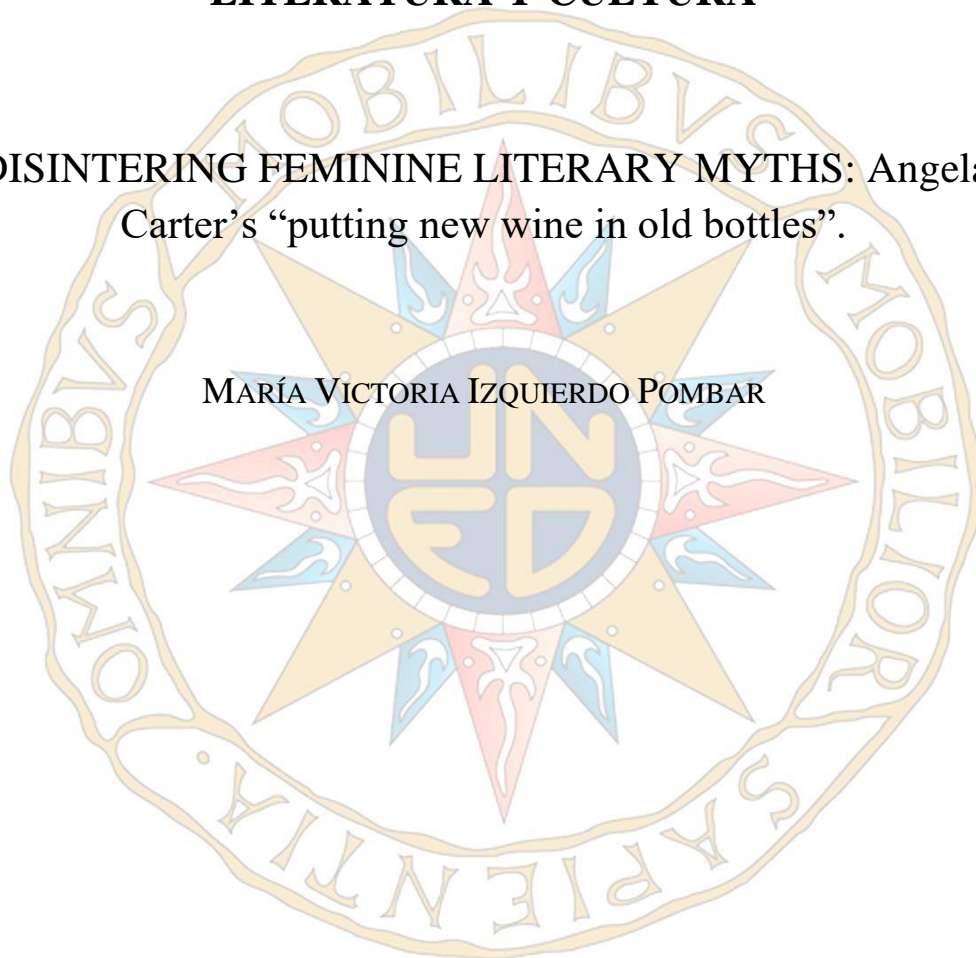**TRABAJO FIN DE GRADO**

GRADO EN ESTUDIOS INGLESES: LENGUA, LITERATURA Y CULTURA

DISINTERING FEMININE LITERARY MYTHS: Angela Carter's "putting new wine in old bottles".

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Introduction

To understand why Angela Carter edited a book of fairy tales, or why she wrote modern fairy tales, we must take a look back and analyse how female writers were out of the canon. It also needs to be considered, how Modernism and posterior movements were addressed by these female writers and the effort they all undertook to be a part of it, along with how writers preceding Carter paved the road to her work.

Modernism started an era in which myths were to be re-evaluated and reinterpreted, since meaning and order had been shifted, there was a need for new literary works that would adjust to this new reality. These transitions in literature, these new definitions were usually made by male writers, so if there was to be a new view of texts, the canon that would be revisited would predominantly be that of men, by men. As noted, "women writing and women in writing were equally ostracized to sex-based cultural categorizations" (García Lorenzo, Zamorano 166).

As proposed, if we take a look at the literary canon, it was established in the nineteenth-century on a Victorian male basis, as it was thought that they were more dextrous, intelligent and capable than women. Challenging this canon was taken up by some as a quest. It was Showalter and Annette Kolodny, among others, who demanded that feminine literature, should be available, for readers, for students, at universities, everywhere. That it should take the place that it deserves, as class A literature, and not some low art, as it had been given before.

As stated, during Modernism, one of the changes that was set was the distinction between high and low art. Critics like Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar[i] "suggest that a major motive for what was understood as Modernism, with its exclusions and discriminations, was a reaction against the rise of literary women" (Zamorano, García Lorenzo U5 1). Considering that fairy tales themselves were

being taken into consideration as low art, it is only fair that Angela Carter thought about, not only editing an anthology of fairy tales from another perspective, but also, rewriting some of them to change received ideas of status and gender in society. We will see through this TFG how this is not something new, since Perrault and his peers had already discussed where to include fairy tales. Again, it is necessary to understand previous female (and male) writers and critics who paved the way. With this context this TFG will undertake research on *Angela Carter's Book of Fairy Tales* to explore how she tried to unearth a genre that had not always been considered a low art form.

Virginia Woolf, one such pioneer, started *A Room of One's Own* with a very clever strategy: placing a "but" at the beginning. A strategy to insert us, the readers, into the problem, that is, the need to question existing ideas. The question would be whether we were, or still are, able to read everything with a "but" in mind. Furthermore, if in a world where beliefs and truths have been presented to us as universally accepted, are we, women, able to rewrite the canon to fit in. This could be what Carter had in mind, like Marina Warner states, placing us women, not only as readers, but also in the centre of the story. Carter tries to seed a "but" in the conventional and received ideas that we had about fairy tales.

When the canon started to be re-thought, Woolf introduced the figure of Judith Shakespeare. This made many women aware of what was lacking. With no previous tradition, with no common place to turn to, how could they learn and master female writing? There was no female literary tradition; they had been taken out of the story, but the reality was different: women were writing. For Woolf it was clear that Shakespeare existed because he had predecessors, tradition was needed; which is why I find it so important that writers like Carter would write, rewrite and look for a new canon. Exposing new truths, new perspective, allowed future writers more freedom. Not only this, but it would also grant children new ways to portray women. This is one of the main lessons gained from writing this TFG, it is not that there were not any female fairy tale authors, but that they were unknown.

Reading Marina Warner, one is introduced to Marie-Catherine Aulnoy, Jean de La Fontaine, Charlotte-Rose Caumont de La Force, Marie-Jeanne L'Héritier and many more. This could be the point Woolf was trying to highlight. If someone with my profile, an English student interested in genre studies, who, after four years of learning and reading, is only aware of Perrault, the Grimm brothers and Disney as fairy tale providers, it is only natural that works like this TFG are necessary. We should be able to listen to these female voices, who kicked off a revolution and are now buried within books like the ones I have only just discovered. They are far from anyone's radar, hidden in bookshelves. This canon does not exist. This canon, that Carter needed in order to subvert received ideas, must have been hard to find.

And so, it was with Postmodernism that previous creations began to be questioned. Postmodernists were sceptical towards grand discourses, towards legitimized knowledge. Authors like Adrienne Rich were concerned with language and history, as they were male constructs. There was a real struggle to find a voice and a language. Woolf, part of the United Kingdom wave of Postmodernism, understood as well that "the old conventions of realism were no longer tenable" (De la concha, Dobrott, Ballesteros 8).

It was through Angel Carter's editing of fairy tales that I came across the reformulation of the feminine myth. I found my "but". Woolf expressed a need for a feminine language that would allow women to express themselves with the different creativity that they should have. This is the objective that I would like to analyse with this work: how Carter, with her own language, tried to rewrite myths that were taken for granted, how she edited fairy tales to try to be as faithful as possible to the folklore, to the original tales, and how, she went a step further and wrote her own modern fairy tales, like *The Bloody Chamber: and other stories*, which sadly I won't be able to delve into to any great extent.

Izena duen guztia bada, this old Basque saying emphasises the importance of naming, because what is not named, doesn't exist. My main objective is to prove that by editing her volumes of fairy tales and also by subverting roles and old classical fairy tales, Carter was naming female authors, female protagonists, female references. She was actually reformulating the feminine myth. Naming it, so that it would exist.

