

THE WOLF-GIRL NOMADIC: BECOMING-ANIMAL AND POST-HUMAN FEMININE
SUBJECTIVITY IN ANGELA CARTER'S "PETER AND THE WOLF"

by

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Calling upon a post-structuralist post-humanist account of Angela Carter's short story "Peter and the Wolf," it is necessary to take an approach such as this in order to facilitate the articulation of potentiality as well as explore different perspectives through Carter's use of animals in her "re-tellings." With this in mind, one can allow her work to flow freely through multiple disciplines and discourses such that, like the animals she writes about, a nomadic feminine subjectivity would be better suited for examining the benefits of its methodological practicality. When re-telling a story from not only a feminine perspective but also one that contains the female figuration as that of a wolf, Carter opens up the feminine subjectivity onto the terrain of Deleuze and Guattari's ideas on "becoming" and Rosi Braidotti's nomadic theory. Ultimately this concludes on the matter that the question of the animal itself is one that holds especially imaginative means of critique through difference, rather than in comparison with traditionally "human" means of discourse.

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*“Dear Mother,
 “The Devil has a river in Texas that is all his own
 And it is made only for those who are grown.
 Yours with love
 Mollie”*—Mollie Dent

The tiger will never lie down with the lamb; he acknowledges no pact that is not reciprocal. The lamb must learn to run with the tigers.”—Angela Carter, “The Tiger’s Bride”

INTRODUCTION

According to Texas folklore¹, roughly around 1834, John and Mollie Dent fled a dispute between neighboring trappers over a matter of profit arrangements and the selling of hides in which the ending result was a public argument and the fatal stabbing of Dent’s trapping partner, Will Marlo. As fugitives from justice, Dent and his wife Mollie left without sending word to their families and it was not until some months later that a letter postmarked from Galveston was received by Mollie’s parents which reads as a letter that provides the first epigraph above. In 1835, after settling into a brush cabin in what was then the Devil’s River area—today known as north Del Rio—Dent set to trapping beaver. By this time Mollie had become pregnant and, because of the danger of hostile local Native Americans, they were unwilling to travel. Earlier that year a group of American colonists pushing westward led by Dr. Charles Beale who had camped out for the night at Lake Esponsosa (now known as Carrizo Springs) which was approximately a mile from where the Dents would later camp. The Beale party was raided by a Comanche tribe and most of the travelers were killed, their bodies and supplies thrown into the lake. Despite their reluctance, John and Mollie picked up and moved towards the lake area of

¹ See L.D. Bertillion’s “The Lobo Girl of Devil’s River.” *Straight Texas: Publications of the Texas Folklore Society XIII.* ed. Boatright, Mody C. (Austin: Texas Folklore Society, 1937)

Devil's River. Apparently around the month of May, during a thunderstorm, Mollie went into labor. Due to complications with the birth, John made the decision to head west to look for help. Coming across a Mexican goat ranch, he explained about his wife's condition and urged them to return with him. The Mexican ranchers obliged and were preparing to leave but, as luck would have it, a bolt of lightning struck Dent while on his horse and killed him instantly. The ranchers, in an attempt to follow Dent's directions, set out to find Mollie but were not able to locate the lonely cabin until the following morning. Unfortunately, they were too late and she had died in the night. There were telltale bite marks on her body and wolf tracks all over the site. The child, which was nowhere to be found, was assumed to have been carried off by wolves and eaten. Jumping ahead ten years, in 1845, a young boy who lived near the area claimed to have seen a creature of some sort with long hair that looked like a naked girl attacking a herd of goats alongside a pack of wolves. The story was never taken seriously but still managed to make its way back into many of the local settlements. The following year a Mexican woman from the same area reported that she had seen two large wolves and a young girl feasting on the fresh kill of a goat. The woman attempted to approach the scene but frightened them off. The woman noted that the girl ran on all-fours for a number of strides before rising up and continuing on two feet, all the while keeping in pace with the wolves. So adamantly did the woman profess her story that the people of the Devil's River area started looking out for this "wolf-girl." Other accounts began to spring up and even local Apache stories told of child's footprints seen alongside those of wolf tracks in locations near the river. A group of Mexican cattle herders organized a hunt for the wolf-girl and after three days search they were able to find and trap her near Espontosa Lake. Only making guttural noises, walking on all fours, and displaying wildly animalistic mannerisms, the wolf-girl was taken to a ranch house and locked in a room. She was

offered food, water and clothing but accepted none of these, cowering in the corner instead. The people who had captured her left her alone for the night; they locked the door and had someone stand guard. The girl began to cry out and howl terribly, unnerving her captors. Her calls were answered by multiple howls from her wolf pack which closed in from all sides of the small house before eventually charging in and causing enough disruption and distraction for her to break out through a window. Other sightings were reported throughout the years, most notably in 1852 when a survey party spotted a young woman near Devil's River suckling two wolf cubs. When she realized the men's presence she scooped up the cubs and bolted back into the woods.

Stories and folklore such as this retain a sense of "re-telling" in which they are able to maintain their own historicity by being handed down from past to future generations. They accentuate underlying concepts of the progression of history in a unilateral undertaking for which certain meanings and theories are formed and structured. Unfortunately, with re-telling certain stories or tales from the past, there are retentive aspects of the social, ethical and political ideologies with which they were formed in the first place; narrative lessons that provide foundations for historical structuralization. Over time, as Walter Benjamin has told us, these stories—and those who tell them—have proven to be incompatible with the rapid dissemination of information that competes with the modern world's communicative changes of experience.² While the storyteller may no longer be able to intimate her own experiences to the audience, residual ideologies still remain as stubbornly embedded discourses within the information of the stories themselves regardless of their temporal relevance. The author Angela Carter, for instance, has demonstrated in many of her works of fiction that the re-telling of stories, folklore and fairytales can be used to bear witness to oppressively patriarchal systems of discourse that

² Benjamin, Walter. "The Storyteller." *Theory of the Novel: A Historical Approach*. ed. McKeon, Michael. (London: John Hopkins University Press, 2000), 77.

are perpetuated through the stories themselves. Taking a feminist approach to most of these re-tellings, Carter is able to reclaim female sexual identity through a kind of violent reclamation of libidinal energies that have been subjugated by the portrayal of dominant male figures in folklore and fairytales. However, it is not simply some drive to reclaim feminine identity, which always appears to fall short because of the linearity of its methodology. Insofar as the goal of responding to patriarchal methodologies may not simply be a matter of setting up a sexual binary between men and women in which a feminine critique is reacting. That is to say, if it is more focused on the concept of woman rather than the processes, then the complexities that have the potential to open up new spaces that can come to represent changes, transformations or mutations in philosophical endeavors reduce the productivity of the feminine, leaving it to remain within classical areas of thinking about Being. Much critical theory written on Carter's work has dealt primarily with performativity, gender and psychoanalytic discussion. And while there are prominent displays of these types of discourses that run throughout all her work, both fiction and non-fiction, there remains avenues of thought that seem to have been overlooked in terms of problematizing her work beyond that of feminist critique in order to open up her "re-tellings" in ways that would amplify theoretical alternatives, rather than locking it back down to normative metaphysical ideologies. Thus, to call upon a post-structuralist account of her stories is necessary in order to facilitate the articulation of this potentiality. Moreover, a look at how post-human perspectives on Carter's use of animals in many of her re-tellings is also necessary. In doing so, one can allow her work to flow freely through multiple disciplines and discourses such that, like the animals she writes about, a nomadic feminine subjectivity would be better suited for the challenge of countering the separation of reason from imagination.³ To this end, I will examine that the methodology Carter's short story "Peter and the Wolf" incorporates re-tells

³ Braidotti, Rosi. *Metamorphoses: Towards A Materialist Theory of Becoming*. (London: Polity Press, 2002), 3.

the Texas folktale in a way that Jacques Derrida would describe as “following” or “being-with,” such that in telling the story again from not only a feminine perspective but more importantly one that contains the female figuration as that of a wolf, Carter opens up the feminine subjectivity onto the terrain of “becoming.” Moreover, by integrating the woman with animal, Carter’s re-telling is able to sidestep metaphysical ideologies through the nomadic wolf-like tracking through philosophical concepts of difference and embodiment. Therefore, sexual potential is more richly realized when the libidinal energies she is trying to liberate are put in the more radically capable hands (paws?) of the animal that is able to traverse humanist boundaries and limitations. From this, I hope to conclude on the matter that the question of the animal itself is one that holds especially imaginative means of critique through difference, rather than in comparison with traditionally “human” means of discourse.

