

**“The Wolf May Be More Than He Seems”:
Wolves and Werewolves in Angela Carter’s
“Little Red Riding Hood” Stories**

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In this thesis I examine three short stories by Angela Carter: "The Werewolf," "The Company of Wolves" and "Wolf-Alice", included in the collection *The Bloody Chamber* (1979). They are all versions of the traditional European fairy tale, "Little Red Riding Hood", which originated in medieval Italy and France as a coming of age story celebrating the independence and resourcefulness of peasant women. I am interested in what the different figures of wolves come to symbolise in Carter's stories. I argue that there are only few natural wolves to be found in these tales – the rest are werewolves or lycanthropes. These creatures have different roles in each story.

As a feminist writer Carter believed that by rewriting canonical European fairy tales she could restore a voice to those women history has traditionally silenced. She is particularly interested in the social constructedness of gender. I examine how Carter utilises the framework provided by the fairy tale genre and how she employs historical knowledge in her writing in order to challenge established truths and centuries of both misogynistic and anthropocentric thinking. My own approach is thus mostly influenced by feminist research, but I also draw on posthumanism, ecocriticism and psychoanalytic literary theory. I believe such an interdisciplinary approach to yield more substantial results.

Through her rewritings Carter presents the wolf and werewolf as allegories for different phenomena. The first story, "The Werewolf", examines the vulnerability of old women and the misogynist and ageist attitudes common in fairy tale tradition; the werewolf accusation merely provides the justification needed for the eradication of a weakened member of the community. The second story, "The Company of Wolves", employs the werewolf as a metaphor for the female libido and explores the attempts to control female sexuality and mobility through fear in a male dominated society. Carter's protagonist rejects the narrative of female victimhood and instead embraces the threatening animal, that is, accepts her own sexuality. The final tale, "Wolf-Alice", questions traditional perceptions of human exceptionalism by exploring the boundaries between humans and animals. The story also challenges the notion of human language as the prerequisite of consciousness, thus granting the possibility of selfhood to other animals as well.

Key words: Angela Carter, animals, eating, fairy tale, fear, feminism, human–animal relations, Lacan, Little Red Riding Hood, sexuality, werewolves, wolves

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1 Introduction

What truly separates us humans from other animals? I found myself asking this question repeatedly while reading Angela Carter's short story "Wolf-Alice", from the collection *The Bloody Chamber* (1979). In this story, a young girl raised by wolves is brought in touch with human civilization for the first time, only to be abandoned nine days later at the mansion of a cannibalistic monster. Themes of identity and humanity arise throughout Carter's collection as she revisits and re-envision traditional European fairy tales with a feminist twist. In this thesis I examine three of Carter's stories which are inspired by the traditional tale "Little Red Riding Hood"; "The Werewolf", "The Company of Wolves" and "Wolf-Alice". All three are laden with intertextual and cultural references as well as with sexual and violent imagery.

I will place these stories in a broader frame by briefly examining some of Carter's other works and source materials as well as the socio-historical context in which she wrote her texts. I also touch upon the history of fairy tale as a genre, but my main focus lies elsewhere: I am mostly interested in the wolves of these stories. Like many scholars before me, I began my work with the hypothesis that Carter's wolves are manifestations of the female libido. However, I gradually found myself concentrating on the animals as animals, creatures in their own right, and not just in relation to humans. Animal studies and posthumanism have recently questioned our anthropocentric views about animals. Unfortunately this line of inquiry did not take me very far, either, for the simple reason that I quickly realised that Carter's wolves are not always wolves: instead, it appears that she often uses the words "wolf" and "werewolf" interchangeably. This changed my approach once again. Suddenly, the most intriguing questions that arose were about the boundaries between humans and other animals.

I came to the conclusion that in all these three stories, "The Werewolf", "The Company of Wolves" and "Wolf-Alice", the wolf (or werewolf) becomes a metaphor for quite different things. In "The Werewolf" the sickly, old grandmother has been assigned the role of the malevolent, magical werewolf – however, I challenge the very foundations of this narrative and claim that the story is not true: the grandmother is actually the victim in this tale. Old, dependant women were

historically the main targets of witch-hunts and sometimes of werewolf accusations. The entire story of “The Werewolf” is thus transformed into an elaborate ruse with which to hide the murder of an innocent old woman. That is to say, the narrator cannot be trusted and there is no actual wolf in this tale.

The second story, “The Company of Wolves”, is the most traditional of these tales, as it follows the conventional plotline of “Little Red Riding Hood” much more closely than the other two stories do. Consequently, “The Company of Wolves” transforms the werewolf into a metaphor for the female libido and the dangers of untamed sexuality. Finally, there is “Wolf-Alice”, the story of a young, mentally challenged feral child who has been raised by wolves. After her questionable rescue the girl is sent away from the civilised human community to live with a demonic lycanthrope in a faraway mansion. This tale examines the ways we humans draw borders between ourselves and other animals. What is the essential difference between humans and other animals? I claim that in “Wolf-Alice” Carter dismisses the traditional Western notion of human superiority and in doing so also simultaneously challenges the views of some of the leading psychoanalysts of the twentieth century. I argue that for Carter the acquisition of human language is not a prerequisite for achieving consciousness and subjectivity. Therefore she grants these qualities to other animals, as well.

My approach is quite interdisciplinary: I am utilising mainly a feminist framework with posthumanist and ecocritical undertones while also drawing from concepts of psychoanalytic literary theory where I see appropriate. As a feminist interested in psychoanalysis, Carter also sought to challenge some of the discipline’s main tenets, especially those concerning women: she was quite sceptical of some of Freud’s basic hypotheses. “Little Red Riding Hood” narratives in general have often been approached from Freudian perspectives, as the climactic image of the wolf’s mouth has brought the attention of many a commentator to the emphasis placed on orality in the tale (Warner [1994] 1995, 182). Some of the Freudian interpretations consider this orality “an allegory of a child’s aggressive feelings towards the mother’s breast”, whereas others have seen it as a reference to “another form of maternal nurturance: language or oral knowledge” (ibid.). In “Wolf-Alice” Carter is concerned with the importance of language in the emergence of consciousness and clearly examines the post-Freudian French psychoanalyst Lacan’s mirror theory –

therefore I find it necessary to discuss some concepts of psychoanalytic literary theory as well.

Even though Carter is amongst those feminist writers of the 1970s who endeavoured to make women's voices heard in history, she did not aim for historical accuracy in these short stories. Nevertheless, I am interested in how her vast knowledge of history, folklore and fairy tales is transmitted through these tales; therefore I argue my examinations of cultural history to be justified and necessary. Carter's stories are teeming with intertextual references and allusions; to identify them requires substantial background knowledge from the reader. The tales can also be enjoyed without such information, yet deeper analysis requires the examination of this socio-historical context. Carter's stories demonstrate an extensive knowledge of many different fields and during my research I found it increasingly useful to draw on historical studies about the early modern period in which her tales are situated. I also rely quite heavily on fairy tale research conducted by Zipes and Warner throughout this entire thesis. To summarise, I believe such an interdisciplinary approach to yield a deeper and more meaningful interpretation of Carter's texts.

While *The Bloody Chamber* has been marketed as "fairy tales for adults", I do believe Carter was not to merely rewriting old familiar stories. She chose the fairy tale genre deliberately in order to take part in the debate about its perceived misogynistic structures as well as to shake its traditional forms: "I am all for putting new wine in old bottles, especially if the pressure of the new wine makes the old bottles explode", she once said in an interview (Carter cited in Makinen 2000, 22). Consequently, I am interested in how Carter works within the framework provided by this particular genre and, perhaps even more importantly, how she works outside it. Partly due to their oral history, fairy tales traditionally invite multiple retellings and different versions. Questions of originality and authorship are rendered irrelevant, and similarly the line between true and false becomes blurred. Even the fact that Carter has included as many as three versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" in a single collection demonstrates the importance of retellings within this genre. In doing so, I argue, Carter seems to invite a deconstructive reading of her texts; with slight alterations and a vast array of intertextual references and allusions she creates entirely different and fresh narratives.

I begin by examining the work of Carter quite broadly and discuss the literary influences affecting her during the time of writing *The Bloody Chamber*, after which

I introduce the three short stories in more detail. For the sake of clarity and brevity, I will henceforth refer to the tales as follows: “Little Red Riding Hood” as “LRRH”, “The Werewolf” as “Werewolf” and “The Company of Wolves” as “Company”, while “Wolf-Alice” may remain as such. Carter was very familiar with the history of the fairy tale genre; therefore I consider it necessary to offer a brief overview of it. The evolution of the story “LRRH” in particular deserves a closer look, not only because the stories I examine are different rewritings of it, but also because it demonstrates how societal attitudes toward women, animals and sexuality have developed throughout history and how these different attitudes have been transmitted to new audiences.

I claim that Carter deliberately alludes to historical events as well as to traditional folklore, and therefore I delve quite deep into the socio-historical context of the first versions of “LRRH”. I am, however, well aware that Carter was writing fiction in the context of the 1970s, and I will therefore not attempt to read her stories as historical documents; I merely suggest that there is much added value in knowing about the historical era she is writing about. For example, Carter very slyly remarks on the paranoia and persecution of social misfits as witches and werewolves in the story “Werewolf” – I only came to the conclusion that the plotline of the story is not as straightforward as I initially believed with the help of research on the historical werewolf paradigm. For example historians Schulte and Wiseman address these issues of the werewolf and witchcraft thoroughly. The story of “LRRH” in general is connected to werewolves in ways that I found to be unexpected, yet logical and intriguing.

After introducing this historical context, I examine shifting beliefs about animals in more detail, focusing especially on *wolves*. This particular species becomes intertwined with attempts to control female sexuality and mobility through fear and therefore in my discussion of the wolf I draw especially on feminist affect theory as introduced by Ahmed. However, as the wolf as such proved to be less relevant to my interpretation than I initially thought, I quite quickly move on to the figure of the werewolf. It, too, appears as an instrument of control, especially by raising questions about the border between human and animal, indicating the threshold between members of a given community and threatening outsiders. My final theme is that of consciousness and language, the two main concepts that allegedly separate us humans from other animals. I claim that Carter challenges some

of the basic premises of Western philosophy in regard to our attitudes toward animals. She seems to reject mind-body dualism and questions the role of human language as the basis of consciousness, thus also contesting the very concept of human exceptionalism.

2 Angela Carter as a Fairy Tale Writer

The British novelist Angela Carter (1940–1992) is a slightly controversial figure among the feminist movement. She is “a writer who spent much of her life out of fashion, who failed or declined to fit into any orthodoxies of feminism, whose novels notoriously did not win big literary prizes and whose name has become generally well known only since her death” (Lee [1994] 2007, 317). Yet she has become one of the most well researched authors of the late twentieth century and many of the themes she discusses are still relevant and topical.

Carter believes that what is thought to be the “real” world is in fact a result of the most powerful narratives in circulation. As a result, the weak are silenced, and Carter wrote in order to make these ignored voices heard (Eaglestone 2003, 199–200). She was amongst those feminist writers of the 1970s who attempted to “restore women’s voices to history” while simultaneously altering gender relations of her day (Downs 2004, 31). Eaglestone (2003, 204) claims that Carter is always on the side of the less powerful and subsequently mainly concerned with the experiences of women. This is apparent in all three tales that I examine in this thesis. I believe that having read the French philosopher Foucault’s work, Carter thought of power in the Foucauldian sense: “[Power] is produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to another. Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere” (Foucault [1978] 1980, 93). Fairy tales and other stories of folklore are thus also part of this creation of power.

Carter is interested in the concepts of social and historical constructedness. Especially the structures of gender and sexuality are a never-ending source of material for her and her work often deals with issues of gender politics (Jordan [1994] 2007, 211). Carter has also been described as “an author who insisted that ‘everything’ comes out of history”, including our views about gender and sexuality (Easton 2000, 16). The historical evolution of “LRRH” quite markedly demonstrates these changing attitudes, and I therefore argue that Carter takes special care to place her own tales in this historical continuum. In the next section, I focus on Carter’s fairy tale collection *The Bloody Chamber*, in which these three stories I examine are found, as well as her non-fiction book *The Sadeian Woman: An Exercise in Cultural*

History (1979), as the two are closely related. Both *The Sadeian Woman* and *The Bloody Chamber* explore gendered structures relating to passivity and aggression (Atwood [1994] 2007, 134). They both deal with issues of female sexuality and victimhood which one might not readily associate with fairy tales, but are actually found at the very core of many a story.

2.1 *The Bloody Chamber* and *The Sadeian Woman*

In *The Bloody Chamber* Carter rewrites some of the canonical European fairy tales ranging from “Snow White” and “Puss-in-Boots” to “Beauty and the Beast” and “Bluebeard”. The tales are filled with sex and blood in a manner the average contemporary reader of fairy tales is usually not accustomed to. Most of the stories also deal with young girls discovering their sexuality amidst vivid erotic imagery. Carter’s tales are based on centuries of fairy tale history and are committed to the deconstruction of “the original” stories (Eaglestone 2003, 202). The 1970s, the time Carter was writing her collection, witnessed the “feminist reclaiming of various things – the streets, the night, as well as fairy tales” (Farnell 2014, 270). Second wave feminism and feminist writers took on the mission of reclaiming fairy tale with different views on appropriate female conduct in the 1970s and 1980s (Warner [1994] 1995, 281). Carter is a prominent figure amongst these writers.

Carter’s initial interest toward fairy tales grew when in the 1970s she took on the task of translating into English the fairy tale collection *Histoires ou Contes du temps passé* (1697) by the French aristocrat Charles Perrault. Carter took many liberties in her translation, testing the limits between translation and adaptation. She chose to ignore Perrault’s refined and ironic style, converting his “long, elegant sentences into short, blunt ones” and even altering “his verse morals with prose homilies, many of which said the precise opposite of what he intended” (Gordon 2016, 267). However, Carter did not want to neglect her duties as a translator, so she kept the alterations moderate. While translating Perrault’s collection, she began to consider fairy tale as “a specific genre of European literature” (Makinen 2000, 22). To her it represented “the oral literature of the poor” that reached across Europe and dealt with the dark and sinister parts of the human psyche (ibid.). She conducted a considerable amount of research for her translation, including, for example,

familiarising herself with Bettelheim's psychoanalytic study of European fairy tales, *The Uses of Enchantment* (1976) (Gordon 2016, 266). At the time of its publication Bettelheim's book was very influential, although it has later been widely discredited. Bettelheim's main claim was that the traditional fairy tales present "terrifying mysteries" such as sex and death in a symbolic form in order to offer children consolation and tools for processing such difficult concepts (ibid.). However, Carter had several reasons to argue with some of Bettelheim's basic tenets as she was familiar with the historical contexts in which these stories had originated: for example, she maintained that the fear of wild animals in medieval rural France was not only a symbolic abstraction as Bettelheim had claimed, but a reasonable practicality and safety measure in the agrarian peasant community. Nevertheless, as an artist she was inspired by the vivid underlying imagery of sex and violence Bettelheim had affiliated with these tales meant for children (ibid.). She was particularly impressed by Bettelheim's claim that fairy tale animals represent base human desires and wrote in her journal "The animal is repressed sexuality – 'the beast is man'" (Carter cited in ibid.). This thought became an essential guideline for my initial reading of Carter's stories.

Inspired by Bettelheim and Perrault, Carter began work on her own collection of fairy tales with the aim of exposing the ways we humans try to differentiate ourselves from other animals as conceited lies (Gordon 2016, 267). This was the beginning of *The Bloody Chamber*. Two years after the Perrault translation she finished this fairy tale collection of her own (Warner [1994] 1995, 308). In it Carter also rewrites the story of "LRRH", producing as many as three variations of the tale. All the stories in the collection are filled with physical and sexual violence and deal with some very dark issues such as incest, sex and rape. Carter's Gothicizing of canonical fairy tales has been seen by many as doing violence to the "original" stories (Farnell 2014, 271). I would argue against such a view, for it reveals a lack of knowledge about the history of the genre. The traditional oral tales discussed some very somber material as well and did not shy away from issues such as sexuality, violence and death. Only through the editing process that took place over the centuries, the darker material was gradually excluded – thus, I argue that Carter's fairy tales are in fact even more true to the "original" stories than those of, say, Disney. Be that as it may, both despite and because of her retellings, Carter has

become one of the most widely studied writers of the later twentieth century (Farnell 2014, 271). I certainly find her stories worth examining.

When Carter began writing *The Bloody Chamber*, she had already published seven novels, and her book-length essay on Marquis de Sade, *The Sadeian Woman: An Exercise in Cultural History*, was about to be published (Gordon 2016, 273). The essay examines the representations of women in the writings of the famous French libertine. This is perhaps Carter's most influential non-fiction work and by examining its bibliography, one gains a glimpse into what Carter was reading at the time. Her writing was influenced by "major European theoretical thinkers" such as Foucault, Barthes, Lacan and Klein, to name a few, who were perhaps not yet "standard fare of many literary critics" at the time of Carter's writing, but are well established today (Easton 2000, 6). In addition to these more contemporary theorists, Carter was also interested in the works of European philosophers and intellectuals of the past, such as Freud and Marx (Easton 2000, 6). Consequently, many have claimed that *The Sadeian Woman* not only offers major insight into Carter's feminist and socialist views, but also functions as a guide to her other works written during this period – *The Bloody Chamber* included (Gordon 2016, 252–53). Makinen (2000, 25) is among those who think that the extent of Carter's reading shows: according to her, *The Bloody Chamber* seems to expect at least a beginner's level grasp of feminism from the reader. She claims that the collection is engaging with the type of reader informed by feminism and "historically situated in the early 1980s (and beyond)" (ibid.). *The Bloody Chamber*, Makinen (ibid.) asserts, raises questions about the cultural constructedness of femininity. As the two books are so closely connected, I consider it necessary to also discuss *The Sadeian Woman* in more detail.

The Sadeian Woman was published during an increasingly heated public debate about pornography, and certain feminists viewed de Sade as "the misogynist extraordinaire" (Gordon 2016, 292). In 1974, the American radical feminist Dworkin first claimed that pornography and fairy tales are congruent, and later in 1981 that Marquis de Sade was "the world's foremost pornographer" (Farnell 2014, 270). As could be expected in such climate, Carter's book provoked mixed reviews. For example Dworkin described *The Sadeian Woman* mockingly as a "pseudofeminist literary essay" (Dworkin [1981] 1983, 84). Carter was not shaken by such criticism and her reaction demonstrates quite well the oft made claim that she never conformed to a static notion of either femininity or feminism (Snowden 2010, 166).

She declared that if she could irritate Dworkin “then my living has not been in vain” (Carter cited in Gordon 2016, 292). In fact, Gordon (ibid.) claims that Carter’s *The Bloody Chamber* became a “semi-calculated affront to Dworkin” because Dworkin had also argued that the fairy tale as a genre entrenches gender stereotypes and holds women back; Carter wanted to prove her wrong.

Carter was most certainly known for her willingness to argue. According to her “a day without an argument is like an egg without salt” (Carter [1993] 1992, 4). Her choice to write about de Sade and to reclaim fairy tales by rewriting them was most likely a deliberate provocation on her part (Farnell 2014, 270). Similarly her relationship with feminism was complex and she recognised that not all shared her views: “I get into such trouble with the sisters [...] because ideologically, I can be found wanting. Either I argue too much or I giggle too much” (Blodgett 1994, 50-51). The arguments she engaged in were partly caused by her wariness and suspicion toward absolute truths and rigid ideologies.

Given all this, it is perhaps no wonder that Carter’s texts have also been criticised as being antifeminist, sometimes even misogynistic. For example Carter’s critic Lewallen sees her work almost as a “reproduction of male pornography” (Makinen 2000, 23). Similarly the British radical feminist author and scholar Duncker saw Carter’s usage of the narrative form of fairy tale as too strictly tied to the genre’s misogynistic traditions (Duncker cited in Snowden 2010, 169). Duncker argues that in utilising the fairy tale genre Carter merely repeats its rigid conservative structures while simultaneously failing to escape the inherent sexism of the traditional tales. She also claims that all the tales in the collection (with the exception of “The Bloody Chamber”) repeat patriarchal behavioural patterns (Duncker cited in Kaiser 1994, 33). Kaiser, on the other hand, argues that what Duncker sees as inconsistencies in the application of feminist principles is in fact a reflection of Carter’s attempt “to portray sexuality as a culturally relative phenomenon” (1994, 33). I am more inclined to agree with Kaiser, as Carter, while clearly demonstrating her knowledge of history and traditional folklore throughout her stories, simultaneously introduces resourceful and independent female protagonists that do not conform to the role of a passive, helpless fairy tale heroine.

In *The Sadeian Woman* Carter also comments on the works of the founder of psychoanalysis, Freud. She had read Freud’s *Interpretation of Dreams* during her student years and was intrigued with his work. Psychoanalysis thrilled her, as its

language revealed a network of symbolism present in everyday discourse (Gordon 2016, 70). This influenced her way of looking at the world, which intensified and culminated in these two career-defining books, *The Sadeian Woman* and *The Bloody Chamber* (Gordon 2016, 71). However, as with Bettelheim, Carter argues with some of Freud's basic hypotheses. For example, she saw the Freudian idea of women's castration as a "psychic fiction" that not only affects individual development, but pervades our entire culture and helps justify sexual violence against women. In *The Sadeian Woman*, commenting both on the violence of the Marquis and the psychoanalytic theories of Freud, she wrote:

The whippings, the beatings, the gougings, the stabbings of erotic violence reawaken the memory of the social fiction of the female wound, the bleeding scar left by her castration, which is a psychic fiction as deeply at the heart of Western culture as the myth of Oedipus. [...] Female castration is an imaginary fact that pervades the whole of men's attitude towards women and our attitude to ourselves, that transforms women from human beings into wounded creatures who were born to bleed.

(Carter cited in Sheets 1991, 653)

Carter recognises Freud as another powerful myth-maker whose views on women have significantly influenced Western thought. She, on the other hand, firmly rejects female victimhood, which is also an important theme in all the short stories I examine, especially in "Company".

In *The Sadeian Woman* Carter writes "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 cited in Atwood [1994] 2007, 139). By such a definition, the perfect, passive woman is a fairy tale creature, a fallacy not worth pursuing. The heroines of Carter's own stories are certainly not passive or submissive. Atwood ([1994] 2007, 134) claims that *The Bloody Chamber* may be read as a talking-back to de Sade in which Carter seeks to question the dichotomies of predator and prey, master and slave, which were so important for de Sade. Carter seems to suggest that to avoid becoming meat, women must achieve an independent existence and actively reject the role of the victim (Atwood [1994] 2007, 135). This is aptly demonstrated in "Werewolf" and in "Company". Carter also discards the idea that men are by nature predatory and women consequently their natural prey; these roles are not fixed and can be found in both men and women, even "in the same individual at different times" (ibid.).

Carter's three "LRRH" stories present us with young and bold heroines who survive in the world without the help of a male saviour. These resourceful and independent women refuse to be anybody's meat, as I shall demonstrate in the next section by presenting brief plot descriptions of each tale.

2.2 Carter's "Little Red Riding Hood" Stories

The three short stories, "Werewolf", "Company" and "Wolf-Alice", appear quite similar at first reading, but upon closer examination they deal with remarkably diverse issues. Carter's rewritings of the traditional "LRRH" are dark, violent and filled with sexual content, yet still recognisable as versions of it. Traditionally the tale recounts how a young girl, on her way to take food and drink to her sick grandmother, encounters a talking wolf in the forest. All of Carter's versions also feature a young female protagonist, just at the threshold of puberty. The character of the wolf appears in "Werewolf" and "Company" as a dangerous threat in the more conventional manner of a "LRRH" narrative, whereas in "Wolf-Alice" the girl is raised by kind and compassionate canines. Initially Wolf-Alice also identifies as one of the wolves. In the following, I give brief plot descriptions of Carter's stories before delving deeper into their analysis.

