she will one day be punished, no matter her objections. Although the traditional tale makes it out to be Snow White who ensures the fate of the queen, Carter's tale and its focus on garments suggest that the sealer of her fate is the one who gave her the boots to begin with: the Count. When the boots are transferred to the girl, it signals her own impending death. Only after the girl dies and transforms into the parts of her creation – the snow, the bird's feather and the fatal rose – do the shoes return to the Countess.

The removal of the boots from the Countess's feet also signals that the threat of punishment is removed and placed upon the girl. I argue that this is the second point of 'the Queen must die for Snow White to be born' (Bacchilega 36) argument made earlier: that the two characters of Snow White and stepmother figure cannot exist and develop simultaneously. Snow White's birth does not have to be a physical birth but can symbolise the change from childhood to adulthood: from sexually naïve to sexually mature. With such a sexual maturity comes sexual agency within Carter's tales, as argued in Chapter 3. Therefore, the boots symbolise both sexual maturity and the punishment that comes with such assertiveness which lingers from the traditional tales. As the threat of punishment is directed at someone else, the Countess stands momentarily at risk but simultaneously free. She is vulnerable because the social and economic safety provided by her husband is now directed at someone else, but the punishment is gone. Such is the horrible duality of the Countess' fate: her husband's attention on someone else puts her at her most vulnerable position and the closest to escaping his judgement and punishment. All of this occurs through the transaction of sexual power. Although Gilbert and Gubar contest that analysing the queen's hatred for

Snow White through the lens of her 'budding sexuality' (38) is not entirely adequate, it does speak of a significant difference between the two: that of sexual agency.

4.3 Deadly Passivity in 'The Snow Child'

Chapter 3 dealt with the concept of sexual agency in Carter's writing, but the structure of those tales permitted a focus on such agency because they subvert our perception of what type of agency we praise and the kind we condemn. 'The Snow Child' does not present its main character as having agency, especially sexual agency. Although, as I have demonstrated, the sexual maturity of the character grows through the symbolism of her clothing, Carter does not in any way attempt to direct desire to any other character than the Count. It is through his desire that the child is created, and the utterance of his desire leads to an ambiguity in the context of it. 'I wish I had a child as white as snow' (105), the Count utters, and Chainani points out that the word 'had' in this wish 'acquires the doubled meaning of possession as a father and possession as a lover' (225). She is described as a 'child of his desire' (105) when she first appears beside the road, but the length of that desire is never specified. It becomes even more ambiguous when he wishes he 'had a child as red as blood' (105), consisting still of the ambiguous 'had' whilst drawing attention to the link between desire and blood. As seen throughout the analysis of the wolf trilogy, Carter uses blood as a symbol of sexual maturity, either through the visual of the first menses or the loss of virginity. However, in her version of 'Snow White', there is also the added intertextuality to consider.

From the published version of the Grimms' tale, the imagery of blood is used in the creation of Snow White, as her mother pricks her finger on a sewing needle which drops down on the white snow. Bettelheim argued that this imagery symbolises the actual conflict of the story: 'sexual innocence, whiteness, is contrasted with sexual desire, symbolized by the red blood' (202), and, although that might be true for the focus of the traditional tale, the same symbolism creates a different focus in Carter's tale. The traditional tale uses this colour symbolism in creating the difference between Snow White and the queen, punishing the queen for being an assertive woman with sexual desire and praising Snow White for her sexual passivity. The prince finds the assumed dead Snow White in her coffin and asks the dwarfs to have her: 'Make me a gift of it, for I can't live without being able to see Snow White. I will honor and cherish her as if she were my beloved' (260). Kari Sawden argues that this demonstrates a 'dehumanisation of women' (3), as the prince does not want Snow White

as a company, but as this passive object for him to simply look at, in the best case. However, Carter's tale does not attempt to praise this passivity or provide the Snow White character with agency. Instead, she emphasises the objectification that follows passivity as a critique of the dehumanisation of female characters.

The concept of sexual naivety and sexual desire is through the critique of the male character and the awareness of the system that oppresses both women. The young girl does not express any sort of desire for herself, sexual or otherwise. Whereas the protagonists in the wolf trilogy achieved some sense of agency through acknowledging their desires, the snow child does not. She does not express any desires or ambitions, because she does not speak at all. Everything happens *to* her, the only time she acts is when she picks the rose as the Countess bids her to, resulting in her death. Whereas Snow White gets the prince after demonstrating her passivity, Carter's protagonists dies and is raped by the Count before melting into 'a feather a bird might have dropped; a bloodstain, like the trace of a fox's kill on the snow; and the rose she had pulled off the bush' (106). She is reduced to the parts of her creation, and the possibility of resurrection, a prominent aspect of the traditional tale, does not seem possible.

However, the lack of resurrection and the snow child's connection to nature might suggest that the actions in the tale do not change any character's behaviour. The Countess regains her clothing and passively watches as her husband 'thrust his virile member into the dead girl' (106), showing no emotion towards the events that just occurred. The only actual emotion she displays throughout the tale is her hatred for the girl, and even that is told as an omnipotent truth. The Count is the only one in the tale whose emotions are stated: he desires the child, feels sorry for his wife when she stands naked, and weeps upon the young girl's death. Although it is the Countess who wishes to get rid of the girl and attempts to trick her, I would argue that it is the Count who is the actual agent of the story. He is the one who affects the trajectory of the story in the sense that he decides whether the Countess's wishes will be met. When this does not change after the death of the girl: the Count hands the Countess the rose which killed the child, and she accepts. The child's presence does not undo the cycle of abuse, but the Count is allowed to continue in his ways. Nothing stops him from creating another child out of his desires since the materials which created her have returned to nature. Moreover, nothing suggests that the Countess can resist his advances since so much of her fate is determined by his attention throughout the tale.