Starting with Roland Barthes' *Mythologies*, Donald Haase's *Fairy Tales and Feminism,* and also Marina Warner's *From the Beast to the Blonde*, I would like to set a context to examine how fairy tales and myths have been presented to us throughout history. That is, beginning with myths tales that have sometimes been passed through folklore for centuries, as far back as ancient Greece, I would question if these stories have been updated or if they need to be updated. Why there was a necessity for authors like Carter to rewrite the genre and why a feminist view of fairy tales was needed.

Through the cited texts the proposed methodology is to set three contexts in which to analyse Carter's editorial work, as well as some of her fairy tales. Barthes' work will contextualise the myth nowadays, and what it implies. Haase's work will set the connection between feminism and fairy tales. And Warner's, will put the focus on how to better understand the history and stories behind fairy tales.

Once these three contexts have been established, *Angela Carter's Book of Fairy Tales* will occupy this work starting with what she found when editing fairy tales, taking the Grimm brothers as the precursors to fairy tales' compilations, and then analysing female figures, like Mother Goose, throughout fairy tale and folklore history. It will end with some of those tales that exemplify the ideas exposed.

1. The fairy tale and the myth

Fairy tales come from the folklore, they were usually short stories that were told orally and had magical elements and mythology within their narratives. Throughout history they have been allotted to the lower arts, always seen as a lesser genre, that for many years, have not been studied or analysed with the importance that was needed.

Myths, as a genre, talk about origins, and they are seen as foundations, since many of them have religious implications. Myths are usually linked with what a given society sets as values, or norms. They usually tell a traditional story, that varies from culture to culture, in which the mindset of that culture is appreciated.

As Bruno Bettelheim pointed out, the line that divides both is not clear at all. Fairy tales were mostly told by women, in their oral form, in many cases as cautionary tales, but then, as will be explained in this TFG, their role changed and they anchored the way in which women were or have been portrayed throughout history.

Myths started portraying women as dangerous. The main example of that would be Eve, the culprit of the fall of humankind. Or even Pandora, who was too curious. Through these myths, women started being portrayed, always, as the ones to blame, they were guilty, they were babblers and they were all the same. Only old women were portrayed as wise women.

It is no wonder then, that fairy tales, as it will be seen, changed as well. When they started to develop as a written genre, women were portrayed like those in the myths. The narrator changed, it became an old woman. The protagonists looked alike those women described in myths. This is what Bettelheim pointed

out: myths and fairy tales are intertwined, and what society accepts as a myth is mostly what appears in a fairy tale.

When scholars and authors started to analyse fairy tales, as Donald Haase suggested, they found out that they had been "utilized as evidence to demonstrate the sociocultural myths and mechanisms that oppress women" (Haase 3), that "scholars can demonstrate how fairy tales have been intentionally manipulated to serve in the process of socialization and constructing gender" (Haase 26). This means that they became part of the narrative. The myths of Eve, Pandora, or Sleeping Beauty, were taken as role models. Women needed to be dependent, shy, not very talkative. And this can be seen in the fairy tales that are told nowadays. Women are hardly ever the main characters; they are almost always the passive subjects of the narrative. They usually have no power, they are waiting for love, which is their main objective in life, and they are helpless without a man. They are not capable of controlling their own lives, not at least, without a male figure next to them.

We perceive the world through the myths that our society has settled as truths, therefore, fairy tales, by taking them as a basis, perpetuate these images. "In 1979 (…) Carolyn G. Heilbrun proposed that "myth, tale and tragedy must be transformed by bold acts of reinterpretation in order to enter the experience of the emerging female self"" (Haase 5). This idea will mostly dominate this TFG, as it will be set forth, that fairy tales did not always portray women like this. Fairy tales have changed, as society changed, and its' values as well. So, they needed to adjust to these new mindsets, these new acceptable characteristics that women could possess.

Myths hardly change, Eve will always be the same. But, Sleeping Beauty, or Cinderella have been transformed through history, and it is with these changes that society can adjust and create new myths, once again, agreeing with what Bettelheim said. The fine line disappears. Since Pandora, a myth, could not be

changed, they changed the folklore tales, making the readers believe that those fairy tales have always been told like that. Let us discover that reality is quite different.

2. Autopsy of the myth: thematic overview

2.1. Roland Barthes - *Mythologies*

Barthes will contextualise a theoretical frame, to analyse how myths are controlling tools, as well as how they have been perpetuated both by the press and by the bourgeois. These points are key to understand why *Angela Carter's Book of Fairy Tales* was needed.

First of all, Barthes understands that "myth is a language" (Barthes preface). Feminist writers came to the same conclusion. They also saw that these myths (Eve, Pandora) were educating children, creating realities for them and ways of expressing themselves, which often limited little girls' aspirations to being rescued and having some kind of happily ever after. Most of these ideas, they wished to put an end to. Myth and fairy tales, once more, connected, and feminist writers understood that by creating this language, what happened was that fairy tales changed to accommodate to it.

Angela Carter tried to make a change in the way we perceived fairy tales, and so how we perceived the world and its myths. She was trying to give voice to women and stop perpetuating the stereotypes set centuries ago. "If the tale of Perrault and the Grimm Brothers may be said to perpetuate images and stereotypes that are unfit for our time, then Carter and Atwood would say that it is high time to let someone else tell new stories" (Ryggvik Mikalsen 3). But as Barthes points out, our children have already been conditioned, "the child cannot constitute himself as anything but an owner, a user, never as a creator; he does not invent the

world, he utilizes it: gestures are prepared for him without adventure, without surprise, and without joy" (Barthes 60). By offering different readings, open endings, new voices Carter was trying to turn the tables. Fairy tales were not creating realities, they were using pre-existing ones. And those ones had been created by a male point of view which only perpetuated what interested them. It was high time that the example was changed and that children could encounter new narratives, some that would stimulate and foster creative thought.

The first tales, as Marina Warner states, had female narrators, especially when they started to be told orally. The problem was that these female narrators did not evolve into female writers when folklore turned into writing tradition. So, they ceased to have a voice. Perhaps, because as Barthes points out when talking about the *femme de lettres*, "women must not suppose they can enjoy the advantages of this arrangement without first submitting to the eternal status of femininity. Women are on earth to give men children" (Barthes 56). The main argument here, was that women were supposed to bear children, that was their main purpose in life. After which, the arrangement of writing could happen. However, if they wished to have advantages, like being able to write, first and above all, they had to be mothers, in order to be able to enjoy this second aspect. First, fulfil your duties, then, take on a hobby. Women were seen as "constituted body jealous of its privileges" (Barthes 57). So, women were not to be writers. This is another myth that had been perpetuated, another myth that Carter tried to break down, that women were not creative beings capable of writing. This is why it was so important to take myths and perform an autopsy on them, to critically analyse the message behind the seemingly innocent stories.

It is important to understand why this mythological language matters. Language shapes our understanding of the world, it creates meaning. We understand what surrounds us through language. Thus, if myth is language, it moulds ideas, our imagination, it gives meaning and context. Therefore, it becomes something dangerous, as it has power. Myths that govern each society should be unearth,

gutted, understood. We understand our roles, positions, and what is expected from us through myths.

At one point, women had had the power, women had written fairy tales: the term Conte de fée, as Jack Zipes points out was first coined in France by a woman, Madame d'Aulnoy. The folktales, as we will later see, were mostly told by women. So, the language was taken from a female perspective, the myths were changed, stories were re-edited and it came to a point where we, women, had no control anymore over our narrative. Barthes states that "to steal his language from a man in the very name of language: every legal murder begins here" (Barthes 52). Female fairy tales' writers were murdered. The Grimm Brothers and Perrault took that language and made it theirs.

As for the reason for this appropriation Barthes states that he "emerged with the conviction that by treating "collective representations" as sign systems one might hope to transcend pious denunciation and instead account *in detail* for the mystification which transforms petit bourgeois culture into a universal nature" (Barthes preface). In short, the narrative used by the petit bourgeois needed to be controlled. Transformed to convey uniform meaning and messages, this narrative was able to capture and influence the collective imagination.

It is true that Barthes analyses the myth through the prism of the petit bourgeois in a set time in France, which is quite ironical, since later on, in Warner's writing it is revealed that the first *conteuses*, were French bourgeois, and that, furthermore at the time, it was Perrault who also dealt with the high and low art.

