The journal of El-Ryssala for studies and research in humanities | **Volume : 08 / N° : 01./ Avril 2023. pp 1292-1300**

PISSN : 2543-3938 - EISSN : 2602-7771

"A Room of her Own" Voicing the Other. Female Metamorphosis Simulacrum and the Subversion of the Tradition: A Case Study of Angela Carter's "Woolf Alice"

Samira BOUHELAIS[1,*], Pr. Saleh BOUREGBI[2]

[1]Badji Mokhtar University-Annaba (Algeria), samira.bouhelais@univ-tebessa.dz

[2]Badji Mokhtar University-Annaba (Algeria), sala.bouregbi@gmail.com

Received: 22 /09 / 2023 **Accepted**: 20 /03 / 2023 **Published**: 30 /04 / 2023

Abstract:

The desideratum to excavate the question of contemporary female gothic has occupied an inaugural status in the literary catalogue. Indubitably, the perspicacity in phrasing the issue of the quintessence of contemporary female gothic fiction between conservation and subversion reveals a relentless pursuit to scrutinize the concealed facets, whose details may be difficult to grasp. Au fond, female gothic writers felt an absolute urge to find a literary essence that would subvert women's domestic patriarchal ambit. In a larger discursive endeavour that female gothic writers brought their texts to bear on such paramount concern, Angela Carter's "Woolf Alice" has been woven into the fabric. Ranging from the theme of metamorphosis, subversion to female self-awareness, the story parodies Carter's conscious havoc of the patriarchal domestic ideology, and the female exigency to reify a room of her own.

Keywords: *Angela Carter, contemporary female gothic fiction, patriarchal domestic ideology, metamorphosis, subversive, "Woolf Alice".*

ملخص:

أخذ موضوع "الأنثى" في السرد القوطي اهتماما بالغا ضمن المشهد الإبداعي المعاصر، ومما لاشك فيه أن الكتابات الإبداعية قد دأبت على تكريس الصورة النمطية للمرأة حينا، مثلما كسرت هذا التقليد وخرجت عن المألوف حينا آخر، مما ينم عن ذلك السعي الدؤوب لاكتناه عمق الذات الإنسانية الأنثوية والكشف عن الخفي المتستر فيها.

لقد كانت الحاجة ملحة لتأسيس خطاب إبداعي لا يركن للسلطة البطريركية تقوده كاتبات في الأدب القوطي هدفهن القضاء على تلك الهيمنة وإحداث التحول والتجاوز في صورة المرأة وحضورها في المخيلة الأدبية.

إن قصة "وولف أليس" لأنجيلا كارتر تمثل هذه القضية الجدلية بكل تفاصيلها وحيثياتها، حيث تنطلق أنجيلا في بناء تصورها من وعيها الذاتي بوصفها أنثى ترفض الأيديولوجيا الأبوية، وتسعى لتجسيد غرفة خاصة بها.

الكلمات المفتاحية : أنجيلا كارتر؛ السرد القوطي الأنثوي المعاصر؛ الأيديولوجيا الأبوية ؛ التحول؛ التجاوز؛ "وولف أليس"

*Corrsponding author

I. INTRODUCTION

The rehearsal upon women's obsequiousness and subservience has come into the bailiwick of literary studies. In order to establish a bulwark against male-dominated ipse dixit, women felt the need to get accustomed to literature as paraphernalia to chime in their trepidation about acquiescence and precariousness under patriarchal ascendancy. Thus, for Ellis (1989), literature has always been used as "a site of résistance to ideological positions as well as a means of propagating them" (p. xxi). Forsooth, this kind of resistance, according to Foucault (1978), is a result of sway wielded by the patriarchy: "where there is power there is resistance" (as cited in Mills, 1996, p. 40). Inspired by concerns over agency and subjectivity, women started flagrantly cross-examining the chore ascribed to them, and they slated to disport the servile wife that does not get to have her own identity.

There is a colossal interest of the often assiduous efforts towards women's use of gothic fiction as a talking cure for women's occluded or repressed histories; unfavourable to male stories that mushroomed from its early days. No sagacious literary oeuvre could allow for awareness of women's situations and could encourage any reforms to the status quo. In the eighteenth century, the social backdrop was heavily focused on male ruling. Women were expected to remain quiet and to stay at home. Rolled by the sense of longing, self-indulgence, snugness and the supernatural, women's writings since their inception as 'romance novels' had been gauged as frivolous and inconsiderable.