THE ANIMAL—“BEING-WTH”—THE OTHER

The history of the otherness of the animal, along with the canine itself being a companion species to the human entails a long and interesting multitude of stories. And though the field of animal studies has only come under more rigorous critical attention within approximately the last twenty-five years, the long standing relationship and interaction that the canine has had with humans over the course of our biological, political, ethical and literary evolutions is indeed worth noting. Moreover, the way in which we perceive and analyze these relationships has assisted in formulating different and more radical methods of philosophical endeavor that allow us to advance critically and evaluate particular instances of potential and revolutionary thought. However, these directions of theoretical speculation are not necessarily geared specifically towards the canine—though they obviously play an important role as a companion animal—in

that the general term of “non-human” with regards to post-humanist thought finds its intentions leading away from traditional methods of thinking and more towards the interactions of affect between subjects. That is to say, what has become important to think about is the space between the interactions of particular bodies; the microscopic or the singularized events that occur within processes can reveal vast amounts of theories and ideas ripe for post-human examination and critique. In the specific case of the canine and the human, these instances or events are more apparent to us as humans (not that they are less apparent to non-humans) and are transcribed to language with greater ease precisely because of the ongoing histories that the two species share with one another. As a result, many contemporary thinkers such as Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Rosi Braidotti, Matthew Calarco and Cary Wolfe have taken on the task of teasing out the experiences and study between the human and non-human in an effort to come to a greater understanding of what it means to not only *be* human, but more importantly what it can mean to be post- or indeed, non-human. Additionally, what these resulting discourses allow is a better understanding of the political, ethical and social implications that arise when the question of the animal is brought to the table alongside traditional methods of Westernized thought.

Before taking on the task of the animal—and its re-telling—with concern to Angela Carter’s work, which is prominent in her book *The Bloody Chamber*, I will begin with the most widely recognized contemporary examination thus far, that of Derrida’s *The Animal That Therefore I Am*. In the opening chapter of the lectures collected in this volume he introduces the notion of what it means to be naked or, rather, what it means to be looked at by the other which is animal.⁴ Moreover, he examines what it means to be naked *with* the animal. His example is the experience he had when stepping out of the shower one day to find his small cat watching

⁴ Derrida, Jacques. *The Animal That Therefore I Am*. trans. Wills, David. ed. Mallet, Marie-Louise. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 3.

him. In this instance Derrida is compelled to verify himself as a subject when confronted with the gaze of the animal. “I often ask myself, just to see *who I am*—and who I am (following) at the moment when, caught naked, in silence, by the gaze of the animal, for example, the eyes of a cat, I have trouble, yes, a bad time overcoming my embarrassment.”⁵ He notes that what comes to mind first is a moment when one’s body is shown in its fully exposed state, without that with which to hide itself. Derrida asks, “Ashamed of what and before whom?”⁶ He states that he is ashamed because he is naked as the beast (animal) before him that he, in turn, stands before. To be naked before an animal, as naked *as* the animal is a question that he finds problematic in the sense that one must know one is naked before one can be naked. “Because it *is* naked, without *existing* in nakedness, the animal neither feels nor sees itself naked.”⁷ To have no knowledge of one’s nudity is, for Derrida, to be without a moral foundation with which to stand upon in order to take notice of the shame that one experiences when suddenly becoming the other. In other words, one becomes aware of one’s subjectivity and is, in a sense, able to witness one’s own objectification free of the limits or boundaries of being-human or “humanness”—one forgets oneself. Clothing, for instance, is an example of one of the primary boundaries that Derrida uses to indicate the “properties” of man.

With these boundaries or limits removed or freed by the gaze of the animal, it then becomes a matter of examining two things: first, the question of not whether the animal “speaks” in some way to the naked human, rather, whether one understands the meaning of *respond* and how it is distinct from simply a reaction; second, the different manners or modes in which one is, as Derrida explains, “being-with” that begin to modify how one experiences the event of when one forgets oneself in the presence of the animal. The matter of the animal responding,

⁵ Ibid. 3-4.

⁶ Ibid. 4.

⁷ Ibid. 5.

according to Derrida, has a stake in the literality of the word and the fact that a human can speak to an animal without any real expected response. The animal is deemed already by the language itself to be an object that only has the capacity to react and is unable to come to any real understanding that would render an actual response. However, this reduction to mere capacity is reliant on a much more fundamental principle which, in turn, is not to be reduced itself to a question of ethics. In other words, before a value can be ascribed to the response there is the matter of how the animal affects the human in order to come to such ethical conclusions in the first place. Matthew Calarco, in his examination of Derrida's philosophical work on the animal, explains this lack or reduction of capacity as a basic question of whether or not the animal can suffer.⁸ He argues that it is not simply about the ethical implications when asking the question of whether or not an animal can suffer, rather, the question itself suggests something more basic: "an interruptive encounter with animal suffering that calls for and provokes thought."⁹

Therefore, as Calarco continues, the discursive questioning of the animal is inherently a *response* to an experience of some kind that has preceded it. This results in the fact that one's response to the animal's suffering—whether one affirms or negates it—bears witness to the animal "face" which is able to affect one via expressivity and vulnerability.¹⁰ The concern of the face of the animal is that it holds the power to be able to look or gaze upon the human in much the same way that the human is able to look upon the animal. The difference here being that the gaze is in recognition of otherness, or being looked upon as other which can be disruptive to the sense of self that a human has when looking upon something as merely an object. Ultimately, philosophy in general has overlooked the idea that it is not about proving whether or not animal suffering

⁸ Calarco, Matthew. *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 117.

⁹ Ibid. 117.

¹⁰ Ibid. 119.

holds as much weight as human suffering, rather, the point that suffering itself is able to stir within us *as humans* a sense of compassion and, thereby relation, speaks to the importance of considering the question in this way. Furthermore, it attests to the ease with which the self is able to be disrupted or removed from itself—forgotten as Derrida will say—and be forced to reckon with the gaze of another in terms of its own subjectivity.

The different modes of “being-with” and how they begin to modify one’s experience of the animal can be examined as a sense of forgetting oneself. That is to say, that one’s intellectual composure, having returned from this interruption of subjectivity, can find no suitable philosophical response or position to explain to oneself what has happened. The “I” itself is suddenly under self-scrutiny for what it has come to believe it should refer itself to be; one cannot make sense of the situation in terms of the self. “It is the moment of a simulacrum of discussion, which comes to grief when they are unable to agree on the sense of words, on what a *word* means, and in the end...on what “word,” what the term *word* could ever mean.”¹¹ Derrida utilizes Lewis Carroll’s *Through the Looking Glass* as a means to emphasize this point: the Cheshire Cat telling Alice that “We’re all mad here: I’m mad. You’re mad.”¹² Therefore, the issue is not solely that one forgets oneself when confronted by the gazing of the animal. Moreover, it is how one is *with* the animal after one has been exposed to the vulnerability—and potential to suffer—of one’s own otherness. This results in, as Derrida explains, the “I” having to return and “being *after*,” whose outcome now is a paradox for which it cannot account. “[B]eing *alongside*, being *near*...would appear as different modes of being, indeed of *being with*. With the animal.”¹³ All of these modes of being point towards one being *with* the animal, which is to say that if one asks themselves the question “Who am I?” there are suddenly a multitude of

¹¹ Derrida 9.

¹² Ibid. 9.

¹³ Ibid. 10.

different answers based on how one now considers themselves *with* the animal. From this Calarco ascertains that with Derrida's account of this experience one is able to determine one's own self-consciousness through other living beings, whether they be animal, human, or otherwise. More importantly, Calarco argues that "Such encounters are specifically proto-ethical in that I affirm, or say "yes," to the Other *before* I can negate or disavow the Other's impact."¹⁴ That is to say, ultimately, that the question of the animal will not depend upon any kind of consistent theoretical discourse or rational determination. Each instance of each encounter will be singular in its own resulting experiences and can be examined from different angles and perspectives based on the affects that arise and influence that encounter.

Building upon the notion that when confronting the animal—or being confronted by the animal—we find that language becomes problematic, in that one is interrupted from their own explanation of normative claims concerning subjectivity. What once seemed distinctly human now becomes questionable under the gaze or in the presence of the animal or the other. It is not that what is human drops out entirely, rather, the idea of what it means to be "human" is radically altered and traditional discourses begin to falter under their own weight. Take for instance Gerald Bruns' example of Ovid's myth of Actaeon from *The Metamorphoses*. When Actaeon is transformed into a deer after witnessing Diana bathing he is then spotted by his dogs with who he was hunting. But as he tries to "speak" to his companions, his commands come out only as un-humanlike guttural groans and grunts, while at the same time not sounding like any such stag. Bruns encourages us to look closely at the particularities of this narrative.