The last item of interest to be analysed is how Barthes points out that the press perpetuates myths in society, and how they choose to build myths and celebrate some things over others. Talking about fairy tales, it is only normal to compare the press to editing houses. Of course, they have always been the ones to choose what goes out on print, and how it goes there. And so, with every new edition,

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those fairy tales have been changing. We will later learn through Warner how the first "Sleeping Beauty" was not the same tale which is told nowadays. We can see how the publishing houses have been changing the message, since for many editions, no male kiss awoke the Princess as it does now.

So, both the press and the publishing houses have intended to manipulate these universally accepted truths. Then, it is no wonder that when an independent autopsy is carried out on these myths, another way of looking at them can be discovered. However, all effort has been made to quiet these critiques, to keep them off the front page. Angela Carter edited two books of fairy tales, digging up tales, were women were portrayed differently. She found a publishing house that did so. Unfortunately, she did not find the mass media needed to change the narrative. Nowadays, Sleeping Beauty remains a princess woken up by a kiss, and Cinderella remains a poor helpless maid. Carter found former narratives that told a different story. Up until now, the press has not backed up these tales.

As Barthes points out

> We still live in a pre-Voltairean mentality; that is what must be constantly repeated. Science proceeds straight and fast its course, but collective representations do not follow suit, they are centuries behind, kept stagnant in their error by the press and by the values or Order (Barthes 69).

When analysing the myth today, he thinks "myth can reach everything, corrupt everything, and even the very act of refusing oneself to it" (Barthes 244). Virago Press by editing *Angela Carter Book of Fairy Tales*, hoped to put out there female protagonists that reverted myths, so that hopefully it could corrupt every little girls' mind.

2.2. Marina Warner – *From the Beast to the Blonde, on Fairy Tales and their Tellers*

Learning about the history behind each fairy tale and analysing how, where and dare I say, why it was born, is very enriching. Warner gives insight into how posterior editions of the same tale, in different times, countries, or voices changed the narrative, highlighted news aspects, silenced characters or even adapted the very purpose to which that fairy tale was created. It has been quite an eye opener. Carter edited two fairy tales' books where the protagonists were females. New role models were needed. Otherwise "the conventions of fairy tale, including the shinning beauty and goodness of the heroine, become clichés, used by moralists to enforce discipline (and appearance) on growing girls" (Warner 381).

It is reiterated many times in the *From the Beast to the Blonde* how fairy tales controlled children. Their narratives were educational, easing their terrors, setting their hopes and creating a make-believe world, this is a form of creating myths.

It is true, like Warner says that fairy tales "do not belong in the classical tradition of myth" (Warner 64), but, through them in the minds of many children new myths were created. For many generations "The Beauty and the Beast", "Cinderella", and "Goldilocks", not only showed children some moral lessons, or taught them what was supposed to be right or wrong, but they created structures in their minds, as to how one is supposed to be rewarded, and what would happen depending on how one acted. Obviously through the different decades, these messages have changed. According to Zipes, for example, "fairy tales is myth (…) any fairy tale in our society, if it seeks to become natural and eternal, must become a myth" (Montakhabi Bakhtvar; Niknezhad-Ferdos 2).

The myth accommodates itself to the times, sometimes organically, sometimes, however, it is directed because of political issues, such as the Grimm's editions of fairy tales to meet the German ideal.

Regardless of how myths changed throughout the history of fairy tales, Marina Warner repeatedly states that most of them take Eve falling as a premise, showing women at fault for the dangers and evils that later occur. Highlighting how women's speech is portrayed, Warner states that "the prejudice against women's talk has scriptural legitimacy" (Warner 30). And maybe it is this myth, idea or received historical concept that Warner uses as the axis: misogyny. The way women have been depicted, mainly unaffected for centuries is why she proposes that "uncovering its structural axioms can help dismantle those conventionally attributed meanings themselves" (Warner 44). To this end Carter in her fairy tale book finds 103 stories with female protagonists that do not fall, do not hold their tongues and, for the most part, are not at fault.

Moreover, it is very interesting to learn that fairy tales were never narrated in the first person, and that this "technique" (and I am putting this within quotation marks, as when the first tales appeared these literary devices did not quite exist yet) had its purpose and it was quite clear: children needed to remember the story, needed to be able to retell it, many times, so by stepping out of the narration, the child would, in turn, transform from the listener, to the protagonist and finally to the new story-teller (Warner 215).

Many of the tales that are told today have the same myths within their structure, as said before, Eve or Pandora, women who disobeyed, women who were curious. The tale comes with the lecture: Bluebeard needs to kill his wives, Goldilocks needs to be punished, "the woman who disobeys and, through curiosity endangers her life" (Warner 244). This had been the moral for years. Thankfully, it is not true and we will later see this when analysing the tales in Carter's book. Of particular importance is how Warner summarizes female voice

through her book as a way of highlighting what has happened and how Carter's book brings that to light:

> Fairy tales give women a place from which to speak, but they sometimes speak of speechlessness as a weapon of last resort. The book, beginning with gossip as a woman's derided instrument of self-assertion, closes with muteness, as another stratagem of influence (Warner XXI).

"All over the world, stories which centre on a heroine, on a young woman suffering a prolonged ordeal before her vindication and triumph, frequently focus on women as the agents of her suffering" (Warner 202). Analysing how women were portrayed, how their speech was structured or silenced in the history of fairy tales, how gossip, wit and so on were punished, it was only natural that authors like Carter, having studied previous female fairy tale writers, as Warner states, came to terms with revisiting the genre. The misogyny that can be found in fairy tales, especially when it comes to romance and how they fight for the prince's love, set women against women (Warner 238). This was the idea transmitted to children, this was the myth that was being created, this was what Carter wanted to revisit. Maybe she was aiming to revisit the archetypes created since "an archetype is a hollow thing, but a dangerous one, a figure or image which through usage has been uncoupled from the circumstances which brought it into being, and goes on spreading false consciousness" (Warner 239).

It is quite surprising to learn about the relationship between fairy tales and Catholicism. Warner leads us through the beliefs of different periods and makes us understand how the myths portrayed by fairy tales changed to accommodate what was "natural" at the time. "The rise of fairy tale as a printed genre of literature coincides with permission to accept that between Heaven and Hell and Purgatory there lies another kingdom, a realm of human fantasy" (Warner 77). It was only natural then that these tales were adequate for those times, and that they settled examples that were later naturalised into the myths of later generations (evil stepmothers, absent fathers, silenced heroines, etc). Maybe this is why Carter, in her book, points out which country each story originally comes from, and not surprisingly, most of the countries are not Catholic. So, as you could imagine,

they portray empowered, wistful, talkative women. This, added to the discovery made while reading Haase about how women controlled their own lives before 1500, which gave a new insight into the fairy tales that can be found in Carter's book, and which brought a new dimension to them.

We should not forget that fairy tales come from folklore and oral tradition, but at some point, as we will see better when talking about the Mother Goose narrator, they started to be written down, and as Warner points out when this happens "they no longer seem suitable material and undergo alteration in order to edify and instruct and elevate" (Warner 380). Unfortunately, it has been male editors deciding what was to be printed, male editors deciding which tales and which versions of them were to be included in the anthologies.

Warner explains the role female writers or fairy tales and female protagonists have had through different periods dating back to the first folklore fairy tales. It is shocking, as mentioned in the state of the question, that many female writers created heroines, stories with morale, stories that empowered women, stories that portrayed female character in different ways, and nowadays, these stories have fallen into oblivion. The ones that have survived, and also the versions that are retold nowadays, are almost unrecognisable from their original voice. We will also see through Haase how different studies of fairy tales differ on how to approach former tales and how Carter can be linked to these retellings.

Through the evolution we learn from Warner's text, that when arriving to the twentieth century some myths had already changed and for example the ideas about marrying a beast were no longer the same. Society had changed and thus the way "The Beauty and the Beast" was told, or the conclusions that needed to be reached after reading it, changed as well. Because of time and scope of this text, I cannot examine Carter's reformulations of the fairy tales, especially the stories of *The Bloody Chamber*, so I will focus only on her edited stories. But

there, as well, we can see former editions, former versions where women were portrayed quite differently.

Later, figures like Mother Goose will be analysed, along with "good girls", based on the detailed path Warner deploys, to compare what has been defined as "good" in the different versions of the well-known fairy tales of today. This analysis will be compared to that which Carter dug from folk tales as a subversion. As Lorna Sage writes [Carter] "in retelling these tales was deliberately drawing them out of their set shapes. (…) It was yet another assault on Myth… done caressingly and seductively. The monsters and princesses lose their places in the old script, and cross forbidden boundary lines" (Warner 309).