Whereas critics such as Gilbert and Gubar have criticised the depictions of the antagonist in Snow White versions for falling into the trope of negative associations with assertive women, Carter's tale does not take such a stance. Patricia Duncker criticised Carter for keeping with the jealousy and hostility between female characters in the tale, stating that 'she doesn't question the ideology implicit in the story, that the Mother and Daughter will – necessarily – become rivals for the Father's love and be prepared to countenance one another's destruction' (229). It is perhaps easy to fall into the Oedipal-based reading of Carter's tale as it deals with the interactions between a father, mother, and daughter figure, but Duncker's critique of the rivalry between the two women falls short if one considers the social and economic implications of such a rivalry. The two women are not rivals for the Count's *love* so much as they are rivals for the economic and social safety he provides.

Duncker criticises Carter for endorsing predictable and sinister enmities about female relationships (229), but she fails to consider the important role of the Count in the tale. The father figure is missing in the traditional published Grimm version, but his presence in this tale cannot be ignored as the decider of action and the forcer of sexual action. Chainani argues that 'The Snow Child' is 'a pornographic fairy tale that conjoins the stepmother and child in a triangle of desire' (221), mainly the father's desire. However, whereas the concept of being desired in 'The Company of Wolves' aided the protagonist's sexual awakening and maturity and therefore agency, the inclusion of the female-female rivalry presents desire as a source of conflict. Therefore, the death of the snow child before the rape removes any indication that she defeated the Countess just because the Count fulfilled his sexual urges with her. It becomes clear that the desire for the child was the desire for possession.

The pornographic elements in this tale are seen through the symbolism of blood and the gruesome rape. Carter does not shy away from uncomfortable pornographic elements in the stories in *The Bloody Chamber*, but 'The Snow Child' is one of the few tales where the inner confessional narrative of the heroine is not disclosed. 'The Company of Wolves' offered such a narrative on the often-analysed rape scene in 'Little Red Riding Hood', forcing the reader to question the uncomfortable nature of sexual agency within that scene, but 'The Snow Child' does no such thing. The snow child is not offered any sense of agency, but again the role of desire stands clear. Carter uses bleeding as a symbol of sexual maturity when the girl pricks her finger on the rose's thorn. Upon witnessing this, the Count turns from an assumed helpful and protective figure, stopping the Countess from her advances on the girl, into a sexual predator. Carter describes the act: 'Weeping, the Count got off his horse,

unfastened his breeches and thrust his vile member into the dead girl' (106). As the only explicit pornographic content of the tale, the significance of the duality of the penetration in the girl is crucial for Carter's critique. The rose is the first, piercing her skin and causing that first bleed. Chainani argues that the symbolic power of the rose, which has for so long been seen as a romantic symbol, is the changed by the 'allegorical nature of the narrative' since it carries the symbol of murder weapon after the rape and encompasses one of the natural elements that was left behind after the child's death, signalling the martyred child (228). Following Chainani's claim, I would argue that since the rose follows the trajectory of the Count's character – how something pleasant, like the image of a protective father, can turn dangerous – it also comes to symbolise the phallus.

The sexual symbolism of the rose demonstrates a defining difference between the two women. It leads us back to Bettelheim's original argument regarding the importance of sexual purity versus sexual desire in 'Snow White'. When the Countess touches the rose and feels its sting, she drops it '[i]t bites! she said' (106). Although nothing suggests that the power of the rose's sting has changed since killing the snow child, its effect on the Countess is far less. Chainani suggests that the different reactions to the rose can be explained by looking at the relationship between the two women compared to the relationship between Justine and Juliette Carter analyses in *The Sadeian Woman*. Although Chainani offers multiple ways of looking at this relationship, the virgin-wife binaries he suggests create the best socioeconomic backdrop for this analysis. Chainani writes that Justine is the holy virgin, represented by the snow child, and Juliette is the profane whore or wife, represented by the Countess, leaving the rose to represent the power of the phallus (229). 'The Countess can survive the prick, the figurative "thrust"', Chainani argues, 'but the virgin cannot, and her stain is left against the snow as a symbol of the both metaphorical and literal deflowering' (229). Therefore, the central theme Bettelheim suggests is present in the traditional tale is also present in 'The Snow Child'. Bettelheim places the father figure at the centre of the women's desires, as is typical with an Oedipal reading, and Carter's subtext and use of direct intervention in the plot on the Count's part place him as the true aggressor. Although it is the Countess who tells the girl to pick the rose, it is set in motion by his allowance, and, more notably, he is the one who offers the same rose to his wife.

I argued for an analysis that focuses less on the heroine's perspective and more on the antagonist's motivations earlier, and the symbolism and narrative focus of 'The Snow Child' is quick to subvert the expectations of exactly which antagonists we are discussing. Although

the intertextuality Carter works with leads the reader to assume that the Countess is the ultimate antagonist, with her distinct contrast in clothing and assumed sexual maturity because of her marriage, the socioeconomic analysis leaves readers to view the father figure as the controlling force. The patriarchal figure, with its phallic power, casts both women as victims in different ways. Instead of offering a solution to the oppression women face in a phallocentric and patriarchal society, Carter illustrates what such oppression does to female relationships. The ending is not a hopeful one, not because the character we associate with the Snow White heroine dies, but because of the lack of change: her resort back to the nature from which she was born and the continuation of the life of the rose does not suggest a change in behaviour within the characters. The moralising question of 'what does Snow White learn?', which is brought on by her survival in the traditional tale, does not exist in Carter's tale.