[I]n ceasing to be human, Actaeon does not quite cease being human; that is, ceasing is in some sense interminable. It is as if Actaeon had entered into a

¹⁴ Calarco 126. Italics are mine.

temporality somewhat different from the *logical* or *familiar* order of things (think of it as the temporality of suffering or of dying—the temporality of *flesh*).¹⁵

Another possibility that Bruns points out is that perhaps Actaeon’s subjectivity is lost because “it can no longer be ascribed to him by others.”¹⁶ In the same vein as Derrida and Calarco, the losing of one’s voice, the ceasing of being human, or the losing of one’s capacity to be looked upon *as human* is the “maddening” of one’s existence: one is no longer affirmed as a human or as a subject. “His [Actaeon’s] metamorphosis thus expresses a certain side of him...something out of character or out of keeping with his friends and his dogs...is, so to speak, brought out and exposed to others.”¹⁷ He becomes naked not only in the world but *to* the world. This lack of recognition is, as mentioned before, a struggle for philosophical traditions and Western metaphysical ideologies and as we will see with Carter’s re-tellings, a key element within her work. There is always a danger or fear of losing that which has come to be known as the “I” or the “logical subject.”¹⁸ This remains important precisely because there is a metaphysical necessity to being human in order to hold the power to deem someone or something human. This begs the question of what is one’s responsibility to another being, human, animal or other, that has the ability to experience pain, or more specifically, the ability to experience suffering. Moreover, do we as humans have the legitimating power to choose what can be labeled as “human” and what cannot?

These become very pertinent questions when considering where the animal comes into play with regards to its relationship with the human. Yet before we can look at this correlation of the animal as other that confounds the implications of thinking as a “logical subject” we must

¹⁵ Bruns, Gerald. *On Ceasing To Be Human*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 32. See also Maurice Blanchot, *The Step Not Beyond*, 12.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 32. Italics are mine.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 32.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 34.

first analyze the alterity of what it means to be post-human that emerges from such relationships that create a divide between the concepts of human and non-human. While the canine species are not necessarily those which readily fall into the category of what can be considered abnormal because of the close relationships that have evolved between each family of species, it is precisely because the canine is still held at a distance as other, as a kind of potential outcast or monster, that the way in which humans utilize the animal must be examined in post-human terms of the animal as abnormality or monstrous. In other words, the methodologies that we subscribe to as humans already limit or seal off the myriad ways of examination that are available which hold the potential for resisting meaning. For instance, Patricia MacCormack argues that post-human theory is not a matter of temporality in that it comes “after humanism” in traditional hierarchical fashion. Instead, post-human theory actually puts humanism to task by way of interrogation which is intended to open up new possibilities of discourse that recognize the potential in humans while at the same time calling out the delimitations of its parameters.¹⁹ In addition, the way that human is conceptualized as an idea and as a means of verifying identity demands that it have a counter binary term in order to define it by what maintains the ability to pervert it. Yet elements or traces of the human are always present in the non-human and vice versa. This complicates defining the idea of what it is to be human to the point where it seems to work both ways, in that there are always traces of the non-human, or perversities, in the human. Therefore, as MacCormack explains, “‘The monster’ refers to the element outside the observer that sparks and creates an event of perception that necessitates the participation of two unlike entities. The monster can simultaneously refer to anything that refused being “the human” and

¹⁹ MacCormack, Patricia. “Posthuman Teratology.” *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous*. (Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Comp., 2012), 294.

that which makes the person who encounters it posthuman.”²⁰ She uses the term “monster” here tactically for two reasons: to remove the idea of its taxonomical categorizations; and to describe it more as an event or catalyst that results in an encounter, rather than reducing “monster” to a mere thing.

Following from this, when we couple how MacCormack complicates the approach of post-human theory with Derrida’s later ideas in his lectures on the idea of the beast as feminine and its relationship with the human as sovereign, we find interesting connections that can be made which continue to point out the increasingly complex state that the animal finds itself in; humanity’s conception of the animal is determinable by means of nature and relies more and more on culture. In this case, the way that the idea of the beast coincides with the feminine and what it means to be human (masculine) siding with the sovereign. Though as Derrida begins in his 2001 lectures, “The question of the animal was also, here and everywhere one of our permanent concerns. But the beast is not exactly the animal.”²¹ He goes on to say that the differences that present themselves between sexualities—along with certain couplings—can be found not solely between humans but within interactions between animals and humans as well. What this means is that hierarchies that try to reestablish themselves back into binaries are still constantly overlapping and penetrating each other causing multiple interactions and distributions. What results from this is that animals are able to preoccupy our spaces by their very differences to us; by their relation to the feminine or their state of otherness. Although, in contrast, a common animal that humans use as analogous to man is that of the wolf, in that the figure of the wolf has been an icon, myth, fable, fantasy, etc., for many different cultures and their histories.²²

²⁰ Ibid. 294.

²¹ Derrida, Jacques. *The Beast & the Sovereign: Volume I*. trans. Bennington, Geoffrey. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 1.

²² Ibid. 4-5.

The wolf, as Derrida explains, is an object of apprehension that does not readily present itself. Simultaneously, it does not represent itself either. The way that the wolf is nomadic in nature and able to “without permission” traverse human frontiers, borders and institutions without prejudice demonstrates how that, in a sense, the wolf is everywhere and it is nowhere. The wolf is as a silent expression or absence that, as Derrida continues, is a “savage intrusion of the adverb of negation.” This intrusion, like a spirit or phantasm, “haunts” silently much in the same way that an adverb haunts a noun.²³ However, there is no wolf in its absence, in its looming or lurking, there is really only the word, the ghost that precedes the machine but is not there or yet present. Rather, there is something that both announces as it conceals, similar to a type of persona. As cryptic as this may sound, it is meant to demonstrate the power or force that the strength of a simulacrum or fragment of language can have. Insofar as the sovereignty of the wolf, it is always looming or haunting the human though we speak as if it is not truly there. Moreover, we must recognize that this insensibility of the animal pierces us as humans in the way it moves through our spaces. It moves not only through our spaces, but *with* our spaces as well, contributing to a continuous alterity of both. Thinking about the animal in the sense of movements through space allows one to conceptualize animality as a means of “becoming,” or in this case “becoming-animal.” As such, this sense of becoming-animal that stalks or sneaks up on the human yet never presents itself wholly exhibits sovereignty in that it can be compared to the “animal faced with the enemy.”²⁴ That is to say, the presence of the other presents itself in terms of a threat with which to gauge one’s own space and position of power within that space at any given moment in time.

²³ Ibid. 5.

²⁴ Ibid. 10.

This inevitably leads us to how humankind has maintained the animality of the wolf but “already defined and dominated, by man *in view* of man, an animality that is already destined, in its reproduction organized by man, to become either an enslaved instrument of work or else animal nourishment.”²⁵ We remain, as Rousseau would argue, in the order of analogy and, as such, use this as a discourse of reasoning which provides or situates our ability to conceive of sovereignty in relation to hierarchical conceptions of power and the analogy of man as a beast to be herded, domesticated and eventually devoured.²⁶ Although, Derrida does warn us that by utilizing this analogy it is not intended as merely a means for reducing the space of the animal or the concept of sovereignty to the bottom of some kind of human order as it will be shown to do. In fact it is quite the opposite. With this inversion of order we come to recognize that it is not the case that:

Political man is still animal but that the animal, is *already* political, and exhibit[s] examples of what are called animal societies, the appearance of refined, complicated organizations, with hierarchical structures, attributes of authority and power, phenomena of symbolic credit, so many things that are so often attributed to and so naïvely reserved for so-called human *culture*, in opposition to *nature*.²⁷

Thus, there is no reliance on the limits that are placed between what can be called nature and what can be called culture; we cannot rest on the concern of what is “proper to man,” just as it is unreliable to argue in favor of analogies that work towards resemblances and identities that reinforce hierarchical structures. There must be attention given to the multiplicities of difference that arise when examining the animal as such along with the ramifications of said examinations

²⁵ Ibid. 12.

²⁶ Ibid. 13.

²⁷ Ibid. 14-5.

that spring up in other areas of discourse, specifically those of becoming-animal and becoming-woman.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari give just such attention to how these relationships occur between not only man and animal but also between animals themselves. These relationships can be found within many different disciplines of study and expression from the sciences and practical use to dreams, art and poetry. In regards to the relationships between man and animal, they are caught up in a distribution of the idea of man that permeates throughout many different facets of what they refer to as “series-structure.” “[T]he objective relationships between animals have been applied to certain subjective relations between man and animal, from the standpoint of a collective imagination or a faculty of social understanding.”²⁸ This means that the animal, or the idea of the animal, has always been shot through with the idea of man and, as a result, has become inseparable from what we as humans can now consider historical. Furthermore, the role of the animal now plays a key part in the possibility of transforming structural integrities within systems of thought. The production of this transformation is that man is no longer the prominent functionary with regards to natural history and, as such, terms that are utilized as a series that can affect structuralized systems of thought take on the animal as an eminent term in relation to man. Thus, as Deleuze and Guattari claim with respect to a structuralist approach:

It is a question of ordering differences to arrive at a correspondence of relations.