"Folk tales powerfully shape national memory" (Warner 410), maybe male editors, writers and decision makers have known this for decades. They knew how powerful tales were and decided to keep revisiting archetypes, morals, female characters, to fit the story, to the one they wanted to survive. This is another area where the importance of Carter's work comes into force. National memory needed to be shaken, needed to be destroyed and reconstructed. New examples, new myths, new narrations were needed. Male editors did not understand that "underestimating values and attitudes can be as dangerous as ignoring changing historical realities" (Warner 410), Carter did.

2.3. Donald Haase – *Fairy Tales and Feminism*

Even though Barthes has given important insight into myths, and Warner has provided the background necessary to understand were fairy tales come from, it is Haase who connects the dots and brings deeper understanding as to why Carter's edition of fairy tales needs further investigation.

Before the 1970's feminist issues were not being studied, much less in the scope of fairy tales. This started to develop with feminist second wave. It is important to see that this interest in fairy tales from a feminist point of view, changed, because, as Haase points out "" Cinderella", "The Sleeping Beauty", and "Snow White" are mythic figures who have replaced the old Greek and Norse gods, goddesses, and heroes for most children" (Haase 1). This raises the question as to why these fairy tale figures had never been researched before the 1970's, especially if they stem from more primitive myths. Perhaps the male pen had, up until then, staved off any real effort to critically analyse such themes.

What Carter did was to discover the "woman's voice in the fairy-tale production" (Haase 2) and as will be analysed further through some stories, it is surprising to learn how women portrayed themselves before the 1700's. Madonna Kolbenschlag saw fairy tales as "parables of feminine socialization with the view that the same stories can call women forth to an awakening and to spiritual maturity" (Haase 6). Carter looked for these parables, sure that they existed, sure that writers like the French *conteuses* were not the first ones, sure that there was a narrative that could awake further generations.

In the introduction Haase indicates further fields of research surrounding fairy tales and feminism: reception studies, interdisciplinary research, comparative multicultural and transnational research, recovery work or interpretation. With the exception of comparing and interpreting, *Angela Carter's Book of Fairy Tales*, covers them all. It has been impossible to find papers, thesis or works that study what she did with this anthology. It would have been incredibly interesting to delude further into these tales Carter compiled and compare how critics and researchers linked them with previous theories of female voice in myths. Unfortunately, however, no such critique has been found.

A little-known fact is that between 1450 and 1700 women lost the power and autonomy they had. It is a shame that Carter cannot place the approximate date

next to the country of origin of her tales, to see when these narrations first arose, on the notes she locates some of the stories, but since most of them come from the folklore and oral tradition, those dates are not referential, so it is unclear if the tales can be traced to these times where women were fully in control. Reading Haase you learn that before 1500 women controlled their money, and were relatively independent. It may come as a shock to learn that adultery was openly talked about, female sexuality was a theme, and yet pregnancies were not an issue in these narratives. However, seeing that before 1500 women could control their own fertility, this fact becomes less surprising.

The importance of all this is understanding the tales Carter put in her anthologies, as Haase argues. They differ from later stories where "women no longer scheme to admit men to their beds. Instead, boys and men intrude their bodies into the private space of terrified girls or women" (Haase 49).

Therefore, understanding how women were portrayed before the 1500's, sheds light on how fairy tales as a genre played their role in creating a submissive woman. Haase points out that it was at this changing time that fairy tales came to exist as a new genre. These changes, brought of course new topics into the genre, as mentioned earlier, men had not been portrayed as dangerous before, or at least not in the same way, since women were also powerful and sexually active. When female characters became silent and sexually dormant, roles changed and the ways women were portrayed were not surprisingly much more similar to the tales we are familiar with today. When Carter's fairy tales are finally analysed, how women were portrayed back then will be illustrated.

3. Angela Carter, "putting new wine in old bottles"

Angela Carter was born in the United Kingdom in 1940 and sadly passed away too soon, in 1992, at the age of 51. She is an English novelist, but throughout her

career she did not only write novels or short stories, she also translated Perrault's fairy tales and edited two volumes of fairy tales.

There are a few aspects of her biography that are relevant to understand her contributions to the fairy tales' genre. Throughout her career she tried to shift the myths, to rewrite to old tales, to offer future generations different fables and fairy tales, so that gender wouldn't be a limitation.

According to her authorized biography, by Edmund Gordon, she was shy, had a stammer, was a bit overweighed and had an overprotective mother that wouldn't even let her dress herself.

It seems that she rebelled against her mother, lost weight and started answering back at her mother. She was a gifted student and was to go to Oxford. However, she felt suffocated within her family and all the overprotection and dropped the idea of continuing her studies to marry. Which she thought would liberate her.

She married Paul Carter early in her life but divorced him in 1972. It was he who showed Carter folk music, so he dragged her into the folklore. In this autobiography it can be seen that she addressed her sexuality as a problem. She saw herself not as a sexual person and apparently the main problem with her husband was the lack of sexual appetite he had. She again felt suffocated by the life she had built, but this time, she decided to get a proper education in order to be free from everyone. A degree would give her, her freedom.

All these points are important. First and foremost, because she herself went through a change, she "became" an independent woman. She freed herself. Which made her understand that there was a way, that change was possible.

Also, how she narrates her sexual experiences with her husband, gives us the insight needed to understand her later fascination with Sade or how women were sexually portrayed in her own short stories such as *The Bloody Chamber*.

Let us continue with her life. She got her degree at the University of Bristol and as she points out, became a feminist. And she started writing. It is important to understand that she did not describe her feminism as that concerned with justice for women. For her, women needed to proclaim what they wanted, that is, power, freedom and sex. This is what can be found in her early work.

In 1969 she won her first award and with that money, she went to Japan, without her husband. There, she met a Japanese man, six years younger than her, and they became lovers. She wrote to her husband and asked for a divorce. She spent two years there. Apparently, her lover had many other lady friends. In her biography, she states that those two years radicalized her as a feminist. Japanese women made her change her mind about gender identity. It made her "accept" her lover's infidelities. But, when he left her, she was heartbroken.

It was in 1976 that she started translating Charles Perrault's fairy tales. When she was done with this task, *The Bloody Chamber* was written, which was only logical given all of what has been stated about her life, and the fact that she had just translated Perrault. She became a mother in 1983. She wrote the first *The Virago Book of Fairy Tales* in 1990 and *The Second Virago Book of Fairy Tales* in 1992, just before she passed away.

There is an important interview she gave in 1984, where she talks about how much more attention male writes are given in comparison, and how they make it to lists like "the most important writers" where systematically, women are left out. If we put two and two together, by now, she was already involved in the field of fairy tales. And even though, she would not be the first to turn to fairy tales to incite change, she made significant contribution. Before her, D'Aulnoy and other

women of high status, "developed social ideals (…) as a polite revolt against the dominant culture. Fairy tales became part of this protest" (Warner 168). Many years later, Carter did the same.

This would be the main reason for analysing Angela Carter's books, to unearth feminine myths. "Fairy tale constituted in itself a genre of protest" (Warner 163), but it was mainly when female tellers were the voices. The fairy tales that we are used to listening to today, have nothing to do with the etymology of many of them. Only through exploring their origins, changes and evolution through time can Carter's work be better explained and its' importance nowadays understood.

Effective production and distribution are essential to the success of any body of work. Carter edited her book of fairy tales, with the aid of close friends, the Virago Press owners, who, one can only assume, all knew the importance of printing. Virginia Woolf, with Hogarth Press, knew it was needed for the feminist message to reach audiences. However, in modern times, Carter knew that if she was to convey new meaning in tales, she needed to be printed. "When women began to choose the books that were produced, they did not automatically reproduce the male bias that had for so long dictated what was published, reviewed and sometimes made "canonical". (Riley, Pearce 33).

Pearce and Riley noted that for presses like Virago, "their collective mission was very much one of making women's writing newly visible (including a great many texts which were no longer in print), thus challenging the deeply patriarchal "literary canon" that, even in the 1970s and 1980s was overwhelmingly male" (Riley, Pearce 1). It is no coincidence that Virago was the press that made Carter visible. Nor is it a coincidence that, as Carter knew she was ill, she hurried to finish her fairy tale's book, because "she owed it to the girls". Perhaps, it is with this kind of sorority that we should look at this new turn of the canon.