Ineluctably, literary academia modus operandi exhibits the urgency to gain insight into a topic that has long remained intriguing. More troubling luck in earlier criticism was its appraisal of women's gothic stories as merely romantic fiction that are subpar compared to male stories. Moers (1976) attempted to trace a unique female gothic tradition as works that have been done by women in the gothic mode engaged critics in pamphlet wars. Ergo, the lengthy confabulation opens up the possibility of seemingly endless varieties of complex interplay of female gothic simulacra. While Moers (1976) upholds the importance of the author's gender, Becker (1999) defined female gothic fiction in terms of the speaking topic gender. Consistently, female gothic texts seek out new ways to make unspeakable or unrepresented voices heard. Ultimately, contemporary female gothic fiction sought to delve into the question of subverted gendered roles via impeding the patriarchal tenets and the binary moods of thinking. Accordingly, Angela Carter amalgamated a set of literary themes so as to give agency to her heroines and to subvert the traditional simulacrum of female gothic identity. In her trilogy of wolf stories, Angela Carter addresses the much debated problematic of female self-identification and agency. She wants to caution patriarchal societies about the jeopardy that outspoken, freestanding, or self-assured women proffer. This study is, thus, based on the investigation of the drastic reconceptualization of female identity in the tale of "Woolf Alice". It goes further to explore the heroine's metamorphic identity that has moved forward to enswathe a number of new horrific scenarios more germane to the reality of contemporary audiences. The bourne of the study entails going through a set of questions:

- What is the nexus between Gothicism and feminism?
- Is contemporary female gothic a conservative or subversive genre?
- How did Angela Carter use the female gothic tradition to subvert the already established female identity that exists out of the rigid social and cultural gender binary?
- To what extent can the story of "Wolf Alice" be considered as a metaphor for female self-awareness and the subversion of domestic ideology?

1. Ellen Moers and the Female Gothic Lore

"whenever a thing is done for the first time, it releases a little demon." Emily Dickinson

The term 'Female Gothic' has come under heavy critical opprobrium. In a meticulous audit of a set of women's literary calligraphy, which is entitled *Literary Women* (1976), Moers excogitated the appellation 'Female Gothic'. Exclusively, Moers weened that 'Female Gothic'

is "the work that women have done in the literary mode that, since the eighteenth century, we have called the Gothic" (1976, p. 90). Ergo, female gothic would refer to the author's female gender. Merely, the genre became a record of female growing solicitude and agita within the patriarchal society. Axiomatically, female gothic has been regarded as "a coded expression of women's fears of entrapment within the domestic and the female body" (Wallace & Smith, 2009, p. 2). Moer's (1976) attempt to propound a distinguishable female gothic rubric aroused a pivotal discussion over the viability of the label. There has been much discussion on the fluctuation of "Female Gothic", since the early 1990s akin to 'Gothic feminism', 'women's Gothic', 'feminist Gothic', and 'lesbian Gothic'.

Pernickety imbroglio and artistic incongruity between the two late eighteenth century writers, Matthew Gregory Lewis and Ann Radcliffe, are at the root of male and female gothic fiction's bifurcation. Accordingly, the major differences between them reside in "narrative technique, plot, their assumptions about the supernatural, and their use of horror/terror" (Williams, 1995 as cited in Wallace and Smith, 2009, p. 4), and for a variety of reasons male gothic fiction is regarded as the simon-pure gothic. Raddcliffe's plot story goes through a journey of a downtrodden, virginal and harassed heroine who was comminated by a peremptory oppressive male antagonist; explained the supernatural; and concluded with the schismatic marriage. Since it explores manly transgressions of social taboos and gender propensities that have been neglected, Matthew Lewis's "The Monk" is a notable example of male gothic. The plot promotes the sense of atrocious rape and even murder, which typically resists resolution. While female gothic harnesses the supernatural to get to grips with female leitmotifs, male gothic evacuates the supernatural indecipherable.