"Werewolf", a "tiny little story", as Carter described it, was the first one of these three wolf tales that she wrote (Gordon 2016, 272). The story begins in a way most people familiar with "LRRH" are accustomed to: a young girl meets a wolf in the forest on her way to see her grandmother. However, this is not a wolf to converse with; this is a ferocious beast who will listen to no reason, ready to attack, kill and devour as "it went for her throat, as wolves do" ("Werewolf" 127). However, like the protagonists found in the oral tradition, the girl in Carter's story is in need of no salvation as she instead takes matters into her own hands by chopping off the wolf's paw and scaring the beast away. She takes the maimed paw with her and continues her journey through the woods. The girl arrives at her grandmother's cottage to discover that the old woman's hand has been cut off and the paw in the girl's basket has transformed into a human hand, thus revealing the wolf and the grandmother to be one and the same creature. The girl cries out loud enough for the neighbours to come rushing in. As a result, the villagers drive the old woman away out into the

snow in her shift, and “pelted her with stones until she fell down dead” (“Werewolf” 128). After the death of this monstrous werewolf, the girl moves in to her grandmother’s house and prospers.

The second story, “Company”, mimics an oral storytelling event by occasionally directly addressing the reader. The tale begins by the narrator recounting miniature tales inspired by superstition and hearsay about werewolves and other wolfish beasts, only to conclude with another version of “LRRH”. A young girl meets a handsome man in the forest and agrees to race him to her grandmother’s house. They wager on a kiss. She is unaware that the youth is a werewolf, and as he arrives at the cottage first, he consumes the old woman. When the girl reaches the house, the werewolf threatens her with the same fate as her grandmother, but instead of cowering in terror and begging for her life she ends up laughing daringly in the beast’s face: “The girl burst out laughing; she knew she was nobody’s meat” (“Company” 138). This is without a doubt the climax of the story, to which I shall return to in more detail later in sections 4.2 and 4.3. The girl burns both her own and the beast’s clothes and gets in bed with the wolf. The story ends with the girl “sweet and sound” asleep in her grandmother’s bed “between the tender paws of the wolf” (“Company” 139). Up until the point where the girl laughs at the wolf, “Company” is perhaps the most conventional of these three tales in the sense that it follows the plotline of the original oral tales most closely, as section 3.1 will demonstrate.

The third tale, “Wolf-Alice”, is the final story of the collection. The protagonist is, once again, a young woman, but quite different from the previous Little Red Riding Hoods. Wolf-Alice has been suckled and raised by wolves. The girl is feral, “[n]othing about her is human except that she is *not* a wolf” and “like the wild beasts, she lives without a future” (“Wolf-Alice” 141). She has no understanding of human language, no sense of selfhood or time. After the death of her surrogate wolf mother she lives with Catholic nuns for a short while, but, after they find civilizing her too arduous a task, the nuns soon dispatch her to the mansion of a lycanthropic creature called the Duke. The Duke feasts on human corpses and casts no reflection in the mirror. As Wolf-Alice has been raised by other carnivores, the wolves, she does not find the Duke frightening, but instead lives quite content as his companion and maid. Gradually throughout the narrative the girl begins to construct pieces of subjectivity and selfhood. When she finds a mirror she comes to realise that the figure in it is her and as she grows, her menses begin, leading her to

notice the passage of time. Consequently she becomes conscious of herself as an individual, yet she never obtains any form of human language. At the end of the story, when the Duke is wounded by angry villagers, she takes care of him by licking his face and suddenly the Duke, too, appears in the mirror.

As mentioned earlier, I find the three stories to be thematically fairly different. In my opinion, “Werewolf” focuses on the vulnerability of a lonely postmenopausal woman, “Company” deals with matters of victimhood, sexuality and the female libido, and “Wolf-Alice” explores questions of consciousness and the boundaries between human and animal amidst the daunting figures of feral children and lycanthropes. All three are variations of “LRRH”, first written down by Perrault in 1697. Perrault’s version is a classic warning tale instructing young women how to behave, concerned especially with the regulation of sexual morality and conduct. The oral folk tradition on which he based his tale, however, had quite a different message in which the female protagonist was presented as resourceful and independent, a natural equal of the male (were)wolf.

Before we move any further, I consider it necessary to comment on the setting and time period during which Carter’s stories presumably unfold. Even though these are fairy tales, which generally tend to deal with the fantastical and take place in imaginary lands, I believe Carter situated her stories in specific socio-historical contexts by utilising intertextual references. In this I agree with Kaiser (1991, 31) who believes Carter’s use of intertextuality in the collection to be a way of moving the tales into specific cultural moments instead of “mythic timelessness” of the fairy tale. These moments emphasise different issues of gender relations and sexuality, and, similarly, the changing context also affects the outcomes of the narratives (ibid.). Remembering Carter’s views about historicity and how our perceptions of reality are constructed, I argue that the stories are easier to comprehend once they are historically situated. In the following I suggest a timeline and contextual frame for the stories.

Drawing straight parallels between the stories and historical environments and events would be problematic and pointless. Carter herself addressed this issue of narrative time as follows:

Narrative is written in language but it is composed, if you follow me, in time. All writers are inventing a kind of imitation time when they invent the time in

which a story unfolds, and they are playing a complicated game with *our* time, the reader's time, the time it takes to read a story. A good writer can make you believe time stands still.

(Carter [1993] 1992, 2)

I argue that the stories unfold in early modern Europe. Based on their descriptions of peasant life and superstitious beliefs prevalent during the era, I consider "Werewolf" and "Company" to take place during the seventeenth century. "Werewolf" also alludes to an early modern story about a female werewolf, which I shall return to later. "Wolf-Alice" refers to *Robinson Crusoe* which was published in 1719 and also bears remarkable resemblance to the story of a wild child called Mademoiselle le Blanc who was discovered in France in 1731 – I would therefore situate this particular story in the eighteenth century.

In fact, there are many intertextual references to be found in Carter's stories which are a way of creating a recognisable setting and context for these tales. However, the main problem in analysing such intertextuality is that one needs to be familiar with a wealth of texts in order to detect it. For example, "Wolf-Alice" is a clear reference to Alice in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and the main character also resembles the wolf child Mowgli in Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (1894), the archetypal "noble savage" Friday from *Robinson Crusoe* and the bear man Orson from the medieval tale "Valentine and Orson". Carter is formidably well-read and utilises her reading throughout her own texts. She recognised the importance of intertextuality, but also what she called "the sub-text":

Because all fiction, all writing of any kind, in fact, exists on a number of different levels. [...] If you read the tale carefully, the tale tells you more than the writer knows, often much more than they wanted to give away. The tale tells you, in all innocence, what its writer thinks is important, who she or he thinks is important and, above all, why. Call it the sub-text.

(Carter [1993] 1992, 3)

That is, in addition to deliberately referring to other texts, writers may unconsciously reveal their attitudes or thoughts concerning different phenomena. Therefore, if they remain attentive, readers may discover suppressed secrets.

The density of intertextual references in Carter's stories is indeed very high. Easton (2000, 5) suggests that there is a need for far more academic study aimed at identifying Carter's source materials and examining how she utilised them and I am inclined to agree. Carter draws on multiple different sources had, for example, read

the British historian Pollard's book *Wolves and Were-wolves* and utilised this material in the writing of her three "LRRH" stories (Gordon 2016, 272). The German philosopher Benjamin's essay *The Storyteller* (that focuses on storytelling as "an artisan activity") as well as the American historian Darnton's essay "Peasants Tell Tales" (which centers on socio-cultural and economic conditions associated with these stories) also influenced her views of fairy tales (Warner [1994] 2007, 256). Carter's texts demonstrate a deep knowledge of the cultural history behind the figures of wolves, werewolves and lycanthropes. I find her numerous references and allusions at times frustrating, but also potentially very rewarding. It would be futile to itemize all the intertextual references here. Instead, I will discuss some of my findings throughout this thesis where I find them relevant. After all, intertextuality is not my main research interest here, but examining it is rather a means of situating Carter's stories in suitable contexts and as a part of the historical continuum of the fairy tale genre. The history of fairy tale is the topic of the next chapter.

3 Fairy Tale History and “Little Red Riding Hood”

Fairy tales are traditionally stories with happy endings and magical happenings, often (but not always) intended for children. In this chapter I present a brief history of the European fairy tale while using the evolution of “LRRH” as an example. I rely especially on the comprehensive studies on “LRRH” by Zipes, who is one of the leading scholars on the German Brothers Grimm in particular and “an indefatigable champion of the fairy tale” in general (Warner [1994] 2007, 256). According to Zipes, “LRRH” is the most popular fairy tale in the world, with thousands of different versions told in numerous languages, as well as one of the most researched ones with over a hundred published books and scholarly studies (Zipes 1995, 23, 28, 35). Zipes examines the evolution of this specific tale in detail in his extensive work *The Trials and Tribulations of Red Riding Hood* (1993) as well as in numerous other publications. I also draw on the work of Warner, who has also written several works on the history of fairy tales.

The history of fairy tale is a history of continuous cultural adaptation and appropriation, which is also evident in Carter’s tales. In my opinion this makes the genre all the more interesting for research. Returning once more to the ideas of historical constructedness, Carter considers both literature and fairy tales as “vast repositories of outmoded lies, where you can check out what lies used to be a la mode and find the old lies on which the new lies are based” (Carter cited in Makinen 2000, 22). Quite fittingly then, as they pass on information about the beliefs and values of a particular community, fairy tales tend to excess in both blame and praise (Warner [1994] 1995, 49). Especially if the audience consists of children, the storyteller is generally believed to wield considerable power; the teller has an opportunity to influence children’s views about such fundamental issues as who is trust-worthy and who is not and what kind of behaviour is condemned and what in turn praised within a given community (ibid.). The fairy tale is designed to both entertain and enlighten.

Fairy tales often incorporate tropes and elements from other genres, simultaneously absorbing high and low elements. Motifs and plotlines are nomadic, traveling by word of mouth; in fairy tale elements of animal fables, classical romance and moralities as well as medieval jests and saints’ lives all fuse together (Warner

[1994] 1995, xvii). In fact, “all the short narrative forms” such as myth, legend, and fable are closely related to fairy tale (Zipes 1995, 95). Similarly, the story of “LRRH” mixes several genres; fairy tale, initiation tale, warning tale and fable (Zipes 1995, 28). This is to say that fairy tales are quite intertextual by nature. In her introduction to *The Old Wives’ Fairy Tale Book* (1990), Carter herself points out intertextuality as one of the main features of the genre (Kaiser 1994, 30). This led her to wonder about the question of authorship. Carter repeatedly questions the concept of “originality” so often discussed in relation to fairy tales. She writes:

Ours is a highly individualized culture, with a great faith in the work of art as a unique one-off, and the artist as an original, a godlike and inspired creator of unique one-offs. But fairy tales are not like that, nor are their makers. Who first invented meatballs? In what country? Is there a definitive recipe for potato soup? Think in terms of the domestic arts. ‘This is how I make potato soup.’

(Carter cited in Warner [1994] 1995, 418)

Absorbing different elements and influences is thus natural to fairy tales and the question of originality is rendered almost irrelevant. However, I am interested in the previous oral history of “LRRH”, for it reveals many things about the changing attitudes towards women and sexuality. Metaphorically erotic, “LRRH” focuses especially on gender roles and the relations between the sexes while simultaneously posing questions about violence and sexism, all of which are themes Carter is also interested in (Zipes 1995, 28). I discuss this issue in the next section.

3.1 The Oral Tales

It has been repeatedly argued that the literary origins of all canonical Western fairy tales are a historical culmination of a much longer oral tradition (Zipes 1993, 7). Originally fairy tales were transmitted orally: telling stories was an entertaining way to pass the time while working and a convenient way to educate and spread ideas. This oral practice gave birth to numerous different versions of familiar stories. As each listener is also a potential storyteller, it seems quite logical that fairy tales have been, and still are, subject to continuous change. The stories may change because the teller simply forgets something or otherwise unintentionally alters the tale, and likewise they may change because the teller wishes to tell them differently. This practice of orality also requires physical proximity with the audience, and partly

because of this, fairy tales also seek to please and tend to cater to the audience's pre-existing beliefs (Warner [1994] 1995, 409). This seems logical, as telling a displeasing story in front of a crowd is usually an uncomfortable ordeal.

According to evidence by historians, folklorists and ethnologists, similarly to other canonical fairy tales "LRRH" was also born out of a separate oral tradition that was controlled by peasants and, more specifically, by peasant women (Zipes 1993, 7). Similar stories are found around Europe and Asia and these independent oral tales seem to always lack the name of the girl and any mentions of the colour red; thus these elements can be considered to be later additions by Perrault (Zipes 1993, 23). The oral versions of "LRRH" that scholars consider the most typical ones seem to have originated in sewing communities in northern Italy and southern France, more specifically in areas where werewolf trials were most common in Europe during the beginning of the modern era (Zipes 1993, 20). This also suggests that the original villain of "LRRH" in the French tradition was a werewolf, and it was, once again, Perrault who changed him into a simple wolf (Zipes 1993, 19). I will return to this important distinction between wolf and werewolf later on in chapter 5.

It is quite clear that the oral versions told by lower class peasant women differed from those that were later written down by aristocratic or middle class men, a fact that Carter, too, was well aware of. The oral versions of "LRRH" emphasise the aspect of growing into womanhood, as they address the protagonist's maturation and initiation into to the role of a seamstress, thus succeeding her grandmother and assuring generational continuity. In these tales the protagonist is an ordinary, nameless peasant girl, resourceful and quick-witted, a natural equal to the (were)wolf (Zipes 1995, 28). She goes to visit her sick grandmother and meets a talking wolf in the forest. He asks her whether she will take the path of the pins or the needles, and the girl chooses the path of the needles. The wolf reaches the grandmother's house first and eats the old woman. When the girl later arrives, she almost immediately realises the impending danger and manages to trick and escape the wolf on her own.

The oral "LRRH" was not just a reminder for children to be weary of strangers: it was "also a celebration of a young girl's coming of age" (Zipes 1993, 24). It has been viewed as a transitional story that refers to women's acquisition of new types of knowledge at different points of physical maturation (Makinen 2001, 57). Choosing between the path of pins and the path of needles is considered a reference to sewing. In certain regions of France where the tale was common, pins

and needles were related “to the arrival of puberty and initiation into society” (Zipes 1993, 24). When a girl reached a certain point of maturity, she would become a seamstress. Therefore, the pins, which the girl would have used when assisting others with their sewing, signified childhood and inexperience, and, respectively, the needles her ability to start sewing herself. In her tales, Carter also examines the physical maturation into womanhood, joining her retellings to this tradition of “LRRH” as a coming-of-age story. Her protagonists are young girls who have either just started or are about to start menstruating, taking their first steps into the realm of adulthood. For example Wolf-Alice finds the changes brought on by puberty both surprising and intriguing:

She examined her breasts with curiosity; the white growths reminded her of nothing so much as the night-sprung puffballs she had found, sometimes, on evening rambles in the woods, a natural if disconcerting apparition, but then, to her astonishment, she found a little diadem of fresh hairs tufting between her thighs.

(“Wolf-Alice” 146)

Following this same theme, special attention is paid to inexperience and virginity. In “Company” virginity is described forebodingly as a sign of naivety and childlike innocence, hinting at a future filled with loss:

She stands and moves within the invisible pentacle of her own virginity. She is an unbroken egg; she is a sealed vessel; she has inside her a magic space the entrance to which is shut tight with a plug of membrane; she is a closed system; she does not know how to shiver. She has her knife and she is afraid of nothing.

(“Company” 133)

However, the fact that the girl carries a knife implies that she is more prepared to spill someone else’s blood, rather than her own. She may be young and innocent, but she is also confident and unafraid of the dangers lurking in the woods. In all three tales Carter emphasises the youth and inexperience of her protagonists, yet never describes them as helpless or powerless. Even the fact that all these stories take place during the winter, a time of dormancy and hibernation, implies that spring is coming and growth is to be expected.

There are some aspects in the traditional oral tales that today’s audience might find quite unnerving in a fairy tale. In some versions the girl is tricked by the wolf into eating pieces of her grandmother’s flesh and drinking her blood, thus symbolically absorbing her knowledge (Warner [1994] 1995, 181). This can be seen

as an allegory of the younger generation replacing the older one (Makinen 2001, 57). The grandmother's death represents continuity, passing on information and special skills as well as reinvigorating customs, all of which are crucial for the well-being and preservation of the peasant community (Zipes 1993, 24). Eating becomes an important theme in Carter's tales as well, especially in "Company", and I examine the practice of meat eating in section 4.2. I also find the deaths of old women worth a closer inspection: the grandmother's demise in both "Werewolf" and "Company" is dealt with very casually and neither of the protagonists seems to agonize over the death of their own kin. I find this aspect quite peculiar and shall return to it in more detail in section 5.2.

The oral tradition, then, demonstrates the importance of women's knowledge for survival as the resourceful peasant girl outsmarts the cunning beast and escapes death (Bacchilega 1997, 56; Makinen 2001, 56). The story "underlines the autonomy and power of women in regard to their own destiny" (Zipes 1993, 24). Such an active heroine could certainly be out of one of Carter's short stories as all her protagonists survive on their own, sometimes even prosper, without outside help. Many critics and folklorists maintain that as happy endings are more prevalent in the oral folk tale tradition, the versions where Little Red Riding Hood survives on her own were probably the most typical ones, while the tragic endings seem to arise from literary versions (Zipes 1993, 4). It is therefore interesting to note that in the traditional oral versions the girl is never killed but instead outwits the wolf and saves herself, which is exactly what happens in Carter's "Werewolf" and "Company" (Zipes 1993, 23). Carter's first protagonist succeeds in driving the werewolf away on her own, and similarly the second girl has to rescue herself as she "cannot be rescued from the wolf by the hunter, because the wolf *is* the hunter" (Atwood [1994] 2007, 145). These protagonists are resourceful and refuse to become victims, an issue to which I return in sections 4.2 and 4.3.

In some oral versions a happy ending is achieved when the girl escapes the wolf by claiming she has to leave the house to urinate. After refusing the wolf's suggestion to relieve herself in the bed, the wolf ties a long rope to the girl's ankle. Once outside in the woods, she slips the knot and escapes (Warner [1994] 1995, 181). The same trope is found in one of the miniature stories embedded in Carter's "Company"; a young couple is preparing for their wedding night. The bride lies down on the bed, but the groom insists that he must go outside to relieve himself.

The woman waits patiently, but he does not return: all she hears is the howling of wolves coming from the forest. Only years later after she has already remarried she is reunited with her first husband, but the man now returns in the form of a vengeful, bloodthirsty werewolf (“Company” 131–32). There are many such links to the oral tradition in Carter’s tales, which demonstrate she was well aware of the history of the material she was rewriting.

3.2 Perrault and the Brothers Grimm

Readers have interpreted the story of “LRRH” in drastically varying ways. Some have gone as far as to suggest that the story is essentially about how “women need men for protection and guidance and, without them, women are likely to threaten the social order through sin” (Chase & Teasley 1996, 775–76). Given the resourceful, independent women found in the oral tradition, one cannot help but wonder how such a reading could be possible. The answer lies in the literary versions of “LRRH”, written almost exclusively by men whose opinions regarding the independence and abilities of women were quite different from those portrayed in the oral tales.

I will now examine the most important literary versions of “LRRH” by Perrault, who was the first one to write the story down, and by the Brothers Grimm, whose tale is perhaps the most widely spread and known even today. Perrault was in fact the first man to write down fairy tales at all, even though he identified the genre as women and children’s literature (Warner [1994] 1995, 265). Perrault is often remembered as the defining pioneer of the genre, when in fact he was “greatly outnumbered, and in some instances also preceded, by women aficionadas of *contes de fées* [fairy tales] whose work has now faded from view” (Warner [1994] 1995, xii). The writing and reading of fairy tales was a popular undertaking among the women of the French court, yet history tends to emphasise the importance of Perrault.

Consequently, it is Perrault who is credited with shaping folklore and oral tales into an exquisite literary form, while he also “set rigorous standards of comportment, which were intended to regulate and limit the nature of children’s development” (Zipes 1993, 27). Perrault’s influential fairy tale collection and within it, the warning tale “Le petit chaperon rouge”, or “Little Red Riding Hood”, was

published in 1697 (Bacchilega 1997, 53). This was the first written version of the tale and served as the basis for many rewritings to come, including “Rothkäppen”, “Little Red Cap” by the Grimms in 1812 (Zipes 1995, 23). In Perrault’s tale a young country girl travels through a forest to visit her grandmother and encounters a talking wolf along the way. The girl and the wolf agree to race to the grandmother’s house. As in the previous versions of the oral tradition, the wolf arrives there first, eats the grandmother and waits for the girl. Once she gets there, the wolf asks the girl to come lie in bed beside him: she undresses and climbs in. As a result the wolf eats her as well. The story ends surprisingly unhappily for a Perrault tale.

One possible interpretation of Perrault’s “LRRH” emphasises the contrast between the home Little Red Riding Hood leaves and the wildness of the woods. The wolf comes to symbolise people of the countryside, “hairy, wild, unkempt, untrammelled by imported acculturation” (Warner [1994] 1995, 182). However, the moral Perrault adds to the end of the story reverses these roles completely: suddenly the wolf becomes an urbane, articulate seducer who preys on little girls and old women alike (Warner [1994] 1995, 183). The moral is as follows, here in Carter’s translation:

Now there are real wolves, with hairy pelts and enormous teeth; but also wolves who seem perfectly charming, sweet-natured and obliging, who pursue young girls in the street and pay them the most flattering attentions. Unfortunately, these smooth-tongued, smooth-pelted wolves are the most dangerous of all.

(Perrault cited in Warner 2000, 38)

Through this added piece of moral guidance the narrative is turned into a story in which metropolitan manners and classical learning swallow “the homebred nursery culture of old women and their protégées” (Warner [1994] 1995, 183). The wolf no longer represents wilderness, but the dangers of city life and the powerful men who wield authority in it (Warner [1994] 1995, 183). The tale becomes a moralistic guide for women on proper sexual behaviour.

This change is quite logical when we think of the context in which Perrault was writing. His was an era that had only quite recently begun to recognise childhood as a distinct phase of growth and the basis for the development of a person’s individual character (Zipes 1993, 29). Partly due to advances in printing and developing literacy, the general education of children received increasing attention: a growing number of books, pamphlets and brochures addressing the issues of “table

manners, natural functions, bedroom etiquette, sexual relations, and correct speech” were published during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Zipes 1993, 29). Another phenomenon of the era was what Foucault termed the “pedagogization of children’s sex”, which he describes as

a double assertion that practically all children indulge in sexual activity; and that, being unwarranted, at the same time “natural” and “contrary to nature,” this sexual activity posed physical and moral, individual and collective dangers; children were defined as “preliminary” sexual beings, on this side of sex, yet within it, astride a dangerous dividing line. Parents, families, educators, doctors, and eventually psychologists would have to take charge, in a continuous way, of this precious and perilous, dangerous and endangered sexual potential [...].