4.4 Fear of Rising Social Power in 'Snow White'

Whereas Carter moves the focus away from a heroine's perspective to include the effect the tale has on the Countess, Chainani's tale remains focused on the Snow White figure but uses intersectionality to visualise the society's role in the fate of the characters. Similarly to how the wolf pack and the town members had a distinctive impact on the creation of identity with the girls in 'Red Riding Hood', Chainani applies the public's attitudes towards race to criticise the harmful impact this has on identity. Therefore, Chainani moves into the field of intersectionality to criticise aspects of feminist theory Carter missed: namely, how the experiences of gender-based oppression risk a generalisation if one does not account for matters such as race and class.

The main point of intersectionality which Chainani uses in this specific tale is the connection between race and gender, reminiscent of the origin of intersectionality itself: to conceptualise the interlocking of privilege and oppression in social identity structures (Collins 7). In her exploration of the development of intersectionality regarding black feminism, Patricia Hill Collins writes that the feminist theory of the late 20th century not only based itself on a universalisation harmful to *all* women but directly ignored the experiences of black women: 'Theories advanced as being universally applicable to women as a group on closer examination appear greatly limited by the white, middle class origins of their proponents' (7). As stated in Chapter 3, critics such as Toril Moi have criticised second-wave feminism for

focusing too much on universalisation among the singular female experience, opting instead for the argument that such a thing does not exist. However, Moi remains focused on the white, middle-class feminist, which Collins argues leave no space for black voices to articulate their experiences (7). The Black Power movement of the 1970s was led primarily by black men seeking equality with white men, so the exclusion black women faced were in social movements regarding both their gender and race (Collins 7-8). Intersectionality proposes apprehending 'the social reality of men and women together with its associated social, cultural, economic and political dynamics as being *multiple* and determined *simultaneously* and *interactively* through various significant *axes of social organisation*' (Stasiulis 345 italicised in original). Moving away from the notion that gender, race, or class alone determines the differences between humans which results in social conflict, intersectionality asks us to look at these axes simultaneously. Although the paradigm started to get black women's voices to emerge from invisibility, contemporary work in Anglophone academic circles apply intersectionality to 'designate the complex intertwining of multiple identities/inequalities' (Bilge 59), including gender, class, race, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation. However, because Chainani's tale primarily focuses on the relationship between race and gender in relation to social power, these are the two axes this analysis is based on.

Chainani establishes the kingdom's attitudes towards people of colour early in the tale and positions them as a minority in a primarily white community. When writing about Snow White's mother marrying the king's son, he writes: 'So many see only her skin, how different she is from the fair maidens of this land' (19). Chainani plays with the assumptions that fairness equals beauty which lingers from the Grimms' version of the tale, to demonstrate how she is treated differently than others because she does not fit this beauty standard: 'They treat her like a lump of coal, like black is a sin' (19). Although he writes that the people treat her badly because of her skin colour, he also states that they do not express their concerns with the prince marrying a black woman to his face until the king dies: 'the people don't want her to be queen. They can only hold their tongues for so long' (19-20). Through this change, Chainani demonstrates how society's opinions seep into how marginalised groups' identities are treated. The prince, who has now become king, does not feel anything besides love for his wife until the public voices their concern. Whereas she felt the judgement presumably all her life, such judgement is new to this white upper-class man. So, to reassure the people, the king 'strays about the kingdom with women fairer than she' (20). One cannot assume that the

mistreatment of the queen is based on her gender alone when Chainani demonstrates such a shift. There is also nothing which alludes to her behaving outside of the norms assigned to women in fairy tales; she demonstrates no sense of desires or agency except for the desire for a daughter.

Chainani subverts the associations from the traditional tale to demonstrate these issues of race when the queen wishes for a daughter. Much like the Grimms' tale, the queen sits by the window and pricks her finger, making her wish for a child '[w]hite as snow. Red as blood. Black as a crow' (20). She does not specify which physical attributions each of these colours should represent, but the image popularised by Western versions of the tale and the famous Disney drawings is not what Chainani's Snow White looks like. She mirrors the appearance of her mother, with 'crow-black skin, blood-red lips, eyes with whiteness as bright as snow' (20). Moreover, she is treated by the people of the kingdom with the same resentment as they treat her mother. However, whereas the queen had suffered through this treatment in isolation, she can now place all her attention and love on Snow White to ensure she will not face the same solitude: 'The queen keeps her close, warding the child like a jewel, for only in her keeping can she teach her how to be loved' (21). Chainani has painted the queen to be similar to Bettelheim's 'good mother', as she does not show any resentment towards anyone – no hatred or the like towards the king or members of the public are mentioned – but instead showers her daughter with love. Therefore, in true fairy tale fashion, the good mother dies after succumbing to an illness and Snow White has to face the discriminatory treatment of the public alone, just like her mother (21).

