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VILLAINS, VICTIMS, OR VOICES UNHEARD: ANGELA CARTER'S AND EMMA DONOGHUE'S RETELLINGS OF FAIRY TALES

This paper sets out to explore female protagonists in a selection of fairy tale retellings from Angela Carter's 1995 collection, *Burning Your Boats: The Collected Short Stories* and 1979 *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*, and Emma Donoghue's 1997 *Kissing the Witch: Old Tales in New Skins* in light of Victorian concepts of womanhood such as the Angel in the House and the Fallen Woman. These concepts tended to define and control women's behaviour, positioning them as either kind and docile or wicked, with the latter resulting in their exile from society. By radically rewriting well-known traditional fairy tales, the paper argues that both Carter and Donoghue often create a new type of heroine, the New Woman, who unapologetically challenges firmly established social and cultural stereotypes and thus subverts traditional gender norms. The paper demonstrates that both Carter and Donoghue portray female characters who are not confined to specific roles, whether passive or transgressive, and that they are fully capable of making their own choices.

Keywords: fairy tale retellings; Angela Carter; Emma Donoghue; Angel in the House, Fallen Woman, New Woman

INTRODUCTION

Numerous fairy tales have traditionally venerated female protagonists who exhibit passivity, compliance, and selflessness, waiting for their prince charming to come and rescue them from difficult situations, leading to their happily-ever-after endings. Reflecting patriarchal structures which strictly place women in submissive roles of silent and silenced daughters, mothers, and wives, fairy tales have often tended to perpetuate stereotyped portrayals of appropriate (and inappropriate) womanhood. Many traditional heroines, as we will attempt to argue in this paper, can be read and explored against the backdrop of the well-established Victorian concepts and ideas of women: the Angel in the House, the Fallen Woman and the New Woman.[1] How these Victorian archetypes are demonstrated in some of the best-known fairy tales and how they are rewritten and openly subverted by contemporary writers such as Angela Carter and Emma Donoghue are key issues that lie at the focus of this paper. Analysing selected texts from two of Carter's collections, *Burning Your Boats: The Collected Short Stories* (1995) and *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (1979), and Donoghue's *Kissing the Witch: Old Tales in New Skins* (1997) respectively, we will concentrate on the ways these two authors rewrite and reimagine them and ultimately often create a new type of heroine, the assertive and unapologetic New Woman.

As Malcolm Bradbury (2001: 432) argues, "rewriting the fairy-tale tradition of Perrault, the Grimm Brothers and others in feminist terms", Angela Carter turns many famous stories into "radical feminist myths" where power and energy are totally reversed, and where "captor turns victim, beast becomes heroine". Her retellings usually feature a macabre and sarcastic tone and are set in dark, gothic environments that allow for the full development of the New Woman trope. On the other hand, Emma Donoghue, approaches traditional fairy tales from a queer perspective. Given that Donoghue is one of the most significant contemporary Irish authors who came out in the nineties challenging "the 'brainwashed with heterosexuality' traditional Irish culture" and openly exploring topics of homosexual experience (Jeffers 2002: 11), it is hardly surprising that 'new skins' her adaptations of fairy tales take on are more or less openly queer. In the collection under discussion in this paper, she often focuses on the tales of lesbian characters set in the pseudo-medieval world of fairy tales and how they navigate a male-dominated society. As we are going to see in this paper,

1 As most critics who examine Victorian archetypes of womanhood capitalize them, we have also decided to use capital letters throughout the paper for clarity and consistency.

exploring Carter's and Donoghue's retellings and their distinctive approaches to the fairy tale tradition might contribute to new innovative readings of source tales and some of the most famous (and beloved) fairy tales. The Brothers Grimm, for instance, perceived their fairy tales very much in the context of a "manual of manners" (Tatar 2019: 265), and this prescribing aspect has undoubtedly left a mark on their young and impressionable audience. In their rewritings, both Carter and Donoghue consistently challenge the expected behaviours for women (and men), particularly regarding the issue of female agency or its absence. In some of their tales, they closely follow the source tales and exaggerate the heroines' personalities, satirising the Angel in the House archetype. In others, their heroines are given autonomy and are allowed to make their own choices without being constrained by all those social and gender stereotypes typically found in fairy tales.