Carter "understood both roles very well in her writing: mercurial slipperiness of identity, as well as the need to secure meanings" (Warner 194), this is the aim of this TFG, to explore those fairy tales that she edited in this book of fairy tales.

> Reading is just as creative an activity as writing and most intellectual developments depends upon new reading of old texts. I am for putting new wine in old bottles, especially if the pressure of the new wine makes the old bottle explode (Carter 69).

This quote can only be understood with what has been explained in her biography. She read the tales, she read Perrault. She understood what it is was to become a feminist. She came from the old texts and from the old mindset. But she exploded. Her brain was the first wine bottle to explode. It was filled with new wine. This is what she did to fairy tales as well. She made the old myth canon explode. Let us see how.

3.1. "I'm just finishing this off for the girls" – *Angela Carter's Book of Fairy Tales*

> I spent a good many years being told what I ought to think, and how I ought to behave… because I was a woman… but then I stopped listening to them (men) and… I started answering back (Carter 452).

The title for this part of the TFG was quoted by Carter once she found out that she was terminally ill. The publishers at Virago told her not to worry, she had already published *The Virago Book of Fairy Tales*, and that could have been enough. But not for Carter. She knew that it was needed, because "writing them down – and especially printing them – both preserves, and also inexorably changes, these stories" (Carter xii). She curated the stories in this book, it needed to be done so they wouldn't be lost any more. So that not only the "girls" in Virago, but **us**, all the girls, could benefit from it. I see all of us women included in this "girls".

This recognition that only in publication can these stories be immortalised, links together what Barthes and Warner reiterated. In order for myths to be sustained, they need to become a language, they need to be printed, they need to be published for all to read.

This book is a statement of intents in which, according to Warner, Carter's presence in a publishing press like Virago, "helped establish a woman's voice in literature as special, as parti pris, as a crucial instrument in the forging of an identity for post-imperial, hypocritical, fossilized Britain" (Carter 453). She impersonated the male voice of narrative, she promised a different future, and she transformed narrative possibilities (Carter 453). She addresses in the introduction of the book, how these tales, on the one hand have no known author, and so, on the other hand, are remade by every teller. At the beginning they were retold to entertain, but what can be found nowadays on the book, is that these new tellers, with time, changed the way women were portrayed.

All of the aforementioned theoretical frame, can be linked to the publication of this fairy tale book. However, there is one final influencing factor, that needs to be brought to the table. Three main factors in this myth revolution have been identified to fully understand how fairy tales end up being edited and changed. However, to fully comprehend the process, the French *conteuses*, mothers of the fairy tale, need to be investigated. Mother Goose, the primal narrator of these tales, and the Grimm brothers, whose versions are the ones that are most known today, cannot go unmentioned.

While researching a lot of controversy was encountered regarding the role Perrault had towards "changing" fairy tales, it seems that he was the one who introduced the final moral of the fable. Some papers point out that he always maintained a feminist point of view in these morals, other state the contrary. The Disney effect on fairy tales is quite controversial as well, some scholars blame him and the Disney factory of the actual portray of the collective vision of fairy

tales, while others go back further before him for this. For this reason, no definitive conclusions can be drawn on these two areas and they will be left out of the analysis.

3.2. There was time and no time: Edition of fairy tales

Marie-Catherine Aulnoy, Jean de La Fontaine, Charlotte-Rose Caumont de La Force, Marie-Jeanne L'Héritier and many more, all writers of fairy tales, whose names and versions have all but been forgotten in today's day and age, were the pioneers of the original fairy tales.

The edition of fairy tales happened, it would seem, naturally: readers had different mindsets, social values changed, and in turn some of the tales no longer made sense. One such fairy tale, "Peau d'Ane", is almost impossible to encounter nowadays and it isn't found in modern day compilations, possibly because, as Warner states, "when interest in psychological realism is at work the mind of the receiver of tradition folklore, the proposed marriage of a father to his daughter becomes too hard to accept" (Warner 349). This means that, at some point in history, it was quite realistic that a father could intend to marry his daughter, and so it was told in the tales of that time. However, when times changed, this became quite an abomination, and so, the mind of the reader changed, which made the story disappear. It was not socially accepted anymore.

These tales were not erased on purpose, they were not dropped. Later editions justified changes, based on the fact that, for centuries, these tales were constructions that responded to fears that society had, and there came a time when marriage between father and daughter was no longer even possible.

On the other hand, as Warner chronologically analyses the story of fairy tales, one can see that although, Perrault and the Grimm bothers are the ones whose

versions are told today, it was D'Aulnoy, who, before 1700, was first to compile three editions of fairy tales and who first coined the term *contes de fées* (fairy tales). So, it would seem unjust that the female voice was to be erased from following accounts.

Shortly the figure of Mother Goose as a narrator will be delved into to understand the evolutions of fairy tale and be fully aware of Carter's choice to edit two volumes of these. It must be known that in the transmission of fairy tales, the storyteller has always been a woman. So, as Warner points out, even though men "have dominated the production and dissemination of popular wonder tales, they often pass on women's stories" (Warner 17).

With time women recognised that publication meant controlling the message, "women in different social positions have collaborated in storytelling to achieve true recognition for their subjects" (Warner 24). Without such recognition through publications, once again, the notion that what doesn't have a name doesn't exist, the meaning of "no time" in the title of this section is returned to. There was no time, because it appeared that no female writers or editors existed, since they were not named. And as Carter states "these stories tend to (…) reinforce the ties that bind people together, rather than to questions them" (Carter xx), so at that time, it was only natural that women were erased, as they were being taken out of the story in general.

However, there **were** female writers, who produced fairy tales which "mounted a critical attack on many prejudices and practices of their day, which confined and defamed women in their view and coarsened the minds and manners of all members of society" (Warner 49). It was Perrault who introduced morals to his conclusions. As the genre became associated with children and educating them, it became a trend to do as Perrault did. At this time, there were no female editors, just men like Perrault and later the Grimms, who, revisited and changed fairy tales

to conform to modern times (this was the excuse), and thus, setting the canon by male writers and editors, leaving women excluded from the process. (Warner 79).

To be fair to Perrault, his changes were slight and were not so diminishing for women. He was a peer to L'Héritier and to the saloons were fairy tales were told to an adult audience, so his changes were more moralising rather than restructuring. If we take the example of "Little Red Riding Hood", it was the Grimms who changed the ending to a happy ending. Carter points out that at origin many of these tales portrayed everyday life, but of course, of many centuries ago, little by little the sexual implications, the "indelicate" material started to vanish (Carter xix). It is previously indicated, Perrault is somewhat controversial in the research of Carter, and it is stated that when Carter read Perrault for her translations "in the original French, the text easily lends itself to a feminist reading that mocks the influence of sentimental stories that fool girls into marrying young" (Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère 134).

Perrault and L'Héritier lived the Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes, which affected the treatment of fairy tales, a low genre for the formers and a genre itself for the later. It is Warner who reminds us, once more, what Virginia Woolf said "it is all very well to spurn Greek when you have been given the chance to study it, to reject tradition when you have been raised in it" (Warner 184). Perrault championed women, undoubtedly, but L'Héritier did it from a totally different angle. For him, it was somehow effortless, whereas for her, it was kind of a war. We have to be aware that "there is a distinction between a woman telling a story, and telling a story as a woman" (Warner 188). Perrault used Mother Goose to tell stories, but he was a male author. L'Héritier was a woman using a female narrator. Nowadays, everybody has him on their imaginary. It was Jack Zipe who tried to bring back these writers, the original writers, Aulnoy, de la Fontaine and many more that were lost, eclipsed by Perrault. It was then Carter who included them and their female protagonists in her new volumes, "we need to know who we were in greater and greater detail in order to be able to surmise what we might be" (Carter xxi).

It was Perrault, for example, who added a subtitle to "Bluebeard" "The Effect of Female Curiosity", to bring it in line with cautionary tales about women's innate wickedness" (Warner 244). But in the early versions of the tale, the one produced by women, it is the heroine with the brother's axe who saves the day. Only when men adopted these materials, did they "often introduce special pleading on their own behalf" (Warner 295). Carter's version of Bluebeard in the book "Mr Fox" offers quite a different female protagonist, one who actually reports her boyfriend. She is curious, she finds out that he is a murderer, she brings proof back home and she patiently waits and tells him off in front of every male character in the story!

> The ferocious father, the lustful suitor, have been transformed or made to disappear; the Cinderella stories we are familiar with now portray the father as virtuous and dead, or weak and henpecked, as we shall see, and she radiates feelings of dutiful and tender loyalty towards him (Warner 345).

