

IOC Notes – Carter

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Introduction to Carter

- Born 1940
- Suffered from anorexia as a teen
- 1960: married Paul Carter
- 1969-1970: lived in Tokyo, learnt “what it is to be a woman” and “became radicalized”
- 1972: divorced Paul Carter
- 1977: married Mark Pearce and had a son
- 1979: wrote *Bloody Chamber* and “The Sadeian Women and the Ideology of Pornography”
- 1992: died from lung cancer at 51
- Was unpopular for most of the 1970s, as the community did not appreciate her subversiveness where her works increased in perversity

Themes

- Postmodernism
 - Inter-textuality and pastiche
- Magical realism
 - Subversion of standard novelistic expectations by experimenting with subject matter, form, style, fusions of the quotidian and the fantastical
- Speculative fiction
 - Elements, settings and characters whose features are created out of “thin air” (imagination and speculation)
- The gothic
 - Horror and romantic elements, as well as parody and melodrama
- Feminism
- Picaresque

Style and convention

- Gothic, lush language and culture but also the lowest of the low
- Decadent, erotic, perverse—influenced by Japan, “a country whose tea-ceremony formality and dark eroticism bruised and challenged Carter’s imagination”
- Hyperbolic purple prose (porn)—“the Priestess of high porn”
- Moral pornography
- *The Bloody Chamber and other stories* are improvisations of folk or fairy tales
- Tried to unearth themes of rape, torture, murder, incest and cannibalism in her work

Categories

- Stories are arranged according to categories of creatures which all possess a predatory inclination
- Early novels represent women in danger of being tuned into fetishized, puppet like objects by a male master and their objective role as property

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- *The Bloody Chamber* stresses on the link between the sexuality of women and their role as property; reflected in the cat stories as well. Bluebeard's victimization of women overturned as he is vanquished by mother and daughter—the females are in a position of empowerment, representing the autonomous desire of the woman to free herself
- *The Snow Child* sees the count raping the body of the snow child, said to be a representation of masculine control of the female identity. Is argued to be a pornographer as he creates the image of a naked girl who he can defile before it melts away; the significance of the countess is derived from the count. Undressing and dressing of the countess by the count is representative of this as well
- *The Lady of the House of Love*: the she-vamp is empowered by her aggressor role against the virgin victim, a subversion of Bluebeard
- *The Company of Wolves* deal with women's relationships to passionate sexual desire as do the other wolf stories—the heroine runs towards the sexual threat of the lycanthrope, not away. Ultimately gains control of the wolf after avoiding being the natural victim
- *Puss-in-Boots* demythologizes sex by being playful and humorous—using elements of opera, pantomime and *commedia dell'arte* (form of theatre characterized by “masked types” and based on situation or sketches)
- Carter's women possess their own sexuality and fight back against masculine violence and the male gaze
 - *The Company of Wolves*: the wolf is a sexual predator with hunger for flesh as he must strip naked before becoming a wolf, while the Red Riding Hood is an adolescent who has reached sexual maturity; she traps the lycanthrope in his wolf form by burning the clothes and uses her sexual autonomy as latent power to control the wolf
 - *Wolf-Alice* combines the characters of the Wolf and Girl into one, serving the antithesis of the mild, delicate woman—the mirror spurs the awareness of her own power and leads to the realization of self-autonomy

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The Bloody Chamber (1979)

"There is a striking resemblance between the act of love and the ministrations of a torturer" (155)

Short story published in a larger collection, inspired by a collection of fairytales, based on Bluebeard. The story is a metaphor for all the myriad yearnings and dangers of sexual relations.

Genres

- Postmodern elements
 - Intertextuality through pastiche and inspiration from fairytales
- Magic realism
 - Natural occurrences in an otherwise mundane environment
- Gothic literature (horror and Romanticism)
 - Elements of parody and melodrama

Plot summary

- Based on Bluebeard: the story of a violent nobleman who murders his wives and the attempt of one to avoid the same fate
- Young Parisian girl from a lowly background marries a rich and powerful Marquis and is brought to his castle where she loses her virginity—the Marquis leaves her but then gives her the key to all the rooms in the castle, warning her to avoid one room
- She enters his enfer and discovers the torture chamber and the remains of three ex-wives; the Marquis finds out and attempts to execute her but is killed by the girl's mother arriving on horseback from Paris with a revolver
- The girl inherits the wealth and donates it to charity and sets up house with the piano-tuner