1. FROM QUIET OR FALLEN ANGELS TO NEW WOMEN

Although the concepts of the Angel in the House, the Fallen Woman, and the New Woman are closely related to the Victorian period, it can be argued that they capture the essence of how women, or to be more specific, "proper" female behaviour, was traditionally perceived in patriarchal society. Fairy tales, on the other hand, usually convey the moral of the story, which tends to mould children's behaviour. Therefore, it seems apt to analyse the selected texts through the lens of distinct archetypes prevalent in the period when female conduct was strictly monitored. In the Victorian era, women were subject to extreme scrutiny, and their actions underwent a grading system which ultimately labelled them as either a perfect woman or a failure to be one. This imaginary grading system is also evident in classic fairy tales, where a heroine is almost always allowed a happily-ever-after ending, whereas a witch, evil stepmother or any other female antagonist meets a grim ending. It is fascinating to see how contemporary authors adapt these Victorian models. Most importantly, as we will see, the New Woman comes to the forefront in most of these rewritten versions that aim to subvert and reject the behaviour typically expected of women, i.e. the Angel in the House trope. At their core, these three concepts of womanhood represent varying degrees to which a woman appeases patriarchy: success, failure, or resistance. We may thus argue that using these archetypes in our analysis allows us to explore to what extent they persist or get transformed in contemporary texts.

The first of these concepts, the Angel in the House, derives from Coventry Patmore's sequence of poems of the same title (1854-63), referring to a meticulous and

subservient woman who relies on her husband (Peterson 1984). This idea was further developed by John Angell James, a 19th-century author deeply committed to religious upbringing and moral influence of women in society, according to whose manual of a telling title *Female Piety: Or, The Young Woman's Friend and Guide Through Life to Immortality* (1854), women were raised to please their husband and attend to his needs (202). He indicates that a woman is a man's closest companion and advisor. However, according to James, she could also be the cause for his demise (ibid. 7). The Angel in the House is not only an ideal, but also a requisite and any type of infringement entails punishment. On the other hand, a woman who fails to meet the requirements of this unattainable perfection is deemed to become a Fallen Woman. In *Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth* (1982), Nina Auerbach suggests that this mostly applies to the promiscuity of women (151), but it also determines their fate within the narrative. "Fallen women" are, according to Auerbach, segregated from the rest of society, presumably not to exert influence, and they are so abhorred that they are treated on par with convicts and prostitutes (ibid. 126). Finally, the last of these three concepts, the New Woman, was coined by Sarah Grand and Ouida, (the pseudonym of Maria Louise Ramé), at the very end of the Victorian era (1894), emerging as a challenge to the existing Victorian ideal. In *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle* (1997), Sally Ledger explains that the term had various meanings, from rejecting motherhood to denoting sexual liberty (10-11). Although there are slight differences in the definition of this term, Ledger suggests that one point of consensus seems to be the threat the New Woman poses to the patriarchy with her independence (ibid. 11). Kendra Reynolds (2020), on the other hand, suggests that the fear around this figure led to her portrayal as a monster, usually a vampire with blood related and sexual appetites. Commenting on the New Woman, Hélène Cixous (1976: 875) says that she finds herself in a constant struggle "against conventional man", and according to B. June West (1955), the New Woman seeks self-actualization and freedom from a male-dominated world. Therefore, her goal is to ultimately break free from the bonds of the existing patriarchal society.