2. Women on Screen / Male Gothic Fiction Vs. Female Gothic Fiction

"your husband is trying to kill you" Margaret Atwood

Gothicism aspires to mitigate individuals' coercion of order and reason that curb their assiduous efforts to allege their solicitude and to forpass pre-established axioms. Wherefore, the disparity between male and female depiction of women is usually called into doubt. Miles (2002) recapitulates the dissimilitude between the two as follows:

> In the male Gothic, woman is always on the verge, or passes over the verge, of appearing unnatural, a monster of artifice. Or rather, for the male observer prone to a deracinating bout of lust, the fault is habitually projected onto woman, an accusation usually couched in terms of her lack of 'nature', her tendency to surpass the limits of an always problematic modesty. In male Gothic what one might call the 'deconstructive tendency of the carnivalesque' is kept in bounds by a psycho-sexual force, by a misogyny generally expressed as woman's monstrous otherness, her 'artificiality'. But in female Gothic the educative issues identified by Wollstonecraft, where woman's true self is thrown into question, exist usually as an implicit, but sometimes explicit, tension. (pp. 81-82)

In this vein, women are reckoned as unnatural and spurious, and they are frequently portrayed as fatalities, which is athwart female gothic fiction, and which impeaches doubts about their identity. Plainly, in female gothic fiction, the real peril to the heroine is eighteenth century patriarchal society, in which males clench political, social and economic undisputed dab hand. The bodacious resolution characterizes the female gothic in which the heroin is proffered a room of her own by marrying the man she loves.

Conventionally, scholars behold terror and horror as two sundry traditions under which gothic fiction might be secerned. The division resulted from the disparate writing style of two late eighteenth century writers Matthew Gregory Lewis and Anne Radcliffe. In her article, which is entitled "On the Supernatural in Poetry," Radcliffe (1826) initially made the distinction between terror and horror. She adapted Edmund Burke's description:

> Terror and horror are so far opposite, that the first expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes, and

> nearly annihilates them. I apprehend, that neither Shakespeare nor Milton by their fictions, nor Mr. Burk by his reasoning, anywhere looked to positive horror as a source of the sublime, though they all agree that terror is a very high one; and where lies the great difference between horror and terror, but in the uncertainty and obscurity, that accompany the first, respecting the dreaded evil. (pp. 149-150)

The sensory impact of terror and horror, according to Radcliffe (1826), escorted the critics to put forward an unhackneyed stratification of gothic: terror gothic represented by Ann Radcliffe, and horror gothic represented by Matthew Lewis. Most significantly, the dissimilitude goes further to uphold that terror and horror arose from male's and female's sundry ordeals of dread and disquietude.

3.Feminism and Gothicism

"We make up horrors to help us cope with the real ones." Stephen King

In her book, which is entitled "Female Gothic Histories: Gender, History and the Gothic," Wallace (2013) contends that "the Female Gothic can be seen as a harbinger of feminist politics" (p. 19). It limns the major issues that feminism upholds and frequently comes to terms with its exigencies. Wallace goes further with Margaret Doody's assertion that

> It is in the Gothic novel that women writers could first accuse the "real world" of falsehood and deep disorder. Or perhaps, they rather asked whether masculine control is not just another delusion in the nightmare of absurd historical reality in which we are involved. (2004, p. 99)

In this respect, feminist discourse of oblivion, coercion, and inaudibility runs concurrently with female Gothicism. More often than not, female gothic writers hack the genre to ventilate females' agony. Admittedly, the subversive, seditious portrait of female gothic emitted as a result of the new wave of feminism, bursting the lore of conservative genre that has accumulated over time. Wallace (2013), in her argy-bargy over the tendency of feminine gothic's disruption of gender roles, plumps for women suit to the vein. She considers history as no more than a hazard for them. Wherefore, history needed to be debugged via unveiling the magnitude of women's melancholia. Thence, a new caption of female gothic has been gaining a rocky eminence.

While bushwhacking the patriarchal essence, gothic novelists were up for the censure of women's socially, culturally and psychologically dire straits. Subsequently, gothic heroines are applauded as the most effective instigation for spreading feminist rudiments. Gothicism aptitude for getting into women's caliginous psyche, where all sorts of subservience and biddability are well adduced, frames it as a vehicle for feminism.

Female gothic fiction is typically linked to the concept of otherness. Hence, authors make efforts to handle the concept of the "other," and disavow the widely believed notion that women are nothing more than social outcasts. By enabling women's voice to come up to its innate strength and by bringing the "other" to life, Cixous (1975, as cited in Lomax 1994) believes that the hefty and immersing female literary works that phrase the question of women's place in literature will put back women to a former locus. She imminently mulls over the idea that female empowerment would help women come to terms with their sexuality, which she refers to as the "Dark Continent." Howbeit, Cixous (1975, as cited in Lomax 1994) cautions that this won't happen unless women are aware of: "to write yourself your body must be heard" (p. 20).

II. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

1.Contemporary Gothic Fiction: A Nostalgic Enticement

The gothic tradition is indelibly revamping and has undergone revelatory oscillation over time. Enticement to decipher the esoteric and arcane of gothic fiction was the backbone of inquiry for literary academia and has indubitably seized a discernible berth. Thereupon, reinvigorated and cautiously erected ruminations immersed in the gothic catalogue and pervaded a myriad of literary and artistic protuberances.

The sundry yen a peculiar epoch has on this genre has been used to demystify the renditions among gothic opuses. Infra, critics have given meticulous portraiture of contemporary gothic that contrast sharply with the prevailing one, which is incipiently comprised of works from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Contemporary gothic writers oft veer from the gothic convention, and as a result, their chef d'oeuvre duplicates the intricateness of the postmodern chamber.

Incontrovertibly, contemporary gothic fiction that shrugs off the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has been applauded by critics. Accordingly, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' gothic have been now rejigged and remoulded to grapple with the fettles and quiddities of the twenty first century. Thus, for Botting (2005), gothic can be delineated as a hybrid literary form in the sense that it accommodates resuscitation and historical replication. He states:

> The diffusion of Gothic forms and figures over more than two centuries makes the definition of a homogeneous generic category exceptionally difficult. Changing features, emphases and meanings disclose Gothic writing as a mode that exceeds genre and categories, restricted neither to a literary school nor to a historical period. The diffusion of gothic features across texts and historical periods distinguishes the gothic as a hybrid form, incorporating and transforming other literary forms as well as developing and changing its own conventions in relation to newer modes of writing. (p. 9)

Punter (2013) succinctly described the quirks and peculiarities of the twenty first century as follows: "contemporary gothic reflects and provides a singular symbolic language for the discussion of preoccupations of our time: capitalist inhumanity, information overload, child abuse, serial murder, pollution and corruption" (p. 179). The new current convulsions and social disruption engendered continuing controversy between the individual's traditional paragons and the ultra-modern society. The conventional standards that used to mimic reality are now deemed trifling and frivolous. Accordingly, themes of meagreness and paucity of the traditional norms are frequently foregrounded in contemporary gothic. By dint of the perplexity of postmodern world, gothic writers are eager to delve into, and to plumb, the depths of the gothic tradition. Nolens volens, their works are duplicated for gothic bone of contention. Angela Carter, as one of the prominent postmodern female gothic writers, lent herself to echo the amalgamated form of postmodern female identity. Thus, "Carter's postmodern taste agglomerates elements from folklore, Gothic literature, fairy tales and surrealism to open the path for the exploration of different possibilities of female identity and sexuality" (Pérez, 2020, p. 158)

2."New Wine in Old Bottles": Angela Cater and the "Latent Content"

Angela Carter's feminist weltanschauung, dichotomized with sexual cruelty and bloodthirstiness in *The Bloody Chamber*, outturns a leitmotif of manipulative, subversive power along with female reification and exploitation. Carter's reliance on the "latent content" of classic fairy tales is discernible, for she "re-imagines the submission of women, contained in the message of traditional fairy tales…she transgresses sexual taboos, that had been stifled in folklore and fairy-tale, and takes mythology to the borders of pornography" (Filimon, 2014, p. 112). The bulk of original fairy tales already have a plot around a poor, virginal heroine who has a quarrel with opulent, despotic man/monster. Parallelly, Carter's rendition sticks to the same horizon of the traditional female gothic stories, but her hub is predominantly the sexual persecution, as she states: "I was taking the latent image- the latent content of those traditional stories and using that; and the latent content is violently sexual. And because I am a woman, I read it that way" (Goldsworthy, 1985 as cited in Bacchilega, 1997, p. 69). In essence, Carter's stories limn the polarity between victim and victimizer clichés, which emanate the appalling female objectification. Scenes of the naked heroine athwart the trimmed man or monster are constantly handled.

Even though the ladies in these settings (and older versions of the fairy tales) appear objectified and helpless, Carter's works give them agency. Instead of criticising conventional

fairy tales for objectifying women and promoting sexual violence, Carter retells them from the heroines' perspective, giving them more agencies over their fate.