After the queen's death, Chainani introduces the new queen as the physical and emotional opposite of Snow White's good mother. The new queen is described as having 'milk-white cheeks, a brown tumble of hair, and eyes as sharp as a bear trap. This new queen has no love for Snow White' (21-22). Whereas Carter's snow child was created out the father's desire and therefore had an illusion of protection against the Countess, Chainani's Snow White has lost the one person who loved and protected her. The king in Chainani's tale despises Snow White because 'there is nothing in her that reminds him of himself' (21) and so she finds no protection in him. The protagonists in the Grimms' and Carter's tales are persecuted once they grow towards adulthood and threaten the stepmothers' beauty and, thereby, their social status. However, Chainani's protagonist is judged right after her birth, and the threat she poses to the stepmother's position is at a larger scale. More so than being on an individual level, like the snow child's threat to the social position of the Countess alone,

Chainani's Snow White's rise against her stepmother suggest the rise in social status of a marginalised group collectively. When the new queen learns that the mirror views Snow White as more beautiful than herself, she worries about the social implications of such a change:

> No one else in the kingdom would consider the idea, of course. That Snow White is more beautiful than her. Beauty in this world has rules. But what if Snow White breaks these rules? What if other people start to see what the mirror does? (23)

Much like the fear that the girl's resistance against the wolves in 'Red Riding Hood' might lead to a revolution as the thought of resistance could spread, the queen is equally worried that the thought that Snow White is more beautiful than her could spread to change the beauty standard and thereby the social ranking of whiteness as above blackness. After learning about Snow White's survival later on, she notes that her existence is 'a threat to the way the world is, an omen of what it might become' (32).

To keep these fears at bay, the queen resorts to making the difference between the social class of herself and Snow White more visible by treating her as a servant and addressing her accordingly, but it does not stop Snow White's beauty from growing. I use the term social class because it is assumed that being the king's daughter, Snow White and the queen share the same economic class. The queen 'kicks and mocks her' (24), and once she realises that her treatment of Snow White does nothing to hinder her beauty and thereby the threat of the queen losing her social power, she orders a huntsman to kill her. The huntsman 'has a wife and two sons to feed, and the queen pays well' (25) so he does not argue with her command, demonstrating the power those with a higher class have over others. However, just when he is about to kill Snow White, she asks him, '[f]or what?' (25), making him question the orders he is given. This questioning is a clear difference from the traditional tale, where it is Snow White's innocence and beauty which influence the huntsman. He does as the traditional tale, lets her go assuming the animals will kill her for him and brings the liver and lungs from a wild boar to the queen. She falls for it because '[a]ll things under the skin look the same' (25), which is ironically the queen's fear.

Once Snow White gets to the cottage where the dwarfs live, she sees people with the same skin colour as herself for the first time, making her more aware of how much the kingdom's inhabitants judge her. She notes how blind she has been to her own skin colour

because 'without her mother, she had no mirror, no reflection, no proof that she was made well to hold in her heart, like a black swan in a flock of white that's told it's a mistake instead of a pearl of pearls' (29). Snow White's sense of identity has been created through the perception of others, and when those others have all been white and mistreated her because of her skin colour, her identity is that of an Other. However, when meeting the dwarfs, she finds companionship in that Otherness, almost like Wolf-Alice and the Duke. She thinks about how she never spoke up against the oppression she faced because she assumed silence was the answer (31). However, her words are set free through meeting others like herself, who might have similar experiences of oppression. Intersectionality's original intent to lift black women's voices out of repression and into the light is visualised in this scene as Snow White can finally tell her story to people who will listen. The dwarfs might not understand what it is like to be a woman, but they have experienced the Otherness created by racism, stating that they were driven out from another kingdom: 'That's where we came from, the dwarf sighs. King out there doesn't want people like us. You won't be safe' (29). For the first time since her mother died, Snow White is part of an 'us' instead of an 'other'.

When the queen comes to kill Snow White, she turns herself into an old, black lady, which is the image the queen most associates with poverty. Chainani notes how her 'face blackens beyond black and sags off her bones, like a mockery of the beauty her mirror called fair' (32). Beyond the blackened skin as being far from what the queen associates with beauty, she also ages herself significantly, which relates to the theme of youth as virtuous as we have seen throughout these tales – especially in the traditional ones. Even Snow White 'can't imagine her stepmother debasing herself like this' (33), and so she falls for her tricks.

Chainani's queen follows in the pattern of the traditional tale by advancing on the young girl through items signalling beauty. She sells the girl three combs and uses them to comb through Snow White's hair, thereby putting the poison directly on her scalp. Many critics have used the comb and lace from the traditional tales to compare it to either beauty or motherhood: Gilbert and Gubar compared it to the 'female arts of cosmetology and cookery' (40) whilst Shuli Barzilai compared it to motherly behaviour, stating that 'the queen invariably chooses to "get at" Snow White by doing what a mother does for a very young girl: dressing, combing, and feeding' (532). However, these are both associations with a presumed white protagonist. Although they can be used for an analysis of Chainani's tale as well, he emphasises the associations Snow White has with this beauty item as a black girl in a white society:

> Snow White thinks of the way the queen used to mock her hair at the castle, taunting that it needed combing and straightening and was best put up in a rag.
>
> Those days are gone. Snow White's hair grows free.
>
> But the memories remain like scars. (34)

Another layer to the queen's use of the comb is the attempt to control and straighten Snow White's natural curls, thereby attempting to control Snow White in fear of what she might come to represent.

Snow White is able to trick the queen into eating her own poison and this is where Chainani demonstrates how deep the racial issues raised in this text affect the happy ending. Upon discovering the queen's body, the dwarfs acknowledge their marginalised positions, how people of power can take advantage of it and how the queen, dead or not, still inhabits such a position. Although Snow White defeated one evil, they are not free from danger. The dwarfs refuse Snow White's suggestion to take the queen's body back to the king, stating that it 'will lead to both Snow White and the dwarfs' deaths, no matter how good their intentions' (40). They argue that the king will see his dead queen next to people whom he already despises and jump to the conclusion that they killed her. The dwarfs are not hopeful for the future the queen feared so much, as they state: 'To seek a fair ending for their kind is as foolish as it is noble' (40).