We can argue that classic fairy tales could have served to reinforce male authority, and every time a female protagonist seeks autonomy or independence, we see a subversion of that purpose. Classic stories always seem to reward obedience and patience, and punish every kind of behaviour that falls outside the prescribed categories. In other words, every role and outcome is predetermined, and by observing someone's demeanour, we can assume how they are going to end up. Although the purpose of many fairy tales seems childlike on the surface, in her introduction to *The Cambridge*

Companion to Fairytales, Maria Tatar (2015) suggests that the stories bear hidden meanings, perhaps not as noticeable to children as to adults, which sets the stage for darker modern adaptations. She also claims that they allow us "to take positions and make judgments" about the stories' subtext and inferred messages we thoughtlessly consume ("Introduction"). According to Laura Campbell (2009), famous authors like Perrault, Basile and others, obtained the stories from female storytellers. As we cannot trace the origins of canonical stories, we can only assume that they were gradually altered and appropriated by male writers to highlight their values and idea(l)s, reinforcing traditional gender roles. Andrew Lang, a Scottish author and collector of folk and fairy tales, curated *Blue Fairy Book* (1889) and selected stories that leave out themes of "death," "low humour", and, among other things, "female initiative" (Lieberman 1972: 383). He appears to have intentionally avoided certain topics deemed unsuitable for children, including female agency, implying that it is something they should not encounter or internalise. Helene Cixous (1976: 885) succinctly suggests that for men, "there are two unrepresentable things: death and the feminine sex … because they need femininity to be associated with death". However, those aspects were not the only ones that were omitted. Kay Stone (1975) argues that translations also lowered the already low number of fairy tales' heroines, with classic stories featuring forty of them and translations no more than twenty-five. Moreover, Lurie Alison (2004: 1) reminds us that "the selection, editing, and publication of fairy tales" was always controlled by men (quoted in Haase). It turns out that male writers shaped and determined portrayals of in/appropriate womanhood, appropriating readers' behaviour to cater to their needs. Marcia R. Lieberman (1972) refers to this as "acculturation of women" and warns us about the implications of mindless consumption of fairy tales, suggesting that such exposure reinforces behaviour shaped by men for their own benefit.

2. MANIPULATIVE MOTHERS, MISUNDERSTOOD WITCHES AND LESBIAN DAUGHTERS

Although limited in number, female protagonists in fairy tales vary in type, principle and destinies awaiting them. However, one consistent role for many of these women is that of a mother, and various scholars have closely examined traditional expectations of motherhood. Margarete Sandelowski (1990: 44-45), for instance, points to "the problematic place of motherhood in feminist thought" and how it is directly linked to "the plight of the infertile woman". According to Sandelowski, emphasizing

motherhood marginalizes those who deviate from that path, i.e. those who do not want or cannot become mothers (ibid.). Defending the new fertility technologies, Barbara Menning (1981) states that attitudes surrounding infertility are shaped by no one other than men. As a result, women face greater expectations and social pressure. On the other hand, Tracey Bretag (1999) claims that yearning for motherhood is sometimes perceived as a result of patriarchal influence as it seems to suggest that a desire to become a mother is an essential part of a woman's identity. Thus, it reinforces the idea that women are inherently tied to their roles as caring and nurturing mothers, which supports patriarchy. It also implies that motherhood is a societal expectation rather than a personal choice, which not only limits women's autonomy but also demotes those who are not mothers. It is significant that in fairy tales, the mother is usually dead and appears as a spirit when needed, indicating that it is the heroine's time to adopt that role. Veronica L. Schanoes (2014) suggests that most stories feature surrogate mothers instead of real ones, usually in forms of mystical helpers. As Zipes (2006: 41) explains, the reason for this may be due to the fact that heroines in these tales live "only through the male and for marriage", and mothers are there to help them achieve that ultimate goal. By removing the biological mother from the equation, these tales shift focus on the heroine herself, highlighting the importance of her filling that void.

Mothers feature prominently in Angela Carter's stories. For example, she mocks the mother in "Ashputtle or The Mother's Ghost: Three Versions of One Story". In "Travelling Clothes", the mother is dead, and in some other stories, she is either a bird ("The Mutilated Girls") or a ghost ("The Burned Child"). Emma Donoghue, on the other hand, omits the mother altogether in "The Tale of the Shoe", for instance, and thus eliminates the traditional influence on the heroine's destiny. Mothers in Carter's adaptations usually symbolize social expectations that were instilled in children by parental figures. This is particularly obvious in "The Burned Child" where the heroine is listening to her mother's ghost, or in "Travelling Clothes" when she deliberately climbs into her mother's coffin, filling her mother's shoes and adopting her behaviour. However, social expectations are not represented by mothers only. Cristina Bacchilega (1997) describes the narrator in "The Mutilated Girls" as bullying and clever, manipulating not only the heroine but the reader as well. Other times, Carter relies on a third-person narrative to deliver the story in an unbiased manner. In "Snow Child", for instance, we witness graphic details of Count's abuse towards Snow White. This way, his behaviour becomes impossible to sweep past, like in the canonical version where the father is never mentioned.