3."The Scariest Monsters…lurk within our souls"

Female gothic authors occasionally availed themselves of the horrendous and grisly monstrous delineations to buckle down masculine revulsion with women's sexuality and their trepidation about the possibility of getting their independence and iron-fisted subjectivity. Ensuingly, postmodern female gothic writers reputedly almost come to blows the long-established objectification of women as monsters. Contrariwise, they strive to engender new precisions of women as vigorous, emphatic and prepotent. Angela Carter, as one of the pre-eminent figures of postmodern female gothic fiction, lent herself to erect avant-garde female monstrous identity via rewriting and converting the archetypal female gothic monstrous statue. Ipso facto, Carter's accentuation of the monster's image in her wolf stories results from taking issue with gender old chestnut and subverting the traditional female encoded norms. For Carter, according to Barootes (2007),

> A free woman in an unfree society will be a monster."…On the surface, this statement seems to suggest that a free woman is demonized by her unliberated society. A different reading, however, reveals a deeper truth: in order that a woman may be free within unfree society, she must first be monstrous. It is her monstrosity - that which separates and distances her from society - that enables the woman to escape her social shackles. (p. 187)

Thus, monstrosity is a crucial term in the sense that it reveals a range of exegeses. Monstrosity that lurks within the female body is the sequel of rigid social consensuses.

4."The Wolf may be more than he seems": Voicing the Silent: Metamorphosis and the Quest for the Self

In Carter's wolf tales, the question of identity is of paramount importance. She believes that pairing excessive and transgressed human-animal underscores the versatility of identity, wherein the dichotomy of subject/ object is mutually dependent.

The trilogy closure is "Wolf-Alice," wherein gender dissimilitude, self versus other, subject versus object, and human versus animal curtailments are crossed and transgressed. The whole story is about the heroine's process of identification and self-realisation that bump into patriarchal boundaries and social fringes.

It is a story of a wolf-raised feral girl, named Alice, who is found and brought back into society at a convent. The girl opts for staying in a wolf community rather than a human society, and

> nothing about her is human except that she is not a wolf…Like the wild beasts, she lives without a future. She inhabits only the present tense, a fugue of the continuous, a world of sensual immediacy as without hope as it is without despair. (Carter, 2015, p. 154)

Thence, for Carter, the convent is no more than a metaphor for one of the coercive regiment of patriarchal apparatus. Ascribable to Alice's animalistic inclinations, the nuns decided to hand her over to the village's renowned Duke, the despised outcast werewolf who visits the graveyard at night.

Wolf Alice animal quirks roughs out the abject pitiful other. Patently, the pre-human stage of Alice's identity goes in parallel with what is promulgated in psychotherapy as the absence of the mother separation stage.

To all intents and purposes, the association of Wolf Alice with the Duke lies at the heart of drumming them out because of their atavistic anomalous comportment. Their odd bearings herded them into the werewolf terrene. The scene where Carter states that the Duke does not show up in the mirror to indicate that he has been ostracized from the human world.

Despite the lack of conveyance between the purportedly werewolf and the girl, the latter does not feel frantic with worry. They share the same mansion and conduct discrete essence.

By the same token, the narrator describes Alice as a person in a pre-fall from Eden:

> If you could transport her, in her filth, rags and feral disorder, to the Eden of our first beginning where Eve and grunting Adem squat on a daisy bank, picking the lice from one another's pelts, then she might prove to be the wise child who leads them all and her silence and her howling a language as authentic as any Language of nature. (Carter, 2015, p. 143)

Thus, she is an allegory of the pre-symbolic juncture in which the process of self-identification is going to ensue. While the symbolic stage appears to emanate from reality as Lacan states: "spring from the real," it is actually emancipated and self-determining.

5.Alice and Lacan's The Looking Glass

In consonance with Jacques Lacan, the process of self-identification goes through a transitional phase, known as the imaginary stage, wherein there is no clear-cut elucidation of the self, and accordingly, "Before the mirror stage, the child has a body, but no conception of self" (Carrier, 1994, p. 136). At this age, there is a feeble attempt by the child to identify himself/herself, mainly because of the subject and object blurredness. In order to achieve a kind of self-identification, the child should eschew and evacuate the mother stage. This proceeding inaugurates just as the child confronts the mirror stage that "signals the coming of consciousness for the child" (Roseboro, 2008, p.19), and discerns his/her independence and self-determining. On that account, "The self, is thus seems, is created in the mirror stage" (Carrier, 1994, p. 136).