Characters

- Young 17 year old girl
- Marquis, powerful and wealthy
- Widowed mother (feminism, strength and tenacity)
- Jean-Yves the piano tuner

Ideas and Themes (form and function)

- Female oppression (power dynamics between girl and the Marquis)
 - Characterization of the girl
 - Gullible and naïve, barely out of school
 - "Knew nothing of the world" (134)
 - "My innocent and confined life"
 - Characterized as pure (sexual virgin), "prayer books" corrupts her purity, comparison with St. Cecilia, patroness of music, girl's main talent is the piano

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- Girl is insecure and weak, page 135, contrast with previous wives
- Characterization of Marquis
 - Marquis is older and authoritative, much older than her (135), authority augmented by how she has no father
 - Experience vs. naivety
 - Powerful, masculine physique “monstrous presence”, “huge, enormous man”, “dark leonine shape of his head and nostrils”, contrast in strength and bestiality
 - Rich and powerful, “rich as Croesus” (135), “the richest man in France”, financial domination
 - Influential, page 157
- Setting of the castle as a representation of the Marquis’s power
 - Page 132 “that magic place, the fairy castle”, surrealism
 - Metaphor for the Marquis’s control over the girl, the “castle of murder” (161), no escape, a “prison” (145)
- Jewelry as a symbol of oppression and instrument of torture
 - Symbolism in the ruby choker, which is “luxurious” (136) and “bright as an arterial blood” (136). Cross reference to the spaniel in *The Courtship of Mr. Lyon*
- Sadistic exploitation by the Marquis
 - Her inexperience and innocence are weaknesses that the Marquis finds pleasure in exploiting
 - “My naivety gave him some pleasure” (145)
- Psychological manipulation
 - “I lay in bed alone. And I longed for him. And he disgusted me.” (148)
 - She becomes codependent on him in her isolation in that castle. Women can be simultaneously attracted and disgusted by men at the same time
- Further manipulation
 - Toying with the keys to his castle, “a great mysterious treat” (145), “give it back to me whore” (167)
- Feminism—female empowerment
 - Subversion through the pastiche
 - The original plot of *Bluebeard* sees the girl’s brothers save the day
 - The girl’s mother is the savior, no male figures in the girl’s family in the *Bloody Chamber*. Jean-Yves, the male becomes the helpless bystander.
 - Characterization of the mother, the embodiment of female empowerment.
 - Pages 131 to 132 describe her independence, bravery and courage. “Defiantly beggared herself for love” (132), reinforces her strength and empowerment through fantastical hyperbole, mythologizes the mother

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- “Outfaced a junkful of Chinese pirates, nursed a village through a visitation of the plague, shot a man-eating tiger with her own hand and all before she was as old as” the girl (131)
- Characterization of Jean-Yves
 - Blind and powerless, of some comfort but of not much use (166)
- Religious significance
 - The Sin of Curiosity, “mark of Cain” (164) and “like Eve” (166), women’s passions are punished
- Narrative voice
 - Retrospective quality of the narrative voice contrasts with the naïve nature of the girl—first person gives way to the interiority of the girl and achieves a psychoanalytic aspect.
 - Child narrator contributes to sense of magical mystery (132, description of the castle)
- Setting
 - The “amniotic salinity of the ocean”, comparison of the sea to the amniotic fluid that surrounds a baby in the womb during pregnancy. Watery connection between mother and the child is followed through the “melting” landscape, and formed in the tears that flow over “gold bath taps” while they talk on the telephone.
 - Connection between mother, sea and child comes when the narrator’s “avenging angel” is the mother, who emerges from the sea and saves her life. Mother is the personification of the protective maternal instinct.
- The Opal Ring
 - It “glimmered like a gypsy’s magic ball” (136), “conspired to seduce me to utterly that I could not say I felt one single twinge of regret” (136), “opals are bad luck” (134), opals are symbols of trans-figurative properties, he demands the opal back afterwards
- Cultural context
 - Carter was writing in the 1970s, which coincided with the rise of Feminist movements in the West.
- Critique on relations between the sexes and the dangers of lust through moral pornography and Gothic imagery
 - The Sadeian Woman in 1978
 - Explored antithetical themes of feminism, used pornography to critique the relations between the sexes, touching on the self-immolation of women and how they are enslaved.
 - Lust and transformation: “the assessing eye of a connoisseur inspecting horseflesh...the sheer carnal avarice of it. When I saw him look at me with lust...” This lust transforms the man into a beast