In Donoghue's collection, on the other hand, first-person narration is employed to highlight female agency and to allow heroines to voice their own stories on their own terms. The witch in "The Tale of the Kiss" (Donoghue 1997: 208), for example, expresses her awareness of how society diminishes those who are unable to have children: "I knew what they thought of women past bearing; unless they had sons to honour them and daughters to clean them, they were old rags tossed in the corner. A barren woman was hated even more; the way they saw it, she had never earned a bite of bread". Donoghue also eliminates the idea of motherhood by often portraying lesbian heroines who are beyond the reach of the prince. Jennifer Orme (2010) sees these representations as a rebellion against the embedded "heteropatriarchal ideologies", and it can be argued that Donoghue's collection is heavily interspersed with acts of rebellion. In many of her stories in *Kissing the Witch: Old Tales in New Skins*, Donoghue articulates the idea that women can be much more than passive recipients completely dependent on the prince charming. Lesbian relations are here implied between Cinderella and her fairy godmother in "The Tale of the Shoe", Belle and the female beast in "The Tale of the Rose", and the witch (from the classic "The Little Mermaid") and the red-haired woman in "The Tale of the Kiss". These stories openly defy heteronormativity by freeing her female/lesbian protagonists from motherhood and marriage, leaving their roles assigned by patriarchy vacant.

As Betty Friedan (1974) suggests in *The Feminine Mystique,* the woman has been traditionally responsible for raising children to fit society's idea of the perfect individual, and if her children stray in any way, the mother bears the blame. A "tradition of mother blaming," as Schanoes puts it (2014), is also a recurrent motif in fairy tales. In the Brothers Grimm's previous editions, the mother is the one who leads her children astray; she abandons them (in "Hansel and Gretel") or tries to kill them (in "Snow White"). In Perrault's "Donkey-skin", she is even blamed for her husband's inappropriate feelings for their daughter. According to Schanoes (2014), to align with the new cultural and ideological values, the blame is later shifted to a stepmother. Sheldon Cashdan (1999) argues that during the child's upbringing, the mother is cleaved in two: good and bad, or in this case, the mother and the stepmother. Each of them has a different goal but serves the same purpose of having the prince pick the heroine, although for the stepmother, it happens unintentionally. The stepmother is the evil version of the mother, as she is the one who will go to any lengths to obstruct and torment the main protagonist. She appears in numerous tales, such as the Brothers Grimm's "Cinderella" and "The Twelve Brothers" or Perrault's "Cinderella or The Little Glass Slipper."