The animal is distributed according to differential relations or distinctive

²⁸ Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. trans. Massumi, Brian. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 235.

oppositions between species; the same goes for human beings, according to the groups considered.²⁹

From here they hypothesize that structuralism cannot account for what results from this kind of corresponding of relations. In a sense, the door does not swing both ways for man the way it can with the animal and, in fact, these types of relations are pushed aside as degradations that deviate from the true order.³⁰ These relations do not suffice—they are not becomings—precisely because they refuse to consider the distribution of affect that occurs and set them aside as either some sort of resemblance, imitation or identification. Becomings for Deleuze and Guattari, more specifically becoming-animal, always involve a multiplicity. Regardless of the characteristics that are present within and between the different conceptions of agency, a multiplicity or population, pack, band, etc., is necessary. This shifts the concern from characteristics to “modes of expansion, propagation, occupation, contagion, peopling.”³¹ This is also not limited to simply saying that animals live in packs, rather, that every animal is a pack in and of itself. It is at this point of conception that the human being encounters the animal and the fascination that accompanies the idea of each animal as pack or assemblage of modes. This fascination stems ultimately from an interruption of the self in which one encounters the idea or notion that one can be many as well as oneself; when faced with the other or the outside, the self is displaced or decentered and, as such, is able to encounter the animal with which to be fascinated since elements of both are now apparent in each. Deleuze and Guattari call this *unnatural participation*. The affect that results from this “is not a personal feeling, nor is it a characteristic; it is the effectuation of a power of the pack that throws the self into upheaval and makes it

²⁹ Ibid. 236.

³⁰ Ibid. 237.

³¹ Ibid. 239.

reel.”³² It is important here to point out that they indeed have qualms regarding certain kinds of animals that are held captive in positions of Oedipalized histories; those animals that are caught up in familial psychoanalytic triangles that work to restrict the potential for becoming. Particularly, the domesticated pet which is referred to as “my” cat or “my” dog. This kind of regression into “narcissistic contemplation” is an animal that can only reside within a psychoanalytical framework that does not truly recognize the animal for what it is nor does it participate in the decentering of a self, which they argue is the effect that results. Rather, this kind of animal is the product of an understanding that only psychoanalysis can make sense of: it is an animal that is looking to discover a daddy, a mommy, a little brother, hence, the restrictive Oedipalization. It is within this section of critique that Deleuze and Guattari strongly announce the claim that: “*anyone who likes cats and dogs is a fool.*”³³ This sort of claim would seem almost too potent for what they are trying to say if they did not already have a history of conflict with psychoanalysis in the first place. Nevertheless, the blame of regression, as they argue, stems from the animal itself as a type of symptom or consequence of human interaction and domesticating appropriation. If this is the case, then the animal would be fully reduced to that of machine in which it would truly be the narcissistic contemplation of an Oedipalized animal and would absolutely reflect the human without any trace of residual non-humanness. But as Deleuze and Guattari continue, they are forced to agree that “*any animal* can be a pack, but to varying degrees of vocation that make it easier or harder to discover the multiplicity, or multiplicity-grade, an animal contains.”³⁴ Not only that, but also that these variations of packs are not socially inferior forms and are to be considered just as powerful in terms of the animal with the human, rather than the human with—or who possesses—the animal. That is to say, that

³² Ibid. 240.

³³ Ibid. 240.

³⁴ Ibid. 241. Italics are mine.

while the animal can be *treated* like a pet, it can also be treated in a way that speaks towards it as a favorite or a being to be respected, such that the animal is considered the polar opposite of what “pet” has come to mean. In other words, the animal is nomadic and the human is fascinated with its wildness or inability to be tamed. Deleuze and Guattari must leave this particular space open for exactly the reason they realize they cannot simply close the door on animals that are considered too caught up in the Oedipal framework. They still must maintain that every being has some kind of affect or power that goes beyond the restrictions of an Oedipalized conception and, thus, leaves an opening for how one can examine and understand the animal through a sense of becoming. More importantly, the animal always holds the potential for pushing through and past the idea of a logical subject, that which is able to ensnare the human and drag her back into the parameters of hierarchical structures.

The animal—or, becoming-animal—can be marked as only one of many different kinds. According to Deleuze and Guattari, there is a sort of order that makes itself apparent through the different kinds of becomings that one could find themselves in, the progression being: “becoming-woman, becoming-child, becoming-animal, -vegetable, or –mineral; becomings-molecular of all kinds, becomings-particles.”³⁵ Essentially, what they mean when they say “becoming” and what I have been working towards in trying to come to a particular understanding of the term is that it specifies processes of desire. Insofar as that the subject that one considers one is, along with all forms and functions that come along with it, are in constant relation with that which is in proximity to it and how these processes interact and distribute affect. For instance, as we will see in Carter’s “Peter and the Wolf,” along with other examples of the animal in her stories, the girl does not actually become a wolf, though there is a reality that can be assigned to the notion of becoming-animal that can be ascribed to the girl. It is not a

³⁵ Ibid. 272.

matter of imitation nor should we look for resemblances or analogies for that would not necessarily be an interaction of affect and desires.

Becomings-animal are basically of another power, since their reality resides not in an animal one imitates or to which one corresponds but in themselves, in that which suddenly sweeps us up and makes us become—a *proximity, an indiscernibility...*”the Beast.”³⁶

The same can be said for the human, specifically becoming-woman in that it is the key or the foundational crux from which all other becomings must begin and then pass through.³⁷ This idea in particular maintains some controversy but, as I will show later with Rosi Braidotti’s concepts of nomadic feminine subjectivity, it is indeed a suitably productive means of entry with which to then move beyond psychoanalytic discourse. By the same argument, it is not a matter of imitating the woman or the feminine, rather, it is being taken up by the feminine in order to move through and on to different modes of thought. The nomadic feminine subjectivity of becoming-woman is the essential creativity that can be applied to radicalizing and disrupting classical images of thought in order to come to new ways of understanding that are in a kind of constancy, roaming or lurking much like the wolf that Derrida describes. It is always following, having presence but not present, and its insensibility enables it to remain nomadic and creatively resistant in that it can reassess subjectivity and redefine it, re-master it, or in Carter’s case, re-tell it. In other words, there is no longer a comfortable imbalance or asymmetry with the animal in relation just as there is not with the feminine and subjectivity. The feminine nomadic subject follows and works towards “disidentifying ourselves from familiar and hence comforting values and identities, such as the dominant institutions and representations of femininity and

³⁶ Ibid. 279.

³⁷ Ibid. 277.

masculinity.”³⁸ Just like the animal, and in relation to the animal, this nomadic subjectivity cannot be reduced to metaphor and moves towards considering an appreciation for what each body has the potential to do including the multiple ways in which its interconnectedness affects other bodies around it. “The nomadic subject is immersed in and immanent to a network of human and nonhuman...relations.”³⁹

In this sense, it can be argued that the theories and processes of feminist writing can easily find their stakes in the idea of becoming-woman, becoming-animal. Literary texts that follow these nomadic processes are able to evade or escape the capture of hierarchical structures and move between spaces such as languages, genres or narratives. As Braidotti explains, “The literary texts which are favoured by philosophical nomadism are potent affirmations of life’s virtual possibilities.”⁴⁰ Affirming the feminine nomadic subjectivity is a celebration of the “I” or the logical subject being decentered or destabilized; by way of sabotage or even a violent undertaking of reclaiming libidinal energies. However, Braidotti warns us that this radical nomadism “is not merely a recipe for the sexual anarchy which Western culture has amply experimented with.”⁴¹ Desire itself, overall, is to be perceived as a fundamentally positive passion with which to utilize as a force that drives us towards different encounters and experiences, ignoring boundaries, borders and structures; that which, like the wolf, roams freely.

CARTER—THE WOLF—THINKING THROUGH THE FEMININE—BECOMING-ANIMAL

Angela Carter’s work spans a wide range of literary forms, from journalism to poetry and children’s stories. Her writing, specifically her fiction, examined Western sexuality through

³⁸ Braidotti, Rosi. “Animals, Anomalies, and Inorganic Others.” *PMLA*. 124:2. (2009), 526-7.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 530.