Chainani recognises this hopelessness and the amount of time it takes for social change through his circle composition of the ending. Snow White meets a prince, who is at first taken by the dead queen's beauty before he sees Snow White. So, the last section of the tale begins identically as the beginning, only this time it is Snow White who marries a man who comes to despise her after being influenced by the public's hateful judgements. She gets the daughter of her desires, who looks just like herself. However, whereas Snow White's mother dies after an illness, Snow White seeks help from her community, the dwarfs, when the illness comes for her. Her survival changes the trajectory of the ending. Her death lay clear as a generational trauma destined to repeat itself again and again, but her survival signals a change. Snow White grew up without any other people of colour around her, only subjugated to the abuse of her stepmother and judgement from her father and the members of the kingdom. Snow White's daughter will not face the same fate because she will have her mother present. The story ends with Snow White's remark: 'No, she's not going anywhere'

(44), signalling that the fear her stepmother had a marginalised groups rising to power may very well be on its way. The members of the public's opinions towards her survival are not mentioned, but it is not necessary as they are not the focus of the tale. Snow White has instead learned to base her identity on her own self-image, away from the judgement of a society that wishes for her downfall for their own gain.

4.5 Subversions of Passivity and Agency in 'Snow White'

Chainani uses the passive heroine and assertive villain throughout the tale, but rather than praising the passivity in his Snow White character, he demonstrates the change that occurs once she leaves such character traits behind. As previously stated, Snow White does not speak up against the queen's cruelty but 'holds her tongue. She knows a nemesis when she sees one' (24). She does not resist the queen's abuse, but Chainani describes her as being aware of the mistreatment she faces and that her mere existence will lessen the queen's control over time: 'Your life drains theirs of power' (24). It appears intentional on her part to wait because she knows there is little resistance she can do so far. The previous section described the importance Chainani places on the sense of community and the safety this provides, something Snow White does not have so far in the tale. Resisting abuse on such a structural level is hard to achieve alone, and so her silence seems to be more calculated than passive. She keeps it locked inside until she meets the dwarfs, which is when the testimony of her pain comes out: 'she thought the answer was silence, instead of mining for words of protest, words trapped heavy inside her – but here, facing these strangers, she sets them free' (29). This change from silence to sound demonstrates a move from passivity to agency, especially when we look at the implications of silence in the traditional tales.

Silence is more than the lack of speaking in a conversation; it is also a lack of engagement in the situation. Ruth B. Bottigheimer writes about the silent women in Grimms' tales, where she notes how often a woman's actions and thoughts are described by the narrator instead of in her own dialogue, unlike the men who are allowed to speak freely (123-4). The women who are allowed to speak through dialogue are evil queens and stepmothers, meaning those we associate with an assertive nature. Bottigheimer writes that in these fairy tales, 'women answer with great frequency, they almost never pose a question, and their general helplessness leaves them to cry out often' (127). It seems that women's spoken words are mostly reactionary, never out of their own action except in villainous women. The queen in

Grimms' 'Snow White', for example, is the one who drives the action through her words and plots, as argued by Gilbert and Gubar, and Snow White simply reacts to her actions. Following arguments by critics such as Jack Zipes and Marina Warner that fairy tales speak of contemporary society's plights, anxieties, and social norms, Bottigheimer argues that the silence in heroines 'expresses the weight of an entire society enjoying compliant responses in good girls and, more important, forbidding inquiry, initiative and, most heinous of all, impertinence' (127). Bottigheimer also notes how this reflects the society at the time, as '[e]vidence from diaries and letters suggest that by the 1830s, silence as a positive feminine attribute had gained wide acceptance in all social classes in the dukedoms, principalities and free cities that made up the Germanies' (116). The passivity portrayed in these heroines' lack of active speech becomes a defining characteristic of virtue in women. This passivity is present in Carter's tale, where the snow child never speaks a word, and all the dialogue is between the Count and the Countess, which associates passivity with our presumed heroine and agency with our villainous woman.

There are many instances in Chainani's tale that seem to allude to a critique of the silent woman seen throughout the fairy tale tradition while simultaneously alluding to the lack of black voices throughout the feminist discourse. As the huntsman is about to kill Snow White, her questioning him on his reasoning causes him to stop and reflect. Whereas Bottigheimer argues that heroines did not pose questions, it is precisely that which saves this heroine's life. Similarly, when Snow White meets the dwarfs and is able to speak about her mistreatment to those who might relate or otherwise understand, it demonstrates the issue leading to intersectionality's creation as a way to give space to black female voices who had also been silenced by popular feminist and black discourse respectively. Snow White's silence is not just because of the positive attributions to passivity with women in fairy tales, but because she is also a young black girl faced with the abuse of a white older woman and a white Western society. More so than being a trait of passivity then, Chainani demonstrates through her openness with the dwarfs that her silence is a product of years of oppression rather than an unwillingness or inability to act.