A mother's task, on the other hand, is to raise a daughter who embodies "the Perfect Lady" (or the Angel in the House) and prepare her for the prince. According to Martha Vicinus (1972), this is a woman who is kind, caring and sexually ignorant with a natural desire to become a mother. In this way, girls are reproduced to become exact copies of their mothers, and a perfect woman becomes a timeless archetype present in all generations so that the template can repeat itself. As Lorna Sage (1998: 62) explains, "the formula from the past" becomes "a trap" as women are stuck in an endless loop. We come across this pattern in the Brothers Grimm's "Little Snow White" where a girl is born from her mother's wish to be "white as snow, as red as blood," and have "her hair as black as ebony" (2014: 170). After her mother dies, Snow White is supposed to take her place, which is why her stepmother wishes her dead. In the same way, the father in Perrault's "Donkey-skin" expects his daughter to replace her deceased mother. Considering that it is the daughter's story, the mother needs to be dead for her daughter to take her place. Angela Carter mocks these family dynamics in "Travelling Clothes", where Cinderella imitates her mother by dressing like her and climbing into her mother's coffin, symbolizing the cycle of life and death. Similarly, in "The Bloody Chamber", based on the story of the cruel Bluebeard, the heroine takes on the role of the marquis' wife, and as long as she acts like an obedient wife, she is allowed to live. We find out that all the marquis's previous wives have mysteriously died, and the main protagonist is the last one to marry him. Later in the story,it is revealed that he murdered them all, and ultimately, it is the main protagonist's mother who comes to her rescue and kills him, breaking this macabre cycle of death. Emma Donoghue defies this pattern in "The Tale of the Shoe", where the main protagonist recognizes the role she is supposed to play but chooses her own path. She is not at all interested in the prince and realizes that she has been in love with her fairy godmother all along. Initially, she follows the voices instructing her what to do, but later on she describes them as "shrieking", and says that she "got the story all wrong" (1997: 7). She realizes how the story keeps her desires in check, as most fairy tales tend to do. This is evident in the canonical story of "Snow White," where the eponymous protagonist is suspended between life and death in a coffin to be preserved for the prince. Snow White never retaliates against her stepmother, keeps the house clean and takes care of her dwarf friends, thus reaching the ideal state that has to be maintained at all costs. Once put in a coffin, she is finally primed and ready to be found.

Kay Stone (1975) argues that heroines are expected to be perfect, without flaws, and the main female protagonists in the source fairy tales usually follow this concept

of the ideal/ised womanhood. They are always kind, gentle and naive, which makes them malleable under the patriarchal authority. Nancy LaGreca (2009: 5) attributes this to their low self-awareness, which prevents them "from demanding rights and moving beyond their prescribed place". Additionally, they always seem to stand out from other women in the group. Whether at the ball or at home, they are always noticed by the prince. Unlike other women, they are exceptionally beautiful, kind and generous, which makes them desirable to men. Donoghue laughs at the stereotypes of female beauty and behaviour in "The Tale of the Skin", where the prince is captivated by the heroine yet cannot recognize her in donkey skin clothing. The heroine is genuinely shocked by his behaviour: "Was he drugged, that he couldn't hear my heart calling to his? Surely he would know me all at once, any minute now, and burst out laughing at the absurdity of all such disguises?" (1997: 161-162). Donoghue's story suggests that physical attraction is only skin-deep and reflects women's value as mere ornaments. The prince's attention is presented as both a reward and necessary for achieving a happy ending, forming the ultimate formula for happiness.

However, if the happy ending is not in sight, our heroines risk becoming villains. In classic fairy tales, everything is polarized, and the characters reflect this division as well. If they are not good, then they are bad, or in other words, they turn into witches. Berta Puig Preixens (2023) describes the witch as an old recluse who lives alone in the woods and possibly eats children. Interestingly enough, they are always predominantly female. In *The Hammer of Witches: A Complete Translation of the Malleus Maleficarum* (2009), a treatise on the persecution of real women accused of witchcraft first published in 1486, this phenomenon is attributed to women's natural gullibility, emotional instability and indiscretion (Mackay 2009). This makes them easier targets for demonic corruption. The witch is a recurrent character in fairy tales such as "Snow White," "The Little Mermaid," "Hansel and Gretel", or "Rapunzel". Although the Queen in the Brothers Grimm's "Snow White" is not a witch in the traditional sense, she is obviously well-versed in dark arts as she possesses a magic mirror and poisons combs and apples, imitating a witch. The Brothers Grimm's witch in "Rapunzel", on the other hand, is a fairy. However, she is classified as a witch since she misuses her magical powers to take Rapunzel away. Lastly, in the story of "Hansel and Gretel", there is no prince, so without him to fight for 'the damsel in distress', the witch seems resigned to eating the protagonists. She is always (not unlike the wicked stepmother) working against the main female protagonist and is usually driven by selfish reasons – to be recognized as the most beautiful woman, to get her beautiful voice and hair, or to make the heroine a house-slave and eat her.