(Foucault [1978] 1980, 104)

That is to say that children’s sexuality was seen as a moral problem, simultaneously “natural” as in animal-like, yet also “contrary to nature”, inappropriate for children and inappropriate for humans in general. It seems that in accordance to the prevailing morals of the era Perrault wanted Little Red Riding Hood to be punished for her “naïve coquetry with the wolf” and thus his version leaves her dead at the end, united again with her grandmother in the stomach of the wolf (Zipes 1995, 28). Zipes goes even as far as to claim that Perrault consciously “transformed a hopeful oral tale about the initiation of a young girl into a tragic one of violence in which the girl is blamed for her own violation” (1993, 7). The Grimms, on the other hand, created a happy ending, but as they felt that a woman could not realistically fend for herself in such a dangerous situation, they added the male gamekeeper who came to her rescue (Zipes 1995, 28). They wrote during a different era in a different environment, so as a result they also emphasised different things in their tale than Perrault.

Along with other German Romantics, the Brothers Grimm valued the power of imagination, dreams and fantasies in an unprecedented manner, granting fairy tales “the highest literary status they had ever achieved, even in the late seventeenth century” (Warner [1994] 1995, 188). The genre was identified with children and ordinary people, innocence and spontaneity (ibid.). The Brothers emphasised the presumed Germanic origin of their tales, yet close comparative research has revealed that their “Little Red Cap” is in fact based on the French version by Perrault (Zipes 1993, 32). The first edition of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* by the Grimms was published in 1812 (Warner [1994] 1995, 211). The collection bore signs of the didactic turn fairy tales had taken by the mid-eighteenth century when they began to

be more exclusively aimed at children rather than aristocratic women (Warner [1994] 1995, 297, 409). The following editions of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* were altered to better conform to the prevailing social and Christian values (Warner [1994] 1995, 211). Evil women became all the more loquacious and were punished all the more severely for their bad deeds, whereas the good heroines became increasingly polite and soft-spoken, sometimes even silent. If one's knowledge of fairy tale is based solely on the tales of the Brothers Grimm, it is no wonder one would find the genre misogynistic.

It has later been argued that as the Grimms wrote their "Little Red Cap" during the French occupation of Rhineland they incorporated both anti-French and anti-Enlightenment ideas into their version of the tale (Zipes 1993, 35). The wolf plays the role of a French revolutionary who has come to corrupt the innocent German youth. The wolf exploits the girl's "latent aversion to ordered and regulated normality and points seductively to the freedom of the colorful and musical woods" (ibid.). In any case, the opposition of nature and order, wilderness and the straight path illustrates attitudes about the specific socio-political context in which the story was written (ibid.). The youth is initially fascinated and drawn in by the enthusiasm of the French, but is eventually appalled by the cruelty of the Revolution. In any case, changes were made by the Grimms to emphasise the importance of obedience. In the illustrations that followed, the wolf is often clothed as a soldier or a gentleman, clearly warning young girls to be wary of seductive "men-wolves." The story has little to do with the dangers of rural life, but is instead concerned "with town life, obedience, and general seduction of women by sly debonair men, a theme which had become common by the end of the 18th century" (Zipes 1993, 39). The encounter between Little Red Riding Hood and the wolf is portrayed more as a private heart-to-heart rather than a life-threatening situation.

The tales of Perrault and the Brothers Grimm were translated and adapted widely. They were not only an essential part of the socialisation process of France and Germany, but they also became "the standard literary building blocks for children of all social groups in Europe and America" (Zipes 1993, 37). Especially the version by the Brothers Grimm was hugely influential; their collection of fairy tales was the second most widely read book in Germany in the nineteenth century, second only to the Bible (Zipes 1993, 36). Most of the literary adaptations and translations in Europe and North America that followed were based on the Grimm story rather than

Perrault's version. Zipes suggests that the Grimms' ideologically altered notions of childhood and obedience were more to the tastes of the bourgeoisie middle-class than those of aristocratic Perrault's (Zipes 1993, 37). This had far-reaching consequences for the figure of Little Red Riding Hood.

3.3 Later Retellings and Feminism

To summarise, the oral tradition of "LRRH" had addressed sexuality openly, but once the story was written down, this began to change. This development was partly due to the different expectations and attitudes of the new, reading audiences. One might even call them cultural differences. As cliché as it may sound, it appears that the earlier French versions of "LRRH" are concerned with seduction and erotic play, whereas the later German adaptations tend to stress patriarchal governance and issues of law and order (Zipes 1993, 41). Despite being hugely successful, the versions by Perrault and the Brothers Grimm were regarded as too cruel by many subsequent authors of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who feared children would be distraught with the violence and sexual undertones of these earlier versions. In consequence, they placed even more emphasis on obedience and proper behaviour, whereas references of Little Red Riding Hood being swallowed or even touched at all were gradually removed (Zipes 1993, 37). The story became more and more interested in the policing of the female body, while the internalization of social norms and the regulation of a child's sexuality still remained at the core of the tale. In order to survive, the child has to restrain from her natural instincts and instead follow the rules established by adults. Indulging in the sensual drives for pleasure meant disobeying the rules, which in turn meant death (Zipes 1993, 45). The only way to survive and be saved is to remain obedient, never straying from the given path.

Zipes (1993, 43) draws a parallel between the evolution of the literary versions of "LRRH" and the overall development of sexual socialization in Western society. During the time of Perrault's writing sexual desire was becoming increasingly considered as a willed activity rather than an animal-like impulse (Downs 2004, 158). Expression of sexual desire was seen as a male attribute and thus, for men, sexual drive became a mark of individualism. For women, however,

such feelings became socially dangerous to exhibit and, as a result, autonomous female desire became a taboo (ibid.). In such a repressive environment Little Red Riding Hood seems to be expressing this inappropriate desire just by talking to a stranger. This discussion about “female indulgence in sin” in “LRRH” had been begun by Perrault and was expanded by the Brothers Grimm (Zipes 1993, 43). At least from the nineteenth century onwards the blame for Little Red Riding Hood’s unfortunate fate was shifted on to herself: especially the English and American versions emphasise her negligence and idleness, even to the point where the girl is treated as if she were “an accomplice in a crime” (ibid.). Her idleness, demonstrated by straying from the path to pick flowers, appears to be one of her condemning characteristics, which seems logical if we are to believe that the “idle woman” was the first figure to be sexualised in Western thought (Foucault [1978] 1980, 120–21). Zipes sees the story as a culmination of rape culture where the victim comes to bear the responsibility for both her and her grandmother’s violent rape and murder (Zipes 1995, 23). By ignoring her mother’s warnings about straying off the path and talking to a stranger Little Red Riding Hood has broken the accepted social norms governing the expression of female sexual desire and has thus brought her unfortunate fate upon herself. This dark theme is part of the reason why so many feminist writers, Carter among them, have felt the need to rewrite and reclaim the story.

In his numerous studies of “LRRH” Zipes wants to emphasise that the literary tale is originally a male creation and projection and suggests that the written story is a reflection of men’s fear of sexuality, and especially men’s fear of women’s sexuality (Zipes 1993, 80). The regulation and policing of sexual drives becomes the key theme of the tale: the wolf symbolises social nonconformity and natural urges, whereas the hero of the tale, the hunter invented by the Brothers Grimm, stands for male governance and control (Zipes 1993, 81). Thus the story gradually evolved into a warning tale that used fear as a means of controlling women, their sexuality and their mobility. I return to this issue of fear in more depth in section 4.3. Similarly Zipes considers it but a logical development that most of the contemporary, experimental versions of “LRRH” are feminist: “The confrontations and situations that women experience in our society have compelled them to reflect upon the initial encounter between wolf and girl that they may have heard, read, or seen as children” (1993, xii). The story has certainly changed over the centuries, yet still remains relevant even today.

Different eras have undoubtedly left their marks on the retellings of “LRRH”. For example during the 1930s, the story was utilised in veiled attacks on Stalinism in the Soviet Union and by 1940 Little Red Riding Hood had become a symbol of either democracy or democratic socialism, depending on the context in which the story was being told (Zipes 1993, 58). Similarly the rise of organised labour and the women’s movement affected “LRRH” and especially after World War II the development of gender roles was reflected in the character of Little Red Riding Hood (Zipes 1993, 49, 58). The gradual improvement of civil rights “along with progressive developments in child rearing and sexual education” meant that she was no longer forced to curb her sensuality and imagination, nor did she have to wait to be rescued by a strong male hero (Zipes 1993, 58). The heroine became more and more independent and resourceful, as is the case in Carter’s versions of the tale as well.

Not all feminists have been enthusiastic about writing fairy tales. For example Dworkin is of quite different opinion than Carter regarding the entire genre. She criticises fairy tales for presenting very limited definitions of “woman”. Dworkin writes about female representation in fairy tales in her 1974 book *Woman Hating*: “There is the good woman. She is a victim. There is the bad woman. She must be destroyed. The good woman must be possessed. The bad woman must be killed, or punished. Both must be nullified” (Dworkin cited in Sheets 1991, 649). However, as I have demonstrated, the history of the fairy tale genre reveals this view to be an oversimplification most likely based entirely on perceptions about male dominated literary fairy tales with little, if any, consideration to the oral stories of the peasantry or female storytellers in general. Especially the oral history of the genre recognises many different ways of being a woman, some of them resourceful, active and independent. Therefore the pattern presented by Dworkin is yet another distorted misconception about fairy tale that Carter wanted to challenge.

Even if Dworkin’s assertions were true, one could ask why would the misogynistic structures of the genre prevent feminist authors from writing their own tales conveying a different message? Be that as it may, it must be admitted that fairy tales do have a partly misogynistic past. The literary tradition was for long mainly dominated by men, even though they often claimed to “speak in a woman’s voice”, whether that was in the role of an anonymous peasant storyteller or the legendary figure of Mother Goose herself (Warner [1994] 1995, 208). Men and women told stories in different ways: sometimes the differences are obvious, sometimes more

subtle (Warner [1994] 1995, 209). However, it would be a gross simplification to claim that all oral tales are somehow inherently feminist or that the first literary versions are automatically misogynistic. It is not only men who practice misogyny, as women, too, may participate in the oppressive structures of the patriarchy.

This brings us back to the questions of power and voice. Warner (1994 1995, 24) presents a comparison between stories and history, asserting that “just as history belongs to the victors and words change their meanings with a change of power”, fairy tales evolve and change depending on who is telling them and to whom. As I explained earlier, Carter shares this idea about narratives creating power. Throughout history, certain voices have been silenced and certain groups marginalised. As a feminist Carter was especially interested in the way fairy tales have been used to construct different gender hierarchies and wanted to challenge the structures she believed to be restricting. She wrote about themes such as sexuality, independence, consciousness and puberty, simultaneously both drawing on the previous oral history that celebrated the competency and independence of women and rewriting the literary versions of male authors that had aimed to control female behaviour. To summarise, the history of fairy tale is a dynamic one and echoes the attitudes and beliefs of the societies in which the tales are told. I would argue that “LRRH” was initially a story about the resourcefulness of peasant women – literary adaptation and editing turned it into a tale about the dangers of unsupervised female sexuality. The feminist reclaiming of the twentieth century is, then, indeed a *reclaiming*: the story was not always about a victimised little girl saved by a strong man, but rather a testimony of the independence and inventiveness of ordinary women.

These issues of power and voice are essential to our understanding of historically marginalised groups; they are thus also deeply intertwined with the ways we humans perceive animals. Non-humans are a group that has certainly been marginalised and silenced throughout history, partly for the simple, yet undeniable, reason that our ability to communicate with animals is profoundly limited. Our attitudes towards animals have also changed throughout history, which is yet another apt example of the constructedness of our perceptions. Therefore the next chapter is dedicated to animals.

4 Animal Nature

The juxtaposition between nature and culture, animal and human is one of the key issues in “LRRH” and this is the case with Carter’s stories as well. As I discussed before, her narrators transport the reader to the rural villages of early modern Europe; the attitudes of this era concerning animals permeate Carter’s tales, yet rather than to simply repeat these ideas, Carter seeks to deconstruct them. This is why I briefly explore the role of the animal in medieval and early modern thought, even though the attitudes toward animals in Carter’s stories are not entirely compatible with their historical counterparts. In this chapter I draw on research of cultural and social historians specialised in animal studies as well as studies by some contemporary biologists, psychologists and ethologists. I feel that such an interdisciplinary approach offers a wider view of the issue at hand. This chapter focuses on natural animals – the supernatural werewolf is discussed later in chapter 5.

In the early modern period, when the first fairy tales were being written down, theologians and philosophers alike preached “a doctrine of human ascendancy and uniqueness,” which was most visibly manifested in the idea that the role of animals was to serve humans (Perry 2004, 22). There were three levels of control in one’s life: “of self, of others, and of nature” (Fudge 2004b, 9). If the control of the self was lost, that is, if one fell into passion, the result was “a loss of command over the natural world itself” (ibid.). In traditional European folklore the human commonly rises above the animal by taming and mastering it and wild animals act as a standard by which human exploits and identity can be measured (Warner 2000, 68, 75). However, rather than being entirely separate from human culture, the natural world was believed to be teeming with symbolic meaning and human analogy (Perry 2004, 22). Fairy tales and fables were eager to employ anthropomorphised animals in their discussions about human nature. In fact, talking animals are traditionally an even more typical feature of fairy tales than actual fairies implied by the name of the genre (Warner [1994] 1995, 142). One of the main figures of the traditional “LRRH” is the talking wolf – surely a prime example of an animal cast in the role of a thinking, feeling subject. But it must be kept in mind that the magical realm of fairy tale is inhabited by all kinds of impossibilities, talking animals amongst them.

In the hierarchy of early modern literature, talking animal texts were ranked

at the bottom and labelled “low” (Perry 2004, 20). There was an insistence on the simplistic, trivial and transparent nature of these texts that suggested they were mainly suited for innocent readers (*ibid.*). Such texts existed to entertain while simultaneously their primary goal was to instruct children and other socially subordinate groups through, for example, homilies or Latin primers (*ibid.*). Animal fables and fairy tales were part of the same phenomenon, but deemed perhaps even lower because they did not always serve such a clear pedagogical function. All things considered, texts connected with animals were generally marked by this same idea of lowness.

Belief in reason, discipline and machine technology came to define the early modern era, and especially the upper classes began to separate intellect and sensual drives from one another, believing themselves capable of achieving “some form of moral perfection” (Zipes 1993, 71). This can also be seen as a question of separating the rational human from the sensual animal. If during the Middle Ages the unity of inner and outer nature was determined by social order maintained by God, the early modern era now made a distinction between the objective outside world and humans as independent subjects (*ibid.*). During the Enlightenment animals were believed to be beautiful artefacts designed by God, proof of his wisdom and power, and thus examining them in various ways was also an attempt to better understand his workings (Harrison 2004, 203). However, the methods of this examination were sometimes quite questionable.

The early modern French philosopher Descartes’s views about animals were highly influential for centuries. He claimed that animals are emotionless, soulless machines with no consciousness; this thought became known as the animal machine hypothesis (Senior 2004, 213). The Scientific Revolution was generally content with the views posed by Descartes, for it made it morally acceptable to, for example, conduct varying painful experiments on animals (Harrison 2004, 186). Many scientific practices of the early modern era would not bear contemporary ethical examination. Those who ascribed to Descartes’ views conducted vivisections and other agonising experiments on animals with a less troubled conscience than those who credited animals with emotions and awareness (Harrison 2004, 195–96). There are reports of how the advocates of the animal machine hypothesis “nailed animals to boards and claimed that their cries were nothing but the noise of insensible machines” (Harrison 2004, 195). Not all shared this view, of course, and many felt

moved by the plight of the animals involved, but the era nonetheless witnessed “a certain standardization of the experimental treatment of animals” that we today would generally find cruel and unethical (Harrison 2004, 188, 196). This is yet another testimony of the constructedness of our attitudes and of the long history of supposed human superiority over other animals.

Even though Descartes viewed animals as machines incapable of judgement, there were others who ascribed them with memory, emotions and complicated reasoning (Senior 2004, 213). Historians are gradually starting to recognise that during this era “animals were represented via competing worldviews” and not just through the Cartesian model (Fudge 2004b, 8). For example the much discussed Perrault had defended animals’ capabilities of imaginative understanding and it could be claimed that he had even argued against Descartes’s views on animals (Warner [1994] 1995, 145–46). Indeed, many contemporaries contested Descartes’ views (Senior 2004, 213). All in all, the consciousness of animals was a wildly questioned issue during the early modern period, but, broadly speaking, animals were always considered to be below man.

According to Taylor (2014, 37), a sociologist who specialises in human–animal relations, even today animals are usually presented as a part of nature and completely opposite to humans, resulting in the binary approach commonly found in modern research. Our relationships with other animals have been traditionally overlooked by different branches of science and have come under broad, interdisciplinary academic scrutiny only quite recently (Birke and Hockenhull 2014b, 1; Walker 2013, 49). Several disciplines such as ethology have begun to view animals differently as conscious subjects, yet the humanities have been quite slow to catch up (Taylor 2014, 44). However, perhaps as a result of “recognizing a progression from the study of the working class, women, ethnic minorities, and homosexuals” many social and cultural historians have recently expressed growing interest toward the study of animals (Fudge 2004b, 7). Already during the 1970s, the era that witnessed the beginning of the green movement, Carter believed that not even nature is completely outside history or society’s constructions (Easton 2000, 3). The separation of nature and society, animals and humans, exists “only in the abstraction of our representation” (Higgin 2014, 83). That is to say that the definition of “nature” is not fixed, but fluid and in a constant state of change.

Animal studies and ecocritical theories have been significantly influenced by feminist thought, as the recognition of power disparities is crucial to all these fields. Likewise it is ascertained that “accountability and responsibility toward the object of research should also apply to animals” while nonhuman animals are still frequently “positioned as the other in research” (Birke and Hockenhull 2014b, 6). The link between these fields is strong, and the initial response provoked by Carter’s *The Bloody Chamber* was actually more focused on the theme of human versus animal nature rather than that of gender politics (Gordon 2016, 268). Carter seeks to challenge the analogy that “male is to female as culture is to nature” (Kaiser 1994, 35). While some feminists “claim to find a kind of liberation in the position of woman as Other in phallogocentric culture”, Carter remains distrustful of such thought (ibid.). In her view being likened to an animal is hardly liberating as it requires taking on the historically subordinate role of the animal that usually also entails entrapment and exploitation, perhaps even violent death (ibid.). During the course of history, poor and working women have often been viewed rather more animal-like than human, indicating their low social status (Downs 2004, 67). Where men represent rationality and culture, women are seen as emotional and closer to nature. Carter explores and challenges this dichotomy in her writing.

Attitudes regarding the place of humans in the universe have also changed. I find it fascinating that already Freud, whose work Carter was greatly influenced by, questioned and denied the grandiosity and uniqueness of humankind: in Freud’s view Copernicus had proved we are not the centre of the universe, Darwin demonstrated our place among the other animals and Freud himself claimed that the human is not even “master in their own house”, referring to the workings of the unconscious (Midelfort 2002, 213–14). Perhaps as a result of this general return to biology the human body has experienced a renewal of interest within feminist thought and some scholars have turned their eye on the feminist study of science; for example interest in Darwin and the evolutionary theory has grown within feminist philosophy (Braidotti 2003, 210). This has often resulted in radical critique toward anthropocentrism and humanism, especially regarding “the role and function of reason and the implicit assumptions it contains not only about subjectivity but also about the human as such” (Braidotti 2003, 210). This line of thinking, which re-examines and questions notions of human superiority, is called post-humanism (Taylor 2014, 37). It rejects pure categorizations and sees them as politically created

and used and thus embraces hybridity instead (Taylor 2014, 38). I am tempted to suggest that perhaps Carter was a post-humanist, too. Especially the character of Wolf-Alice explores the boundaries between humans and animals; raised by wolves, her behaviour is much more canine than it is human. Even though she is clearly not a wolf, her human saviours refuse to accept her as one of their own kind. “Wolf-Alice” also seems to question ideas of human exceptionality; for further discussion on the story, see chapter 6.

To summarise, the early modern period (during which Carter’s stories presumably take place) viewed animals as emotionless machines with no consciousness. Today, advances in varying fields from cognitive ethology to sociology are drawing increasing attention to animals as conscious agents and social, cultured actors (Birke and Hockenhull 2014b, 1). Modern research is gradually emphasising animals as attentive and conscious participants in relationships in contrast to previous beliefs that saw animals as machines merely reacting to external stimuli (Birke and Hockenhull 2014b, 9). This demonstrates how human attitudes toward animals are historically constructed and thus also subject to change, even though it can be easily argued that relationships between humans and animals are still burdened with ideas of inferiority, giving humans dominion over other living creatures (Birke and Hockenhull 2014b, 20). Much of this is due to the fact that for centuries European tradition tended to associate “the beast with the bestial” and “nature and the natural with the inferior and reprehensible aspects of humanity” (Warner [1994] 1995, 373). Renaissance humanism was especially keen on drawing boundaries between humans and animals and this legacy is still somewhat visible in modern thought.

4.1 The Wolf

The character of the wolf is always present in “LRRH”. Many elements in the story may change and differ from one version to the next, but the wolf appears virtually permanent. I argue that Carter’s three stories all invite different interpretations regarding these animals. It is as if the texts are asking the reader to examine their role carefully and in detail, for Carter writes “fear and flee the wolf: for, worst of all, the wolf may be more than he seems” (“Company” 130). It is quite straightforwardly

implied that these are not just wolves, but something else is hidden underneath their hairy pelts. The wolf acts as a powerful symbol for various things, therefore the following section is dedicated to the different aspects of the wolf.

Even though wolves do not look like humans, our species are quite similar: they, too “nurture and educate their young for years, communicate through complex vocalizations and body languages, grieve and sacrifice themselves, violently defend their territories, eat meat [and] cooperate” (Walker 2013, 58). Even though not exactly comparable to the structures of human society, the social hierarchies of wolves are quite elaborate and occasionally challenged by different members of the group (ibid.). Lone wolves driven from their packs struggle to survive in the wild, which I find a fitting metaphor for human life, as well. The most enduring and meaningful bonds humans create with other animals are usually with the creatures we recognise as emotionally similar to ourselves (Birke and Hockenhull 2014b, 2). However, for some reason, wolves do not fit this description. It could be argued that the uneasiness we feel about the wolf is to do with the thought that the similarities we recognise in them (be they physiological, behavioural or social) actually challenge the boundaries between our species (Walker 2013, 57). Perhaps the wolf is *too* similar for comfort.

As humans and wolves are both social hunters and often seek similar prey in shared environments, confrontations have been inevitable throughout history (Walker 2013, 46). This is reality for the people in Carter’s tales, as even the “grave-eyed children of the sparse villages always carry knives with them” as protection against the wolves (“Company” 130). Scarcely populated, mountainous areas filled with forests and large numbers of sheep are ideal habitats for wolves. During harsh winters they might venture out from the mountains and dare to seek sustenance near human settlement. Starving wolves are found in Carter’s tales as well:

It is winter and cold weather. In this region of mountain and forest, there is now nothing for the wolves to eat. Goats and sheep are locked up in the byre, the deer departed for the remaining pasturage on the southern slopes – wolves grow lean and famished. There is so little flesh on them that you could count the starveling ribs through their pelts, if they gave you time before they pounced.

(“Company” 129)

The wolf (and the bear) had dominated the oral literature of forest peoples in early medieval lore; these old traditions saw the wolf as a symbol of the wild side in

humans and a link to sorcery, yet simultaneously a part of organic nature (Warner [1994] 1995, 300; Zipes 1993, 33). As the numbers of wolves and, consequently, the threat they posed to local communities grew during the Middle Ages and the early modern period, people started to identify these animals with evil and harmful magic (Schulte 2009, 33). Naturally the economic and ecological structures of a specific region have affected people's attitudes towards wolves as well, but generally speaking the wolf was hardly seen in a positive light (*ibid.*). This concurs with the fact that the people of Carter's tales are very hostile towards wolves.