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- Motif of masks
 - Are metaphor for a hidden, sinister past unleashed by lust. Page 133, 143. "That face...seemed to me like a mask, as if his real face, the face that truly reflected all the life he has led in the world before he met me, before, even I was born, as though that face lay underneath this mask."
 - Black mask in Reproof of Curiosity (142)
 - "I had seen his face without its mask" (143)
- Symbolism of the white lilies
 - Represent sexual lust, described at face value in the beginning (138) and used to liken girl's room to an embalming parlor (143), foreshadowing death and her as a trophy for preservation.
 - Page 158: the lilies are "hypocritically innocent flowers".
 - "Rank and ghastly, as if the lilies that surrounded him had all at once began to fester" (163)
 - Page 141, loss of purity, "his white, heavy flesh...too much in common with the armfuls of arum lilies...undertaker's lilies with the heavy pollen that powders your fingers...stain you."
 - Funeral lilies in page 133.
 - Symbol for the girl's hope: lilies are used to depict beauty and hope in page 138. But this sense of hope is subverted through the lilies in pages 149 and 155, atmosphere of uncertainty and ominous mood, a "stench of absolute despair" (163)
- Eroticism in the paintings
 - "Reproof of Curiosity", "The Rape of the Sabines", "Immolation of the Wives of the Sultan". Paintings are reflections of his own taste, also reflected earlier in "gallery of women"
- Sexual manipulation
 - Almost like violent torture, "impale" (143), "I heard him shriek and blaspheme at orgasm; I had bled" (143)
- The grotesque
 - Chamber, which is "stark" (155), has a "wheel, rack and iron maiden" (155), a "pool of blood" (157) and descriptions of mutilated wives.
 - The Bloody chamber has more than one meaning
- Gothic elements, classic characteristics, imagery and diction relating to hell
 - Melodrama, isolation of the damsel in distress, gloomy and mysterious settings such as the castle and its mysterious rooms
 - Imagery and diction relating to hell: "devil", "subterranean", "enfer", "dungeon", "hell", "swords" hanging in corridors
- Scopophilism, the male gaze (voyeur)

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- Gothic conventions such as isolated castle, naïve virgin, tyrannical male, confined spaces and horrific secrets
- Concept of “the other”
- Marquis as the emblem of patriarchy
- Suppression of the female identity, the naïve girl has no real sense of self
- Marquis enjoys the humiliation of the girl, not physical interaction.
- The male gaze becomes internalized, beginning from when she is in the train
- Retrospective understanding of the depravity of the Marquis
- Female role as servant to the male
- Mirrors make her a series of multiple reflections of the male gaze

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The Courtship of Mr. Lyon

Retells Beauty and the Beast, subverting and deconstructing on multiple levels, a postmodern pastiche, and a gothic parody.

- Power relations and feminism
 - Wealth is continually mentioned, and his house is the masculine domain
 - Docility, pages 175 when she first meets the Beast, and 176, "she would gladly have gone to the ends of the Earth for her father..."
 - Highly idealized character
 - Page 177, "she must pour" like a servant
 - Page 171, a "girl-child", "pet", idea of ownership
 - Symbol of the rose, which represents the idealized image of the woman
- Myriad yearnings and the dangers of sexual relations, sexual awakening
 - Fearful and insecure with the Beast at first, but then less afraid
 - Page 179, second last paragraph, sees a reflection of herself in his eyes
 - Page 178, no longer felt nervous about speaking to him but would always retreat when touched
 - Page 181, "she flung herself upon him", learns to be more confident, matures
 - Female empowerment or subjugation?
 - Linguistic: Mr. and Mrs. Lyon... Patriarchal?
 - Fantastical to a dull reality
 - Sensual and sensuous pleasures
- Ambiguities
 - Demarcation between the Beauty and the Beast
 - Is the beast really a monster?
 - Beast to man is perceived as a downgrade, domesticated
 - Beauty becoming a milder version of the Beast, like a "pampered cat"
- Setting and magical realism
 - The mansion is like a suspension of reality "where all the laws of the world need not necessarily apply" (178)
 - Described as a kind of schizophrenic vision due to awareness of fiction, anachronism
 - Lush descriptions of luxury and excess, Beauty becomes indulgent and spoiled, commentary of artificiality of material things
- Elements of pastiche/parody
 - "She follows Beaumont the better to trap her"
 - Hyperbolic purple prose in page 171-172