The aesthetic obsession is ubiquitous in fairy tales and very often the prime motive behind the witch's misdeeds. Cemre Mimoza Bartu (2017) suggests that in fairy tales, along with stepmothers and mothers-in-law, witches lack important traits possessed by heroines. The witch, often portrayed as an old ugly hag, seeks to acquire what she lacks – youth and beauty. This need to attain physical perfection seems to extend to all women, with the main difference being in the route they take. The heroine can thrive in the fairy tale setting as she possesses those qualities from the start and can win without any effort. In contemporary adaptations and retellings, however, the witch is more aligned with Cixous' New Woman, or a woman resisting traditional male norms (1976). Witches often live alone, far from civilization, and it can be difficult to find them. Some of them want to be found and lure the protagonists, [2] while others are in hiding.[3] However, as Sheldon Cashdan (1999) argues, the happy ending requires her death; it is tied to the core moral of the story. Dworkin (1974) notes how the witch killings evoke the past when they were also persecuted and killed, although their crimes were alleged. Contemporary retellings tend to follow the same narrative. The New Woman breaks the stereotype by paving her own path. In Donoghue's "Tale of the Cottage", for example, the witch retaliates against Hansel's inappropriate behaviour towards her. In this version, Gretel says that her brother "lifts her skirt behind" and "[w]oman no scream this time. Put a skinning knife to chin make drop of blood till he get in rabbit cage" (1997: 140). The witch here seems to be an innocent woman who refuses to succumb to a man's desire. Donoghue reimagines the source story by demonstrating it as a tale to cover for Hansel's mistakes and implying that there are always two sides to every story. Similarly, the witch in "The Tale of the Kiss" is isolated from society, yet hypocritically sought out for help when needed. Cristina Bacchilega (2013) suggests that labels like "spinster" or a "lesbian" are synonymous with the "witch" in this story, hence her marginalisation from society. Donoghue's witches seem to be women villainised for not complying with the Angel in the House trope or for simply being different. While not fully embodying the concept of the New Woman, the Countess in Angela Carter's "Snow Child", on the other hand, shows us that this idea does not necessarily connote positive aspects. She does kill Snow White in the end and has the Count under her influence. Her anxiety towards Snow White in this version seems reasonable, as she knows that her husband desires this girl in-

[2] Hansel and Gretel come to mind as they are drawn to the witch by her bread house. It is located deep in the forest, and they would not encounter her had they not got lost.

[3] Consider the story of "Rapunzel" where Mother Gothel keeps the heroine incarcerated in a tower which is also situated in the wilderness.

timately. She simply needs to get the younger and more beautiful woman out of her way.

It is rather significant that in the rewritten stories of Carter and Donoghue, the heroines find solace in the company of women after having negative experiences with a man (usually the prince). Moreover, lesbian heroines redirect our focus on their bonds with other females and thus manage to recreate a sense of sisterhood. In other words, they repair the fractured relationships from the source stories where women are constantly pitted against each other. The fractured sisterhood is evident in the traditional stories of "Cinderella" between the heroine and her stepfamily; in "Snow White" where the stepmother tries to harm the heroine; in "Hansel and Gretel" where the children are abandoned by their own mother – later replaced by a stepmother – and must fend for themselves, while the witch attempts to control Gretel; and finally, in "Beauty and the Beast",we encounter the jealous sisters. According to Athena Bellas (2017), this hostility stems from their desire to expand influence in the men's world, which they can only increase by undermining others. This is because women inhabit domestic spaces and have no real access to the ones occupied by men. Therefore, the best way to gain more influence is to dominate their own space. As Christy Williams (2010) notes, if the woman is singled out, she is seen as a rarity among the other beauties. Analysing Angela Carter's "The Bloody Chamber", Kimberly J. Lau (2015: 34) argues that this "severing of ties" between women is ridiculed by marquis' sword who is intent on beheading the heroine, alluding to separating the mother from daughter. This suggests the power men had over female bonds and relationships, capable of easily driving a wedge between them if they wished.