According to hunting treatises and other texts of the era, early modern Europe considered wolves to be bad natured and susceptible to being tamed, thus already rebelling against the order of nature set by God (Jacques-Lefèvre 2002, 187–88). The wolf did not yield to human authority, but represented those who had fallen from grace and threatened the Christian flock and were consequently assumed to be damned (Wiseman 2004, 52). The wolf was a “beast made mundane” that lived in the immediate margins of human territory and society (Jacques-Lefèvre 2002, 188). They were killed for the practical reasons of protecting livestock and people, but also to rid the world of animals that were considered wild, evil and corrupt (Walker 2013, 59). The wolf was so hated that quite often their elimination was turned into a brutal spectacle for no discernible reason (*ibid.*). Such a case is found in “Company” (131) as a hunter cuts off the head and the paws of a wolf to take for a trophy. These negative attitudes are showcased throughout all of three of Carter's stories.

It is clear that Renaissance thought considered the wolf to be a beast and a predator that refused “all forms of reciprocity, amity, or brotherhood” (Wiseman 2004, 52). However, drawing on the qualities of the wolf was simultaneously thought to strengthen humans, as in the classical story of Romulus and Remus (*ibid.*). On the other hand, it can also be argued that in this myth about the founders of Rome being suckled by a wild wolf, it was actually the ingestion of wolf-like qualities that later resulted in the most heinous act of fratricide (Wiseman 2004, 63). However, the wolves encountered in “Wolf-Alice” are different: they are kind and merciful, they care for their pack and “had tended to [Wolf-Alice] because they knew she was an imperfect wolf” (“Wolf-Alice” 144). The girl did not absorb any negative qualities through wolf milk. On the contrary, Wolf-Alice appears to have absorbed her wolf mother's kindness and acceptance, which she later replicates in her compassionate attitude toward the shunned Duke. After being raised by wolves, Wolf-Alice's modes

of behaviour and conduct are logically very wolf-like, but not in a manner the early modern period would recognise. She is not vicious or evil, but kind and nurturing, like the wolves were to her. Her story poses interesting questions about the intertwined roles of nature and nurture in the development of personality and consciousness, but also about the differences between humans and animals. I return to these questions in more detail in chapter 6.

In many other contemporary versions of “LRRH” the role of the wolf has changed quite drastically as well. In fact, the roles are sometimes actually reversed: in several adaptations the victim of the story is the wolf, not the girl or the grandmother. Zipes presents several explanations for this. Firstly, he argues that the scientific and medical control over the human body has reached such a high level that the body is no longer equated with unruly nature, but rather compared to machines: as the body “is no longer “natural” but “manufacturable”, then its collapse cannot be brought about by nature but by malfunctioning parts” and the wolf, as a symbol for nature, is no longer in a position to harm humans (Zipes 1993, 63). Secondly, wolves are now nearly extinct in regions within Western societies and do not pose such a serious physical threat to humans as they used to (ibid.). Finally Zipes (ibid.) connects this change in the wolf’s role to the rise of the ecological movement in the 1960s and 1970s: the wolf (nature) is now threatened by man-made ecological catastrophes like pollution and “the general drive for scientific human perfection”. After all, “intimacy with humans is always unnatural and always dangerous” for wolves (Walker 2013, 47). The wolves of “Wolf-Alice” live by this rule, as they “keep well away from the peasants’ shotguns” and once Wolf-Alice has entered the world of humans, she can no longer find her wolf family (“Wolf-Alice” 140–41). It is heavily implied that the real beasts in this story are the humans.

In “Werewolf” and “Company”, however, the wolves appear to be vicious and evil. The narrator of “Company” warns that “[t]he wolf is carnivore incarnate and he’s as cunning as he is ferocious; once he’s had a taste of flesh then nothing else will do” (“Company” 129). However, as wolves are carnivores by nature, this platitude appears to be a reference to something else than the normal animal: the narrator is talking about werewolves. This interpretation is supported by the narrator’s list of a vast array of magical creatures that do not exist outside the realm of fairy tale, yet the wolf is included in it: “of all the teeming perils of the night and forest, ghosts, hobgoblins, ogres that grill babies upon gridirons, witches that fatten

their captives in cages for cannibal tales, the wolf is the worst for he cannot listen to reason” (“Company” 130). Granted, we cannot converse with the natural wolf either because we do not share a language with it, but I would argue that in this context the narrator is not talking about wolves at all, but in fact implies that there exists yet another supernatural monster that should be included on her list; the werewolf. It is a creature with an insatiable appetite – nothing one can say or do will convince it to surrender its prey. I will return to the werewolf later in chapter 5, but next I delve deeper into the connections between eating meat and having sex.

4.2 Eating Meat, Having Sex

In her account of attitudes toward food in early modern England the historian Fudge reports some of the paradoxes of meat eating. Meat eating seems to epitomise the ideal (anthropocentric) human–animal relation as “there is harmony, and there is dominion” (Fudge 2004b, 70). At the dinner table the human is undeniably superior, the active subject who eats the passive animal. According to the Christian scriptures, to which Carter also occasionally alludes in her stories, meat eating only began after the Fall when “humanity’s original sin led to the wildness of animals, which led in turn to the need for dominion”, and this dominion was enforced partly through the concept of eating meat (Fudge 2004b, 73). That is to say, the order established by God put man in charge of the beasts and gave him the right to consume them, not the other way around as happens in the traditional “LRRH”. Eating meat thus becomes another manifestation of perceived human superiority over animals; in order for us to eat animals, we must be above them (Taylor 2016, 321). It appears that the act of eating meat is an act of dominance and subordination and is consequently generally associated with masculinity, partly because men have traditionally been responsible for hunting and butchering, whereas women for the gathering of non-animal foods (Taylor 2016, 336). Taylor (*ibid.*) even points out that across cultures in times of food shortages the majority share of meat is traditionally reserved for men and boys while women and girls are believed to be better able to survive on a vegetable based diet. It could be then argued that eating meat is a gendered practice entwined with questions of abuse and exploitation of both animals and women.

Be that as it may, it is undeniable that we humans are animals as well,

occasionally even “a meaty prey species”, and as such we are neither fundamentally different from other animals nor external to nature (Walker 2013, 48). The fact that we might be eaten is one that connects us very tightly to the surrounding natural world. Walker explains that “being eaten by another animal is to become energy for that animal” and “to be forcefully pulled back into the metabolism of the natural realm, ripped from the safe confines of cultural dominion” (ibid.). For thousands of years, wolves and other predators have kept us humans aware of our connection with the natural world by reminding us that to them we are, in fact, “just another flavor of meat” (Walker 2013, 49). The debate about human uniqueness comes to an abrupt end as the stomach acids of the wolf dissolve the flesh of the grandmother.

The act of eating can be thought to symbolise several different phenomena in Carter’s stories, but here I focus mostly on what it comes to represent in “Company”. Perhaps to be swallowed by the wolf entails becoming one with the animal: to become a nonconformist and a transgressor, a beast with no control of one’s appetite (Zipes 1993, 46). But there is another way of looking at the issue, and that is through the lens of female sexuality and libido. Much of European folklore is familiar with “the symbolic association between the wolf and predatory sexuality”, and this is “one of the most explicit cases where animality carries a special charge of the forbidden and libidinal” (Briggs 2002, 23). The beastly qualities of desire have been a common trope of moral discourses that emphasise “moderation and restraint of bodily pleasures” since at least the teachings of Plato (Schiesari 2004, 37). Many scholars have indeed argued that Carter explores the idea that women have been taught that their sexuality might devour them if it goes unchecked (Peach [1998] 2009, 28). I claim that this is exactly the case in “Company”, as well. After all, in fairy tales “the metaphor of devouring often stands in for sex” (Warner [1994] 1995, 259). It can be argued that women’s fears do not centre around the act of consumption or sex as such, but on its consequences; loss of virginity, social stigma, pregnancy and even death (Warner [1994] 1995, 260). What raises fear and anxiety is not the act itself, but what happens once it is finished.

Atwood made the observation that the whole collection *The Bloody Chamber* is arranged by the manner of carnivore ([1994] 2007, 138). Indeed, meat eating appears to be an important theme in these three stories, and, according to Peach ([1998] 2009, 28), meat eating is a recurring trope in much of Carter’s other work, too. Eluding the connotations of flesh and meat, Carter plays with the objectification

of women as “flesh” as well as with the perception of women as property (Peach [1998] 2009, 28). According to Eaglestone (2003, 205) the link between female sexuality and animals is a very thoroughly researched aspect of Carter’s work. I claim that this connection between meat and eating, animals and sex, is the main theme of “Company”. The werewolf found in the story is a highly sexualised creature. Even when preparing to eat the grandmother, he strips himself naked and approaches the old woman in a manner that seems a clear reference to intercourse:

He strips off his shirt. His skin is the colour and texture of vellum. A crisp stripe of hair runs down his belly, his nipples are ripe and dark as poison fruit but he’s so thin you could count the ribs under his skin if only he gave you the time. He strips off his trousers and she can see how hairy his legs are. His genitals, huge. Ah! huge. The last thing the old lady saw in all this world was a young man, eyes like cinders, naked as a stone, approaching her bed.
(“Company” 136)

After he has killed and devoured the grandmother, the werewolf tidies up: he carefully places “a clean pair of sheets [...] on the bed instead of the tell-tale stained ones he stowed away in the laundry basket” (“Company” 136). Whether or not the wolf raped the grandmother is left unclear, yet it is certainly strongly implied.

The same violent fate awaits the young girl once she arrives at her grandmother’s cottage. She immediately realises the looming danger and in this moment her scarlet scarf, which is “the colour of poppies, the colour of sacrifices, the colour of her menses” becomes a metaphor for “the blood she must spill”: the girl realises that she will either lose her virginity or die (“Company” 137, 138). The act of eating is closely tied to the act of intercourse; describing women in terms of meat implies that their bodies (as well as those of animals) are “intended for heterosexual male consumption” (Taylor 2016, 323). Therefore, when the wolf announces its plans to eat her, the girl’s reaction can be considered highly unorthodox: “The girl burst out laughing; she knew she was nobody’s meat. She laughed at him full in the face, she ripped off his shirt for him and flung it into the fire, in the fiery wake of her own discarded clothing” (“Company” 138). By refusing to be anybody’s meat the girl is rejecting subordination and victimhood. Her laughter becomes an expression of freedom that abolishes authority and challenges fear (Warner [1994] 1995, 153). Laughing is a sign of equality, perhaps even superiority. Even the ferocious wolf is startled by such boldness and as a result the courageous girl is not eaten but instead sleeps with the beast in the grandmother’s bed.

Carter's fiction explores the issues of female victimisation often in somewhat contradictory ways (Jordan [1994] 2007, 202). She addresses rape and sexual trauma in a manner that does not seem to comply with categorisations established within clinical discourse; her characters often react to traumatic events in very atypical ways, as I have just demonstrated (Baker 2011, 63). Carter appears to suggest that victims of sexual abuse can retain psychological power even in situations that are outside their physical control, leading to the repudiation of "the discourse of femininity which trains women to be passive victims" (Baker 2011, 67). The girl in "Company" will not comply with the narrative of female victimhood certain canonical versions of "LRRH" offer. This is one of the instances in *The Bloody Chamber* where Carter can be thought to challenge Marquis de Sade's dichotomy of predator and prey.

The wolf as a representation of devouring, all-consuming sexuality has lost much of its menace in other contemporary retellings of "LRRH" as well, as fears relating to sex in general have diminished over the decades as a result of increasing scientific knowledge of the human body (Zipes 1993, 63). I claim that "Company" also explores generational differences in attitudes toward sexuality. Peach ([1998] 2009, 175) also maintains that in Carter's fiction the fairy tale element of age becomes particularly relevant in circumstances where older women are "complicit in the oppression of their sex". The grandmother, the "pious old woman", represents the previous generations with their restrained views on sexuality, desire and pleasure ("Company" 135). As a representative of a different era, her general attitudes and her way of being a woman are different from those of the protagonist – the grandmother has bought in to the prevailing narrative of female victimhood, so a victim she becomes. In contrast, the young girl is aware that in meeting the wolf's sensuality (or rather, her own sensuality), "the libido will transform 'meat' into 'flesh'" and "the fulfilment of their mutual desire" will eventually transform and tame the beast (Makinen 2000, 31). In the end, the werewolf proves to be "tender" ("Company" 139). As discussed, this is Carter's way of renouncing the idea of female victimhood. Her protagonist survives "by refusing fear, by taking matters into her own hands, by refusing to allow herself to be defined as somebody's meat" (Atwood [1994] 2007, 146). She is no victim and can certainly take care of herself, unlike her grandmother whose life is governed by a different mindset.

Makinen (2000, 28) claims that as fairy tales often grapple with "the distorted

fictions of the unconscious revisited through homely images” it becomes apparent that different beasts and animals may symbolize the drive for pleasure and other projected desires. She also suggests that reading Carter’s wolves as manifestations of the feminine libido transforms the animals into autonomous desires which the protagonists have to recognise and accept as parts of themselves (Makinen 2000, 31). Thus the animals in Carter’s short stories should be read as allegories of the female psyche rather than as manifestations of an oppressive patriarchal society. Here we come back to Bettelheim: although Carter disagreed with some of Bettelheim’s basic tenets, Carter was influenced by his idea that the animals of fairy tale represent our base desires (Gordon 2016, 267). Carter decided that instead of obeying her mother’s warnings, the protagonist was to embrace her inner animal nature, thus finding satisfaction in the company of wolves (Gordon 2016, 272).

Drawing connections between sexuality and animals seems to suggest something primitive and base, perhaps even shameful, about human nature. For example Kokkola (2013, 144) claims that adolescent sexuality is viewed by many as a taboo subject: therefore linking adolescents, like the figure of Little Red Riding Hood, with animals seems to imply a sinister connection. Young people are not yet fully mature members of society, but like animals; easily led by their primitive sexual urges and unguided by the moral codes that determine the behaviour of civilized adults. She also argues that “uneasiness about heterosexual girls’ carnal desires do draw parallels between their sexuality and animal sexuality” (Kokkola 2013, 144). Fairy tales provide a veiled means of informing children and adolescents about rules concerning sexuality: “We keep the wolves outside by living well”, the narrator explains in “Company” (135). That is, we must live civilised lives according to accepted social norms in order to keep the animal side within us in check. The protagonist of the story seems to violate this code and as a result the wolf is able to enter the grandmother’s house. However, it appears that in “Company” the animal side within us is not something that needs to be contained and controlled, but rather confronted and embraced: letting the wolf inside is actually a positive thing. This is completely opposite to the message the literary versions of “LRRH” have traditionally conveyed. The story has sought to control women’s sexuality especially through the emotion of fear, which I will explore in the next section.

4.3 The Female Libido and Fear

The feminist scholar Ahmed has studied affect theory and emotions. According to her, many emotions are considered to be a sign of the animal within, a manifestation of how our primitive history persists in the present: emotions are beneath thought and reason and, consequently, to be emotional is to have one's judgement affected. Being governed by emotions is "to be reactive rather than active, dependent rather than autonomous" (Ahmed 2004, 3). Because women are traditionally seen as more emotional than men, Ahmed claims that the subordination of emotions becomes yet another tool for subordinating "the feminine and the body" (ibid.). If women are ruled by their emotions and appetites rather than thought and judgement, then they are consequently also more closely connected to nature than men (ibid.). Women are traditionally seen as weak, passive, irrational – that is, governed by their emotions, almost like animals, and thus certainly beneath men. Traditional Christian conceptions emphasized the capacity of untamed female passion and sexuality to overpower even male passion (Downs 2004, 158). This idea stems from the Bible, where the impressionable Eve, persuaded by the snake, eats the forbidden fruit and then convinces Adam to do the same. The result is mankind's fall from grace and banishment from Eden. But for some reason the Enlightenment redefined female and male sexuality in a way that cast women as sexually passive recipients of male drives (ibid.). Female desire became a taboo subject and its expressions were frowned upon. As I discussed earlier, this is visible in the development of "LRRH". Carter's "Company" addresses the issue of female sexuality from several different viewpoints, one of them being that of control and fear.

It is apparent that one important theme in the tradition of "LRRH" is the control of female sexuality. Perhaps surprisingly often fairy tales are concerned with sexual distinctions and transgressions (Warner [1994] 1995, 133). Appropriate male and female conduct is defined, endorsed and usually also rewarded (Warner [1994] 1995, 135). As fairy tales echo the prevailing attitudes of the surrounding society, Little Red Riding Hood of early modern literature is admonished for straying off the path, picking flowers and talking to strangers. The wolf, being the lecherous beast he is, knows no better, but the girl has brought her fate upon herself; she should have been better brought up, she should have listened to her elders (Warner [1994] 1995,

243). She is the archetypical “good girl gone wrong” and has been used as a warning example on what might befall careless and disobedient children, especially girls (Zipes 1993, 17). Zipes goes as far as to argue for a “Red Riding Hood syndrome”, which involves a perversion of sexuality that has led to an instrumentalisation of the body and claims that already the versions by Perrault and the Brothers Grimm preach “obedience and the regulation of little girls’ sexuality” (Zipes 1993, 66). Given all this, Zipes (1993, 64) claims that Carter’s “Company” is remarkable precisely because it adapts the old tale to better reflect the changing attitudes toward women and sexuality in such a positive way. Carter knew full well that writing frankly about female sexuality was to upset a cultural norm (Gordon 2016, 268). It is no wonder that she found the tale of “LRRH” appealing for her own commentary on the issue.

Limits set by fear are frequently present in fairy tales; quite commonly a protagonist “sets out to discover the unknown and overcomes its terrors” (Warner [1994] 1995, 276). In the tradition of “LRRH” and in Carter’s “Company” the heroines are expected to be afraid of wolves. The very essence of these animals provokes dread: “They will be like shadows, they will be like wraiths, grey members of a congregation of nightmare; hark! his long, wavering howl... an aria of fear made audible” (“Company” 129; ellipsis original). Especially female storytellers

undertake this central narrative concern of the genre – they contest fear; they turn their eye on the phantasm of the male Other and recognize it, either rendering it transparent and sage, the self reflected as good, or ridding themselves of it (him) by destruction or transformation.

(Warner [1994] 1995, 276)

In the end the girl in “Company” tames the wolf, and she also feels pity rather than fear towards the other wolves: “It is very cold, poor things [...] no wonder they would howl so”, she remarks (“Company” 137). The wolf is a part of the girl and she has no reason to fear it.

It is typical of those fairy tales that centre on the prolonged ordeals of a young heroine to emphasise the role of women as “the agents of suffering” (Warner [1994] 1995, 202). When the protagonist finally triumphs and is vindicated, the whole of womankind rejoices. However, such stories seem to suggest that women can only find happiness through pain and suffering. This is another manifestation of the masochistic narrative of female victimhood that Carter sought to challenge. The girl in “Company” is determined to not become a victim; she finds the entire idea so absurd that she simply laughs at the thought (“Company” 138). Rather than make her

protagonist suffer and then be redeemed, Carter introduces a character that refuses suffering altogether. As the female protagonist is capable of independently renouncing victimhood, the recurring trope of a male saviour often found in literary versions of “LRRH” is not needed, either.

The early modern period saw men as civilised, rational subjects with a place in the public arena, whereas women were considered emotional dependants who were to be kept close and protected, domesticated (McDowell 2003, 12). As a narrative of feminine vulnerability “LRRH” aims to restrict women’s access to public spaces by suggesting that outside the home women must always be on guard (Ahmed 2004, 69). As a consequence, women should either stay at home or be extremely careful when moving in public “if they are to have access to feminine respectability” (Ahmed 2004, 70). Therefore the question of fear becomes entwined with the politics of mobility and connects femininity with domestication.

The young female protagonists of Carter’s stories live in hostile rural environments, and the women of “Werewolf” and “Company” are threatened by wild animals almost daily. The fear of animals is then easily harnessed as a tool for controlling the mobility of women: the protagonists are constantly reminded that “if you stray from the path for one instant, the wolves will eat you” (“Company” 130). If young women really must leave the shelter of their homes, they are expected to do as they are told and follow the road that has been set out for them “because of the bears, the wild boar, the starving wolves” (“Werewolf” 127). It is true that wolves and bears entering villages and towns used to present real threats to people and their livestock, especially during times of scarcity and hard winters, even to the point where the beasts became known as tools of the devil (Warner [1994] 1995, 299; 2000, 74). But what if the threat presented by these animals is an exaggeration? In such case scaring women with the possibility of violence and death becomes a way of controlling their mobility.

Most women in the world even today “remain trapped or fixed in place. Their everyday lives and social relations are confined within often tight special boundaries, constructed through power relations and material inequalities” (McDowell 2003, 28). Many women are taught that their rightful place is solely within the domestic sphere. Fittingly, as soon as Little Red Riding Hood leaves the comforts of her home, she is disposed to physical danger. In “Werewolf” and especially in “Company” nature, i.e. the world outside the home, is presented as evil and an adversary of civilisation:

“You are always in danger in the forest, where no people are” (“Company” 130). As the girl walks through the woods, “The forest closed upon her like a pair of jaws (“Company” 133). This fear of nature can also be thought to relate to the fear of anarchy and lack of order (Ahmed 2004, 71). In any case, the wilderness is thought to present a grave threat: both the forest and the wolves are ready to devour the girl.

During the Middle Ages the most common warning tales circulating in Europe were about “hostile forces threatening children who were without protection”, often featuring ogres, man-eaters, witches, or, in fact, werewolves (Zipes 1993, 18). The social function of such tales was to instruct children about the dangers of talking to strangers or letting them enter the house. “LRRH” informs its audience about the hazards of social nonconformity and, for women, the story contains the added reminder about the dangers of sexual promiscuity. In the tradition of “LRRH” fear of animals is utilised in an attempt to control the mobility of women. Fear has a temporal dimension; it involves the anticipation of pain in the future (Ahmed 2004, 65). When one is afraid, the world becomes dangerous and the body reacts accordingly by shrinking, by preparing for flight. As the body takes up less space, we can see how “emotions work to align bodily space with social space” (Ahmed 2004, 69). Some feminist approaches aim to reveal how fear can be structural and mediated rather than a mere bodily response to an allegedly objective danger. Instead of “an inevitable consequence of women’s vulnerability”, fear is considered “a response to the *threat* of violence” (ibid.). What is considered fearsome is then highly dependent on common narratives – “LRRH” as a warning tale instructs the audience what it is that should be feared and what can happen if that fear is realised. Thus the telling of the story is an act of power, an attempt to control the behaviour of others through fear. As I have demonstrated, this fear is invoked through the character of wolf, but also, especially in the oral versions of “LRRH”, through the figure of the werewolf. Carter also employs this mythical creature in her stories; thus the following chapter is dedicated to the werewolf.

5 The Figure of the Werewolf

As I discussed earlier, the narrator of “Company” hints that the wolves of the story are something more than they seem. Intriguingly, they also seem somehow conscious of their own animal nature: “That long-drawn, wavering howl has, for all its fearful resonance, some inherent sadness in it, as if the beasts would love to be less beastly if only they knew how and never cease to mourn their own condition” (“Company” 131). Apparently these wolves experience their wolfishness as a lamentable state and would much rather prefer being human. This is a fascinating thought, for it simultaneously both anthropomorphises the animals and places them beneath man. However, I have come to the conclusion that the creatures described in this excerpt are not real wolves but werewolves. I actually claim that there are very few wolves in these stories at all. The title “Werewolf” already reveals that this particular story is concerned with the issues of the fantastic. I argue that in both “Werewolf” and “Company” Carter uses the terms “wolf” and “werewolf” interchangeably, and only in “Wolf-Alice” we find the natural animal. In “Wolf-Alice” the character of the Duke can also be thought of as a type of werewolf, a mentally disturbed lycanthrope. Furthermore, it can likewise be argued that as a feral child Wolf-Alice is also part of the historical continuum of the werewolf paradigm. I return to Wolf-Alice in more detail in chapter 6.