The collision between Alice and her reflection in the Duke's home's mirror signals a way to the symbolic stage. She thinks that her replication is no more than a littermate trying to befriend her:

> First, she tried to nuzzle her reflection; then, nosing it industriously, she soon realized it gave out no smell. She bruised her muzzle on the cold glass and broke her claws trying to tussle with this stranger. She saw, with irritation, then amusement, how it mimicked every gesture of hers…She rubbed her head against her reflected face, to show that she felt friendly towards it, and felt a cool, solid, immovable surface between herself and she – some kind, possibly, of invisible cage? In spite of this barrier, she was lonely enough to ask this creature to try to play with her…at once she received a reciprocal invitation. She rejoiced; she began to whirl round on herself, yapping exultantly, but, when she retreated from the mirror, she halted in the midst of her ecstasy, puzzled, to see how her new friend grew less in size. (Carter, 2015, p. 158)

As long as Alice's reflection is in the mirror, her endeavour to live the symbolic stage eventuated. Artt's (2012) work, entitled " 'Ambulant Fetish': The Exotic Woman in 'Black Venus' and 'Master', argues that

> Much has of course been written about Carter's fiction and its engagement with the woman's image as it is reflected, whether it is the 'annihilating' ceiling mirror of 'Flesh and the Mirror', the multiplied, pornographic mirror of 'The Bloody Chamber' or the 'rational glass' of 'Wolf-Alice'. The spectacle of the female protagonist seeing herself in the mirror is always a watershed moment in Carter's work where the reflecting surface and the reflected image become important for self-awareness. (p. 584)

The mirror stage and the symbolic order, known also as the "big Other," are welded into indissoluble whole; they are mingled and imbricated. For Lacan, the symbolic order is mainly about the child's eventual swallowing of societal norms and perception of the "Other" concept. By taking care of herself and learning how to dress properly to cover her breasts, Alice learns how to manage her period. Alice's imperceptible acquirement of human attitude divulges her

assimilation into the social structure that the symbolic stage sustains. For her, being a woman is increasingly onerous because she never really discerned herself to be a human being.

By disrupting the conventionally-established dualism of object/subject, Carter seeks to question the social constraints her heroine is facing, and eventually frees her from the patriarchal oppression and the already formed inferiority reception of female identity. Inevitably, moving from the mirror to the symbolic order parallels the displacement of object/subject dichotomy. Alice's eventual self-identification during the symbolic phase realises her subjectivity.

The heroine's self-identification and subjectivity is well illustrated via the epilogue in which the incident is regarded as a turning point of the story. The Duke is chased and thrashed by the villagers who have made up their minds to wreak vengeance for his odor as a graveyard larcenist. When the girl notices that he is grief-stricken, "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" (Carter, 2015, p.162). Within the same scene, the pariah Duke appears to be set free from his civic ostracism as the mirror begins to simulate his face: "As she continued her ministrations, this glass, with infinite slowness, yielded to the reflexive strength of its own material construction" (Carter, 2015, p.162).

The eventual metamorphosed phase of the Duke's personality goes further to suggest that

> The communion between animal and human traits in Wolf-Alice results in her empathy, the need of healing and the sexual desire of this scene. Her caring and recognition develops into the final symbolic reappearance of the Duke's reflection in the mirror…As such, his humanity is recovered by Wolf-Alice's identification of him as an individual. (Pérez, 2020, p.166)

Alice is able to discern that the Duke is no longer a monster. She saved him from the villagers' hazard and refurbished his humanity, as the image in the mirror would imply:

> Little by little, there appeared within it, like the image on photographic paper that emerges, first, a formless web of tracery, the prey caught in its own fishing net, then in firmer yet still shadowed outline until at last as vivid as real life itself, as if brought into being by her soft, moist, gentle tongue, finally, the face of the Duke. (Carter, 2015, p. 154-155)

Tacitly, Carter's intention to use

> metamorphosis anthropomorphism and zoomorphism serve the purpose of deconstructing traditional gender roles present in fairy tales and putting forward a new sense of subjectivity…By using metamorphosis carter blurs the traditional opposition between animal and human aiming at female empowerment and at posing forward a radical conception of the self. (Pérez, 2020, p. 158)

To all intents and purposes, Alice's newly constructed female identity and subjectivity conjures up the perception of valued heterogeneity in which we may cohabit in harmony.