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- Imitates the romanticized, descriptive language of traditional fairy tales but the excesses prevents one from taking it too seriously
- References to other fairy tales, Snow White, Cinderella, Alice in Wonderland
- “A collection of courtly and elegant fairy tales”
- Link to The Tiger’s Bride
 - Courtship is the tamer version, quiet domestication “Mr. and Mrs. Lyon walk in the garden...” vs. violent primal nature
 - Lion vs. Tiger “The lamb must learn to run with the tigers” vs. gentlemanly lion
 - Courtship: harmony in domestic everyday level, Tiger is on a sexual, primal level
 - Beauty is more cynical and strong-willed in Tiger, Father is a selfish gambler in Tiger’s Bride

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The Tiger's Bride

Beast wins at cards, winning the daughter, who follows the beast back to his castle. At first daughter has power over him and slowly gets comfortable with the idea of being exposed. Becomes a tiger in the end, returns to the Beast

- Elements of the Gothic (fiction, horror, death, romance)
- Extreme Romanticism, isolation, expressions of emotion
- Elements of Postmodernism in pastiches and subversion of expectations and tropes of the genre, namely the role of women
- Draws on the conventions of the fairy tale, the stereotypical male hero as the Beast
- Carter wanted to extract the "latent content" from the traditional stories, rewrites the story to play and prey upon the earlier version and the misogynistic stereotypes
- Beauty and the Beast, a traditional fairy tale, already considered unconventional for its time due to portrayal of gender and class.
- Women's power over men in discovering their sexuality
- Evil and corruption of men

Atmosphere and Imagery

- Elements of the gothic, oppressive atmosphere at the start, with voluptuously descriptive imagery, reminiscent of a fairy tale, petals falling off flowers and the staining of the rose
- Contrast to signify a metamorphosis

Power relations

- Father over the girl
- Beast over the father
- Beast over the girl ("fear of devourment")
- The beast and daughter power relations become very mixed, link of fear and power
- Useless male: the gambler father

Role of fairy tales

- Self-Reflexivity
- Serves to educate "the girl on the mysteries of what the bull did to the cows"
- Carter uses this system of repetitions to signify how women are trapped in the ancient discipline of language and order, and is herself a cave full of echoes, a system of repetitions, a closed circuit
- To deconstruct and manipulate identities of stories
- Ironic deconstructive techniques

Women's ideal role

- "Clockwork twin", "ballet girl", women are for "pleasure and utility", the trope of one being the damsel in distress; the perfect "civilized woman"

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- Role of women is to just be there and serve the male
- Her self-worth is dependent on her father, but towards the end she starts seeing herself, the hint at a final transformation

Motif of skin and meat

- Flesh plus skin equals sensuality; pleasures of the flesh are vulgar and unrefined, even with an element of beastliness about them, although flesh tints have the sumptuous succulence of peaches.
- Carter's stories about women finding her "skin", the sensuality or sexuality, breaking out from the passive case (being the object of desire)
- Transformation traced throughout the story

The Beast

- Savage and magnificent power outside of humanity
- Signifies sensuality, which the women have been taught, will "devour" them, but when embraced, gives them a sense of awareness, power and strength.

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Puss in Boots

Narrative voice

- Told from Figaro (male) perspective, mostly the male which undergoes the metamorphosis from cynic to someone who accepts love

Gothic elements

- Not a lot of horrific elements
- But gothic themes of death and sex are involved

Magical Realism

- Talking cats

Characterization of Figaro (Puss in Boots)

- Shows a misogynistic and oppressive POV towards women, seen in first encounter with Tabby, his impression etc.

Characterization of Tabby

Characterization of Signor Panteleone

- Commodifies and objectifies the wife
- Impotent, ironic as Panteleone means pantaloons, signifies virility
- Convention of rich old man from commedia

A Bloody Chamber

- Room where the girl stays is also where the man is killed
- Also room where they have sex

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The Erl-King

Mythological character in ancient folklore, a malevolent creature who haunts forests. Follows perspective of a lone narrator when she encounters the Erl-King, realizes the cage is being woven for her and kills him.