There is a notable difference between the terms ‘wolf’ and ‘werewolf’, yet it does not drastically change my interpretation regarding “Company”. Control of female sexuality is still at the core of the tale, but the means of this control gain more religious undertones. With regard to “Werewolf”, examining the historical context of the concept of werewolves reveals an alternate reading that might otherwise go unnoticed. Therefore in this chapter I draw especially on the work of historians Schulte, Edwards, Jacques–Lefèvre and Wiseman. I begin by examining the origins of werewolves.

Simply put, during the Middle Ages and the early modern period “werewolves were considered to be people who through some magic ritual had metamorphosed into wolves” (Schulte 2009, 18). Animal metamorphosis is one of the central myths of humanity, one that was, and still is, found in numerous cultures around the world (ibid.; Edwards 2002b, xiv). The figure of the werewolf is

intriguing for many reasons, one of them being the instability found at its core; the werewolf is “neither wolf nor man”, but in a state of “continuous mutation” (Jacques–Lefèvre 2002, 189). It is a mythical hybrid between man and wolf that does not follow the Cartesian split between the mind and the body, but instead challenges the border between human and animal (Wiseman 2004, 66; Jacques–Lefèvre 2002, 186). Carter, who always seeks to challenge dichotomies, must have found these figures intriguing partly for this very reason.

Werewolf literally means man-wolf and it is derived from the Old High German root ‘wer’, meaning ‘man’ (Schulte 2009, 19). The term originated thousands of years ago when the wolf was celebrated as a protector of the community in pagan rituals. It was believed to possess powers of transformation and was consequently identified with the gods (Zipes 1993, 67). The werewolves were highly regarded by these primitive societies for they represented the union of cultural and wild elements in man and demonstrated how embracing one’s animal side led to greater self-awareness (Zipes 1993, 68). The altered state of the werewolf symbolised mutability and instability while it simultaneously provided an outlet for oppositional perspectives or behaviours within the community (Edwards 2002b, xiv). The werewolf was different and divergent, but simultaneously revered and respected.

Spiritual leaders such as shamans and witch doctors would wrap themselves in a wolfskin or bearskin in order to acquire magical powers from the spirit of the animal that came to possess them (this ritual is also where the word ‘berserker’ is derived from; Zipes 1993, 67). Carter’s stories indicate the importance of the wolf pelt as well: the Duke, who thinks himself a wolf, is “hairy on the inside” and when he is shot, the bullet “bites his shoulder and drags off half his fictive pelt, so that he must rise up like any common forked biped” (“Wolf-Alice” 148). Similarly the girl in “Company” “knew the worst wolves are hairy on the inside” (“Company” 137). Initially I thought this simply a reference to the epilogue of Perrault’s “LRRH”, in which he names well-dressed seducers as the most dangerous of beasts, but Carter is most likely again referring to the older concept of using pelts to achieve metamorphosis.

In addition to the wolf skins, there was widespread belief in Europe that the werewolf used special ointments to undergo its transformation (Jacques–Lefèvre 2002, 192). Such speculation about the birth of a werewolf is also found in “Company”:

They say there's an ointment the Devil gives you that turns you into a wolf the minute you rub it on. Or, that he was born feet first and had a wolf for his father and his torso is a man's but his legs and genitals are a wolf's. And he has a wolf's heart.

(“Company” 132)

The reference to the werewolf's hairy legs can also be seen as referring to the classical Pan myth: the hairy satyrs of Greek mythology were embodiments of lust and only later Christianity adopted their appearance for its visual representations of the devil (Warner [1994] 1995, 359). The fate of the satyr was to be swallowed into Christian imagery – the same happened to the werewolf. This manner of appropriation of folk beliefs and customs was designed to legitimate and strengthen the dominance of Christianity (Zipes 1993, 74). The hairiness of the werewolf is also an indicator of its animal nature, a visible sign of wilderness and the animal within man (Warner [1994] 1995, 359). The mention of the genitals implies that the werewolf is a male sexual predator, a lecherous deviant to an even higher degree than its natural cousin, the wolf.

As the human lifestyle evolved, settlements became more permanent and Christianity spread, real wolves and, consequently, werewolves started to be associated with physical threat (Zipes 1993, 67). Wolves and werewolves shared the same aggressive qualities and rather than seen as respected individuals with beneficial magical skills, werewolves were gradually associated with social outcasts who lived alone in the woods and preyed upon humans and their livestock. Thus also the wolf was transformed into a dangerous deviate and was connected with legal terminology defining social misfits (*ibid.*). The common fairy tale metaphor of animal nature also repeatedly refers to deviants and social outcasts who practice immoral deeds and vice (Warner [1994] 1995, 357). Even today it is common to refer to certain kinds of evildoers and criminals as “lone wolves”.

Quite logically, in regions with favourable ecological conditions for wolves the teachings about werewolves were always more readily accepted (Schulte 2009, 23). As mentioned in the previous chapter 4, the distant, mountainous areas where Carter's stories take place are ideal habitats for wolves. The wolf and the werewolf were intertwined: attacks by real wolves could be explained through the concept of “magical human aggression” and as the blame for these attacks could be assigned to “a person in wolf's clothing”, this evil threat could be personified and eliminated by killing the wolf (*ibid.*). That is to say that the wolf acted as a scapegoat: it was

hunted, captured and killed for its own predatory actions, but also for the alleged sins of the werewolf.

In certain areas of early modern France people from all age groups were afraid to pass through woods or fields alone because of wolves or werewolves, and especially children were attacked and killed by both animals and adults (Zipes 1993, 20; 23). Zipes (*ibid.*) believes that there are some individual cases where famine was the motivator behind such extreme human acts against children, but as such violence was difficult to explain on rational grounds, superstitious explanations were common instead. In folklore the werewolf certainly makes itself guilty of cannibalism and is therefore condemned and damned, yet, on the other hand, historically speaking the cases of starving or demented individuals actually attacking and devouring children are very unlikely or at least extremely rare (Jacques–Lefèvre 2002, 195). Demonological texts certainly associate werewolves with witchcraft as well as acts of cannibalism aimed specifically at children (Jacques–Lefèvre 2002, 184). Be that as it may, werewolves were representatives of uncontrollable, inexplicable magical forces of nature, and provided an easy explanation for the dangers that threatened the lives of peasant populations (Zipes 1993, 23). For these people the werewolf was a real threat.

Throughout the three tales Carter demonstrates a wide knowledge and understanding of this folklore and history regarding the werewolf. In “Company”, Christmas Day is referred to as “the werewolves’ birthday” (139). Likewise the reader is told:

Seven years is a werewolf’s natural span but if you burn his human clothing you condemn him to wolfishness for the rest of his life, so old wives hereabouts think it some protection to throw a hat or an apron at the werewolf, as if clothes made the man.

(“Company” 132)

Here Carter is referring to a tradition that was still ongoing in fourteenth century Normandy called the *varouage*: it was a journey accomplished by an excommunicated individual and took place “on generally set dates, from Christmas to Candlemas or during Advent”, usually lasting for four or seven years (Jacques–Lefèvre 2002, 191). This is yet another demonstration of how the werewolf was absorbed into Christian imagery. An interesting observation about clothing can also be made here: early modern culture believed clothes to be saturated with the significant essence of a person and they were thus often used in magic (Wiseman

2004, 64). Throwing clothes at the werewolf was an attempt to transform it back into a human, like the grandmother tries to do by throwing her apron at the creature in “Company” (135). This significance of clothing is also discussed in “Wolf-Alice”, when Alice starts wearing clothes as a visible sign of her humanity.

During the Middle Ages werewolves were seen as ostracised and desperate victims, lonely men who were doomed to live as wolves until the spell binding them was broken (Schulte 2009, 21, 23). The paradigm linked werewolves to the male gender and the ability to transform into a wolf was bequeathed patrilineally, but in certain regions people also believed in werewolf families (Schulte 2009, 21). (This might actually be explained by a certain genetic condition, which I briefly discuss in section 5.3.) However, by the early modern period the image of the werewolf had changed permanently: it was now seen as a conscious evil-doer in league with the devil, and the scope of werewolf accusations also expanded to encompass women (Zipes 1993, 68). Werewolves were thought to work in packs, “in acts of collective aggression” (Schulte 2009, 23). They supposedly acted as accomplices to witches, even to the point where the two concepts eventually merged under the larger umbrella term of witchcraft – many werewolf trials did not make a distinction between witch and werewolf (Zipes 1993, 68). This becomes significant as I explore Carter’s story “Werewolf” in more detail in section 5.2.

To summarise, werewolves were originally revered spiritual leaders of pagan communities. The ostracised werewolf of medieval folklore, on the other hand, waited for deliverance and wished to be accepted back into society, whereas the later devil’s henchman of the early modern period was believed to endeavour for the destruction of this same community (Schulte 2009, 23). The later version of the werewolf thus became a metaphor for the devil himself, who had “invaded the Christian flock” (ibid.). The previous positive or even ambivalent characteristics had disappeared and the creatures were now considered to be aggressive and destructive, “cannibalistic variants of witches” (Schulte 2009, 22). One reason behind this development can be found in the general crisis of belief that Christendom faced as the Middle Ages were drawing to a close. Previously belief in such supernatural beings had been heretical and sinful, but as the werewolf changed, it proved an effective tool of religious persecution and control.

5.1 Religion and Control

In “Company” the grandmother is described as a “pious old woman” who always has her Bible open on the table (“Company” 135, 137). When attacked by the werewolf, her first instinct is to throw the Bible at him and “call on Christ and his mother and all the angels in heaven to protect [her]” (“Company” 135–36). Unfortunately for the grandmother her efforts are in vain and the werewolf eats her. When faced with real, concrete danger or need, religion never offers any solutions in Carter’s stories and is revealed to be either a consolatory nonsense or a means of control. The Christian narrative of the ultimate male saviour is nothing but a myth and the women of Carter’s tales are left to fend for themselves.

Nevertheless, the characters in Carter’s tales are all influenced by Christianity. In the “Werewolf” there is “a crude icon of the virgin” in the dark log cabin, signifying the importance of religious practices and similarly when faced with the werewolf “the child crossed herself” in the Catholic manner (“Werewolf” 126, 127). However, nearly all accounts of religion found in these three stories are restricting, superstitious and uncharitable. This mistrust toward Christianity is perhaps most visible in “Wolf-Alice” when the wild child is met with little sympathy by the nuns. By definition, they should be the very representatives of Christian charity, but instead they “poured water over her, poked her with sticks” and were apparently greatly surprised to find that “if she were treated with a little kindness, she was not intractable” (“Wolf-Alice” 141). To the nuns Wolf-Alice is an “embarrassment of a child” and they eventually refuse to care for her (*ibid.*). This disabled girl with no means of communication is sent away to live with a monster; the concept of Christian charity is presented as hypocritical as its alleged practitioners abandon the most vulnerable and leave them to fend for themselves. Therefore I claim that Carter also employs the werewolf in order to criticise one of the mightiest narratives of Western tradition; Christianity.

During the time “LRRH” originated, Christianity was experiencing a crisis. Expansion of scientific knowledge and the rise of Protestantism at the end of the Middle Ages raised questions about issues such as free will, the differences between the sexes and the relation between the body and the soul (Krampl 2002, 141). Part of this discourse was the rise of demonology and the study of the supernatural, which

resulted in the first comprehensive summary of witchcraft, the *Malleus Maleficarum* in 1486 (ibid.; Zipes 1993, 69). The theologians of the High Middle Ages had rejected the idea of werewolves as “figments of folkloristic imagination” and the doctrine of the Catholic church considered such transformations impossible (Schulte 2009, 21). Even though they were initially regarded as fictive heresies, the belief in werewolves and other animal metamorphoses was a widespread and widely known concept throughout Europe (Schulte 2009, 18). Zipes (1993, 70) claims that the originally superstitious pagan belief in werewolves was gradually officially endorsed by the Church in order to maintain control over all social groups, yet Schulte (2009, 22) argues that the “belief in werewolves was only able to assert itself in certain branches of Catholic demonology” and that the Protestants, based on the teachings of Luther, were uniform in denying such a phenomenon altogether. However, despite official doctrines, demonical creatures such as werewolves and witches, as well as the other common enemies of Christianity like Jews and other non-Christians, were all equated with one another, and the only remedy for them all was extermination (Zipes 1993, 6). Both Catholics and Protestants alike attacked those who were deemed deviates and non-believers and the different Christian denominations also fought amongst themselves.

As religious conflicts like the French Wars of Religion and the Thirty Years’ War raged across Europe, villages and fields were abandoned widely (Lederer 2002, 36; Jacques-Lefèvre 2002, 182). This in turn encouraged wolves to return to these areas; their growing boldness resulted in confrontations with the human population in an atmosphere already made tense by the wars (Lederer 2002, 36). As before, where there were wolves, there were werewolves, and eventually the werewolf was adopted as a symbol for the horrendous cruelty and madness of war (Jacques–Lefèvre 2002, 194). Especially civil war was thought to destroy the unity of the realm and turn people into monsters so that “the same becomes the Other all the while remaining the same”, much like a werewolf does (ibid.). Part animal, part human, the werewolf symbolised the loss of values, deprivation and degeneration that also defined the people who were considered heretics (Jacques–Lefèvre 2002, 197). After all, it was common to slander enemies, outsiders and inferiors as animals during the early modern period: the contrast between humans and non-humans became an analogy for the difference between the member of society and the outsider (Perry 2004, 24). Scenes of scattered limbs and mutilated bodies were easier to comprehend through

the metaphor of a demonical werewolf rather than as the result of the actions of one's own neighbour.

In Carter's tales, the basic historical premises concerning the werewolf paradigm appear to be quite accurate. In "Werewolf" the superstitious characters live in a remote, rural area with very little, if any, contact with outsiders and the devil is considered an actual factor in their lives: "To these upland woodsmen, the Devil is as real as you or I. More so; they have not seen us nor even know that we exist, but the Devil they glimpse often" ("Werewolf" 127). Such remote regions were historically the last strongholds of werewolf cases mostly due to problems in the spread of information and communication (Schulte 2009, 30). All in all, religion and superstition are visibly intertwined in Carter's stories, for example there is a firmly held belief among the villagers that the Devil holds picnics with the witches ("Werewolf" 126). These ideas seem to reflect historical beliefs. It was thought the devil could penetrate one's imagination, the "dubious space between the soul and the body" (Krampl 2002, 142). As a result, the learned scholars of both the Late Middle Ages and the early modern period heatedly debated whether the werewolf's metamorphosis was real or merely a hallucinatory effect caused by the devil, "that great master of illusion" (Jacques-Lefèvre 2002, 184). In any case, the werewolf was certainly an accomplice of the devil.

I consider it necessary to point out that the peasantry of the sixteenth century did not live in a continuous "state of superstitious terror" (Briggs 2002, 21), and in her descriptions of her characters' superstitious mindsets Carter is most likely being hyperbolic for greater literary effect. Beliefs about diabolism and magic were widespread and from time to time surfaced in tales about witchcraft, yet generally people were inclined to view their environment in commonsensical ways (ibid.). Moreover, beliefs in witchcraft and werewolves were not really just products of the superstitious peasantry of the Middle Ages, but were in fact developed explicitly and thoroughly by intellectuals during the Renaissance (Edwards 2002b, xix). Ideas about different supernatural phenomena "persisted in Europe at all social levels well into the eighteenth century" (ibid.). Consequently, condemning superstitious beliefs and traditions as an exclusive folly of the peasantry would be erroneous: the aristocracy also indulged in occult activities. The division between the common people and the upper classes was less rigid than those of higher social ranking claimed and wanted to believe (Krampl 2002, 144). I am inclined to believe that the

popularity of fairy tales among the aristocracy is part of this same phenomenon. There was a definite demand for folk wisdom on all levels of society.

The French judicial system saw a gradual decline of witchcraft accusations during the seventeenth century (Krampl 2002, 137). This is most likely part of the reason why Perrault changed the werewolf of the oral tales into a wolf in his own version: as he was writing at the end of the seventeenth century, the belief in werewolves was no longer fashionable with the upper classes and the creature lost its significance as the witch-hunts started to decline. Perrault's audience, however, most likely still identified the wolf with the werewolf, and thus also with the devil and the chaotic forces of nature (Zipes 1993, 75). All in all, the werewolf trials began in the sixteenth century and lasted for about 150 years, during which the image of the werewolf changed drastically. The first trials ended with death sentences for heresy by the Inquisition courts and the last ones with acquittals by secular courts. The phenomenon was not very widespread in Central Europe; the legal cases were quite rare and usually isolated instances (Schulte 2009, 32–33).

It is important to note that the witch-hunts began to gradually associate werewolves with witches and saw them as similar possessors of marginal knowledge and pagan secrets (Warner [1994] 1995, 181). As the werewolf gradually became a subspecies of witch and a particularly brutal subsection of witchcraft, it lost its distinctly male character (Schulte 2009, 23, 32). By the end of werewolf trials, almost half of the accused were women (ibid.). The witch and werewolf hunts were maintained to regulate sexual practices and gender roles for the benefit of patriarchal social orders like the Church. They did not merely affect social structures, but also had a profound effect on customs and habits, even social consciousness (Zipes 1993, 71). Men and even more often women were killed for their alleged associations with potential heresy and untamed nature (ibid.). This gendered division found within the witchcraft accusations is an essential part of the following section.

5.2 The Old Woman as Victim

This brings us to my interpretation of “Werewolf”. For such a short tale it certainly has hidden depths. The story may be read as “a triumph of the complaisant society (the symbolic) that hounds the uncanny” where the girl appears an example of “a

‘good’ child who sacrifices the uncanny for bourgeois prosperity” (Makinen 2000, 31). That is, the child rejects the animal within and in driving away the werewolf, the community simultaneously protects itself from a threatening outsider. The story can also be interpreted in the spirit of the oral tales of the French peasantry, that is, as a tale of the younger generation surpassing the older one in a natural attempt to thrive and prosper. In “Werewolf”, as well as in “Company”, the fate of the grandmother is to be killed and not a moment is spent to mourn her death. The protagonist of “Werewolf” appears particularly untroubled by both the revelation that her grandmother is a werewolf and by the old woman’s stoning to death. By the end of the story “the child lived in her grandmother’s house; she prospered” and nothing else is said about the fate of the old woman (“Werewolf” 128). This raises suspicions about the reliability of the narrator and the true victim of the story.

Reading Carter’s stories it may be good to remind oneself that fairy tales do not question the magical, fanciful elements of the plot, no matter how implausible they may seem. The fairy tale is always presented as matter of fact (Warner [1994] 1995, 346). However, I read “Werewolf” as breaking this maxim. Questioning the reliability of the narration and truthfulness of the tale reveals a completely different reading where the victim of the story is in fact the grandmother. Perhaps this is not a story about a supernatural werewolf terrorising a young girl, after all – perhaps this is a story about a community joining forces against a defenceless old woman. My interpretation may be unconventional, as I have not come across such a reading in research on Carter, but this makes my idea all the more worth examining.

Atwood ([1994] 2007) proposes that there are two morals to be drawn from Carter’s “Werewolf”. According to her, the story teaches the reader that “to be a ‘good child’ [...] does not mean you have to be a victim” but instead “to be a good child is to be a competent child, to know how to recognise danger but to avoid being paralysed by fear” (Atwood [1994] 2007, 145). With this empowering interpretation I wholeheartedly agree, but I have a slight issue with the other moral Atwood presents. Referring to *The Sadeian Woman* and Carter’s ideas about predators and prey, Atwood writes how “women can be werewolves too” (ibid.). Surely women can assume the role of predator as well as men can, but Atwood seems to imply that by presenting a female werewolf Carter is somehow unconventional and provocative, as if such creatures were exceptional and unheard of. It is true that originally werewolves were men, as even the root of the word is male, as demonstrated by both

the Old High German term ‘werewolf’ and the French equivalent ‘*loup-garou*’ (Schulte 2009, 19–20). However, as I have discussed, the closer to the witchcraft paradigm the werewolf got, the more women were accused of being werewolves. That is to say, the more negative the image of the werewolf became, the more it began to affect women as well. Individual women were charged for the first time in the beginning of the seventeenth century: it did not take long for the werewolf paradigm to become almost “gender neutral” (Schulte 2009, 27). As women were believed to be more emotional and closer to nature than men, they were also thought of as particularly weak against the advances of the devil; this is part of the reason why women became the principal targets of witchcraft accusations (Krampl 2002, 142). By the end of witchcraft trials female werewolves were almost just as common as male ones (Schulte 2009, 21). This idea is well demonstrated by an early modern tale about a female werewolf, which is strikingly similar to Carter’s “Werewolf” (Jacques–Lefèvre 2002, 189). The story was recounted by one of the most influential demonologists of the seventeenth century, Henry Boguet. In the tale a hunter is attacked by a wolf with a golden ring on its paw. The hunter succeeds in cutting the paw off and scaring the beast away. That same evening he stays in a castle where the master of the household recognises the ring and the mistress has a bloody bandage on her arm (Jacques–Lefèvre 2002, 189). I think it safe to assume that Atwood was not familiar with this tale, whereas Carter clearly refers to it in her “Werewolf”.

Historically speaking it did not take much for werewolf accusations to form: even simple accounts of people returning from the forest just after the disappearance of a wolf were sometimes enough evidence to condemn a person as a werewolf (Wiseman 2004, 61). There are several examples in “Werewolf” of how easily accusations of witchcraft are made when someone deviates from the norms of the community. If someone’s cheeses ripen faster than their neighbours’ or if someone’s cat follows its owner around, the reaction among the villagers is simple and unanimous; kill the witch (“Werewolf” 127). There were many things that might have caused tensions in rural communities, starting with natural phenomena: times of grave economic hardship could be brought on by, for example, long winters and cold summers (Schulte 2009, 34). The belief in harmful magic provided a comprehensible reason for such misfortunes and thus intensified the persecution of werewolves and witches (ibid.). I do not believe it a coincidence that all three of Carter’s stories take place during harsh winters. The weather comes to symbolise not only the natural

environment but also the people: “[T]hey have cold weather, they have cold hearts” (“Werewolf” 126). Challenging environments demanded sacrifices from people who were entangled in a harsh competition with each other for survival.

Witchcraft accusations tended to follow a certain pattern of targeting the most vulnerable members of a community and, similarly, those accused of being werewolves were usually from the lowest classes of society (Schulte 2009, 32). Typically allegations were directed toward families who had recently moved to a new area or lonely, poor people who lived by themselves in the woods, further away from the other villagers and the rest of the community (Schulte 2009, 16, 26–27). In this respect the werewolf certainly seems to have presented a male counterpart for the “forest-dwelling witch” (Warner [1994] 1995, 181). The grandmother in “Werewolf” is almost the epitome of the typical suspect: she is a sickly old widow living by herself in the woods. She is thus extremely vulnerable.

If they survive the dangers of the childbed, women usually live longer than men – there have been many widows and other lonely old women dependants throughout history (Warner [1994] 1995, 228). Many kinds of women threatened society by their singleness and dependency; that is, “any woman who was unattached and ageing was vulnerable” (Warner [1994] 1995, 229). The weakest women were then those who were either unmarried or otherwise alone, such as widows, as well as old and past their reproductive age; these are all attributes commonly associated with witches. The grandmother in “Werewolf” is an old menopausal widow – she lives alone yet still wears her wedding ring (“Werewolf” 127). This intergenerational conflict, mistrust and even hatred of old women so common in fairy tales might arise not only from rivalry between generations, but from feelings of guilt about the dependant and the feeble (Warner [1994] 1995, 227). The grandmother is a strain on the resources of the community.