III. CONCLUSION

Carter's agenda to reweigh and alter the traditional fairy tale is in fact a whack at subverting the female gendered corporeality and the western patriarchal dogmas. On that account, Wolf Alice epitomizes Carter's endeavour to oppugn the extent to which female experiences are swayed by social and cultural binary veins of thinking. The story makes the case for feminism that concedes individual multifariousness in opposition to the metaphysical dichotomy between the sexes.

Athwart the embrittled collateral damage heroines in all the other stories, "Wolf Alice" limns a makeshift and disencumbered female yardstick. Carter nixes the accustomed fairytale cliché of the damsel in distress by yielding the story wraps up with the etching of female mandate. The heroine's soul-searching unveils a far more unhampered ingenue who upends the fetters of a genteel culture, yet who has nothing but scorn for a patriarchal consortium. Alice's

metamorphosis and the quest for self-discovery of her sexuality and humanity enunciate the idea of female self-identification and agency. As provision for forging an independent female identity that subsists outside the binary of subject versus object, the narrative deteriorates Freudian gender binaries. With the "new wine" of her female gendered construction, Carter disenthralls women from the "Old bottles" of fossilized patriarchal verdicts.

- **References**

- Artt, S. (2012). 'Ambulant Fetish': The exotic woman in 'Black Venus' and 'Master'. In S. Andermahr & L. Philips (Eds.). *Angela Carter: New Critical Readings*. 580-613. A Bloomsbury company: Continuum International Group.
- Bacchilega, C. (1997). *Postmodern Fairy Tales: Gender and Narrative Strategies*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.
- Barootes, B. (2007). Nobody's meat: Freedom through monstrosity in contemporary British fiction. In N. Scott (Ed.). *Monsters and the Monstrous: Myths and Metaphors of Enduring Evil*, 187- 200. Amsterdam, Rodopi B.V., NY.
- Becker, S. (1999). Gothic Forms of Feminine Fictions. Manchester University Press.
- Botting, F. (2005). *Gothic*. Taylor and Francis e-Library.
- Carrier, D. (1994). *The Aesthete in the City: The Philosophy and Practice of American Abstract Painting in the 1980s.* The Pennsylvania State University Press, Pennsylvania.
- Carter, A. (2015). *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*. Penguin Books, USA.
- Doody, M. A. (2004). Deserts, ruins and troubled waters: Female dreams in fiction and the development of the gothic novel. In H. Bloom (Ed.). *The Eighteenth-Century English Novel*. 71-112. Chelsea House Publisher, Philadelphia.
- Ellis, K. F. (1989). *Gothic Novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology*. University of Ilinois Press, USA.
- Filimon, E. C. (2014). *Heterotopia in Angela Carter's Fiction.* Anchor Academic Publishing, Hamburg.
- Miles, R. (2002). *Gothic Writing 1750-1820: A Genealogy*. Manchester University Press, UK.
- Mills, S. (2003). *Michel Foucaul*t. Routledge, London
- Moers, E. (1976). *Literary Women*. Doubleday and Company, Inc., USA.
- Lomax, M. (1994). Gendered Writing and the Writer's Stylistic Identity. In Katie Wales (Ed.). Feminist Linguistics in Literary Criticism, 1-20.
- Pérez, N. R. (2020). Howling in the woods: Angela Carter's metamorphosed little red riding hoods. In L. Brugué & A. LIompart (Eds.). *Contemporary Fairy-Tale Magic: Subverting Gender and Genre*, 158-168. Brill, Boston
- Punter, D. (2013). *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day 2*, 145-180. Routledge, USA.
- Radcliffe, A. (1826). On the supernatural in poetry. *New Monthly Magazine 16*.
- Roseboro, D. L. (2008). *Jacques Lacan and Education: A Critical Introduction.* Sense Publishers, Netherlands.
- Wallace, D. (2013). *Female Gothic Histories: Gender, History and the Gothic, Bringantine Place*. University of Wales Press, Cardiff.
- Wallace, D & Smith, A. (2009). Introduction: Defining the female gothic. In D. Wallace & A. Smith (Eds.). *The Female Gothic: New Directions.* 1-12. Palgrave Macmillan.