Prominence of male domination and control, but the innate power of the female triumphs

- Aspects and symbols of male domination
 - Atmosphere and setting (entrapment)
 - The forest itself is a prison and signs of gothic decay: rain like “nicotine-stained fingers”, “russet slime of dead bracken”, “cold oozed up”, “lancinating cold”, “haunting sense of the imminent cessation of being”, “sickroom hush”.
 - Entrapment, the active malevolence: light was “sufficient to itself”, “impenetrable”, the cold “grips hold of your belly and squeezed it tight”, “the woods enclose”, “swallow up”, “enclose again” serve to make the woods eerily autonomous with an intent to control
 - Psychological introspection, atmosphere and setting, magical realism: representing an indeterminate subconscious where the narrator figure unravels her interior psychology; “easy to lose yourself in these woods”, enhanced by the liminality of the winter-autumn state, resulting in psychological rawness highlighting the primal interplay of gendered power
 - Deification of the Erl-King
 - Introduced in the first person, page 223, he possesses nature, embodies it, and is a guardian and master. Elevated and powerful position, nature at his beck and call
 - Symbol of domination being the Male Gaze: “the black vortex of his eye, the omission of light at the centre, that exerts on me such a tremendous pressure, it draws me inwards”, “if I look into it long enough, I will become as small as my own reflection”, the male-directed reflection
 - Symbol in clothing: “skin the rabbit” referring to the unclothing of the narrator; the Erl-King’s “skin” covering her entirely, “He strips me to my last nakedness”, symbolizes consumption of the female by the male, and the projection of his identity onto her
 - Birds are a symbol of freedom but are caged
- Corruption of love and sexuality
 - Statement of malice; doing her “grievous harm”
 - Domination of the female narrator; “he lays me down...where I lie at the mercy of his huge hands”
 - “I fall down for him”
 - “You sink your teeth into my throat and make me scream”

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- Bird calls displaying loss of power, the first call being a “girlish and delicious loneliness”, while next call was “as desolate as if it came from the throat of the last bird alive”
- Sexual transformation of the female narrator: innocence to masochism, a resemblance between the act of love and the ministrations of a torturer”, innocence transmutes into a pleasure derived from oppression. Physical and psychological desire
- Female domination
 - Sexual domination gives the narrator an ironic power: “I knew from the first moment...Erl-King would do me grievous harm”
 - Her power is removed when she discovers that the Erl-King intends to control her beyond the realm of sexuality, and the inability to prevent this would indicate a true loss of power
 - Male domination transits to the empowerment of the female character, through the murder (strangulation), humiliation (strangling with his own hair, the symbol of male destruction), protest (“mother, mother, you have murdered me!” the descent and betrayal of the Erl-King’s misplaced trust) and then the dismantling of the male dominance (freeing the birds)

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The Snow Child

A subversion of snow white, from motherly desire for a child to the male lust for the idealized woman, presenting the unattainability of desire, which will always melt away below possession

Gothic elements

- Snow child is the pure, young virgin, damsel in distress
- Weather: the midwinter (winter solstice), snow and its significance
- Bloody hole (the bloody chamber)
- Necrophilia (taboo)

Narrative voice

- Third-person narrative, detached from the events
- Contrasts with the empowerment of the narrator in other stories with first-person narrations
- “bleeds; screams; falls”

Magic realism

- Animation and personification of clothing
 - Furs
 - Boots
 - Exposure of women is seen as natural
- Animation of the rose
 - “biting” reveals life within the rose, and how it is a symbol that is dangerous and corruptible
- Sardonic humor

Color symbolism

- White for purity
- Red for spilling of blood
- Black for sin and sexual desire

Significance of the image of Winter

- “Midwinter” is the transitional period in the year, turns towards the coming of spring and new life while looking back to the season of death
- Suggesting life but foreboding death, invisible and immaculate, endowed with a quiet beauty
- Whiteness of the setting contrasts with the black colors of the count and countess, the snow child is pure and innocent

Significance of the rose

- Symbol of romantic love and lust (desire of the male)
- “I can't deny you that,” position of the female is reduced to love and lust
- The rose bites: lust bites