Many of these rewritten adaptations portray women in their brave, forgiving, assertive and composed demeanour and provide them with a space where they can form natural bonds without being forced into rivalry. In Carter's "The Bloody Chamber", as we have already seen, the mother plays a far more significant role than in the classic story as she marches to her daughter's rescue: "a wild thing … [with] one hand on the reins of the rearing horse while the other clasped [heroine's] father's service revolver and, behind her, the breakers of the savage, indifferent sea, like the witnesses of a furious justice" (Carter 1979: 142). She is no longer a passive bystander, but becomes the one who saves the heroine, emphasizing the mother's strong determination to protect her child. On the other hand, despite her anger towards Hansel, the witch in Donoghue's "The Tale of the Cottage" does not resent Gretel. The girl even defends the witch, explaining her behaviour towards Hansel as a reaction to him sneaking into her bed and inappropriately touching her. Gretel ultimately decides to stay with

her after helping her brother escape. Similarly, the stepmother in Donoghue's "The Tale of the Apple" wants to make amends with Snow White and is portrayed not as a cruel and heartless queen but as a much more complex and human character. In the beginning, she appears power-hungry, but by the end of the story, she shows remorse by inviting Snow White home. Moreover, the blame is shifted to a group of woodsmen who accuse the stepmother of leading Snow White away from her household duties: "[they] told me that my stepmother must be a witch to put such poison of idleness in my head. They warned me to stay inside and shut the door to all comers" (Donoghue 1997: 56). This suggests that patriarchy isolates women to maintain control over them. Additionally, preventing them from forming genuine friendships with other women, it fosters their dependence on men. The narrative seems to imply that if women built strong bonds with each other, they could become less reliant on the system and potentially break free from it. Also, these stories seem to provide guidance on how to achieve more independence and start the transformation into the New Woman.

Classic fairy tales also encourage competition between women by presenting the prince's attention as the ultimate goal. He is always perfect, attractive and wealthy, especially compared to the heroine (Lieberman 1972). The heroine in Donoghue's "The Tale of the Voice", for example, describes him as "everything I wasn't, hadn't, couldn't. Grace was in his smooth boots, and sunlight ran along behind him. His collar gleamed like a halo; he made me think of trumpets, and horses, and the flash of high gates. If I couldn't have him, I'd have nothing" (1997: 187). However, this achievement often requires a sacrifice: the loss of voice in the source story of "The Little Mermaid", freedom and family in "Beauty and the Beast", or safety in "Snow White". Donoghue correlates the loss of voice in her "The Tale of the Voice" with being silent and silenced, one of the necessary preconditions for being with the man, the prince. The author further highlights the importance of voice and the absence of voice when the heroine is painfully faced with her beloved's infidelity. As for the "Beauty and the Beast", Belle, the main protagonist, leaves her family in all three contemporary retellings: in Carter's "The Courtship of Mr Lyon," "The Tiger's Bride", and Donoghue's "The Tale of the Rose." Additionally, in "The Tiger's Bride", she is urged to sacrifice her dignity by showing herself "unclothed" to the Beast (Carter 1979). However, Carter overturns this unpleasant situation, making the Beast disrobe first, after which the heroine follows suit. This scene seems to act as a defence against the patriarchal suppression of women. Cristina Bacchilega (1997) argues that Belle is conditioned by patriarchy to save herself for the marriage as a trade good.

However, according to Bacchilega, once he strips naked, he unmasks as a "wonder" which earns him Belle's admiration and prompts her to yield and become a beast herself. Furthermore, this very sight that triggers her transformation can be read as the Beast's way of freeing her from rigid patriarchal rules that have controlled her throughout her life. Merja Makinen (1992) thus suggests that the destruction of this fear propagated by patriarchy is prevalent in both "The Courtship of Mr Lyon" and "The Tiger's Bride". The Beast in both stories represents the forbidden sensuality, and the heroine becomes stronger once she embraces it. Thus, the Beast, as the Other, represents the otherness of raw passion, which women were always taught to fear. However, the moment she gives in to it, she breaks free from the bonds of oppressive expectations, becoming the New Woman.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have attempted to illustrate how Angela Carter and Emma Donoghue highlight the often unfair treatment of female protagonists in traditional fairy tales and reimagine alternative narratives. It is significant that in each of Donoghue's adaptations, the heroine is the narrator as she is finally given voice, and the person she retells her story to (apart from the reader) is usually the heroine of the following story. Donoghue's protagonists seem to be the victims of circumstances and the patriarchal system, which tends to twist their stories to protect men or cast men as heroes. These women, mainly misunderstood due to their "wrong" (lesbian) sexual identity, navigate their lives in a world that tends to ostracise them. However, at the end of each tale, they emerge as New Woman characters. Donoghue's retellings depend on the heroine's self-discovery to bring them to a close, initiating a new tale. By intricately intertwining the stories and their heroines, Donoghue has managed to bring them together as a whole and, in that way, accentuate generational trauma caused by gender-biased ideologies found in classic fairy tales.