⁴⁰ *Metamorphoses*, 94.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 100.

assorted types of fables and fairy tales. Always with a sensibly dark humor, she was ever finding ways to take advantage of opportunities that would arise in her stories that allowed for a hard uncomfortable edge to be taken; as she stated in an interview in 1985, “I would say that I half-suffocate them [opportunities for overwriting] with the enthusiasm with which I wrap my arms and legs around them.”⁴² Or, as Aidan Day claims, “Carter’s anti-realism has also provoked a special form of mythologizing, a mythologizing that confounds author and work.”⁴³ Carter’s perspective was that the false universes that myths create function mainly for the purpose of solace, specifically women, of the decadence of the real world.⁴⁴ Using the idea of a “fantasy” genre, or as I will use from here on, “speculative fiction,” Carter’s fables examined the experiential conditions of the surrounding reality, though she was adamantly against the separation of the two: fantasy and reality. To label her fiction as purely fantasy, as some critics have mistakenly done, is to ignore a primary function of work. It is not a matter of something supernatural or magical or even uncanny. To associate her fiction within these categories is to already have a rational sense of the world “in which strange events are no longer explained by reference to forces outside of human reality, but according to the idea that strangeness is the product of a subjective disturbance in the mind of a perceiver.”⁴⁵ In this case, what is ignored is the materialism of the “strangeness” itself, which is not allowed its own course and is always wrapped up constitutively in the subjectivity of the reader, restricting the exteriority of the experience altogether and leaving the logical subject comfortably intact. There is no possibility if the subject is not interrupted. Carter herself expresses it very simply: “Speculative fiction really means that, the fiction of speculation, the fiction of asking ‘what if?’ It’s a system of

⁴² Day, Aidan. *Angela Carter: The Rational Glass*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 1-2.

⁴³ *Ibid.* 2.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 4.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 5.

continuing inquiry.”⁴⁶ And, as we will see, the crux of this system she employs is materialism; that which does not bind fantasy and reality together, rather, considers them one in the same substance.

At the beginning of this essay I recounted the Texas folktale of the wolf-girl of Devil’s River, a story published in 1937 in the journal *Straight Texas* by the Texas Folk-Lore Society. Carter’s short story re-telling of “Peter and the Wolf” was originally published in 1982. While much has been written on Carter’s use and points of origin of the wolf figure, primarily from her book *The Bloody Chamber*, the critical examinations of “Peter and the Wolf” appear to have always gone back to the earliest sources of reference when dealing with the tale. For example, as Betty Moss mentions in the notes of her article “Desire and the Female Grotesque in Angela Carter’s “Peter and the Wolf,” it is assumed that Carter’s primary folktale source is Sergei Prokofiev’s *Peter and the Wolf*, in addition to the probability of utilizing Aesop’s fables for their use of shepherds, wolves, and young boys.⁴⁷ There is, in fact, a decidedly conspicuous lack of reference to the Texas folktale, which seems likely to have been the actual source that Carter uses in re-telling her story of the wolf-girl. The reason being that most, if not all, of the events in each match spatially, temporally and, arguably, materially. There are of course minor differences that Carter inserts in order to make the story her own, but aside from her re-telling, it is in the opinion of this reader that this is the folktale that she used as the basis for “Peter and the Wolf.” That being said, it is not my intention to draw a distinctive focus away from Prokofiev’s story. There is a salient importance to asking the question of why she might have chosen to doubly reference two tales involving wolves. Rather, I am calling attention at this point to the way that a narrative that begins to emerge when looking at the two side by side; one that tends or

⁴⁶ Ibid. 9.

⁴⁷ Moss, Betty. “Desire and the Female Grotesque in Angela Carter’s “Peter and the Wolf.” *Marvels & Tales: Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies*. 12:1 (1998), 200.

appears to follow the other: the Texan folktale follows or lurks behind the apparent reference of Prokofiev's title for the story. I will delve into this more later on but suffice to say that after reading the account of the wolf-girl of Devil's River, one has all the key story-telling points available for better understanding Carter's adaptation.

"Peter and the Wolf" appears approximately three years after her collection *The Bloody Chamber*, which contained three feline stories and three canine stories, all of which were retellings of folklore and fairy tales that had predominantly masculine themes. The same themes can be found in "Peter and the Wolf" but, while it seems that it should have a place amongst the other canine/wolf tales it is different in such a way that it finds itself relating more to a commentary on nature rather than culture. Moreover, it can be seen as a kind of alternate fragmenting of the story "Wolf-Alice" in *The Bloody Chamber* because of the similarities in each of the wolf-girls' histories: murdered or dead parents at a very young age; found and nursed by wolves; a feral state of being that persists against capture and insistent enculturation.

Carter's re-telling of the story begins after a severe storm in which an old woman wishes to go and check on her pregnant daughter who lived with her husband up in the hills. With her son accompanying her, she goes up to their cabin to find the corpse of her daughter, traces of proof that she had given birth, and nothing left of the son-in-law but a "gnawed foot in a boot." The child, of course, is nowhere to be found yet there is also evidence that wolves had been in the cabin as well because of droppings that remained. Years later Peter, the eldest grandson of the old woman, is old enough to herd the goats with his father up the mountain. As he is braiding baskets while watching the goats he spots three wolves, one of which is "a prodigy, a marvel, a naked one, going on all fours, as they did, but hairless as regards the body although

hair grew around its head.”⁴⁸ That night he tells his grandmother that he saw a little girl with the wolves, to which she takes him back up the mountain to relay the information to his father who before was too angry to listen on account of Peter letting wolves get too close to the goats. The boy shows his father the tracks where he had seen the wolves the day before and demonstrates cleverly that the oddly shaped prints left in the damp ground that were not definitely wolf tracks were how a child would run on all fours, using the toes of the foot and not relying on the ball of the heel. Subsequently soon after they find the wolf-girl, presumably after setting out on a hunt for her, they capture her with a sliding noose. The hunters also kill a large she-wolf who tries to protect her in the process. The grandmother’s hand is bitten by the wolf-girl in the commotion. Wildly she fights against her captors until they are able to lash her to a pole and carry her off back to the village. “She didn’t scream or shout, she didn’t seem to be able to, she made only a few dull, guttural sounds in the back of her throat, and, though she did not seem to know how to cry, water trickled out of the corners of her eyes.”⁴⁹ They take her to the grandmother’s house and dump her limp body onto the floor—for she is now, like an animal, pretending to be dead. The grandmother commands that she be untied and as soon as she is freed she goes wild. The rest of the onlookers who had amassed to see the wolf-girl all run for the ladder leading to the hayloft above the house but Peter and his grandmother head for the door to make sure that she cannot escape. Never rising up on two legs, the wolf-girl bounds all about the kitchen in a frenzy, knocking over everything; growling and coughing out “intolerable, thick grunts of distress.” She even defecates several times much like a fearful animal would and the stench that fills the house is that of something noticeably different, it is not human shit that they smell. By this time, the grandmother is convinced that it is the child of her dead daughter but is still very

⁴⁸ Carter, Angela. “Peter and the Wolf.” *Saints and Strangers*. (New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1986), 60.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 61.

much afraid of the wolf-girl as she, upon finding no way out of the house, squats down as a wolf would do and begins to howl incessantly. In response to her calls, the other wolves from her pack answer with howls of their own and descend upon the house to rescue the wolf-girl. Peter and his grandmother finally take refuge in the hayloft above as the wolves break the door down. They come only for her and, though the kitchen is demolished further, upon investigation by the other villagers it is found that the wolves did not take or disturb anything else. The grandmother dies soon after due to complications with the bite she received on her hand. Peter asks the village priest if he will teach him to read the Bible; becoming deeply pious over the next few years and eventually at fourteen years of age Peter heads off to the seminary in another town down in the valley. During his first night of travel, camped out alongside a river that runs from the mountain, he goes to have a drink and wash his face in the water. On the opposing bank, he sees the wolf-girl who is also coming to the river to drink. He sees she is now covered in more hair than before and accompanied by two wolf cubs that, after she has satisfied her thirst, she allows to suckle at her breasts. Peter is enamored by this scene, begins to sob and with outstretched arms starts to wade across the river towards the wolf-girl. She is startled by this and, frightened, runs back into the woods with the cubs scurrying behind. At this point Peter reaches the epiphany that he no longer has anything to fear and decides that the seminary is now useless. “He experienced the vertigo of freedom.”⁵⁰ Though he must still leave his childhood behind in the old mountain town, he sees his own history turn into a simply bit of scenery suited for just such a tale as the wolves and the wolf-girl. “As he said goodbye to it, he saw it turn into so much scenery, into the wonderful backcloth for an old country tale, tale of a child suckled by

⁵⁰ Ibid. 66.

wolves, perhaps, or of wolves nursed by a woman.”⁵¹ He must press on to a new tale, a different story, and will not look back for fear—much like Lot’s wife—of being turned to a pillar of salt.