There are instances of Snow White reacting to actions caused by the queen, but her ability to trick her suggests that she possesses an awareness of the queen's expectations of her. Earlier, when she learned about the girl's survival, she stated that it does not matter because the girl will 'just be killed again and again until her spirit is broken' (35-36). Her assumptions that the girl is beneath her socially and cannot defeat her, and years of silence

and assumed passivity on the girl's part, makes her underestimate Snow White's assertiveness to destroy the queen. Moreover, her feelings of superiority over the girl ensure a confidence that does not allow the thought that the girl might win to enter her mind. Therefore, the interactions between the queen and Snow White at the cottage allows Snow White to learn from her mistakes and use the queen's assumption of her weakness to trick her. When the queen first arrives at the cottage, Snow White takes pity on the old lady and lets her comb through her hair, causing her to fall unconscious on the ground. She 'realizes her mistake' (34) right before the poison works, but she does not realise it is the work of the queen until she tells the story to the dwarfs after her resurrection: 'then she sees the dwarfs' faces and knows how foolish she's been' (35). Again, speaking her abuse out loud to others makes her aware of the extent of the abuse she has suffered through. Therefore, by the time the queen comes again to try to kill her, Snow White has baked the poison from the comb into a loaf of bread which she tricks the queen into eating. When the queen pretends that she knows nothing about who sold her the comb the previous day, Snow White recognises the con and thinks, '[w]e're playing that game' (37). She does not allude to the queen that she knows of her scheme but gives her a loaf of bread as payment for the apple she tries to give her. Snow White uses the queen's own insecurities surrounding beauty to draw her in, stating that the butter in the bread 'makes you fair and lovely' (38) and the queen cannot resist such a promise of beauty, making it part of her downfall.

As the queen accepts the bread, the role of passive protagonist and assertive antagonist shifts. Whereas the traditional tale showed the queen treating Snow White like a mother treats a child by combing her hair and feeding her, Chainani's Snow White now 'tears off a piece [of the bread], holds it to the peddler like a mother bird to her chick' (39). The imagery of the roles is reversed and suddenly Snow White appears to the be driver of the action in the tale, not the queen. Chainani keeps with the image of Snow White's ability to wait not as something passive but cunning: 'Snow White waits like a storyteller who's found the right ending' (39). She has killed the queen with her own poison, signalling that it was the actions the queens made at the beginning of the tale – the abuse and eventual persecution – which led to her downfall. Thus, the queen drops dead and is placed in a glass coffin instead of Snow White. Bottigheimer argued that a lot of the silence in Grimms' tales was placed upon the characters in the form of a curse, which traditionally happens to Snow White as she is forced to sleep in this coffin and be viewed until her curse is broken (119-20). In Chainani's version, however, it is the queen, who has been outspoken and assertive since the tale's beginning,

who is cursed to a life of silence and objectification. This curse aspect of the narrative then portrays passivity as a punishment instead of the virtue we see in the traditional tales.

The change in the association to Snow White's passivity comes full circle in the ending, where the determination we saw as dangerous in the queen is now portrayed as inspiring in Snow White. The queen's hold on the throne was at the expense of Snow White, and her assertiveness negatively benefitted others we associate with goodness. The same goes for the queen in Grimm's version of the tale and even in Carter's Countess. Even though we acknowledge how the Countess is also a victim in Carter's tale, we cannot escape the fact that her assertiveness is linked with the desire to kill a child. However, at the end of Chainani's tale, Snow White claims assertiveness because of her own survival and, more significantly, her daughter's survival. Her rise to agency against the queen was on an individual level, woman against woman, but her rise to the throne in the final scene is against the opinions of society. However, her community is growing with the dwarfs and her daughter, and so she does not stand as alone as her mother did.

The father's role as the judgemental voice between these two women is noticeably absent from Chainani's tale. He establishes early on that the conflict between the two women is not for the father's love but for the social power the queen fears she might lose should others recognise Snow White's beauty like that of the mirror. Therefore, the Oedipal reading often brought to the Snow White tales serves little function in Chainani's tale. Since the father's presence is there only to demonstrate the effect society's judgements have on the perception of identity and social class, the sexual aspect of his character is close to non-existent. The new queen does not portray this 'sexual terrorist' fitting the Juliette standard of the evil queen as introduced by Carter (Chainani 'Sadeian Tragedy' 226), nor is the innocence and naivety of Snow White ever in focus. Carter's Countess survived the rose given by the Count because the sexual power it holds is one she is already familiar with, being a sexually mature woman. The downfall of Chainani's queen does not come from sexual or pornographic symbolism but Snow White's cunningness. Chainani argues that Carter's tale danger being an 'exercise in ejaculatory pleasure' (232) despite its intentions because the pornographic elements do not remove the archetypes of the villainous mature woman and the passive angelic girl, which alludes to why Chainani subverts the roles of passivity and agency within his characters halfway through the tale along with his exclusion of pornographic elements.

Carter's snow child is one of the few protagonists in *The Bloody Chamber* who is destroyed by a sexual act instead of achieving a sense of sexual agency, but Chainani's protagonist does not fit into either of these tropes and neither does the antagonist. There is no sexual act which threatens to harm Snow White; even the scopophilic tendency of the prince viewing her in the glass coffin is replaced with him viewing the queen. The sexual act of creating a child is also overshadowed by the mother's desire to have a child based on natural items. The same goes for the creation of the snow child, but as Chainani argues, the father's desire for the child border on sexual desire (225), which is not present in his own tale because of the father's disgust for the girl. Snow White and her daughter are born from a mother's desire to have a 'child that's mine to love' (20, 43), whom she keeps safe to 'teach her how to be loved' (21, 43). The association we have to the biological mother in fairy tales, the concept of the 'good mother' (Bettelheim 69), entail that we do not see this desire as a sexual one but a protective one. Her creation is not sexual, nor is her demise like in 'The Snow Child'.