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- Rose as a phallic image

Consistency of the male power

- Reversal of roles in the Carter universe: the countess is powerless, the countess and the snow child are one
- Countess in powerful attire

Female oppression

- Two levels: countess and snow child
- The idealized female image is despised by women, oppression of the autonomy of females
- Identity is found in the glittering pelts of black foxes, black shining boots, which are given to her by the count
- More helpless than the mare in watching the necrophilia
- The snow child is merely an object for the count
- Snow child is objectified

Male gaze

- Pornographer just like the Marquis
- "I wish" – obsession and desire
- Count has power and wealth i.e. his title
- The girl is his creation and he is the creator
- Only values or desires sexual gratification
- "Weeping" – vulnerability of the male

Inversion/reversal of roles

- Mirroring of the countess and the snow child, equal in subjugation

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The Lady of the House of Love

Gothic Conventions

- Gothic antithesis (the trope of virginal victim and powerful beast all in one)
- Lady is trapped in her role
- Fate in the form of tarot cards, symbolic of fate, trapped within a “cave full of echoes,” nothing can console her and she turns to the comfort of the tarot cards
- Mise-en-abyme
- The male subverts the gothic power, giving human solutions and contesting gothic power
- Subverting fate: heralded with the drawing of the love tarot card, challenging fate

Carter Conventions

- Postmodernism
- Animal imagery (prey vs. predator in the same person)
- Cats and foxes
- Characterizes the male; he is not predatory, his role is to liberate the female from the realm, not dominate her
- The rose as a force which traps the ideals of the feminine, and has a dominating, overwhelming presence in her domain
- Eating; her drinking their blood is eating them, and she invites them into her domain to feed them, food is a symbol of power usually but in this story the food is not expected of the gentry, her power is fake
- Clothing: her negligee of bloodstained lace, and her mother’s wedding dress
- Female gaze? The mirror that does not reflect a presence, along with antiquated glasses, which she needs to see the male, symbolic of archaic worldview and being sexualized to exploit males vs. the virgin’s purity.
- If sex suggests equality of sexes she must first remove this worldview; is injured in an attempt to escape the worldview
- Male gaze? His eyes are described as blue beams, associated with the sun and light, that she is allergic to as a vampire. The virgin sees her as she is and not sexualized, idealized or mythologized, not an object of desire

Implications on Gender Relations

- Feminist is a dark construction that imprisons women and turns them into living dead creatures – the she-vamp
- The female herself subverts the norms in the anthology
- Female has apparent power but is entrapped, and the male who enters offers female liberation, and myth of femininity are not debunked

Triumph

- He sucks her blood, the “end of exile” similar to the “end of being”
- She becomes “otherized”

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- Animal imagery: an allusion to sleeping beauty, released as a bird with the help of the male
- Human powers opposed to gothic powers
- The rose is as sign of female, “plucked from between thighs” signaling loss of virginity
- Rose is trapped by the male in his glass of water

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The Werewolf

Series focuses on Wolves and kinship relations, based on little red riding Hood. A cautionary tale for little girls to avoid speaking to strangers, and there is a distinction between good and bad, citing familial relations. Tale is fantastical and inspired by the Grimms' version and a 12th century Japanese folk tale. Utilizes pastiche

Werewolf subverts, as it is:

- Matriarchal rather than patriarchal
 - Child saves herself from the wolf
 - Requires no huntsman to save her
- Realistic portrayal of fantasy setting
 - In opposition to the Grimms' setting
- Universal character

Gothic conventions

- Strange, mysterious and dark setting outdoors and indoors
 - "Cold tempest; wild beasts in the forest"
 - "No flowers grow there"
 - "Winter and cold weather"
 - "Crude iron of the virgin behind a guttering candle"
- Townspeople are suspicious
 - "Wreaths of garlic on the doors keep out the vampire", plays with the mythicity and setting
 - Walpurgisnacht and its significance

Narrative voice

- Omniscient, at first it describes the grotesque setting, an old lady with a black cat following her would be considered a witch, and describes the feelings of the character, the emotions of the child and the wolf, characterizing the wolf as human
- Each paragraph becomes less personal, "go and visit grandmother", "the good child does as her mother bids", and "the child had a scabby coat of sheepskin to keep out the cold" [reflecting the wolf in sheep's clothing]...
- The girl is the "wolf", the mother in Bloody Chamber. She is represented as calm and not frightened
- Casual, matter of fact narration to characterize the child and distance the reader
- Reader feels uneasy and detached from the story with terse phrasing and tone for dramatic effect