As one can see, the events of the Texas folktale of the wolf-girl of Devil’s River and Carter’s “Peter and the Wolf” closely resemble each other. It is not so much that it is intended to be a representation of the original tale, rather, as a kind of response to overarching dominant narratives. I argue this because of her use of Prokofiev’s title, in which the masculine themes within the narratives are apparent. In connecting the two, she is able to call upon a lesser known story and apply its energies to uprooting these themes. Unfortunately, this opens up many opportunities for psychoanalysis to pull Carter’s re-telling back into a restrictively Oedipalized structure of representation. And while Carter’s method of story-telling is definitely focused on resisting certain narratives of repressing the idea of sexual difference for women, Freud in particular, it stands to reason that to maintain a discourse such as this is to ignore the vast potentiality that a nomadic feminine subjectivity in terms of becoming-animal can provide. For example, in her essay on Carter’s ideas and method in “Peter and the Wolf” Jean Wyatt sets up Carter as pitting herself against Freud’s image of a castrated woman. She argues that “Carter challenges Freud’s image of woman as castrate, attempting to displace it by entering into the cultural imaginary her own picture of an intact female body.”⁵² Wyatt continues with her claim by pointing out how in the part of Carter’s story, when Peter is able to look upon the wolf-girl’s sex, he does not see a lack of a penis, as the traditional Freudian narrative of sexual discovery would have one believe. Peter does not see the wolf-girl as castrated or missing something in order to position himself comfortably back into the sex/gender system. Instead of “nothing”

⁵¹ Ibid. 67.

⁵² Wyatt, Jean. “The Violence of Gendering: Castration Images in Angela Carter’s *The Magic Toyshop*, *The Passion of New Eve*, and “Peter and the Wolf.” *Critical Essays on Angela Carter*. ed. Lindsay Tucker. (New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1998), 61-2.

Carter describes the wolf-girl's flesh as "infinity." Wyatt believes that Carter is purposefully troping Freud here by contrasting the wolf-girl with the figure of the castrated wolf of the "Wolf Man's" castration anxiety dream.⁵³ "Peter doesn't reduce female difference to a logic of the same (having/not having the penis): he sees his cousin's vagina in all its "puzzling otherness," its "unresolved materiality," its heterogeneity."⁵⁴ Wyatt concludes from this that Peter sees a "vision of real difference" and that the story itself is honorable in that it provides an adequate and affirming representation of the female body that resists the dominant libidinal economy. This is all well and good, but I believe problems arise when questioning what she means by representation. "If representation governs what we believe in as real, the absence of representation has the effect of erasing reality."⁵⁵ Wyatt makes this jump from the material back to representation in order to reinforce her arguments on the efficacy of the female sex organs from cultural representations. But is it not the point here to be looking past the sense of reality that is relying on the very same structures that efface the female body in the first place? Moreover, to build a discourse based on the representations that apparently govern our belief in what is real, does this not put us back where we started in terms of lack or nothing? That is to say, is this method of dialectical thinking necessary or does it actually threaten the affirmation of the other or of difference all over again?

For example, is it necessarily correct to picture the wolf-girl, as Wyatt does, as "an intact female body?" If we have written off castration already as Oedipal posturing, then what does intact really mean here? Intact in terms of the human, perhaps? In this case, the wolf-girl would not be intact, rather, she would be something else, something that affirms difference much stronger than what a humanly gendered subject could produce. In a sense, to not push the idea of

⁵³ Ibid. 62. See also Freud's "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis." (1918) (Wolf Man's case history).

⁵⁴ Ibid. 62.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 63.

the wolf-girl further, in that she *is* wolf-girl, is to ignore the potential of her body itself and what it can do. In other words, the titling of Carter's story as "Peter and the Wolf" calls upon everything that Wyatt sets up in order to reorganize libidinal energies in favor of a differencing of the woman as other. But if the folktale of the wolf-girl is what is being re-told, then it is something that goes beyond the other as a female human and the idea of reality as something to be represented, or that falls into positioning a structural discourse that is able to reinforce it. Therefore, to label the girl as "intact" in order to appropriate the figure of the wolf-girl back into the realm of the human denies her body and what it can do. Furthermore, the monstrousness of the wolf-girl is completely left out of the equation, that within the story that holds our fascination in the first place. I would argue that in "Peter and the Wolf," the energies of animal are just as, if not more, important as the energies of woman. Granted, it is not a matter of bypassing or skipping over the woman to reach the animal, rather, it is to call attention to the re-mapping of becoming-woman becoming-animal that demonstrates to rely on materiality is to deny the representation of such. Nor is it merely the matter of castration or lack; what I mean by monstrous here is absolute affirmation of the wolf-girl's difference: sexually, humanly and otherwise. The wolf-girl cannot be represented because her story is "being-with" or following the dominating narrative structures of human, not solely woman. She can be re-told, but not represented. While Wyatt is astute to point out how Carter resists and counters Freudian psychoanalysis, I do not believe she pushes the idea and story of the wolf-girl to its potential: that of becoming-animal, which would point directly to the materiality of the wolf-girl's body rather than representation and affirm her sexual reclamation far more violently—which is indeed Carter's strategy—than with the structuralized relationship that keeps reality and the imagination at odds with each other.

Hope Jennings, in her essay on Carter's "Peter and the Wolf" agrees with Wyatt's strategy of countering Freud's "nothing" with how Carter portrays Peter's look at the wolf-girl's sex as affirming sexual difference. Her claim is that in addition to telling the story from a male perspective that does not reduce the difference of the other or of woman, Carter in fact is able to provide an "other" discourse of sexual relations.⁵⁶ Where Jennings' argument differs from Wyatt's is how Carter's demythologizing originates, namely the creation story in Genesis and the Christian myth of the Fall. "Carter views Genesis as one of the more insidious patriarchal narratives, since within Western culture it has had such a significant impact on the construction of gendered subjectivities as well as socio-sexual roles and/or relations."⁵⁷ Jennings believes that Carter's approach to these narratives is a revisionist, rather than deconstructive, move in the direction of providing alternative examples of female transgression and desire. She notes also that it is important to realize that the way in which feminine disruption of patriarchal narratives "lends itself to various feminist appropriations of the myth" that allow for the biblical text itself to be better understood in terms of sexual relation and, perhaps, free the Bible from its patriarchal ancestry. But this seems to beg the question of whether or not it is at all necessary to try and change the relationship with a text such as the Bible. Insofar as if Carter's method of re-telling folklore and fairy tales is to confront and challenge the patriarchal narratives, then it is not a matter of reconciliation, rather, of radicalizing the text entirely; penetrating it in order to push the feminine subjectivity all the way through and coming out the other side with something entirely different that does not run the risk of falling back into some other kind of dominating

⁵⁶ Jennings, Hope. "Genesis and Gender: The Word, the Flesh and the Fortunate fall in 'Peter and the Wolf' and 'Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest.'" *Angela Carter: New Critical Readings*. ed. Andermahr, Sonya and Lawrence Phillips. (London: Continuum Int'l. Publishing Group, 2012), 165.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 165.

mythology. I believe Jennings argument is leading up to this kind of radicalization when she points out that with Peter's second encounter with the wolf-girl:

The wolf-woman now seems more animal than human, as a kind of primal mother with cubs feeling from her 'dangling breasts'...Rather than feeling revulsion, Peter is overcome with the same sense of 'awe of wonder' he experienced when he first saw the wolf-girl as a child.⁵⁸

This awe of wonder can be attributed to the kind of proto-ethic that Calarco explains. Therefore, it is not so much that Peter does not reduce the femininity of the wolf-girl, rather, he does not reduce the wolf-girl as a body that is other than human. Before he can even succumb to any kind of reduction or notion of lack; before he can negate or disavow the impact of the wolf-girl, he is indeed affected. Moreover, the purity of his transparency as a child reinforces a play of ideas and interpretations rather than Peter simply reducing her to "nothing" because he notices something that is *not* there. This aligns more with the wolf-girl and Peter becoming-animal instead of a psychoanalytic discourse. To put it another way, Rosi Braidotti quotes Laurie Anderson as saying that "science fiction's anti-anthropocentrism allows it to dispense rapidly with the question of "human nature" and its psychological repertoire, so as to move toward the exploration of other possible worlds."⁵⁹ In the same vein as Deleuze and Guattari, Braidotti associates the emotions that are common to the human condition as not necessarily being eliminated, rather, they are "decentralized and diffused throughout the text." Also, this is not specific to the genre of science fiction insofar as any text containing some kind of ultimate plan or plot to be uncovered or revealed by history and psychic processes. "There are, instead, only

⁵⁸ Ibid. 169.