Angela Carter, on the other hand, relies on both first and omniscient third-person narrators. The former is, just like in Donoghue's tales, used to bring attention to the heroine's perspective, which has not been voiced before. The latter seems to be linked to societal pressure, which monitors the heroine and relentlessly assesses her actions, often retelling the story significantly different from the source tale. Carter's stories, heavily imbued with elements of the macabre, have established, as Bradbury (2001: 433) argues, "a fantastic, new Gothic iconography" where fantasy turns into "a form of freedom". It can be argued that she illustrates this freedom by exploring the same

story from different perspectives; at times, she completely rewrites it, while at other times, she remains faithful to the classical version, commenting on events through sarcasm. By offering a mosaic of fragmented and possible versions (and truths), she destabilizes the idea of a definite narrative, or the one traditionally promoted by canonical male voices.

Both authors portray audacious women who ultimately attain autonomy and independence, and, as we have seen, many of them can thrive without the prince. Traditional fairy tales seem to teach young female readers from an early age that a woman should behave like the Angel in the House if she is to have a happily-ever-after ending. Moreover, these tales also show the terrible consequences of not conforming to or failing to meet societal expectations, almost always portraying "fallen women" as witches and stepmothers. In these contemporary rewritings, many beautiful and compliant "angels", on the one hand, and ostracised women, on the other, transform into the New Woman type as they challenge a series of stereotypical conventions and ultimately carve their paths. Instead of facing an evil queen, for instance, the heroine will encounter a reasonable one. Instead of being ruthlessly pitted against each other, in these contemporary rewritings, women unite and form sisterhoods. Instead of running away from beastlike men, they embrace their wild side and join them or kill them if needed. Dworkin (1974: 42) claims that the heroine in classic fairy tales needs to be "as close to dead as possible" to summon the prince. Instead of dying and succumbing to the restricting standards of male-dominated society (and the fictional world of fairy tales), the contemporary heroine, the New Woman, is alive and well and chooses to live entirely on her terms.

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ZLICE, ŽRTVE ILI NE ČUJNI GLASOVI: PREISPISIVANJE BAJKI U DJELIMA ANGELE CARTER I EMME DONOGHUE

Ovaj rad analizira ženske likove u odabranim kratkim pričama u zbirkama *Burning Your Boats: The Collected Short Stories* (1995) i *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (1979) autorice Angele Carter, te *Kissing the Witch: Old Tales in New Skins* (1997) autorice Emme Donoghue u kontekstu viktorijanskih pojmova ženstvenosti, poput Anđela u kući i Posrnule žene. Navedeni koncepti uvjetovali su načine ponašanja žena, prikazujući ih ili kao ljubazne i poslužne, ili kao zle, što nerijetko rezultira njihovim udaljavanjem iz društva. Tvrdi se da radikalnim preispisivanjem tradicionalnih dobro poznatih bajki Carter i Donoghue često stvaraju novi tip junakinje – Novu Ženu – koja se bori protiv duboko ukorijenjenih društvenih i kulturalnih stereotipa i time potkopava tradicionalne rodne norme. Carter i Donoghue pokazuju da ženski likovi ne moraju biti svedeni na unaprijed zadane uloge, bile one pasivne ili neposlušne, već da itekako mogu donositi vlastite odluke.

Ključne riječi: preispisivanje bajki; Angela Carter; Emma Donoghue; Anđeo u kući; Posrnula žena; Nova žena

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