Peach ([1998] 2009, 169, 181) claims that in order to explore the relationships between women of different age groups, Carter often employs ageing and illness as tropes and metaphors as well as demythologising strategies. Peach also maintains that Carter scholarship has for long ignored these older women, especially the presence of the postmenopausal female (Peach [1998] 2009, 175). In both “Werewolf” and “Company” the grandmother is supposedly old, sick and frail and in dire need of help from younger women. However, in fairy tale the concepts of “witch” and “old age” go hand in hand: this has been a part of establishing “a way in

which elderly women in Western cultural discourse can be seen as menacing” (Peach [1998] 2009, 178). Old women in fairy tales often play the role of the villain, preying on the young, sometimes even preparing “to literally consume their youth”, as is allegedly the case in Carter’s “Werewolf” (ibid.). Old women who are past their fertile years, like the grandmothers in “Werewolf” and “Company”, transgress the “purpose” and “function” of the female sex and as violators of this natural, God-given order are easily harnessed to represent other objectionable aberrations (Warner [1994] 1995, 44). A case in point is the grandmother who is accused of being a werewolf.

However, I propose that despite the title of the story, there is no werewolf in “Werewolf” and the old grandmother is wrongly accused. I find it most likely that the girl and her mother have agreed to kill the old woman and the werewolf paradigm offers a convenient way to provide them with the justification to do so. Many aspects of “Werewolf” support my reading, starting with the fact that the grandmother fits the profile of those traditionally accused. The story seems to prepare the reader for bloodshed from the very beginning. “Here, take your father’s hunting knife; you know how to use it”, the mother instructs the girl in a foreboding statement (“Werewolf” 127). Clearly this is an environment where even little girls have to know how to protect themselves, but the question is whether the knife is meant solely for her protection from the wild animals or whether it is meant for the eradication of some other threat. I am inclined to believe the latter.

According to the narrator the girl is attacked by a wolf. Allegedly she “slashed off its right forepaw” and scared the beast away, but as it conveniently starts “to snow so thickly that the path and any footsteps, track or spoor that might have been upon it were obscured”, the reader cannot be certain whether this same wolf has left or entered the grandmother’s house (ibid.). When the girl arrives at the cottage, she finds the grandmother in the grips of a terrible fever. As she reaches out for a cloth in her basket, the wolf paw falls to the ground; only it is not a paw anymore, but a hand “chopped off at the wrist, a hand toughened with work and freckled with old age” (ibid.). The girl immediately recognises the grandmother as the wolf that attacked her and claims that the festering stump where the grandmother’s hand has been cut off is the source of the old woman’s fever. However, there is a flaw in this story. The reader has been told that grandmother has already been sick for some time and that her hand was slashed off only hours before – therefore the “bloody stump”

cannot possibly be the reason behind her prolonged sickness (“Werewolf” 128). The girl must be lying, and as a consequence the narrator, too, is proven unreliable.

Historically the accusations of witchcraft “relied on a temporal and logical sequence, from quarrels and threats to misfortunes” (Briggs 2002, 1). This resulted in “a remarkably efficient system of communal scapegoating, which left the accused virtually defenceless once a determined coalition had taken shape amongst their neighbors” (ibid.). This is exactly what happens in “Werewolf”: the girl convinces the neighbours that the grandmother is a werewolf by simply presenting a wart on the old woman’s cut off hand as her sole evidence. The superstitious neighbours believe the wart to be “supernumerary nipple”, and take it as proof that the old woman is in league with the devil (“Werewolf” 126). This idea of a witch’s nipple was common especially in English witchcraft narratives; it was believed that witches kept demonic familiars in their houses and suckled them from these special teats (Briggs 2002, 5). In “Werewolf”, then, something as small and arbitrary as an old woman’s wart is enough proof to kill the grandmother.

I argue that “Werewolf” is much more complicated than would seem at a first glance. I firmly believe that my interpretation of the old woman as the true victim of the tale is both defensible and logical. It cannot be a coincidence, either, that in all the examples of witchcraft provided by the narrator the witch is always an old woman (“Werewolf” 126). The reader is being prepared to more readily accept the grandmother as a monster. I argue that Carter’s stories explore this gendered aspect as well; in “Werewolf” the grandmother is eagerly killed based on the testimony of just one witness, whereas the male monster in “Wolf-Alice”, the Duke, continues his irrefutably cannibalistic ways for years before the villagers finally even attempt to stop him. In these stories the rules of society are different for men and women. It is true that historically men were not safe from witchcraft accusations, either, but women were always more readily condemned.

5.3 Melancholia and Mental Illness

There is yet another aspect to the werewolf I have not yet touched upon – mental illness. The unstable werewolves of “Company” seem to long for death:

There is a vast melancholy in the canticles of the wolves, melancholy infinite as the forest, endless as these long nights of winter and yet that ghastly sadness, that mourning for their own, irremediable appetites, can never move the heart for not one phrase in it hints at the possibility of redemption; grace could not come to the wolf from its own despair, only through some external mediator, so that, sometimes, the beast will look as if he half welcomes the knife that despatches him.

(“Company” 131)

The key concept here is melancholia, for it leads us to yet another side of the werewolf paradigm: medical discourse and lycanthropy. Lycanthropes are people who think themselves to be wolves and act accordingly – it was believed that they suffered from an extreme form of melancholia that resulted in a heightened impulse to autodestruct (Jacques–Lefèvre 2002, 195). Medieval and early modern theories believed human psychology to be based on the distribution of four humors: according to this view, melancholia was caused by the excess of black bile and thus lycanthropes were thought of as psychologically unbalanced. Building on classical models, the consensus among demonologists appears to have been that werewolves did exist, but rather than believed to be supernatural beings they were considered melancholic and deluded people instead (Edwards 2002b, xxi). So to make yet another distinction, I now examine the figure of the lycanthrope.

Aetius’s *On Melancholy* from the late fifth century was frequently cited in matters of lycanthropy by Renaissance intellectuals. Aetius describes lycanthropia or “wolves fury” in a manner that corresponds with many of the characteristics associated not only with the werewolves of early modern Europe, but with Carter’s character, the Duke, as well: “[T]he afflicted disturbs graves, eats bones, suffers from thirst, has a hollow, haggard appearance, and even howls” (ibid.). The change of image from a demonic werewolf into a psychologically imbalanced lycanthrope demonstrates yet again how religion was gradually losing its status in people’s lives during the early modern period’s need to rationalise the world. During the Enlightenment, the political and economic system gradually surpassed the religious one as a frame of reference for accepted societal behaviour and the Christian explanation for the werewolf phenomenon lost much of its importance (Krampl 2002, 143). Naturally this change did not take place overnight, and the figure of the demoniac resisted well into the eighteenth century (ibid.). It did, however, demonstrate the beginning of a development of rationalisation and medicalisation that is still visible in the Western world today.

Drawing on Aetius, Diderot, one of the prominent philosophers of the Enlightenment, defined lycanthropy in the French *Encyclopedia* in the eighteenth century as follows:

[T]his type of melancholy in which men believe themselves transformed into wolves; and in consequence, they imitate all of their action; following their example, they leave their house at night, they roam around graves, they take refuge there, mix and fight with ferocious beasts, and often risk their life, their health in these kinds of combat. [...] They have a pale face, sunken eyes, bewildered expression, dry tongue and mouth, an immoderate thirst, sometimes also bruised, torn legs, fruits of their nocturnal debates [...].

(Diderot cited in Jacques–Lefèvre 2002. 194)

Here again, “men believe themselves transformed into wolves”; there is no actual diabolical animal transformation, just the beliefs of a delusional mind. This could also be a direct description of the Duke. He “is sere as old paper; his dry skin rustles against the bedsheets as he throws them back to thrust out his thin legs scabbed with old scars where thorns scored his pelt” (“Wolf-Alice” 142). He sleeps during the day and only leaves his mansion at night, when “those huge, inconsolable, rapacious eyes of his are eaten up by swollen, gleaming pupil. His eyes see only appetite” (ibid.). It is interesting to note that some researchers have linked lycanthropy with current medical diagnoses such as porphyria, which is a very rare hereditary disorder characterised by light sensitivity, coloured teeth, ulcers, deformation and even “mental aberrations, such as hysteria, manic-depressive psychosis, and delirium” (Edwards 2002b, xxi). On a similar note, some researchers believe that the accusations of witchcraft were the results of the deliberate use of hallucinogenic mushrooms or accidental exposure to ergot, a type of fungi found in mouldy rye (ibid.). I mention this because it demonstrates how the figure of the werewolf has been subject to change and how the explanations for the phenomena have gradually lost their religious aspects. However, one must also remain wary of anachronism, and it should be kept in mind that these ideas are later attempts to rationalise the phenomenon of witchcraft; people of the past viewed the world differently. Moreover, Carter is writing fiction, not history.

I am convinced that Carter’s Duke is based on Duke Ferdinand from John Webster’s 17th century play *The Duchess of Malfi*. In the play Duke Ferdinand is a lycanthrope, riddled with a specific type of extreme melancholia which leads him to believe himself to be a wolf (Wiseman 2004, 60). In the following excerpt a doctor describes Duke Ferdinand in a manner that also applies to Carter’s Duke:

Doctor: In those that are possess'd with't there o'erflows
Such melancholy humour, they imagine
Themselves to be transformed into wolves,
Steal forth to churchyards in the dead of night,
And dig dead bodies up: as two nights since
One met the duke, 'bout midnight in a lane
Behind Saint Mark's church, with the leg of a man
Upon his shoulder; and he howl'd fearfully;
Said he was a wolf, only the difference
Was, a wolf's skin was hairy on the outside,
His on the inside [...].

(Webster cited in Wiseman 2004, 60)

As discussed before, Carter's Duke believed himself to be hairy on the inside. Like Webster's Duke Ferdinand, he, too, can be found "scuttling along by the churchyard wall with half a juicy torso slung across his back" or "howling round the graves at night in his lupine fiestas" ("Wolf-Alice" 142). Wolf-Alice even encounters him in the kitchen "with the leg of a man over his shoulder" in a similar manner as that described in the play ("Wolf-Alice" 145). I find this connection relevant, because in the play the lycanthropy of Duke Ferdinand is employed as a commentary on the "ambiguous power of wolfishness and its crucial association with rule – with tyranny" and "the threat to social relations" (Wiseman 2004, 61). Carter's Duke must be a man of high status and power; otherwise he would have been punished and reprimanded for his condemnable actions by the community a long time ago. Society imposes different rules for rich men than it does for poor women, as we see when we compare the Duke with the grandmother of "Werewolf". This is also an interesting commentary on mental illness – if you are rich, you may be considered eccentric, whereas if you are poor, you are more likely labelled insane. It takes years of horrible misconduct before the community finds the courage to take action against the Duke.

Carter is clearly interested in the construction of the human psyche, as is demonstrated by the lycanthropic character of the Duke and the mentally challenged feral child Wolf-Alice. In Carter's stories, things that might usually be considered as depictions of mental illness are actually employed as manifestations of difference (Peach [1998] 2009, 181). It has been argued that in doing so she seeks to challenge "the explanation of male and female identities in Freudian psychology" (ibid.). At this point I consider it worth mentioning that although Freud never commented on werewolves directly, like Carter he, too, was deeply interested in the phenomenon of witchcraft (Midelfort 2002, 208). Freud asserted that there was high empirical value

to be found in medieval demonological texts, and even though he rejected the religious explanations of witchcraft, he believed that the Middle Ages had recognised “certain somatic signs of hysteria that his own time had almost completely ignored, suppressed or forgotten”; he saw instances of witchcraft as examples of what medical science later understood as natural illness (Midelfort 2002, 207). Freud was enthusiastic about studying the *Malleus Maleficarum* and confessed: “The history of the devil, the lexicon of curses among ordinary people, children’s songs and the habits of the nursery, all are gaining in significance for me” (Midelfort 2002, 212). This sounds very similar to how Carter became interested in fairy tale as a genre.

6 The Curious Case of Wolf-Alice

After examining wolves and werewolves, we finally arrive at the enigmatic figure of the wolf-girl. If “fairy tales often champion lost causes, runts of the litter, the slow-witted and the malformed”, then Wolf-Alice is the epitome of a fairy tale heroine (Warner [1994] 1995, 415). First abandoned by her own biological mother and later left orphaned after her surrogate wolf mother is killed, Wolf-Alice is entirely alone in the world. Having been raised by wolves with no human contact, this wild child has acquired no human language and therefore no means of communicating with anyone of her own species. Although she has done nothing to harm anyone, humans feel uncomfortable in her presence and, rather than face that unease, send her away to live with a lycanthropic monster.

According to Wiseman (2004, 51) the wild child is a close relative of the werewolf and not only because they both raise questions about the borders of humanity. She notes that wild children begin to appear in the 1640s, whereas narratives of the werewolf start to disappear around the 1660s (Wiseman 2004, 67). She sees a connection between the two, claiming that “inside each [eighteenth-century wild child] narrative there is a werewolf, secretly incorporated” (ibid.). There are many historical accounts of such children, and the tale of Wolf-Alice appears to be based on a story of a particular wild child, Mademoiselle le Blanc, who was found in 1731 in France (Wiseman 2004, 50). Unlike Wolf-Alice, Mademoiselle le Blanc was able to learn human language and embrace Christianity. She lived by the sale of her story, “which is offered as a drama of the wild being subject to the law and made obedient to social and political process” (ibid.). In this tale the savage girl is presented “as the benevolent object of charity” (ibid.). Compared to that of Mademoiselle le Blanc, I consider Wolf-Alice’s fate a testimony to the failure of civil community. The nuns represent those structures of society that are expected to care for the most vulnerable, yet they turn Wolf-Alice away.

Being half-human is often perceived as even more unsettling than being wholly animal (Perry 2004, 24). In fiction these halfway states become metaphors for the origin and maintenance of human civilisation (ibid.). Therefore, when investigating the character of Wolf-Alice, it is once again useful to remember that often the line between human and animal also corresponds with the boundaries

between members of society and outsiders (Perry 2004, 25). Because of her wolf-like behaviour and inability to communicate, Wolf-Alice's humanity is severely questioned and as a result she is sent away to live with another social misfit, the lycanthropic Duke. There was much anxiety and fear about maintaining the separation of human and animal during the Renaissance: "Humans stripped of reason and the consciousness of being created in God's image might sink into the bestial life of the body", as has happened to Wolf-Alice and to the Duke (Perry 2004, 23). Their monstrosity would be easier to comprehend if they were animals. However, the source of all the disgust and unease felt toward this pair is generated by the knowledge of their human origin; if Wolf-Alice and the Duke behave in such an animal like manner yet are still essentially human, could such a disturbing fate befall anyone? Is there a wild beast inside us all, just waiting to surface and burst out?

6.1 Disgust and Shame

In the story "Wolf-Alice" animals are presented in a more positive light than humans. The wolves are compassionate creatures and "tended [Wolf-Alice] because they knew she was an imperfect wolf", whereas "we [the humans] secluded her in animal privacy out of fear of her imperfection because it showed us what we might have been" ("Wolf-Alice" 144). The nuns are disturbed by the fact that while Wolf-Alice is undoubtedly a human, she is also mentally challenged to the point where her cognitive capacity and behaviour are like those of an animal. She is an unnatural hybrid between human and animal: this is why Wolf-Alice is met with such strong feelings of disgust. Kristeva, a psychoanalyst and literary theorist, goes as far as to argue that in confronting a disabled individual "those not afflicted [...] are faced with the anxiety of castration, the horror of narcissistic injury, and, beyond that, the intolerableness of psychic or physical death" (Kristeva 2010, 43). Wolf-Alice's disabilities awaken "a catastrophic anxiety that in turn leads to defensive reactions of rejection, indifference or arrogance, when not the will to eradicate by euthanasia" (Kristeva 2010, 36). The nuns are disgusted by Wolf-Alice and the idea that her base behaviour and mentally challenged state might actually be a manifestation of underlying human nature.

Parallels have often been drawn between animals and the mentally ill to

legitimate a range of controlling practices (Pugliese 2016, 26). The first zoos and mental hospitals were actually both products of the Enlightenment and depended on admissions fees, as “animals and psychiatric patients were expected to be amusing” and both were subjected to cruel treatment by crowds and scientists (Senior 2004, 222). Wolf-Alice, too, is to feel the consequences of this mindset. After taking her to the convent, the nuns utilise cruel and inhumane methods such as beatings to educate her and to bring her to the realm of civilised humanity. However, they soon find her unreachable:

Yet she always seemed wild, impatient of restraint, capricious in temper; when the Mother Superior tried to teach her to give thanks for her recovery from the wolves, she arched her back, pawed the floor, retreated to a far corner of the chapel, crouched, trembled, urinated, defecated – reverted entirely, it would seem, to her natural state.

(“Wolf-Alice” 141)

I find this incident quite ironic and amusing: the nuns try to teach Wolf-Alice about the concept of gratitude, and as a result she defecates on the floor right in front of them. Eaglestone (2003, 204) actually argues that much of Carter’s humour comes from exactly this kind of “interruption of the abstract with the concrete”. In Carter’s stories feelings of amusement are often created by these high contrasts.

It is this baseness, this reality of life that the nuns shun. They are disgusted by Wolf-Alice’s unashamed demonstrations of her bodily functions and by her bold nakedness, in fact by all the traits that link her closer to animals rather than to humans. The emotion of disgust, generated by what is considered lowness and the manifestation of the animal in Wolf-Alice, can then be considered a by-product of social control and power (Ahmed 2004, 89). We are disgusted by things we consider to be below us. However, “[t]o be disgusted is [...] *to be affected by what one has rejected*”, which implies that even though they wish to deny it, the nuns are influenced by their encounter with Wolf-Alice (Ahmed 2004, 86). They are afraid that Wolf-Alice could change them in some way and that they, too, might in the right circumstances revert to Wolf-Alice’s “natural state”. Rather than to confront their own uneasy feelings, the nuns reject and repress them altogether and send the girl away to live with the outcast Duke.

Shortly after being sent away to the mansion of the Duke, Wolf-Alice’s menses begin. As she does not understand what is happening to her body, she is initially bewildered by the blood. However, what is most remarkable is that this

biological occurrence is her first step toward self-realisation and awareness: “the first stirrings of surmise that ever she felt were directed towards its possible cause” (“Wolf-Alice” 144). Wolf-Alice had learned elementary hygiene in the convent and uses cloth to “cleanse herself of her natural juices” and then hides these rags (ibid.). However, as “the nuns had not the means to inform her how it should be, it was not fastidiousness but shame that made her do so” (ibid.). That is to say, the motivation behind Wolf-Alice’s efforts to soak up the blood and then hide the stained rags is her own feeling of shame, born out of the disgust she believes the nuns would feel.

This is significant because shame is a highly social emotion and can be the affective result of breaking the rules of normative existence (Ahmed 2004, 106). It is also entwined with ideas of self-recognition. Shame requires a witness; “even if a subject feels shame when it is alone”, like in the case of Wolf-Alice, “it is the imagined view of the other that is taken on by a subject in relation to itself” (Ahmed 2004, 105). That is to say, the fact that Wolf-Alice is capable of feeling ashamed seems to indicate that she has obtained consciousness of herself as an individual separate from the nuns and she can assume that the nuns would think her disgusting. The feeling of shame becomes a way of relating to oneself, a matter of being, “about how the subject appears before and to others” (Ahmed 2004 104–5). Wolf-Alice’s act of hiding the rags is actually also a very typical consequence of shame, for already Darwin wrote that “under a keen sense of shame there is a strong desire for concealment. [...] An ashamed person can hardly endure to meet the gaze of those present” (Darwin cited in Ahmed 2004, 103). To avoid the judgement of others, we try to hide the source of our shame.

Being without shame seems to suggest some previous state of being, as in the biblical tale of Adam and Eve before the Fall. As they become aware of themselves as subjects, Adam and Eve also realise their own nakedness, which they then endeavour to ashamedly conceal; the story can be interpreted as their awakening to consciousness. The feeling of shame then marks this transition. Carter directly refers to this story:

If you could transport [Wolf-Alice], in her filth, rags and feral disorder, to the Eden of our first beginnings where Eve and grunting Adam squat on a daisy bank, picking the lice from one another’s pelts, then she might prove to be the wise child who leads them all and her silence and her howling a language as authentic as any language of nature.

(“Wolf-Alice” 143)

There is something primitive, original and wise about Wolf-Alice. That is, if we all were transported to the beginning of our species, Wolf-Alice might be “the wise child” – she is actually pure and innocent. Carter is clearly commenting on Enlightenment ideas about the state of nature. When brought to the convent, to the sphere of civil society, Wolf-Alice’s “natural state” is compromised – before her encounter with the nuns she was not yet conscious and she had felt no shame.

If Wolf-Alice is ashamed of her menstruation, does this mean that Carter is suggesting that menstruation or being a woman, even, is something to be ashamed of? This would certainly be a very easy interpretation to make, especially because traditionally women have been thought to be governed by their biology; it was believed that “women, caught up in the timeless, cyclic rhythms of nature (childbirth, nurturance and death), have no history” (Downs 2004, 45). In Wolf-Alice’s case, however, being biologically female actually bestows her with several integral building blocks on her road to consciousness and subjectivity – amongst them a sense of time. Carter is not implying that menstruation is shameful; rather that it is an integral part of Wolf-Alice’s growth into personhood. On what makes us human, Kristeva (2010, 81) writes how “the development of the prefrontal cortex allows the apprehension of *time* thanks to *language* and *categorization*, of which man alone is capable”. According to her, reflexive consciousness achieved through language is the real difference between animal and human (Kristeva 2010, 80). However, Wolf-Alice does not seem to fit this theory.

It is true that Wolf-Alice initially lives with “no direct notion of past, or of future, or of duration, only of a dimensionless, immediate moment” and it is suggested that other non-human animals share this state of timelessness as well (“Wolf-Alice” 144). However, for Wolf-Alice, it is her menstruation, not language, that makes her aware of time: “you might say she discovered the very action of time by means of this returning cycle” (“Wolf-Alice” 146). The fact that this bodily phenomenon influences Wolf-Alice’s thought this severely is an indication that Carter is arguing for the deep connectedness of body and mind. Her fiction in general rejects the mind–body dualism (Peach [1998] 2009, 181). The emergence of Wolf-Alice’s consciousness is highly interesting and seems to challenge not only historical assertions about animals, but also more contemporary psychoanalytic theories.

6.2 Language and Consciousness

The question of consciousness has vexed humanity for centuries, and often this question revolves around language; already Aristotle had claimed language “to involve both a physical and a mental test of qualification” (Cummings 2004, 16). That is, while certain animals may have the physiology needed for the production of sounds, they cannot produce meaning because they supposedly lack consciousness. During the early modern period the most important factor separating humans and animals was thought to be language and even today, when contemplating the possibilities of animal consciousness, one of the main questions often posed is whether animals can speak human language. With some reservation, the answer is generally thought to be no (Cummings 2004, 178). Therefore human uniqueness is often asserted through speech: it becomes the means by which human societies and cultures are both created and maintained. Speech and language are then liminal and mark “the threshold to humanity” (Perry 2004, 23). Generally these ideas seem to completely ignore or dismiss the possibility of animal languages.