⁵⁹ Braidotti, Rosi. "Cyberteratologies: Female Monsters Negotiate the Other's Participation in Humanity's Far Future." *Envisioning the Future: Science Fiction and the Next Millennium*. ed. Barr, Marleen S. (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2003), 150.

debris and sets of hazard meetings and ad hoc intersections of events (Deleuze calls these intersections points of crossings) rather than Freud's libidinal redestination or Marx's teleological process."⁶⁰ Therefore with Carter's wolf tales, especially "Peter and the Wolf," it proves to be a more productive mode of discourse to examine her works from a post-structuralist and post-humanist perspective that will not only affirm the radicalized nomadic feminine subjectivity but also engage it in such a way that the affects that it distributes are not caught back up in the narrative, psychological and genre structures it strives to avoid.

Examining this discourse further we can discover four different ways in which a post-structuralist post-humanist approach radicalizes the nomadic feminine subjectivity in terms of becoming-animal: (1) The nakedness of the wolf-girl that initially catches Peter's attention; (2) The absence of language for the wolf-girl and how this works in connection to her inability to see the reflection of her own face; (3) Peter's experience of the "vertigo of freedom" and the emerging sovereignty of the wolf-girl as beast; (4) The idea of the Texas folktale "following" or "being-with" the patriarchal narrative that Carter is resisting in her work.

First, with the concern of nakedness, there are two different perspectives that one must consider: Peter's and the wolf-girl's. Peter is immediately in awe of her even before he realizes that she is not quite wolf. He sees her as an enigma of sorts before appropriating the idea that she, in fact, *could* be human. "Then Peter saw that the third wolf was a prodigy, a marvel, a naked one, going on all fours, as they did, but hairless as regards the body although hair grew around its head."⁶¹ He is so struck by her that the last thing he sees in her figure is that she might be human; the fact that lastly he sees her as naked and walking on her hands and feet, only having hair around her head is what cues him finally to regard her as something other than

⁶⁰ Ibid. 151.

⁶¹ Carter 60.

animal. Also, she is the third wolf that Peter sees, as if Carter is already denying the set-up of a binary structure. At this first encounter it is not that there is a male-wolf or a female-wolf, or a male-human or a female-human, rather, the only gendered pronouns are that of Peter and the men who come to scare the wolves away. The wolf-‘girl’ is not yet gendered, not yet human, and third to each of these categories in that the animal that Peter sees remains fully other in ‘its’ objectification. There is only a “bald wolf” that fascinates the boy. Moreover, he is naked *with* the animal that he sees and is amazed by in that his rationalization that the creature is indeed naked after being interrupted by its presence. His intellectual composure, already that of child in that his potential for playing with the idea of a bald wolf, tries to return from this interruption of subjectivity and the only response that young Peter can find to finally explain this to himself is that he sees a body that is naked. The idea of nakedness does not come from the wolf-girl, it comes from Peter’s assumption that she must be a human running *with* the animals in order to *be* naked at all. This puts Peter at odds with himself and his own subjectivity is displaced by the event so that in order to reconcile himself—and the wolf-girl—he marks her as naked; he himself must be wearing clothes in order to point out that the animal he gazes upon is without. Yet his fascination with the wolf-girl does not fade and he is continuously “being-with” her throughout the story. “Once the girl was dumped on the earth floor of her grandmother’s house, the boy secretly poked at her left buttock with his forefinger, out of curiosity, to see what she felt like. She felt warm but hard.”⁶² And later, when Peter sees her again drinking at the river, her nakedness is equated with her own consciousness in that is inherently different, something that Peter is unable to account for and he is physically shaken by her otherness. It is important to note here that Carter likens the wolf-girl to that of “our first parents, before the Fall.”

Undoubtedly this is where Jennings’ argument emerges. But what also must be considered

⁶² Ibid. 61.

within the same paragraph describing the wolf-girl drinking is that there is not, and never will be, any kind of acknowledgement of herself as anything remotely related to the idea of “human.” “She did not know she had a face; she had never known she had a face...without innocence or display...repentance was not within her comprehension.”⁶³ The Fall of mankind takes a backseat to not only the wolf-girl’s potential to somehow suddenly be human, but also to Peter’s continual fascination with her as other than human, as becoming-animal. In this case, Eve will never consider moral compunction because there will never be an instance where blame would be an issue; temptation itself being non-existent. In other words, the wolf-girl’s perspective is so radically other that it cannot be dealt with. To release the feminine subjectivity from the patriarchal restraints of the biblical narrative is, as I argued above, a reconciliation that inevitably reinforces the structure in which it functions. But to consider this in terms of the animal, the nomadic feminine subjectivity is already roaming radically free and preceding her identity altogether. Conversely, Carter’s story “Wolf-Alice” is demonstrative of the polarity of this radicalization. The wolf-girl or feral child in this tale, after hours of studying and experimenting with her ‘littermate’ that dwells on the other side of a mirror, Alice eventually comes to the crushing realization that the images she has been playing with are only her reflection and this reduces her to tears which she also does not understand. “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.”⁶⁴ Alice becomes more intimate with herself as a logical subject, as something all too human now and from then on can only be seen as a representation of an animal and her desires are no longer nomadic, rather, they are caught up in the awareness of herself as an “I.” This sense of self found in “Wolf-Alice” in terms of the Fall is more suitable for

⁶³ Ibid. 66.

⁶⁴ Carter, Angela. “Wolf-Alice.” *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*. (New York: Penguin Books, 1979), 124.

Jennings' argument because it is precisely where she stops. While in "Peter and the Wolf" Carter's wolf-girl is ever roaming and must be considered in terms of becoming-animal.

Another example is the absence of language for the wolf-girl and how this works in connection with her inability to see her own reflection or her own face. When Peter, his father, his grandmother and the villagers go to capture the wolf-girl they find her curled up sleeping. She is laying as a wolf would be, "Her spine had grown so supple she could curl into a perfect C."⁶⁵ Already Carter is hinting towards language. For as soon as they catch her with a sliding noose, tie her up and start to drag her back to the village the wolf-girl goes limp. "She didn't scream or shout, she didn't seem to be able to, she made only a few dull, guttural sounds in the back of her throat, and, though she did not seem to know how to cry, water trickled out of the corners of her eyes."⁶⁶ After they get her back into the grandmother's house and cut her loose, she growls and grunts in distress. Eventually the girl begins to howl incessantly. This part of the tale is interesting for two reasons. First, in her absence of language, Carter refers to the wolf-girl as a representation of a perfect letter "C". Counter to the way in which she is unable to "speak," Carter shows the representative nature of language, the perfect way in which she cannot speak, adjacently flush with how the wolf-girl is indeed speaking through *response*. That is to say, because she is forced into a representation of the language with which she has no relationship, while simultaneously being viewed under an imperative of language (She is a human "C" before she is an animal-girl), the way that she can only "speak" in guttural groans, yelps and howls is how the wolf-girl demonstrates resistance to the order of the language. As Deleuze and Guattari would argue, "Life does not speak, it listens and waits."⁶⁷ I would add to this that the wolf-girl, while she is not speaking or according to Derrida *reacting*, she is indeed responding through her

⁶⁵ Carter 61.

⁶⁶ Ibid. 61.

⁶⁷ Deleuze and Guattari 76.

resistance to representation. She *is* life through her response of ceasing to be entirely human. Just as Bruns' refers to the myth of Actaeon's transformation into a deer and the way his temporality is different from the established order of things—the temporality of an in-between state in which, in the case of Carter's wolf-girl, she is neither fully human nor fully animal. She is somewhere in-between that makes her radically present and un-representable in terms of language, reacting or whatever. Her body is a language, yet it is not; her grunts and howls are a type of speaking yet they are not; and as we see also, her sex is that of human, yet it is not. This is my second reason; if we look closely at how Carter has set up the scene in which the wolf-girl has squatted down like a wolf and starts to howl we are immediately aware of Peter's fascination with her sex which is fully visible due to the way that she is sitting. As he falls into the surprising wonder he begins to feel as he fully takes in looking at the wolf-girl's sex, seeing that the vagina itself is illuminated by its own phosphorescence without help from any other source of light, the moment is enveloped by her howling. It is not necessarily the case that her sex alone is what Peter gets lost in, rather, that the scene itself is enveloped by her howling and that he is fascinated not by her sex as a human female but as one would look at an animal's sex.

Her lips opened up as she howled so that she offered him, without her own intention or volition, a view of a set of Chinese boxes of whorled flesh that seemed to open one upon another into herself, drawing him into an inner, secret place in which destination perpetually receded before him, his first devastating, vertiginous intimation of infinity.⁶⁸

Carter is doing a few things here that move more towards becoming-animal for Peter as well as for the wolf-girl which demonstrate the point of Peter's experience of the "vertigo of freedom" and the emerging sovereignty of the wolf-girl as beast. First, we can look at the use of

⁶⁸ Carter 63.