However, previous editions were not like this. The father did not care about his daughter, the female protagonist did not learn morally, the lessons were not the same. This change was due to some parts not being bearable nowadays, or because male editors came into the picture. One cannot say for sure, but it can be said that, the original fairy tales needed to be unearthed. If for centuries they had been transformed to accommodate to new times and ideas, it was time to recognise their origins. So, Carter went on a quest, like the Grimm Brothers or Perrault. In the Introduction of her book of fairy tales, she herself states "that I and many other women should go looking through the books of fairy-tale heroines is a version of the same process – a wish to validate my claim to a fair share of the future by staking my claim to my share of the past" (Carter, xviii).

Carter chose a story for her book "How a Husband Weaned his Wife from Fairy Tales" which "shows just how much fairy tale stories could change a woman's desires, and how much a man might fear that change, would go to any lengths to keep her from pleasure, as if pleasure itself threatened his authority" (Carter xv), because both Warner and Carter affirm that the main purpose of tales was to give

pleasure. Until, apparently, they became weapons used by women to pass on ideas.

> But this kind of tale, which D'Aulnoy and L'Héritier perfected in the late seventeenth century, no longer issued any kind of challenge to the established code of femineity in the nineteenth-century nursery. By forgetting that fairy tales interact with social circumstances, we miss seeing how the copybook blonde princess becomes instead a stick with which to beat young women (Warner 381).

This can be linked to what Carter thought the goal of fairy tales was, "a utopian one, indeed a form of heroic optimism -as if to say: One day, we might be happy, even if it won't last" (Carter 449). For D'Aulnoy and L'Héritier the utopia was clear, they had a voice in the saloons, they were telling fairy tales, they were happy. But that didn't last, as "the passing years have blunted the radicalism of Perrault and his friends among the women writers who were attempting to redraw the map of tenderness to give themselves a stake in it, materially as well as emotionally" (Warner 379). How those passing years meant that the Grimm bothers and many of their peers, killed that utopic happy world, will now be analysed. The *conteuses* wished for the imprint they were trying to make on the fairy tales to travel outside the saloons. Those fairy tales told a different story, one in which women could be happy. Those versions got lost in the later editions, and it was much later that scholars went back and retrieved these versions.

3.2.1. The Grimm bothers

> To have the antiquarian Grimm Brothers regarded as the fathers of modern folklore is perhaps to forget the maternal lineage (Haase 16).

Carter points out that "the great impulse towards collecting oral material in the nineteenth century came out of the growth of nationalism and the concept the nation-state with its own, exclusive culture" (Carter xvii). So many fairy tales as we know them today were complied, revisited and edited by the Grimm brothers due to a nationalistic trend.

German unification has a lot to do with the myths with which we educate our children today. This project:

> involved a certain degree of editorial censorship, envisaged popular culture as an untapped source of imaginative energy for the bourgeoisie, and the Grimms wanted the rich cultural tradition of the common people to be used and accepted by the rising middle class (Carter xvii).

The importance of adding this chapter is to understand why the versions we know today are the way they are. Disney and its influence on fairy tales, could also be addressed, but, as this has happened in the recent years, it falls outside the reach of this TFG. The phenomenon of fairy tales came before any written tradition, it was popular folklore, oral tradition, and so by analysing these editors previous to Disney, the comparison to what Carter tried to do comes more naturally. Disney to an extent is beyond the scope as it comes at a different time and in a different media. The Grimms, however, took these oral tales that had been documented, and shaped and revised them. Carter, on the contrary to the Grimms, was a pure editor, and placed special emphasis in her role as an editor: she did not censor, or change; she tried to ensure that the story came to the reader as pure as possible, unchanged. Quite the opposite to the Grimm brothers, which is why these brothers are worth a chapter in the text.

In Warner's texts, we have learned about the father's villainy in the primitive tales, but the Grimms tended to spare this; it was them who substituted the wife for another mother, who was usually portrayed as the villain. It was them who also "became anxious about the possible effect on children of tales if incest, adultery or murder" (Warner 294), so they re-edited and reshaped tales with didactic intentions. Obviously, these didactic intentions had to do with nationalism, and were decided by a male voice. In fairness, throughout Barthes, Warner and Haase's texts, it has been observed, that tales were adapted to their times, and themes that were uneasy or no longer something that could benefit the moral of the time, tended to be excluded.

There have been studies, as that of Ruth Bottingheimer about the Grimms' fairy tales. One of the conclusions was that "as the editing progresses, virtue spoke up less and less, while villainy became more loquacious, with the witches and wicked stepmothers far surpassing other women in articulacy" (Warner 394). It could be then argued, that, part of the myth of the silenced women, of mutiny as a symbol of a good wife was enforced by their version. It is no coincidence that the social ideas in Germany at that time aimed towards this same direction.

The significance of these editorial changes is that they claimed to be doing what Carter did years later, compiling "pure uncontaminated national products" (Warner 414). This was the message conveyed: the myths had always been those, the portrayal of women had always been that, and moreover, they were German folklore all along. When in reality the tales were not theirs, nor were they German in many cases; and this was proven by scholars like Heinz Rölleke. As Zipes exposed, the tales projected "a male creation and projection that reflected men's fear of women's sexuality and of their own as well" (Haase 9), they "had altered tales to promote patriarchal bourgeoise values as part of the socialization process" (Haase 10).

Bottigheimer also studied what the Grimms did, and concluded that they demonized female power, weakened female characters, imposed male perspective and rendered heroines powerless by depriving them of speech (Haase 11). There are tales that had been told and that can still be found in fairy tale books which had a matriarchal myth that was suppressed by the brothers, like "The Twelve Brothers", "The Seven Ravens", "The Six Swans", "All fur" or "The Goose Girl".

"Who tells the story, who recasts the character and changes the tone becomes very important: no story is ever the same as its source or model, the chemistry of narrator and audience changes it" (Warner 418). There is a desire to believe that this is why these two volumes of fairy tales by Carter exist, and that many of the

messages hidden or buried within these tales, stem from the figure of Mother Goose, which will be analysed next.

Their tales

> laid bare the inscription of patriarchal values in the classic fairy tale, documented the appropriation of the genre by male editors and collector, and sharpened our understanding of the complex editorial and cultural processes involved in the representation of women. Second, it confirmed the role of the fairy tales in the process of socialization by showing how Wilhelm Grimm's representation of women helped construct a culturally specific model of gender identity (Haase 14).

3.2.2. Mother Goose: Folklore – from oral tradition to writing

"For years anonymous was a woman"; this famous and trendy sentence, frequently modified, was stated by Virginia Woolf. It is entirely applicable to fairy tales. As Warner so aptly identifies "anonymous" with the women who were not only the creators, but also the narrators of these stories.

According to Warner, the storyteller in fairy tales is and has always been female, in its origin, and in its end (Warner 19). The fairy tale "is a tale within a circle of listeners (Warner 17), because the purpose was to "bring about a resolution of satisfaction and justice" (Warner 17). These circles where the stories were told, can therefore be seen as a safe place where women could teach children and dream about scenarios where injustices were not being committed. Something that is reflected in Carter's book. A compilation of 103 stories where women were powerful and had the upper hand. Warner states throughout her text that fairy tales were used to bring justice, not only at their beginning, but also later with the *conteuses*, this is why it was important for them to be told in a safe place.

All this effort to return to the voices of the founding female creators did not start with Angela Carter. There were writers before her who started "looking to the fairy tale for evidence of prehistoric matriarchal myths" (Haase 15) such as Heide Göttner-Abendroth, Sonja Rüttner-Cova and Gertrud Jundblut. Even though it

cannot be stated the Angela Carter started her interest in fairy tales because she was looking for matriarchal myths, it is clear that she saw the need to present "prehistoric tales", and with this, the myths that were portrayed there, happened to be matriarchal.

The fairy tales started to be told orally, therefore, they had unknown authors. The stories were told and changed to suit the audience of the moment. The authorship was not important. Mother Goose is the imaginary teller of those first fairy tales, the common narrator. When the tales started circulating in writing, there was always a common grandmother, and old woman, who also had different names such as Gammer Gurton, Aunty Molesworth or Mother Hubbard, but the figure has been passed on mainly as Mother Goose (Warner 25). She is the primal teller, the narrator and/or author of fairy tales: "a witness's record of lives lived, of characters known, and shapes expectations in a certain direction" (Warner XIX).