As a result of centuries of anthropocentric thought, the human world is generally seen as the world of the subject: human actions are guided by conscious and intentional thoughts and desires we can access through language (Higgin 2014, 73). In such a setting, the animal is the epitome of nature without culture, capable only of “dumb noise without language” (Pugliese 2016, 31). Similarly the agency of animals remains irrational and unintelligible as we cannot access their minds through a shared language, leaving the very concept of their consciousness debatable (Higgin 2014, 73). Because of this perceived lack of language, the animal is traditionally thought to have no self-reflexive control of its own life, but it is rather at the mercy of mere unfolding biological sequences (Braidotti 2003, 210). Carter challenges this thinking throughout “Wolf-Alice”, starting with the opening lines of the story:

Could this ragged girl with brindled lugs have spoken like we do she would have called herself a wolf, but she cannot speak, although she howls because she is lonely – yet ‘howl’ is not the right word for it, since she is young enough to make the noise that pups do, bubbling, delicious, like that of a panful of fat on the fire. [... The wolves] are trying to talk to her but they cannot do so because she does not understand their language even if she knows how to use it for she is not a wolf herself, although suckled by wolves.
(“Wolf-Alice” 140)

The ostensibly simple dichotomy of human–animal is rendered useless in the case of Wolf-Alice. She is born human but identifies as a wolf, yet has the language of neither species. Her physiology is that of a human, but her behaviour of a wolf; her character becomes an interesting examination of the nature versus nurture debate. Attention should be also paid to the wolves in this excerpt: they clearly have a language, and they are even using it in their attempts to communicate with Wolf-Alice. Surely this must mean that the wolves are conscious subjects. To me this is yet more evidence that Carter rejects the Cartesian animal machine hypothesis, which absurdly denies the possibility of animal languages. Even the fact that the wolves could not work together as a pack without a means of communication must indicate that they have a shared language; their language is just not a *human* language.

Because of our traditional anthropocentric mentality, our failure to communicate with animals is seen as a fault on the side of the animals. The same thought was expressed by the French Enlightenment philosopher Montaigne, who, studying his cat, wondered:

Why should it be a defect in the beasts, not in us, which stops all communication between us? We can only guess whose fault it is that we cannot understand each other: for we do not understand them any more than they understand us. They may reckon us to be brute beasts for the same reason that we reckon them to be so.

(Montaigne cited in Cummings 2004, 179–80)

It was apparently in response to Montaigne’s philosophical musings that Descartes expressed his views on the consciousness of animals in such a severe manner. Descartes maintained that if animals could talk, we would surely understand them. As this was not the case, he concluded that the reason was simply because “animals have no minds to make known” (Cummings 2004, 180). This radical denial of animal consciousness was an attempt to protect the perceived unique nature of human rationality and, as was discussed earlier in chapter 4, later lead to such strict conclusions as the denial of animal souls or feelings and the idea that animals cannot feel pain (*ibid.*). There are many flaws to be found in Descartes’s reasoning. For example, his model would conclude that if we cannot understand the speech of foreigners, it must be because foreigners are mindless and without consciousness. Nonetheless, Descartes’s views have been very influential in how the concept of animal language has been traditionally understood.

The narrator of “Wolf-Alice” is almost mesmerised by this mysterious connection between language, thinking and consciousness:

How did she think, how did she feel, this perennial stranger with her furred thoughts and her primal sentience that existed in a flux of shifting impressions; there are no words to describe the way she negotiated the abyss between her dreams, those wakings strange as her sleepings.
(“Wolf-Alice” 144)

How Wolf-Alice’s consciousness operates without language is a mystery. She lives “amongst things she could neither name nor perceive” (“Wolf-Alice” 144–45), yet is still able to function and live her life. This is only possible if one is to reject the idea of human language as a prerequisite of consciousness. This, I argue, is the most essential point Carter conveys through this story.

Because it deals with the issues of the mind, language and consciousness, “Wolf-Alice” has been much researched utilising psychoanalytic literary criticism. The prevalence of this line of interpretation is most likely also influenced by the fact that Wolf-Alice’s gradual awakening to selfhood in front of a mirror clearly demonstrates Carter’s knowledge of Lacanian mirror theory. One can note here that Lacan’s work was cited in the bibliography of Carter’s *The Sadeian Woman*. Carter was, indeed, familiar with Freudian and post-Freudian theories, but she was also “critical, sceptical and to an extent dismissive of certain psychoanalytic master (and indeed mistress) narratives” and the way they have been utilised “to legitimise either patriarchal structures, identities and myths or some feminist counter-positions” (Easton 2000, 10). Lacan’s re-reading of Freud has been highly influential in feminist interpretations of psychoanalytic theories, yet it has also been argued that the symbolic order of Lacanian theory is patriarchal and thus “represses or marginalizes anything other than a male-defined female” (Weedon 2003, 120–21). Carter is thus also critical of Lacan’s theories, as I shall demonstrate.

According to Lacan, the pre-Oedipal experience of an infant is fragmented, separate from the surrounding world and “lacking a definite sense of a unified self” (Weedon 2003, 121). Once the infant enters the mirror stage, she overcomes her fragmentation through a structure of misrecognition, “by identifying with an ‘other’, an external mirror image” (ibid.). This is exactly what happens to Wolf-Alice. Her initial encounter with the mirror is described at some length, but I find the event so important that I will quote it here in full. Notice also how she is described in terms of

the animal: she does not have a nose but a muzzle, no fingernails but claws, no hands but forepaws. Her behaviour is more animal-like than human, and she does not initially recognise her own reflection:

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

(“Wolf-Alice” 145)

Wolf-Alice’s initial misrecognition follows Lacanian theory – she is not yet a conscious subject and cannot comprehend who the figure in the mirror is. Here I also wish to point out that even when dealing with such profound and abstract concepts as Lacanian mirror theory and the emergence of consciousness, Carter finds the time to abstract some humour from the situation by writing how Wolf-Alice drags her bottom along the carpet like a wolf or a dog.

Eventually Wolf-Alice comes to understand the concept of the mirror: “This habitual, at last boring, fidelity to her every movement finally woke her up to the regretful possibility that her companion was, in fact, no more than a particularly ingenious variety of the shadow she cast on sunlit grass” (“Wolf-Alice” 147). According to Lacan, an infant’s self begins to emerge as she recognises herself in the mirror, like Wolf-Alice now does, but this “discrepancy between self and the reflection of self opens up a lack and a desire that can never be fulfilled” (Becker–Leckrone 2005, 31). Therefore, as Wolf-Alice looks behind the mirror and her suspicions about the reflected figure are confirmed, she becomes saddened by her realisation: “A little moisture leaked from the corners of her eyes, yet her relation with the mirror was now far more intimate since she knew she saw herself within it” (“Wolf-Alice” 147). This is remarkable: Wolf-Alice now recognises herself in the mirror, a feat not many species of animal are capable of. Another reason for her sadness is the fact that she realises she is, once again, alone. For a social pack

animal, be it a wolf or a human, this is usually a highly uncomfortable situation.

As a result of the development of the self and of subjectivity, the child becomes the source of meaning, Lacan asserts (Weedon 2003, 121). The more conscious of herself Wolf-Alice becomes, the more separate from her surroundings she recognises herself to be:

She perceived an essential difference between herself and her surroundings that you might say she could not put her *finger* on – only, the trees and grass of the meadows outside no longer seemed the emanation of her questing nose and erect ears, and yet sufficient to itself, but a kind of backdrop for her, that waited for her arrivals to give it meaning. She saw herself upon it and her eyes, with their sombre clarity, took on a veiled, introspective look.

(“Wolf-Alice” 146)

Suddenly nature is ascribed a meaning, but only in relation to Wolf-Alice. However, I do not believe this is brought on by Wolf-Alice being human, but rather by her becoming conscious of herself. She becomes an entity that is separate from her surroundings. The girl continues exploring the nearby environment: “She goes out at night more often now; the landscape assembles itself about her, she informs it with her presence. She is its significance” (“Wolf-Alice” 147–48). This significance is the result of her awakening sense of self.

In Lacanian thought the process of identifying oneself in the mirror acts as the basis for future recognition of the self as sovereign and autonomous, but only after the child “has entered the symbolic order of language” (Weedon 2003, 121). Because she was raised by wolves, Wolf-Alice grew “outside of social training of the symbolic”, that is to say, without language and culture (Makinen 2000, 31). The case of Wolf-Alice does not follow Lacanian patterns: she appears to achieve subjectivity and consciousness, but never language, which Lacan sees as a prerequisite for the former two. I argue that Carter thus implies that human language is not necessary for the development of consciousness. This is remarkable, for it indicates that she suggests that other animals without human language are also potentially conscious beings. As centuries of anthropocentric tradition and several contemporary psychoanalytic theories claim that human language is the basis of consciousness, Carter’s assertion is revolutionary and contends the idea of human exceptionality.

7 Conclusion

Drawing conclusions from my analysis, I realise now that my initial question of what separates us humans from other animals is burdened with the traditions of Western belief in human exceptionality. Carter's stories do not provide any straight answers to this question; instead she appears more interested in the things we have in common with other animals. Her wolves and werewolves play a multitude of different roles in her short stories "Werewolf", "Company" and "Wolf-Alice". The wolf appears as a real animal only in "Wolf-Alice", otherwise Carter introduces human-animal hybrids of varying degrees. These stories demonstrate Carter's knowledge of the history of fairy tale, witchcraft and werewolves through numerous allusions and intertextual references. She rewrote such canonical fairy tales as "LRRH" partly in order to reclaim the genre for female storytellers and to provide a voice for those women history has traditionally silenced. In doing so, she simultaneously comments on the gender politics of her own time. Carter asserts that women should not be content with the role of a victim, but instead act bravely as autonomous individuals in the world.

The story of "LRRH" can be considered a product of mainly French oral tradition, originating in rural areas where werewolf trials were most prominent during the Middle Ages and the early modern period. Carter is aware of the history of the tale and therefore also utilises elements of werewolf legends and myths in her own versions of the fairy tale. The story was initially a celebration of the maturation of peasant women and Carter's tales are also coming of age stories, addressing a girl's transition into womanhood. It was only the later literary adaptations, starting with that of Perrault's, that transformed "LRRH" into a warning tale designed to control the sexuality, mobility and general behaviour of women through fear. Once Little Red Riding Hood leaves the safety of her home, she is subject to danger and must remain cautious at all times. Carter, on the other hand, wanted to challenge such a message and actively rejected the narrative of female victimhood promoted by these traditional literary versions. As products of 1970s feminism, her stories deal openly and positively with matters of female sexuality.

Carter explores not only the development of the "LRRH" narrative, but also the evolution of the werewolf paradigm. The werewolf, originally a powerful

spiritual figure of pagan tribes, was absorbed into Christian imagery and connected with the devil. It was utilised for religious persecution and social control; the creature was believed to be a lecherous, aggressive beast that combined the worst aspects of humans and wolves. As the importance of religion gradually diminished in people's lives, the werewolf was explained in increasingly rational and medical terms, thus demonstrating the overall rationalisation of Western society. In Carter's stories one can trace the evolution of the werewolf from the accomplice of the devil to the psychologically imbalanced lycanthrope and, arguably, even to the mentally impaired feral child. Carter thus also employs the werewolf in an examination of mental health and the emergence of consciousness, simultaneously commenting on the alleged differences between humans and other animals. It appears that as all of her tales discuss different aspects of the werewolf paradigm, Carter recognises the historical constructedness of the phenomenon and also comments on our later needs to rationalise the werewolf.

In "Company" the protagonist faces a werewolf, a representation of her own untamed sexuality. By refusing to become its victim, the girl also refuses the prevailing narrative of female victimhood. Carter's world is not divided into predators and prey like that of Marquis de Sade's, but these qualities can be found even in the same individual simultaneously. The story explores changing attitudes towards female sexuality and encourages women to embrace their libido. The older generations, represented by the grandmother, have lived their lives according to different norms and are afraid to break free from the restricting structures of gender; the result of this is death. As she writes about the connections of eating meat and having sex so inherent in the oral versions of "LRRH", Carter also comments on issues of power and dominance. When women are seen as pieces of meat, they are compared to animals in an attempted act of subordination. Therefore it becomes all the more important to refuse victimhood and renounce fear. Women must confront and accept their own sexuality: they must laugh in the face of the wolf.

As the young female protagonists survive and prosper, the true victims of both "Werewolf" and "Company" are the passive old women. In "Werewolf" the dependency and vulnerability of the aged female becomes the main theme of the story; rather than most scholars, who read the tale as a celebration of the resourcefulness and independence of young women, I claim that "Werewolf" is a tale of ageism and misogyny. My interpretation may be controversial, especially as

questioning the truthfulness of the tale goes against the conventions of the fairy tale genre, but my reading is nonetheless defensible and certainly original. The grandmother is a sickly old widow living alone in the woods; she is the archetypal victim of a witch-hunt. Women were thought to be more vulnerable to the advances of the devil and became the primary victims of witch-hunts and eventually also targets of werewolf accusations. I claim that there is no werewolf in this story and that the narrator of “Werewolf” is unreliable. Interpreted this way the tale becomes a culmination of the mistrust and even hatred toward old women typically found in traditional fairy tales. Old women are usually dependent on the help of others and are thus a strain on the whole community, as is the case in “Werewolf”. The werewolf of the tale is utilised as a convenient excuse for ridding the community of a useless old woman. The true beast is the protagonist who is responsible for the death of her own grandmother. Read this way, the story reveals hostile attitudes toward old women and draws a connection between the grandmother and historical victims of witch-hunts.

In Carter’s tales religion is seen as a restricting and negative phenomenon that offers people no help in times of actual need. For example the nuns of “Wolf-Alice” are supposedly the epitome of Christian charity, yet they mistreat the feral child and send her away. As the role of religion diminished, the werewolf became to be viewed in a different light. Especially during the Enlightenment there was a need to rationalise and later medicalise the werewolf phenomenon. It was believed that lycanthropes existed, but their transformation was merely the result of a delusional mind, not the work of the devil. This development is also recognised by Freud who identified in his hysteric female patients symptoms that the people of Middle Ages would have associated with different forms of witchcraft. Therefore one can also examine the werewolf in terms of a psychological phenomenon.

The story of “Wolf-Alice” demonstrates the power of emotion as means of social control when the outsider is shunned and cast out because of disgust and fear. In confronting the otherness of the outsider, of the animal, we are also facing ourselves. In a similar vein, the story discusses the intertwined nature of body and mind. After being brought in to the sphere of human civilisation Wolf-Alice’s understanding of herself as a separate entity begins to develop: emotions of disgust and shame as well as the biological occurrence of menstruation make her aware of herself as a separate being from the nuns and her environment. The last step on

Wolf-Alice's road to consciousness is taken when she finds a mirror and recognises herself reflected in it.

"Wolf-Alice" is thus also a tale of subjectivity and in it Carter explores the emergence of consciousness according to Lacanian mirror theory. Wolf-Alice, the feral child whose normal cognitive development is impaired due to the unconventional environment in which she is raised, never obtains language and thus never enters what the psychoanalysts tend to term the realm of the symbolic. However, following Lacanian thinking Wolf-Alice's consciousness begins to emerge as she recognises her reflection, yet contrary to these theories she never achieves human language. Nevertheless, she clearly develops an understanding of herself as a separate, subjective entity; she develops a consciousness. Carter seems to suggest that the acquisition of human language is by no means a prerequisite of consciousness, and thus bestows the possibility of selfhood to non-human animals as well, disagreeing with centuries of anthropocentric thought. The real wolves of the story are also accepted as conscious subjects from the very beginning; thus Carter rejects the Cartesian model of animals as mindless machines.

"Wolf-Alice" is the only one of these three stories where real wolves are encountered. Contrary to the common negative attitudes of the early modern era, Carter's wolves appear to be compassionate creatures that look after their pack, including Wolf-Alice. Thus these animals create a striking contrast against the Catholic nuns, who are supposedly the very epitomes of Christian charity, yet still drive the vulnerable Wolf-Alice away. The wolves that raised Wolf-Alice recognise her as an imperfect wolf, take care of her and try to communicate with her, thus proving that they must be conscious subjects. They have their own language without which they could not work as a pack.

The connections Carter draws between animals, women and the mentally ill are intriguing and deeply entwined with issues of power. All these groups are traditionally marginalised and silenced, often compared and sometimes equated with each other as a means of control. This could provide a very fruitful perspective for further research on Carter's stories. Similarly, the amount of intertextual references and cultural allusions in her tales is breathtakingly high and certainly warrants further research. Had I not examined the history of witch-hunts, I would have most likely interpreted "Werewolf" differently. Familiarising oneself with Carter's background material could then possibly offer different readings of her other stories

as well.

I argue that Carter acknowledges the transition from a monstrous werewolf to a mentally challenged feral child very much in the same manner as Freud saw a connection between the witchcraft trials and his own hysterical female patients. I believe this is one of the reasons Carter wrote as many as three versions of “LRRH”; she wanted to demonstrate this historical continuum and reveal how these constructed narratives shape our perceptions of reality. Whether one believes the werewolf metamorphosis to be real or just a trick of a delusional mind does not change the underlying phenomenon, but the recognition of these different explanations seems to question whether we can ever achieve objective truth about reality.

For Carter, the way we perceive our world is constructed through narratives, and thus questioning the most powerful stories and established truths is to question the very nature of reality. She does not shy away from complex issues and is not afraid to argue against established opinion, which is demonstrated by her defending the possibility of animal consciousness against centuries of Cartesian tradition and even contemporary psychoanalytical theories. There are undoubtedly many things that separate us humans from the other species of animals, but there are even more similarities that connect us. We humans are also products of evolution and are made of the same elements as all the other living organisms on this planet. Carter seems to reject dichotomies and binary structures and instead much rather approaches different phenomena as continuums and hybrids. Even the border between human and animal is subject to change and Carter’s werewolves are an ample manifestation of this hybridity.

Carter wrote her three “LRRH” stories almost forty years ago, during heated discussions about the welfare of the environment and women’s rights. I feel somewhat saddened that the main themes of her short stories are still so strikingly relevant and topical. Our unwavering beliefs in human exceptionalism and rightful dominion over nature have resulted in the ecocatastrophe that is global warming, while tales of sexual assault and harassment fill the media daily. However, falling into despair and accepting unfavourable conditions is not the message of Carter’s tales. These stories tell us to actively reject passivity and victimhood, they remind us that we can indeed change the world. We need not passively accept our fate; instead, we must find the courage to laugh in the face of the wolf.

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Lyhennelmä

Tässä pro gradu -tutkielmassa käsittelen Angela Carterin novellikokoelmasta *Verinen kammio ja muita kertomuksia* (1979) löytyviä eurooppalaisen Punahilkka-sadun inspiroimia novelleja Ihmissusi, Sudet tulevat ja Susi-Liisa. Jokaisessa tarinassa päähenkilö on juuri murrosiän kynnyksellä oleva nuori nainen, joka kohtaa suden muodossa tai toisessa. Ihmissusi kertoo työstä, jonka isoäiti paljastuu ihmissudeksi, Sudet tulevat työstä, joka päättyy lakanoiden väliin yhdessä ihmissuden kanssa ja Susi-Liisa susien kasvattamasta villilapsesta, jolla ei ole ihmiskieltä eikä omaa tietoisuutta. Carterin tarinat ovat näennäisesti hyvin samankaltaisia, mutta ne käsittelevät kovin erilaisia teemoja. Ihmissusi kertoo iän tuomasta haavoittuvuudesta, Sudet tulevat taas naisen seksuaalisuudesta ja libidosta ja Susi-Liisa pohtii ihmisyyden rajoja ja tietoisuuden muodostumista.

Olen erityisen kiinnostunut tarinoissa esiintyvistä susista, siitä, mitä ne symboloivat ja mikä niiden merkitys tarinoiden henkilöille on. Alkuperäinen tavoitteeni oli tutkia susia tiedostavina eläiminä ja itsenäisinä subjekteina, mutta havahduin nopeasti siihen, ettei Carterin tarinoissa esiinny kovinkaan monia oikeita susia. Novellien susimaiset hahmot ovat itse asiassa suurimmaksi osin ihmissusia ja lykantrooppeja, mikä muutti tulkintaani ja lähestymistapaani. Lähestyn näitä hahmoja pitkälti feministisen kirjallisuudentutkimuksen kautta, mutta pohjaan vahvasti myös kulttuurihistorialliseen tutkimukseen. Vaikka Carter kuuluukin niihin 1970-luvun feministisiin kirjailijoihin, jotka pyrkivät tuomaan naisten äänen takaisin kuuluviin myös historiantutkimuksessa, ei hän näissä novelleissa pyrkinyt historialliseen tarkkuuteen. Minua kuitenkin kiinnostaa myös se, miten Carterin oma laaja tietämys historiasta, kansanperinteestä ja satukirjallisuudesta välittyy näistä tarinoista: tämän vuoksi koen myös kulttuurihistoriallisen tutkimusotteen perusteltuna. Otan vaikutteita lisäksi psykoanalyttisesta kirjallisuudentutkimuksesta, posthumanismista ja ekokritiikistä, sillä uskon vahvasti tällaisen poikkitieteellisen lähestymistavan antavan tutkittavasta ilmiöstä laajemman ja syvemmän kuvan.

Carter oli englantilainen kirjailija, joka nousi suureen arvostukseen vasta kuoltuaan. Hän oli feministi ja otti äänekkäästi kantaa erilaisiin kysymyksiin, tiedostaen samalla olevansa usein eri mieltä monen muun feministin kanssa

esimerkiksi pornografiaan liittyvissä kysymyksissä. 1970-luvun loppupuolella Carter käänsi ranskalaisen aristokraatin Charles Perrault'n satukokoelman *Histoires ou Contes du temps passé* (1697) englanniksi. Perrault'n tarinat saivat hänet innostumaan saduista, ja hänen kiinnostustaan lisäsi Bettelheimin teos *Satujen lumous* (1975), joka on psykoanalyttinen tutkielma lapsille tarkoitettujen satujen taustalla piilevistä padotuista tunteista ja tukahdutetusta seksuaalisuudesta. Carter päätti kirjoittaa omat versionsa eurooppalaisista satuklassikoista ja tuloksena syntyi kokoelma *Verinen kammio ja muita kertomuksia* (1979). Teoksessaan Carter kirjoittaa uudelleen perinteisiä eurooppalaisia satuja kuten Kaunotar ja hirviö, Saapasjalkakissa ja Punahilkka. Carterin tarinat ovat väkivaltaisia ja täynnä seksuaalisia viittauksia.

Carterin kirjoittaessa *Veristä kammiota* hänen kenties merkittävin tietokirjallinen teoksensa *The Sadeian Woman* (1978) oli juuri julkaisun kynnyksellä. Teos käsitteli ranskalaista libertiiniä markiisi de Sadea ja tämän naiskäsityksiä. Aiheesta kirjoittaminen oli aikanaan kiistanalainen valinta, sillä de Sadea oli luonnehdittu misogynistin perikuvaksi ja esimerkiksi amerikkalainen radikaalifeministi Dworkin oli nimittänyt tätä pornograafikoksi. Teoksessaan Carter käsitteli paitsi de Saden, myös Freudin ajatuksia. Carter piti Freudin hypoteeseja kiehtovina, mutta hän myös arvosteli niitä naisvihamielisinä. Carter luki laajalti lähdekirjallisuutta teostaan varten ja on esitetty, että *The Sadeian Woman* toimii ikään kuin opaskirjana hänen muihin teoksiinsa, kuten *Veriseen kammioon*. Kumpikin teos ottaa vahvasti kantaa naisten uhriuttamiseen ja seksuaaliseen väkivaltaan. Carter käsittelee markiisi de Saden näkemystä, jonka mukaan ihmiset voidaan jaotella joko saalistajiin tai saaliisiin – tämä teema toistuu myös näissä kolmessa Punahilkka-novellissa, joita tutkin.