“Chinese boxes” in two different ways that emphasize the same point. Either the reference is to the physical Chinese boxes, similar in style to the Russian matryoshka dolls in which there are a set of graduated containers each being smaller and fitting into the next. Or she could be referring to the frame narrative known as a Chinese box structure in which a story is told in narrative form from inside another narrative and so on. With both, the “whorled flesh” that Carter describes has Peter—and the reader—spinning or cycling ever further into different perspectives within perspectives; all of them demonstrating an in-between temporality of flesh as Bruns talks about. She shows the wolf-girl to be more and more complex the more she howls. Also, it is important to note here the subtle allusions to Prokofiev’s *Peter and the Wolf*. In the original children’s musical story the duck, who initially swims to the middle of the pond in order to avoid the wolf, is swallowed whole as she panics and tries to run away. Skip forward to the end of the story, when Peter has captured the wolf and acquires the assistance of hunters who had been tracking the beast to help him march the animal in a kind of victory parade to lock it up in the local zoo. There are two distinct lines in the narration that stand out against the patriarchal themes of the tale. The first, following the end of the celebratory procession towards the zoo, Peter’s grandfather, walking with the cat, states “What if Peter hadn’t caught the wolf? What then?”⁶⁹ The second line being the narrator telling us that “if you listen very carefully, you’d hear the duck quacking inside the wolf’s belly, because the wolf in his hurry had swallowed her alive.” The grandfather is the astute voice of reason in the face of Peter’s triumph over the beast and follows suit with Carter’s argument concerning speculative fiction. And though his grumpy pondering is a metaphysical one, he puts the idea of capturing the wolf into perspective within the narrative in that there is the possibility of another story that opens up at the end of *Peter and the Wolf*. With the matter of the duck still being alive in the wolf’s belly, she is captured twice

⁶⁹ Prokofiev, Sergio. *Peter and the Wolf*. Perf. Boston Symphony Orchestra. RCA Victor, 1939. LP 78 rpm.

fold within narratives that are not necessarily her own and she is not only captured by the now would-be sovereignty of the wolf figure, but she is consumed by it as well. The duck's plight mimics in much the same way the account of the wolf-girl's sexuality that is enveloped by the howling of her as animal until the sovereignty of her wolf pack comes to rescue her, to re-consume her. Just as from inside the wolf's belly the femininity of the duck could not be effaced, neither can the wolf-girl's sexuality as beast. The different animal and human figures begin to stack inside of each other like Chinese boxes until all Peter can see is "his first, devastating, vertiginous intimation of infinity." If we consider this in terms of when Peter encounters the wolf-girl years later drinking at the river, her reflection is the image of infinity that Peter originally had seen. Therefore, in the sense of becoming-animal, she does not see the logical subject that one would attribute to "I", rather, she already sees the infinity of narrative within narrative, perspective within perspective, human within animal and so on. "She did not know she had a face; she had never known she had a face and so her face itself was the mirror of a different kind of consciousness than ours is...without innocence or display."⁷⁰ Peter, upon seeing this infinity for a second time in the wolf-girl can do nothing but burst out crying and wander dumbfounded into the river if only to embrace her and "join her in her marvelous and private grace, impelled by the access of an almost visionary ecstasy."⁷¹

Lastly, we come to the fourth way in which a post-structuralist post-humanist approach radicalizes the nomadic feminine subjectivity in terms of becoming-animal: the idea of the Texas folktale "following" or "being-with" the patriarchal narrative that Carter is resisting in her work. As Braidotti argues, taking a post-structuralist stance with concern towards a philosophy of difference has its problems in that it is usually caught up in a kind of self-pity or nostalgic

⁷⁰ Carter 66.

⁷¹ Ibid. 66.

longing. Applying a nomadic theory of discourse to the idea of post-structuralism is necessary in order to posit a politics of affirmation and aligns itself with post-human discourse. Also, to place emphasis on *zoe* rather than *bios*, we can come to a better understanding about life that does not rely on phallogocentric modes of thought; those of which I explain above as being caught up in Oedipalized methods of psychoanalysis that only consider the human as such.⁷² “The subject is stripped of its old genderized, racialized, normalized, straitjacket and relocated into patterns of different becomings.”⁷³ In this case, Braidotti is applying Deleuzian thought to the application of poststructuralism in which affirmation of difference is key in order to avoid the “more nihilistic or relativistic edge of contemporary philosophy.”⁷⁴ This method of discourse allows for a unique way of critiquing political, ethical or social issues that are otherwise normative and that close the door on particular matters that problematize rather than establish new avenues of affirmative thinking. Simply put, to think nomadically is to orient oneself pragmatically. One navigates according to the variations of the territory which brings forth the necessity for going about things in more imaginative ways. For the works of Carter, especially “Peter and the Wolf,” to consider this tale as becoming-animal is the activity of a dynamic “minority,” in that creative affirmation is radically opposed to the “majority” concepts, such as the dominant subject being “stuck with the burden of self-perpetuating Being and the flat repetition of existing patterns.”⁷⁵ “Peter and the Wolf,” is the perfect springboard for thinking through the concepts of becoming-animal in that, as Braidotti argues

[B]ecoming-woman is the necessary starting point for the deconstruction of phallogocentric identities precisely because sexuality as an institution structured

⁷² Braidotti, Rosi. *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 21.

⁷³ *Ibid.* 21.

⁷⁴ Braidotti, Rosi. “Nomadism with a difference: Deleuze’s legacy in a feminist perspective.” *Man and World*. 29 (1996), 305.

⁷⁵ *Nomadic Theory* 29.

around sexual dualism and its corollary—the positioning of women and sexual “deviants” as figure of otherness—are constitutive of Western thought.⁷⁶

Therefore, becoming-animal in Carter’s work can be looked at as the next or “following” step in pushing the transformative elements of a nomadic feminine subjectivity. And though it resists the normativity of “majority,” the fact that it is able to traverse, penetrate and re-map normative discourses is how it produces the sense of “being-with” in that it is indeed becoming-animal; the sovereignty of the lurking wolf; the infinity of nomadic feminine subjectivity. Carter’s reliance on the double approach of a lesser known folktale and normative story-telling tropes allow her to re-map the feminine subject in order to create a danger for the majority masculine perspective. Peter may want with all his “being” to join the wolf-girl in her freedom from humanity and the struggles and limitations it creates for itself, but she will always run away. If he had come within reach to embrace her, it is safe to assume that she would have killed him. He is limited to “being-with” the wolf-girl, as she is limited to “being-with” him. He is stuck while she roams, and what lingers of her humanity is how Peter vertiginously envisions his chance at the possibility that she could conceive his wanting to join her.

CONCLUSION

My examination thus far of Carter’s methodology of re-telling in the short story “Peter and the Wolf” has shown how the incorporation of the Texas folktale of the wolf-girl of Devil’s River and Prokofiev’s musical children’s story create a sense of “following” or “being-with” in that the feminine perspective is not only radicalized by the nomadic subjectivity entailed in the female figuration of the wolf, but also opens up this subjectivity onto the terrain of “becoming.” That is to say, by integrating the woman with animal, finding an alternate discourse in Carter’s

⁷⁶ Ibid. 30.

re-telling is able to sidestep metaphysical ideologies through the nomadic wolf-like tracking through philosophical concepts of difference and embodiment. Insofar as sexual potential is more richly realized when the libidinal energies or desires she is trying to liberate are put into terms that traverse not only humanist boundaries and limitations, but disciplines as well. Therefore, concluding on the matter of the question of the animal, we can see that more imaginative means of critique through difference, instead of traditionally human-centered means of discourse, allow a post-structuralist post-humanist exploration that affirms the “unthinking” of animal studies in that expected and comfortable “human” conclusions about what we are and what it means to be human are found to be, as Donna Haraway would suggest, intimately entangled with that of the non-human world.⁷⁷ Lastly, and most importantly, it suggests the necessity of a *transdisciplinarity* or an understanding of “a kind of distributed reflexivity necessitated...by the fact that *no* discourse, no discipline, can make transparent the conditions of its own observations.”⁷⁸ The working towards a philosophy of difference that embraces the myriad disciplines that are necessary in order to tease out new and creative ways of exploring an object of study, in this case Angela Carter to which she was no stranger to applying multiplicitous means of dodging, thwarting and resisting dominant themes of Western culture, like the wolf itself: always a pack and ever present, lurking as it hunts.

⁷⁷ See Donna Haraway’s *When Species Meet*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008)

⁷⁸ Wolfe, Cary. *What is Posthumanism?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 116. See also Irene Dolling and Sabine Hark’s “She Who Speaks Shadow Speaks Truth: Transdisciplinarity in Women’s and Gender Studies.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 25, no. 4 (2000): 1195, 1197.

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