The girl as the universal character

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- Has her father's hunting knife; the symbol of virility and strength
 - "You know how to use it"
 - "Child was strong"
 - Female empowerment as a result
 - The girl as a phallic mother
- She is a wolf in sheep's clothing

The grandmother/werewolf

- Inversion of the Tiger's Bride, the wolf is less brave than suspected, questioning the tradition that werewolves are male
- It betrays the "sexing" of tradition

The villain

- Dubious little girl who contributes to the grandmother's suffering
- She is not punished but prospers
- Devoid of emotion
- Grandmother is condemned by the masses as a witch
- Death was deeply moving
- Sympathy and pity of the reader

No moral message; good are not necessarily rewarded, bad are not immediately punished, and that everyone may be a werewolf, not only these who assume the wolf's shape. The little girl may become the werewolf by "prospering"

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The Company of Wolves

Title: double entendre, the word company has two meanings. Red cloak symbolizes menstruation, a nymph. Company refers to the gang and also companionship. She is in the company of a wolf in the end

Wolf or werewolf, duality, the bestial and animalistic side of man, subplots in the story and different “wolf stories” with multiple subplots

Wolves respond only to lust and self-desire

Magical framing, superstition and foreboding, page 256 first half

Didactic refrain

Predominant third person narrative with shifts in temporal position, “you” and “me” to link reader to story, involving the reader’s thoughts and feelings

Male gaze: the huge eyes

Gothic setting of the forest

- Didactic function to warn children about the perils of the outside world
- Carter preserves the gothic setting and uses it to highlight the female’s agency
- Elements of mystique and magic are found, which alludes to the Erl-King
- Female protagonist is afraid of nothing despite the forest
- Allusions to Lady of the House of Love, similarity to the soldier

Characterization of the girl being innocent is not as strong, as she has power from the onset

Page 258: even her own striptease is done in a playful manner, and finally as the wolf wants to eat her she bursts out laughing

IOC Notes – Carter

Wolf-Alice

Inspired by LRRH, BatB and Alice in Wonderland; pastiche

Themes: the female body is the backdrop for shame/self-awareness and gives way to societal conditioning and origins

Duke

- Lives in a mansion alone: shunned by society
- 264: "bereft and unsanctified household"
- Even wolf packs shun him

Wolf-Alice

- Outside cultural inscription
- Deprived of communication, respect, identity
- 263: "two legs looks, four-legs sniffs"

Freak against freak

- Codependency, shunned by society
- Usage of the female body and self-awareness: the passage of time and a sense of self

Female body

- Carter uses the periods as signal of passage of time and sense of self, with violent undertones (jolted into maturity)
- Violence of societal conditioning "it was not fastidiousness but shame that made her do so" (267)
- 266: "in a world of talking beasts and flowers, she would be the bud of flesh in the kind lion's mouth: but how can the bitten apple flesh out its scar again?"
- "Mutism is her lot": logo centrism, where language is her "order" but she cannot use it

Power play

- She thinks her period blood is from a wolf who "nibbled her cunt" (267), paint a picture of females being helpless in view of male violence
- "Only his kitchen maid, who is not wolf or woman, knows no better than to do his chores for him."

Natural instincts

- Nuns regarding her as feral/a travesty while her natural instincts are actually supposedly the most basic/pure form of being
- Society is reductive for Wolf-Alice

Feminism

- Nuns try to domesticate her but fail

IOC Notes – Carter

- Strength and growth of Wolf-Alice
- Raw, unbridled compassion
- Nuns do not believe that such concepts exist in Wolf-Alice's being
- Feminism challenges sexist conditions

The moon and the mirror

- Serves as a boundary between human existence and raw transcendence
- Mirror stage: beginning to recognize themselves in the mirror (concept of the other self)
- "She is its significance"

She is a hybrid

- Wolves tended her because they knew she was an imperfect wolf
- Secluded her out of fear of her imperfection
- This hybrid is also present in the Duke, at the end he transforms but is still referred to as a wolf or a woman in labor

Conclusion

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