Tutkimukseni kohteina ovat Carterin kolme Punahilkkan inspiroimaa tarinaa, Ihmissusi, Sudet tulevat ja Susi-Liisa. Ihmissudessa nuori tyttö vie sairaalle isoäidilleen ruokaa. Kulkiessaan metsän läpi hänen kimppuunsa hyökkää susi, jolta tyttö kuitenkin onnistuu leikkaamaan tassun irti. Tyttö ajaa eläimen pois. Isoäitinsä mökille päästyään hän löytää vanhuksen kuumeen kourista. Vanhan naisen toisen käden tilalla on verinen tynkä ja suden tassu tytön korissa on muuttunut ihmisen kädeksi: tyttö ymmärtää isoäitinsä olevan ihmissusi. Hän huutaa apua ja kyläläiset tulevat hänen tuekseen. Yhdessä he ajavat vanhan naisen ulos hankeen ja kivittävät tämän kuoliaaksi. Tyttö muuttaa isoäitinsä taloon ja voi hyvin.

Sudet tulevat alkaa kertojan luettelolla erilaisista ihmissusikohtaamisista. Varsinainen tarina kertoo jälleen nuoresta tytöstä, joka kulkee metsän halki viedäkseen sairaalle isoäidilleen ruokaa. Matkallaan tyttö kohtaa komean nuorukaisen, jonka kanssa hän kulkee osan matkaa yhdessä. Pari lyö suudelmasta vetoa siitä, kumpi ehtii isoäidin talolle ensin. Tyttö hidastelee tahallaan ja mies ehtii perille ensimmäisenä, mutta paljastuukin ihmissudeksi. Vaaran edessä isoäiti heittää hirviötä Raamatulla ja rukoilee apua, mutta turhaan. Ihmissusi syö vanhan naisen ja jää odottamaan tyttöä. Tyttö saapuu lopulta ja tajuaa pian isoäitinsä kuolleen ja olevansa itsekkin vaarassa. Kun ihmissusi uhkaa syödä hänet, tyttö kuitenkin nauraa päin olennon kasvoja. Tyttö riisuu vaatteensa ja heittää ne takkatuleen. Tarina loppuu kuvaukseen siitä, kuinka tyttö nukkuu alasti isoäitinsä sängyssä lempeän suden tassujen syleilyssä.

Susi-Liisa on näistä kolmesta tarinasta kaikkein poikkeavin ja samalla myös vähiten uskollinen perinteiselle Punahilkalle. Tarinan päähenkilö on Susi-Liisa, jonka oma äiti on aikoinaan hyljännyt ja joka on elänyt susilauman kasvattamana. Hänellä ei ole tietoisuutta itsestään eikä hänellä ole kieltä, jolla kommunikoida. Metsästäjien ammuttua hänen kasvattiäitinsä Susi-Liisa viedään nunnaluostariin sivistettäväksi. Nunnat pitävät Susi-Liisa vastenmielisenä eivätkä kykene kommunikoimaan tämän kanssa, joten tyttö lähetetään Herttuan linnaan. Herttua on ihmissusimainen olento, kannibalistinen haudanryöstäjä, jonka kuvaa peilit eivät heijasta. Susi-Liisa, joka on elänyt susien kanssa, ei pelkää Herttuaa ja asuu sovussa tämän kanssa. Vähitellen Susi-Liisalle alkaa kehittyä tietoisuus omasta itsestään – tässä ratkaisevana tekijänä on peili, jossa näkyvän hahmon Susi-Liisa vähitellen ymmärtää olevan hän itse. Kuukautistensa alettua Susi-Liisa oppii hahmottamaan myös ajan kulun. Tarinan edetessä tyttö alkaa muuttua aina vain tiedostavammaksi olennoksi, kunnes hän lopulta ymmärtää itsensä ympäristöstään erillisenä entiteettinä. Tarinan lopussa vihaiset kyläläiset haavoittavat Herttuaa, ja Susi-Liisa pitää tästä huolta. Tyttö nuolee olion kasvoja ja yhtäkkiä myös Herttua kuvastuu peilistä.

Ymmärtääkseni paremmin Carterin lukuisia intertekstuaalisia viittauksia ja sitä, mitä hän tarinoillaan viestittää, tutkin hieman eurooppalaista satuhistoriaa painottaen erityisesti Punahilkan kehitystä läpi vuosisatojen. Esille nousee ero pitkälti talonpoikaisten naisten hallitseman suullisen perimätiedon ja alkujaan lähinnä yläluokkaisten miesten kirjoittaman satukirjallisuuden välillä. Ensimmäiset

suulliset versiot Punahilkasta ovat syntyneet Pohjois-Italiassa ja Etelä-Ranskassa elinvoimaisen käsityöläiskulttuurin alueilla, joissa ihmissusioikeidenkäynnit olivat Euroopassa keskiajalla ja uudella ajalla kaikkein yleisimpiä. Nämä tarinat kertovat nuoren tytön kypsymisestä oppilaasta omatoimiseksi ompelijattareksi ja niiden alkuperäinen antagonistin on mitä luultavimmin ollut ihmissusi. Perinteisissä suullisissa saduissa tytön isoäiti päätyy suden syömäksi, mutta tyttö itse selviää kohtaamisesta ehjin nahoin itsenäisyytensä ja älykkyytensä avulla.

Ensimmäinen kirjoitettu versio Punahilkasta on ranskalaisen Perrault'n kynästä. Hän on tiettävästi ensimmäinen mies, joka kirjoitti satuja, vaikka itsekin piti niitä lähinnä naisten ja lasten tarinoina. Perrault'n versiossa Punahilkka saa rangaistuksen polulta poikkeamisesta ja tuntemattoman kanssa seurustelusta: tässä tarinassa myös tyttö kuolee. 1800-luvulla saksalaiset Grimmin veljekset kirjoittivat Punahilkkan tarinasta oman versionsa. Vaikka he väittivät sitä alkuperältään germaaniseksi, myöhempi tutkimus on osoittanut heidän pohjanneen oman versionsa Perrault'n aiempaan tarinaan. Kuten aikansa muutkin saksalaiset romantikot, veljekset korostivat ja ihannoivat mielikuvituksen voimaa. Heidän Punahilkka-satunsa korosti tottelevaisuutta, mutta he halusivat tarinalle onnellisen lopun. Tuolloin vallinneen naiskäsityksen mukaisesti he uskoivat, ettei nainen yksin selviäisi suden luomasta vaarasta, joten Grimmin veljekset lisäsivät tarinaansa miehekkään metsästäjän, joka saapui kuin ihmeen kaupalla pelastamaan tarinan naiset.

Punahilkkan tarina on vastaavasti saanut eri aikakausina erilaisia piirteitä ja merkityksiä kulloinkin vallinneen asenneilmapiirin mukaan: esimerkiksi Neuvostoliitossa tarinan avulla kritisoitiin stalinismia. Kun läntinen yhteiskuntarakente erityisesti maailmansotien seurauksena muuttui, myös Punahilkka sai yhä useammassa versioissa olla itsenäinen nainen ja pärjätä omillaan. Sadun kehitys siis heijastelee muuttuvia naiseuden ihanteita. Myöhemmissä feministisissä uudelleenkirjoituksissa Punahilkka onkin usein aktiivinen sankaritar, joka ei tarvitse miestä avukseen. Carterin versiot voidaan lukea tähän feminististen tekstien joukkoon.

Susi on Punahilkassa aina keskeisessä roolissa ja tarkastelenkin hieman satujen välittämää eläinkäsitystä. Länsimaisessa ajattelussa eläinten on perinteisesti koettu olevan ihmisen alapuolella miehen ollessa luomakunnan kruunu. Varhaismodernilla ajalla, jolloin Perrault'kin kirjoitti, oli vallalla kartesiolainen

ajattelu, jonka mukaan eläin on kuin mekaaninen kone vailla tietoisuutta ja tunteita. Saduissa kuitenkin saatettiin käsitellä mitä ihmeellisimpiä mahdottomuuksia, joten esimerkiksi puhuvat eläimet muodostuivat satukirjallisuudelle tyypilliseksi troopiksi. Eläintekstejä ei tosin tuolloin pidetty korkeakulttuurina lainkaan, vaan niiden katsottiin sopivan lähinnä viattomille ja naiiveille lukijoille (kuten naisille ja lapsille). Erityisen kiinnostunut olen siitä, miten juuri sudet on nähty eri aikakausina ja eri konteksteissa.

Susiin liittyvät historialliset asenteet ovat mielenkiintoisia. Kyseinen eläin on sangen ihmisenkaltainen sosiaalinen metsästäjä, joka on vuosituhansien ajan kilpaillut samoista resursseista kuin ihminen. Tämä on usein johtanut väkivaltaisiin yhteenottoihin lajien välillä ja vähitellen ihmisasutusten muuttuessa pysyvämmiksi sudesta tulikin yhä varteenotettavampi fyysinen uhka. Carterin tarinoissa syrjäisissä talonpoikaisyhteisöissä elävät ihmiset pelkäävät susia, sillä ne ovat vaaraksi paitsi karjalle, myös ihmisille. Historiallisestikin susi alettiin nähdä pahansuopana eläimenä, joka asettumalla ihmistä vastaan kapinoi myös Jumalan asettamaa järjestystä vastaan. Siitä tuli paholaisen kätyri ja se liitettiin esimerkiksi yhteisön karkottamiin lainsuojattomiin: yhä nykyäänkin tietyytyypisistä rikollisista puhutaan ”yksinäisinä susina”. Susi yhdistettiin myös seksuaalisiin hyväksikäyttäjiin. Punahilkassa suden rooli on kuitenkin vuosisatojen aikana muuttunut lipevästä elostelijasta joskus jopa viattomaksi ihmisen väkivallan uhriksi. Uudemmissa versioissa susi ei yleensä enää edusta vaarallista seksuaalisuutta, osittain koska lääketieteellisen edistyksen ansiosta seksillä ei enää aina ole samankaltaisia seuraamuksia kuin vuosisatoja sitten. Nykyään yhä useammin Punahilkasta julkaistaankin ekokriittisiä versioita, joissa susi luonnon symbolina on ihmisen väärinkäytösten uhri.

Punahilkassa susi syö isoäidin ja uhkaa tyttöä samalla kohtalolla: juuri samoin käy Carterin Sudet tulevat -tarinassa. Ihmisen syömällä susi loukkaa Jumalan syntiinlankeemuksen jälkeen asettamaa hierarkiaa: eläimet on annettu ihmisen syötäväiksi, ei toisin päin. Lihansyönti on perinteisesti myös hyvin maskuliininen teko, joka asettaa eläimet ihmiselle alisteiseen asemaan. Saduissa syöminen onkin usein metafora seksille ja jotkut tutkijat ovat pitäneet Punahilkkaa raiskauskulttuurin ilmentymänä, jossa tytön harteille sälytetään vastuu häntä kohdanneesta väkivallasta. Kun Carterin Sudet tulevat -novellissa susi ilmaisee aikeensa syödä päähenkilö, tyttö nauraa päin suden naamaa. Hän ei ole lihanpala; tyttö kieltäytyy asettumasta uhrin

asemaan ja sen sijaan riisuu itsensä alasti ja päätyy hämmentyneen suden kanssa isoäitinsä sänkyyn. Tarinassa on mielestäni nähtävissä myös sukupolvien välinen ero asennoitumisessa seksiin ja seksuaalisuuteen. Vapautuneempi nuori nainen selviää vahingoittumattomana, kun taas naisen uhriuttamisen kulttuurissa kasvanut isoäiti ei osaa toimia toisin, vaan päätyy uhriksi suden suuhun. Sudet tulevat -tarinan tärkein teema onkin uhrin identiteetin torjuminen sekä oman seksuaalisuuden kohtaaminen ja hyväksyminen. Aiemmat sukupolvet eivät ole tähän aina pystyneet, vaan ovat jääneet uhriuttamisen narratiivin vangeiksi: isoäidin kohdalla tästä tuloksena on kuolema.

Kirjallisella satuperinteellä on perinteisesti pyritty kontrolloimaan lasten ja erityisesti tyttöjen ja naisten käytöstä. Punahilkkin varoittaa kuulijoitaan siitä, kuinka haavoittuvainen nainen on kotoa poistuessaan. Ulkona liikkua nainen on aina potentiaalinen uhri ja miehen saalis, tarina tuntuu viestittävän. Vastaavasti Punahilkka joutuu vaikeuksiin antautuessaan keskusteluun vieraan miehen kanssa – näin toimiessaan hän ilmaisee seksuaalista halukkuutta, josta häntä on yhteisön normien mukaan rangaistava. Ihmissusi- ja Sudet tulevat -tarinoissakin nuoria naisia ohjeistetaan pysymään annetulla polulla näennäisesti juuri susien, eli miesten ja raiskauksen, pelossa. Punahilkka-narratiivi pyrkii näin luomaan pelon ilmapiiriä kontrolloidakseen naisten liikkuvuutta, mutta Carterin naiset eivät tähän alistu.

Loppujen lopuksi Carterin novelleissa on hyvin vähän oikeita susia. Susi-Liisa on näiden eläinten kasvattama, mutta muutoin Carterin tarinat käsittelevät toisenlaisia olentoja: ihmissusia. Alkujaan ihmissudet olivat shamanistisia olentoja, jotka yhdistivät ihmisessä sekä luonnon että kulttuurin tuoden ihmisyyden eri puolet esiin. Paganalliset hengelliset johtajat käyttivät esimerkiksi sudennahkoja saadakseen yhteyden suden henkeen. Nämä rituaalit olivat yhteisölle tärkeitä ja ihmissusi oli arvostettu ja kunnioitettu hahmo. Asutuksen muuttuessa pysyvämmäksi, oikeiden susien uhan kasvaessa ja kristinuskon levitessä ihmissudesta tuli kuitenkin paljon synkempi ja negatiivisempi hahmo. Se alettiin nähdä aggressiivisena ja demonisena olentona, joka hyökkäsi kristillistä yhteisöä vastaan.

Punahilkkan suullisten versioiden syntymän aikoina kristinuskko oli kriisissä erityisesti tieteellisen tiedon leviämisen ja uskonpuhdistuksen seurauksena. Esimerkiksi vapaan tahdon käsite ja sukupuolten väliset erot puhuttivat kristikuntaa. Ihmissusista tuli myös uskonsotien symboli, sillä niiden kautta silmitöntä väkivaltaa oli helpompi käsitellä: ihmissuden hahmossa yhdistyi tuttu ja tuntematon. Myös

noitavainot olivat tämän ajan ilmiö ja niiden tarkoituksena oli pitkälti vahvistaa kirkon asemaa ja harjoittaa sosiaalista kontrollia yhteisöjen sisällä. Erityisesti naisten seksuaalisuus oli tällaisen vallankäytön kohteena ja ulkopuoliset tai normeista muutoin poikkeavat yksilöt jäivät usein noitavainojen uhreiksi. Myös ihmissusi alettiin nähdä yhtenä noituuden muotona ja vähitellen koko ilmiön miehinen alkuperä katosi ja myös naisia alettiin syyttää ihmissusiksi. Carterin tarinoissa uskonto näyttäytyykin lähinnä rajoittavana ja negatiivisena asiana. Esimerkiksi Susi-Liisan tarinassa nunnat, joiden tulisi olla kristillisen lähimmäisenrakkauden ilmentymiä, kohtelevat villilasta väkivaltaisesti ja lopulta lähettävät hänet pois.

Noitavainojen uhrin olivat tyypillisimmin yksinäisiä vanhoja naisia, jotka elivät erillään muusta yhteisöstä. Ihmissusi-tarinan isoäiti, metsän keskellä asuva vanha ja sairaaloinen leskirouva, sopii kuvaukseen täydellisesti. Pidän kertojan tarinaa epäluotettavana ja, vaikka se onkin vastoin satuperinteen konventioita, haluan kyseenalaistaa tapahtumien todenperäisyyden. Ihmissusi-novellin tulkintani on omaperäinen ja poikkeuksellinen, mutta silti looginen: uskon tarinan isoäidin olevan salaliiton uhri. Pidän erittäin todennäköisenä, ettei tässä tarinassa ole lainkaan ihmissutta. Tällöin novellista tuleekin kertomus vanhasta, sairaasta naisesta, jonka oma lapsenlapsi ja naapuruston ihmiset kivittävät kuoliaaksi. Tyttö jää asumaan tapetun isoäitinsä taloon ja menestyy. Näin tulkittuna tarinassa kulminoituu saduille ominainen epäluulo ja jopa viha vanhoja naisia kohtaan. Vaihdevuotensa ohittaneet naiset eivät enää kykene täyttämään sukupuolelleen asetettua lisääntymisen tehtävää, he ovat usein pitkälti muiden avun varassa ja siten rasite koko yhteisölle.

Ihmissuteen liittyy myös lääketieteellinen aspekti ja lykantropian käsite. Lykantropit ovat mieleltään sairaita ihmisiä, jotka kuvittelevat olevansa susia, kuten Susi-Liisan Herttua. Tämän ajattelutavan mukaan ihmissusia on siis olemassa, mutta heidän muodonmuutoksensa ei ole todellinen vaan harhaisen mielen tuote. Myös ihmissusidiskurssissa nousi valistusaikana esiin tarve rationalisoida ja myöhemmin myös medikalisoita aiemmin selittämätön ilmiö. Myöhemmin esimerkiksi Freud, joka oli kiinnostunut myös myyteistä ja saduista, näki itsensä noitavainojen inkvisitiotyön jatkajana ja tunnisti omista hysteerisissä naispotilaissaan piirteitä, jotka keskiajalla oli liitetty noituuden eri muotoihin. Täten myös ihmissusi-ilmiön voi ajatella jatkuneen odotettua kauemmin, vain muotoaan muuttaneena mielisairauden ilmentymänä.

Susi-Liisan tarina käsittelee ihmistä hieman erilaisesta näkökulmasta. Tarinan Herttua on mieleltään järkkynyt lykantrooppi ja Susi-Liisa itse taas susien kasvattama villilapsi vailla ihmiskieltä ja tietoisuutta. Tämä novelli käsittelee erityisesti ihmisen ja eläimen eroja sekä ihmismielen rakentumista. Ihmissivistyksen piiriin jouduttuaan Susi-Liisan tietoisuus omasta itsestään yksilönä alkaa vähitellen kehittyä. Tähän myötävaikuttavat monet tekijät, kuten häntä hoitaneiden nunnien tyttöä kohtaan tuntema inho sekä hänen kuukautistensa alkaminen ja näiden kokemusten synnyttämä häpeä. Nämä tuntemukset saavat Susi-Liisan havahtumaan omaan muista olennoista erilliseen olemukseensa. Viimeisen askelen matkalla tietoisuuteen Susi-Liisa ottaa löydettyään peilin ja tunnistettuaan sen heijastaman kuvan omaksi itsekseen.

Psykoanalyttikko Lacanin peiliteoriaa osittain mukailleen Susi-Liisan minuuksia alkaa rakentua kun hän tunnistaa itsensä peilistä, mutta teorioista poiketen tyttö ei milloinkaan saavuta ihmiskieltä eikä myöskään tunnu sitä tarvitsevan. Näin ollen Carter suo tietoisuuden mahdollisuuden myös ihmiskieleen kykenemättömille olennoille, eli muille eläimille. Tässäkin Carter siis kritisoi sekä psykoanalyttisiä teorioita että kartesiolaista ajatusta eläinten mielettömyydestä. Hän antaa ymmärtää, ettei ihmiskielen omaksuminen ole tarpeen tietoisuuden synnyssä: näin ollen myös eläimet voivat olla tietoisia olentoja, vaikka vuosisatainen antroposentrinen perinne toisin väittääkin. Ainakin Susi-Liisasta huolta pitäneet sudet tunnistavat tytön epätäydelliseksi sudeksi, pitävät hänestä huolta ja koettavat puhua hänen kanssaan, joten näiden susien on oltava tietoisia olentoja.

Carterin novelleissa susilla on todistetusti monenlaisia eri rooleja. Oikeana eläimenä se esiintyy ainoastaan Susi-Liisan tarinassa ja muutoin kyse on ihmisen ja eläimen eriasteisista hybrideistä. Eläimen roolissaan susi näyttäytyy myötätuntoisena ja laumastaan huolta pitävänä olentona, joka ei aja pois apua tarvitsevaa Susi-Liisaa. Näin sudet muodostavat räikeän kontrastin katolisille nunnille, joiden tulisi toimia kristillisen lähimmäisenrakkauden periaatteiden mukaan, mutta jotka silti lähettävät apua tarvitsevan tytön pois. Muutoin näissä tarinoissa tavattava ihmissusi puolestaan on ihmisen ja eläimen sekoitus, joka tuntuu yhdistävän kummankin huonoimmat puolet. Toisaalta ihmissuden voidaan ajatella toimivan metaforana naisen seksuaalisuudelle, jolloin se tulee hyväksyä ja omaksua osaksi omaa minuutta. Naisen ei tule asettua uhrin rooliin vaan hänen on toimittava aktiivisesti omana yksilönään maailmassa. Markiisi de Saden jaottelu saalisiin ja saalistajiin ei Carterin

mukaan toimi, vaan Carter näkee näiden ominaisuuksien löytyvän eri yksilöistä toisinaan jopa samanaikaisesti.

Toisaalta ihmissusi voi olla myös tekosyy ja vallankäytön väline, jonka avulla yhteiskunnan poikkeavia yksilöitä vainotaan ja tuhotaan, kuten käy Ihmissusi-novellissa. Vanha, yhteisöstään riippuvainen nainen rinnastetaan kamalaan hirviöön, minkä varjolla hänet voidaan hyvällä omallatunnolla tappa. Carter esittelee myös lykantroopin, psykologisesti epätasapainoisen ihmisen, joka kuvittelee olevansa susi, sekä villilapsen, jonka tavanomainen kognitiivinen kehitys on häiriintynyt epätyypillisen kasvuympäristön seurauksena. Näin tekemällä Carter tunnistaa ihmissusi-ilmiön historiallisen rakentuneisuuden ja kommentoi myös myöhempien aikojen tarvetta rationalisoida tämä ilmiö.

Carter kirjoitti novellinsa osittain lunastaakseen perinteiset satukertomukset takaisin naisten käsiin. Hänen tarkoituksenaan oli antaa ääni vaiennetuille ja kommentoida oman aikansa seksuaali- ja sukupuolipolitiikkaa. Myös ihmisten ja eläinten väliset suhteet sekä psykoanalyysin teoriat tuntuivat kiehtovan Carteria, ja hän käsitelikin niitä omissa saduissaan. Hän tunsu eurooppalaisen satuperinteen historian hyvin ja demonstroi tietämystään elävöittämällä tarinoitaan erilaisilla historiallisilla ja intertekstuaalisilla viittauksilla. Ihmissusi, Sudet tulevat ja Susi-Liisa tuntuvat kommentoivan paitsi Punahilkkan, myös ihmissuden historiallista kehitystä. Carterin novelleissa on havaittavissa kaikuja ihmissuden kehityksestä pakanallisesta voimahahmosta kristittyjen saatanallisen vainoajan ja mielenvikaisen lykantroopin kautta lopulta rationalismin ja medikalisaation piirin taltuttamaksi villilapseksi. Näissä tarinoissa ihmissusi toimii uskonnollissävyytteisen vallankäytön välineenä; hahmon avulla pyritään kontrolloimaan naisten seksuaalisuutta ja liikkuvuutta. Samalla ihmissusi näyttäytyy myös tutkielmana mielenterveydestä, ihmisen ja eläimen eroista sekä tietoisuuden rakentumisesta. Carterin tarinoissa ihminen on eläin muiden joukossa.