The queen in Chainani's tale does not fear Snow White because of the 'budding sexuality' as many critics have argued is the case with the traditional tale (Gilbert and Gubar 38). Instead, the fear of Snow White's beauty is the fear that viewing black girls as beautiful will cause a shift in social classes and that the queen will lose her social status should the others recognise Snow White as more beautiful. Similar to how clothing symbolises power, as argued by Rogers, so does beauty and it appears through the queen's anxieties and the treatment of Snow White by the public. Therefore, the agency portrayed by the queen is to save her own social status and not for the love of the king. However, as argued earlier, since this assertiveness come at the expense of a marginalised group, it can remain villainous. One might assume at the beginning of Chainani's tale that the archetypes of Snow White and the queen are set to serve the same purpose as the traditional tale, and as Chainani argues is present in Carter's tale, but the different approaches to assertiveness suggests a resistance of universality in portraying these tropes. Instead of switching the narrative completely away from 'passive women are good and assertive women are bad' as seen in the traditional tales, Chainani's tale suggests that 'passivity at the right time could be beneficial and assertiveness can be both good and bad depending on the perspective'. The inclusion of complexity within the representation of passivity and agency suggests a move away from the generalisation and universalisation in the analysis of such tropes in feminist and intersectional discourse surrounding fairy tale retellings.

5 Conclusion

It is evident through the analysis of the modern retellings of these traditional fairy tales that the thematic core remains constant even as other structural elements, such as setting and characterisation, change. In short, as Alfred Hitchcock stated, '[w]hat frightens us today is exactly the same sort of thing that frightened us yesterday. It is just a different wolf' (Chandler 5). This thesis has examined how passivity became a prominent characteristic of the traditional tales 'Little Red Riding Hood' and 'Snow White' because authors such as Charles Perrault and Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm changed the tales as they wrote them down to comply with the bourgeoisie morals present in 17th century France and 19th century Germany. The analysis of the traditional tales demonstrated how portrayals of femininity are reduced to the moral that the passive virtue rewards success and happy endings while the driven woman must be punished. Moreover, the research by Jack Zipes and the historical sources by Eda Sagarra concluded that these gendered norms were a part of the socialisation process that kept middle-class women submissive to their husbands. However, the analysis of Carter's and Chainani's tales demonstrated that these archetypes, which are so established in the fairy tale genre that they appear to be set in stone, can be challenged and criticised whilst keeping the tale within the 'straight-jacket of their original structure' (Duncker 227).

Through her clever use of intertextuality and subversions of expectations, Carter forces the reader to acknowledge the power structures between men and women presented in the traditional tales in her wolf trilogy, while Chainani demonstrates the chain reaction of oppression through gender and class in 'Red Riding Hood'. Carter also brings the issues of class in relation to gender into the forefront in 'The Snow Child' as we see the economic conditions which affect the queen's motivations, while Chainani includes the explicit judgement of society to comment on intersectional oppression in 'Snow White'. All these texts critique descriptions of passivity and agency with female-led fairy tales differently, but the question remains why it is significant to read them together. What does comparing these versions of 'Little Red Riding Hood' and 'Snow White' tell us that they could not tell us separately?

To answer this question of comparison, we must look at how the analysis of the traditional tales demonstrated different kinds of passivity because of the role of the antagonist. As argued in Chapter 2, 'Little Red Riding Hood' demonstrates how Charles Perrault and

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm used the threat of punishment to inspire passivity in young girls. Their protagonist strays off the chosen path, and explicitly disobeys her mother's orders in the Grimms' version because she acts on her own desires. Moreover, they are tempted by the strange man in wolf form before they disobey. Therefore, their desires come about when they entertain the wolf's company, following the symbolism of the wolf as the sexual predator. The punishment occurs because they leave their passivity behind, and in the Grimms' version, it is only when the wolf swallows her and she resumes a sense of passivity in his belly, that she can wait for the huntsman to come and rescue her. The role of the antagonist is to tempt the young girl away from virtue and thereby away from passivity, more so than symbolising the dangers of agency within women.

In contrast, the passivity portrayed in the Grimms' 'Snow White' is seen in the idealisation of Snow White compared to the assertive queen. There is no masculine presence which tempts her to act outside of her expected passivity. Instead, the agency seen in the antagonist demonstrates the consequence of straying off the path: a woman becomes villainous when acting on her agency. Punishment is still a presence in this tale as well, as the assertive queen will eventually meet her fate and dance to her death because of her actions, while Snow White is rewarded for patiently sleeping in the glass coffin, waiting for her prince. The comparison between Snow White and the queen explicitly shows how passivity leads to success and agency leads to destruction in two opposite characters. Meanwhile, 'Little Red Riding Hood' focuses on the eventual punishment should the passive woman be tempted to act on her agency.

Analysing Carter's and Chainani's texts together demonstrate two vastly different approaches to criticising the passivity in the Grimms' traditional heroines. Although the analysis of their 'Little Red Riding Hood tales' takes up a greater section of this thesis than the analysis of their 'Snow White' tales, that is only due to the sheer number of texts analysed in Chapter 3 and not because the wolf tales hold more significance for my argument. Rather, viewing all these tales together demonstrates the different methods of using traditional tropes as a form of criticism. Carter focuses on emphasising the power difference between the masculine and feminine figures in her wolf trilogy and the difference between passivity and agency in 'The Snow Child' so the reader cannot ignore the disadvantage the protagonists face. I compared this to Carter's concept of the moral pornographer in Chapter 3 and how an awareness of the social and historical conditions which produced pornography can function as a mode of criticism in her wolf tales. The same applies to Carter's 'The Snow Child', where

an awareness of the economic and social implications of the stripping of the Countess adds a layer of critique to the tale without removing the central theme of jealousy between these two women. Instead of providing a statement saying the virtues applied to gender roles in the traditional tales are wrong, Carter emphasises these associations to gender to make the reader question these roles without providing an answer as to how to change them.