 But in a female voice, as women took fairy tales "as a different kind of nursery, where they might set their own seedlings and plant out their own flowers "(Warner XIX). The fact that she was and old woman gave the story the chance to be told (apparently) as something spontaneous and with speech like style, it gave the narrative an atmosphere of bed time story. However, it also gave the tale a sense of anonymity, it came from traditional wisdom, which meant that what was going to be told by Mother Goose was common knowledge (Warner 25). Portrayed as a clumsy, fun, even sexual character, she could talk about the moral of a fable. "The history of fairy tales, as a form of literature, becomes entangled with changing attitudes to these female voices speaking with a claim to knowledge" (Warner 75), which were sadly, almost always linked to religion.

Most of the first tales were named "old wives' tales" and were told to children, mainly to scare them off. "The fairy tale becomes a coded text in which the female voice, despite the attempt by men to control it, not only continues to speak but also speaks a secret, subversive language" (Haase 16). At first hearing the term

"old wives' tales" one might experience a sense of anger, once again confronted with misogyny and the negative connotations that come with the idea of "wives' tales". However, even though it might appear somewhat derogatory, since it is true that women's tongues were thought to be bearers of problems, the term old wife, was not derogatory in such a way. Old women were sages, they were the bearers of folk wisdom. Haase states that fairy tales created a secret, subversive language by using a female voice. It was socially accepted that old women were wise, they could be narrators, and they could share what they had known. There was no danger there. Or at least, the danger was not seen. In the tales that will be later analysed in Carter's anthology, it will be seen how this secret language, this female voice was there all along. Then, it could be argued that men started controlling the message, and as have been stated, figures like the Grimm brothers, changed those female characters. It could be argued that this was what Carter intended to do with her anthology years later and she could be considered, as a modern Mother Goose. She dug up the secret, subversive language: women were portrayed like powerful, independent figures.

These female tellers, the *conteuses*, were not accepted within society as real authors, as writers, surprisingly and quickly enough, fairy tales were assigned as lower arts. Therefore, one the one hand, women were meant to remain aloof, they could not be "seen" as narrators, and on the other hand, this genre that was starting to have relevance in the saloons was pulled apart for what was considered proper literature. Hence, this new narrative voice, "Mother Goose", was coined: not properly a myth but a common European figure, that came to be accepted and had a female implication. As Warner points out "the narrator hidden under the bird's vulgarity while at the same time transcending it by the act of narrative itself" (Warner 65). A stratagem, once again necessary, in order to be a female author, even with the oral folklore tradition. "The history of the male appropriation of folktales is the history of the male's attempt to control this female power, to co-opt the female art of storytelling" (Haase 16). With these tales, women had been passing on stories, therefore controlling the storytelling of their core, their family, their audiences. Language is myth, once more. Women could control the message that was being delivered, because those folktales were to

become myths. This is what the Grimm brothers did as well. Those folktales were to be German. As Haase states, those folktales needed to be male.

So, in order to survive, in order to have a voice, when fairy tales evolved from oral to written form, the female narrators looked for a figure that was able to pass on their ideas, and so:

> Mother Goose took root in British folklore in the course of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as a comical witch figure compounded of many fancies and dreams, a fount of female wisdom, a repository of tradition, an instrument of children's entertainment, as well as a familiar butt of the material in which she starred (Warner 156).

The use of Mother Goose brings a rise to a clash, a contradiction, since male authors were using a female narrator to talk about ancient oral tales that had been created at their origin by women. A contradiction which may be surprising, since "approximately two-thirds of the seventeenth-century *contes de fées* were written by the *conteuses*" (Haase 54), something to bear in mind as most of the tales known nowadays were at some point told in the *conteuses* narratives.

The "fairy" the "wonder" was an escape for these women, the female narrators. Not only were they teaching generations to come about the dangers awaiting, but were giving them hope. The fable of "The Beauty and the Beast" was born, as Warner affirms, because women were "given away" on marriages to beasts. One learns that fathers sometimes intended to marry their daughters, and that is where "Donkeyskin" comes from. Little by little, this oral folklore makes sense. This was their secret language. The female voice, warning through tales that seemed were only meant for children, about the dangers of real life. Many of the tales were about hope. Carter was also, by adopting a Mother Goose figure, trying to give hope to "the girls".

Mother Goose, in her origin, had a purpose, especially for the women who needed to hide behind this rhetoric figure, "imagining that the teller speaks instead as an older woman, as herself a grandmother or a mother-in-law, we can then discover in the tales the fear she feels" (Warner 227). However, once Mother Goose came to be the Grimm Bothers' tool, the vantage point for female narrators was eliminated, appropriated for misogynistic purposes. Since "if you accept Mother Goose tales as the testimony of women, as old wives' tales, you can hear vibrating in them the tensions, the insecurity, jealousy and rage of both mothers-in-law against their daughters-in-law and vice versa" (Warner 238). Mother Goose was talking about evil stepmothers, evil stepsisters, and many more, limiting female stereotypes that came with these times. In Warner's words "if women say such things about themselves, then the matter is settled" (Warner 209). However, when male appropriated the female art of storytelling, Mother Goose became a female narrator to a male author, yet another excuse, a male chauvinist one to use an impostor narrator. Therefore, when these male authors added the moral of the fable to the fairy tales, they did so in the words of a female narrator (and in many minds in the voice of a female author), making said morals legitimate as it was a supposed mother figure imparting said wisdom.

In Angela Carter's book, the figure of Mother Goose is not used, although it is mentioned in the preface. In her stories women are portrayed free, they have no taboos. There is no need for this rhetorical figure, but it needed to be analysed in order to understand why Carter did not use tales that included her.

3.3. *Angela Carter's Book of Fairy Tales*

Carter selected fairy tales from all over the world and edited an anthology of tales, actually two, since there were two volumes, which now have been edited into one, called *Angela Carter's Book of Fairy Tales.*

They are classical fairy tales, but not the ones in which one would normally think of, "The Beauty and the Beast", "Cinderella". They are, the majority, tales that have been told in different cultures, and countries for centuries, but did not make it to Disney or the Grimms and therefore, are unknown to the general.

"Fairy tales exchange knowledge between and older voice of experience and a younger audience" (Warner 21). When translating Perrault, Carter realized that women were not the protagonists of the tales, and that the roles that were portrayed were mostly of passive characters, not heroines, not "doers". So, the stories that she collected for her book, have feminine protagonists, and subvert gender roles, such as we are not used to finding in Grimms' or other recognisable fairy tales. It is said that this inspired other writers to re-write and re-think tales as they are known.

> Apart from a few early-twentieth-century anthologies (all of which are difficult to find); virtually none of the *contes de fées* were published in modern French-language editions until the 1990s. Since 1978, scholars have been able to read most of the seventeenth-century fairy tales in the Slatkine facsimile of the eighteenth-century *Cabinet des fées*) (Haase 69).

With this as an antecedent, not being able to find and read what previous female writers wrote, Carter's work's is of the upmost importance. Carter herself highlighted the importance of changing this vision of the passive female, "to be the object of desire is to be defined in the passive case. To exist in the passive case is to die in the passive case – that is, to be killed. This is the moral of the fairy tale about the perfect woman" (Carter, 76-7). Children learn with fairy tales. They take role models from them. Many little girls want to be Beauty, and be able to change the Beast. Many want to be rescued by a kiss from the prince. In reality, all those images of women, are objects in the story, things happen to them, they have no power, they are passive subjects. Sadly, this was the image that those fairy tales have been building in our imaginary for years. The perfect one is one who is passive. Wait to be awaken by a kiss. Wait for the prince to find you with your glass shoe. Wait. None of that is to be found in these 103 tales in Carter's text. They portray active women.

The first collection, which was published in the United States as *The Old Wives' Fairy Tale Book* (1990), in her words gathered "stories that have only one thing in common, they all centre around a female protagonist, (…) she is centre stage, as large as life" (Haase 8). These two books, affirmed by Warner "turns topsy-turvy some cautionary folk tales and shakes out the fear and dislike of women they once expressed to create a new set of values, about strong, outspoken, zestful, sexual women who can't be kept down" (Carter x).

It has been observed how the feminine myths were lost with the Grimms and the paradigm changed, but according to Göttner-Abendorth the matriarchal content was underlying there, it could be recognized. Women had been clever enough as to "hide" its content under structures, so that it would still be transmitted. Carter dug out these treasures. Within her book, there were gems that the Grimms had not touched, but there were also stories that are well known today which she edited to be published in their original, almost unrecognisable form.