Chainani, on the other hand, provides a more immediate solution to the issue of praised passivity in fairy tale heroines by giving his characters agency and demonstrating the lack of change resulting from passivity. The protagonist in 'Red Riding Hood' uses her wits to escape the danger the wolves pose and uses the aid and knowledge of her elder to defeat them. Her agency changes not only her fate but the fate of the other girls who are destined to be sacrificed. Similarly, Snow White saves herself from the queen's wickedness through the switch from passivity to agency in 'Snow White' and such a switch suggests that her daughter will not have to endure the same struggles Snow White faced alone in her upbringing. In both tales, Chainani demonstrates how changing one's own fate can affect others whilst acknowledging that changing the lives of a few does not change the lives of everyone and the exploitation Eagleton argued narrative Marxism emphasises continues for the less fortunate. Both authors draw on society's role in shaping the identity of female characters but with vastly different approaches.

Reading Carter and Chainani together also provides a comparative analysis of the inclusion of erotic content in Carter's tales and the exclusion of such in Chainani's writing. As demonstrated in both Chapters 3 and 4, Carter's pornographic elements have come under great discussion and debate, with critics such as Merja Makinen praising her for what the erotic content does for the character's agency and Patricia Duncker criticises her for hiding passivity behind the assumed sexual agency. Although my analysis concluded that the sexual agency Carter places on her characters does change the trajectory of the tale when compared to the traditional versions, Chainani's versions demonstrate how such agency and change of fate can be achieved without eroticised content. Instead, Chainani brings the erotic back to the implicit, which is more reminiscent of the traditional tales.

I disagreed with Duncker's argument that Carter fails to challenge the structures of gender hierarchy presented in the traditional tales because she is 're-writing the tales within the strait-jacket of their original structures' (227) in Chapter 3. Moreover, the comparison between Carter's and Chainani's tales further demonstrated how one does not need to rely on

sexual agency in order to disagree with Duncker's statement. Chainani's tales are closer to the familiar structures from the traditional tales and yet his ability to subvert associations and expectations provides agency to characters often associated with passivity, changing the ending of the tales. Ultimately this thesis concludes that the modern retellings by Carter challenge the portrayals of virtuous passivity and villainised agency, and Chainani's tales more directly prescribe agency to his characters while remaining within the structures of the fairy tale genre.

The themes raised in this thesis are by no means fixed and can, along with the fairy tale genre itself, be expanded upon and developed to enlighten new areas of criticism. Although I incorporated the erotic aspects of Carter's tale in my analysis, looking into the rise and development of erotic fairy tale retellings could expand the analysis to include why exactly fairy tales are so often eroticised and how this affects the concept of passivity and agency within the female characters. Jeana Jorgensen has written an essay on erotic fairy tales aimed at female readers (2008), which can be used for such an analysis. Investigating how these tales differ from Carter's tale in terms of erotic focus could lead to an insightful analysis of the significance of female sexual pleasure in feminist literary discourse. Such an analysis could benefit from comparing Carter's work which is placed firmly in the rise of second-wave feminism of the 1970s, with a contemporary erotic piece to see how the change in historical conditions affects the tales' portrayal of female sexuality.

One of the limitations of this thesis is the focus on tales which have their setting and perhaps most of their popularity located in Western Europe. Although the concept of intersectionality discussed in Chapter 4 raises the question of race in these tales, it remains as race seen through Western and predominantly white society. An analysis of how the gender norms discussed in this thesis are portrayed in versions in, for example, Asia or Africa, along with an analysis of the differences presented in the two different geographical places, could result in an insightful analysis of how influential culture is in shaping such norms. Additionally, one could examine how the cultural, economic and thereby social connotations change in different geographical locations and whether we would need to adjust Eagleton's concept of exploitation which is at the root of narrative Marxism, as the attitudes towards class difference and patriarchal hierarchies might differ from the Western view.

Finally, to further develop the argument regarding passivity, one could look beyond the written anthologies of fairy tale retellings to include visual adaptations. As mentioned in

Chapter 4, Disney's *Snow White and the seven dwarfs* (1937) has reached massive popularity to the point where Christine Shojaei Kawan argues they hold an equal amount of popularity, if not more, as the Grimms' version (237). Similarly, there have been countless film adaptations of 'Little Red Riding Hood' in many forms, which Maria Tatar touched upon in a lecture at the Chicago Humanities Festival in 2013. Such an analysis which compares the behavioural associations to femininity to the visual beauty standards they portray would expand on the argument I made using Laura Mulvey's concept of the male gaze and scopophilia in Chapter 3. Does the male gaze in cinema contribute to these passive attributions to femininity lingering from the traditional tales? If so, does the film adaption of 'The Company of Wolves' manage to challenge these norms in the same manner as Carter's text?

Carter's work reappears countless times within the discourse surrounding fairy tale retellings, but as mentioned in the introduction, Chainani's tales have not achieved the same amount of praise or criticism. However, the hope is that this thesis demonstrates precisely why an analysis of his work can better aid the discourse surrounding the progress of fairy tale retellings. Instead of only using his critical work to analyse Carter's 'The Snow Child', an analysis of his fictional texts compared to Carter's tales can demonstrate the different aspects of fairy tale revision through his use of intersectionality and how the connotations of the traditional happy ending might not be the same for everyone. Compared to Carter's texts, his work demonstrates a further development of the rejection of universality within female experience and oppression. The happy ending for one might not be the happy ending for all, but it is a start.

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