> I believe that all myths are products of the human mind and reflect only aspects of material human practice. I'm in the demythologising business. I'm interested in myths – though I'm much more interested in folklore- just because they are extraordinary lies designed to make people unfree (Carter 38).

Many feminist scholars, have complained about the lack of active female protagonists. However, they were not resourceful enough. This is why Carter named one of the chapters of her book and final chapter of this TFG "clever women, resourceful girls and desperate stratagems". To show that these protagonists, had indeed been there all along and that it was following editions, the dominant canon that had taken them out. It is most likely that by translating Perrault, Carter came across previous editions, previous tales, previous voices. She started by editing without altering, like she tried to do when translating Perrault, but in the end, she evolved and created her own fairy tales. Believing the myth needed to be reformulated, the first step was to prove that it shouldn't need to be reformulated because it has been born and it has existed for many

years, as a matriarchal one and therefore was purely returning to its natural original form.

3.3.1. Clever women, resourceful girls and desperate stratagems

There are 103 fairy tales in *Angela Carter's Book of Fairy Tales*. This is, 103 living proofs that female characters could be protagonists, 103 examples of powerful, active female characters, 103 heroines.

This TFG has explored how, on the one hand, the fairy tale came to exist, and on the other hand, how the female point of view, character and treatment evolved through the years as well as, how myths work. It was by focusing on how women are depicted and constructed in some of these stories, that the need to reformulate the feminine myth can be better understood. For this reason, some stories will be analysed considering all the key concepts that have been brought up in the TFG.

The story "The Wise Little Girl", tells the story of two brothers, one poor, one rich, who argue over a matter that is clearly ridiculous: if a cart can bore a foal. Even though it is clear that no cart could bore a foal, the tsar himself echoes the quarrel and proposes riddles to them. The two brothers, resort to the female figures in the story, the younger daughter of the poor brother and the godmother, in search of wisdom to answer the riddles. The story depicts with mockery how they do not know how to answer the riddles that were posed to them. It is the seven-year-old daughter of the poor brother, who, without any effort, keeps answering all the riddles the tsar comes up with. This covers a key point that has been studied by Warner and Haase. One of the powerful characters is an old woman, the other one is a little girl; the old women being the only ones given permission to be wise, and of course, children. This little girl does not for a second stop to question herself as a passive character. She has the answers, the wit, never hesitates

when answering. The role model that Carter wanted to depict. It is also important in this story, the fact that males are not ashamed of reaching out to women. And of course, the fact that the old woman is not depicted as a witch. Both of these examples have been subverted and are polar opposite of how women have been portrayed in the stories more commonly known.

However, the main reason for choosing this tale is that of the empowered little girl who wins for two main reasons: she never shuts up, she keeps answering back to the king, and moreover, she wins by being herself.

The second story that will be analysed is "The Girl Who Stayed in The Fork of a Tree". This story is about a mother and daughter who fight against everything and everyone. A woman and her daughter live peacefully in a bush. One day, a man discovers them and as the daughter was really beautiful, decides that the king should marry her. He goes back to town and expose their existence to everyone. The inhabitants go back to this tree to try and catch the girl, up to three times. Each time, they bring more powerful weapons but each time the mother was able to defeat them. Except for the last time, and so, the girl is captured. She is taken into the village where she is forced to pound in a mortar, we will later analyse the importance of this act. Soon enough the mother goes to her rescue. She kills everyone and brings her little girl back home. This story is relevant because the masculine is left outside of the story, as a mere anecdote, there is a king of course, but he is not even a secondary character, it's anecdotal. The emphasis is made in that the mother is the provider, the carer, the protector.

"The Girl Who Stayed in The Fork of a Tree" is a West African tale and based on its theme, once can guess that it is quite an ancient story, and even then, the stress is on letting the daughter be a child. She is to be protected, she is to be left out of adult work, she is to entertain herself with creative tasks. This is why the pounding of the mortar becomes something relevant in the story. The village is obsessed with making the little girl work. She is the only female not pounding

the mortar. The mother sees this as one of the biggest offenses. Researching it has been noted that pounding the mortar was hard work, not suitable for kids at that time. Therefore, within the story, civilization was forcing the child to grow up and robbed her of her happy existence in nature. This differs from what came later on. Women as "the angel of the house", silent characters, not able to play. In this story, the mother kills everything and everyone so that her daughter can be reborn, can be a sprout again. This portrayal of sorority and of maternal love, was later on replaced by the evil stepmother, who continues to be perpetuated up until now.

In "The Resourceful Wife" a woman, madly in love with her lover, gives him all the rice supply she and her husband have. Realizing what she has done, she tricks her husband. She devises a stratagem to make it appear that a goddess has requested that rice to him. It seems to him that he has saved the day, as the goddess wanted their bullocks, but he managed to only give her rice. Of course, all along that goddess was the wife herself. This really short story states something really important in its last sentence: that having a lover was not a taboo, women wanting to satisfy themselves was not only not hidden, but it was well seen socially, especially if your husband had any kind of trouble. In this story it is not known why the protagonist takes a lover, however, once the clever woman tricks her husband "she told the other women the story with great pride" (Carter 76), which indicates a social acceptance of her actions.

"The Husband Who was to Mind the House" has been chosen to illustrate what has been written about Perrault and how he was the one who added the morale to many of the tales. This tale describes with great irony how a husband, after mocking and taking for granted what his wife does at home as a housewife, experiences for himself, how difficult a job it is. It could be a modern fairy tale, except it ends abruptly. Upon turning the page in search of a moral ending, none was to be found. It was not needed.

"The Two Women Who Found Freedom" is a fantastic tale about a polygamous family and how the women set themselves free. They flee the house, escape from the husband that didn't make them happy and, "it is said that they were very happy in their new home" (Carter 237). It is the ultimate subversion of the genre. On the one hand, she almost uses the "magical" ending of "they lived happily ever after" however, referring to two wives who left their abusive husband instead of finding their prince charming. On the other hand, in this two-page story, she changes the tale of "The Beauty and the Beast" to a cautionary lesson, one where you won't change the beast, nor do you need to. Or even better, one should not strive to change the Beast when they can just run away and be happy.

CONCLUSION

Angela Carter did something that had not been done before. She searched for stories with women as protagonists, with women as power figures, with different stereotypes, with different sets of values, and she tried to put them into writing, unaltered, so that we would have these models out there.

And yet, it has been hard to find enough papers, articles or thesis based on the work she did on *Angela Carter's Book of Fairy Tales*. I have gone through these fairy tales shocked, surprised and proud.

Shocked to recognize many of the tales, but only their surface. Many of them I know having a male protagonist, a female punishment, and a different moral.

Surprised to see how it was possible in previous period in history, not so long ago, to portray women like this, how when we think about reverting conceived ideas, we can see a distant past when this didn't need to be done. These themes haven't been researched in further depth yet, it seems.

Finally, proud to see, what Haase describes as "the fairy tale as a carrier of the toxic patriarchal myths that are used to deceive women" (Haase 3) start to fall apart.

I would love to have the chance to dive deeper into what Carter did. To use Warner's chronology and compare and contrast some of the tales, and furthermore, to link them to Carter's own fairy tales. Scholars have been more focused on her own creative writing, which of course subverted the genre, but what about her editorial work? What about offering girls the chance to read tales unaltered, or as unaltered as they can be? I think it is quite important to have these referents, to see that perhaps the reformulation of the myth is more of and unearthing of it, going back to its origins, quite a surprising turn of events that I was not hoping for when I started researching for this paper.

"The nexus between recalibration of fairy tales and reconfiguration of femininity has become a manifest mark on the body of postmodern feminist writings "(Montakhabi Bakhtvar; Niknezhad-Ferdos 2). However, everyone focuses on *The Bloody Chamber* and perhaps, in order to better cherish her original work, in order to better research fairy tales, in order to better comprehend the feminine myth, the bedside book should be *Angela Carter's Book of Fairy Tales*.

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[i] Gilbert and Gubar have analysed Angela Carter's work, it is stated in CHAINANI, Soman Sadeian Tragedy: The Politics of Content Revision in Angela Carter's "Snow Child", 2003 and in RYGGVIK MIKALSEN, Paula, "But you can't get me out of the story" Feminist Revision of Fairy Tales in Short Stories by Margaret Atwood and Angela Carter, 2015