

穆杨 著

*Breaking the Magic Spell:*  
*from Body to Subject in Angela Carter's Rewriting of the Fairy Tale*

# 破除魔咒：

安吉拉·卡特童话  
反写作品中的身体与主体



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## 中文摘要

白雪公主、睡美人、小红帽、蓝胡子的新娘、美女与野兽、苏醒的木偶、夏娃、大地母亲、黑色维纳斯、丽达与天鹅、特洛伊的海伦、丽兹波顿，好莱坞偶像——这些似曾相识但却以全新面貌出现的形象构成了英国当代作家安吉拉·卡特神奇而另类的童话世界。卡特所定义的童话是一个宽泛的概念，它更接近于罗兰·巴特所指的神话，是一种固化了的符号体系，一种用自然性掩盖事物文化性的话语，一种渗透到日常生活中并潜移默化地控制人们思想和行为的“真理”。更准确地说，卡特所致力于破除的是男性话语中关于女性的童话——其中既包括了经典童话、民间故事、神话传说、圣经典故，也包括了文学经典、人物传奇、童谣、迪斯尼动画及好莱坞电影。

这篇论文将按照卡特对童话的定义界定研究范畴，探讨卡特四部长篇小说《新夏娃受难记》、《魔幻玩具铺子》、《霍夫曼博士的恐怖欲望机器》、《马戏团之夜》及部分短篇小说《雪儿》、《血腥的密室》、《紫姬之爱》、《丽兹的老虎》、《伏尔河斧子谋杀案》、《狮子先生求爱记》、《老虎的新娘》、《黑色维纳斯》，《与狼为伴》中被反写的童话主题。这些作品颠覆了权威文本中两极化了的女性形象：美

丽、温柔、善良、隐忍，甘于奉献的女性在卡特笔下命运多舛，境遇堪忧；反之，传统意义上强悍、倔强、粗俗、残酷，自私的女性被描写得自由洒脱，志得意满。卡特激进的反写成为二十世纪末文学研究的热点，也引起了评论界持久而激烈的争论。有的批评家认为卡特的反写标志着女性主义在话语领域的新纪元，也有的批评家认为这样的反写只是用另一种方式在重复父权话语。

这篇论文试用福柯的身体与主体，权力与抵抗理论阐释卡特童话反写作品的主题，从而重新审视这些作品的女性主义价值。本论文的中心观点是卡特的反写是以身体为视角，以主体探求为目的的双重结构：一方面揭示了经典文本中父权通过规训、惩罚、自我监视等身体手段塑造驯顺女性主体的过程；另一方面通过对叛逆女性的积极描写为女性在现有权力关系中通过身体寻求主体性提供可能。本文还将用福柯任何抵抗都只能来源于权力内部的观点解释卡特作品中存在的含混，并得出结论——卡特的童话反写从总体来说是女性作家在话语领域对以父权为主导的权力关系的抵抗。

论文主体由三章构成。第一章“童话反写中的身体与主体”确立了整篇论文的理论框架。这一章定义了四个基本概念——反写（后现代戏仿）、童话、主体及身体，同时也探讨了这些概念在卡特作品分析中的内在联系。第二章“瓦解被动的主体：身体作为权力的场所”分析了卡特反写作品中对“理想女性”形象的瓦解。她们由于身体被“权力的眼睛”客体化、被消费文明商品化、被囚禁在极度被动的状态中、在家庭空间被规训和剥削、遭到暴力的威胁和虐待的恫吓，或被各种身体技术和话语强迫习得

“女性气质”，从而丧失了主体性。第三章“重建自主主体：身体作为抵抗的场所”分析了卡特反写作品中对“邪恶女性”形象的重塑。她们用壮硕的身体、粗鄙的举止挑战男性对于女性身体的审美标准，用暴力反抗父权对女性身体的操纵，在把女性身体商品化的体制中彰显独立的自主意识，在压抑女性身体的语境下张扬自主的女性欲望，并让滋养他人的母性身体获得真正的权力。第二章和第三章作为一个有机整体，彼此呼应论证了卡特反写童话作品中探求女性自主性身体—主体的主题。



## Abstract

Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, Little Red Riding Hood, Bluebeard's bride, Beauty and the Beast, wakened marionette, Eve, Mother Earth, Black Venus, Leda and the Swan, Helen of Troy, Lizzie Borden, and Hollywood idol—these familiar yet totally new images build up the British contemporary writer Angela Carter's magical and alternative fairy-tale world. The fairy tale, for Carter, is an inclusive definition, similar to what Roland Barthes calls mythologies—an established signifying system, a discourse that transforms what is cultural into what appears to be natural, and a "truth" that permeates daily life and insidiously manipulates our minds and behavior. More accurately, what Carter endeavors to demythologize is the fairy tale about women in male discourses—ranging from classical fairy tales, folk tales, myths, biblical allusions to literary classics, famous people's legends, children's rhymes, Disney cartoons and Hollywood movies.

Setting the boundary of the fairy tale according to Carter's definition, this dissertation aims to explore the theme of Carter's rewriting of the fairy tale in four of her novels—*The Passion of*

*New Eve, The Magic Toyshop, The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman, Nights at the Circus* and some of her short stories—"The Snow Child," "The Bloody Chamber," "The Loves of Lady Purple," "Lizzie's Tiger," "The Fall River Axe Murders," "The Courtship of Mr Lyon," "The Tiger's Bride," "Black Venus," and "The Company of Wolves." These works subvert the polarized female images in authoritative texts: the beautiful, kind, good-hearted, self-restraining, and sacrificing women are entrapped in misfortune and misery under Carter's pen, while the conventionally defined strong, wayward, vulgar, cruel, and selfish women are depicted as subjects enjoying freedom and prosperity. Such radical rewriting became a focus of attention in literature studies at the end of the twentieth century and has aroused lasting and heated debate among critics. Some believe that Carter's rewriting marks a new era of feminism in the discursive field; others argue that her rewriting is repeating the patriarchal discourse from another perspective.

This dissertation attempts to interpret the theme of Carter's rewriting of the fairy tale with Foucault's theory on body and subject, power and resistance in order to restore the feminist value to these works. My central argument is that Carter's rewriting is a two-fold project with an ultimate goal to explore female subjectivity through the perspective of body. Her rewriting, on the one hand, exposes the process how submissive female subjects are shaped by patriarchal power through bodily techniques such as discipline, punishment and self-surveillance in canonical texts, and, on the other hand, provides possibilities

for more autonomous female subjects by positively portraying rebellious women with subversive bodies. And the debate on the ambivalence in Carter's works is recast with Foucault's insight that resistance is never exterior to power. Therefore, the conclusion is that Carter's fairy-tale rewriting, generally speaking, is a discursive resistance to the power relations dominated by patriarchy.

The body part of the dissertation covers three chapters. Chapter One "From Body to Subject in Rewriting of the Fairy Tale" provides a theoretical framework by defining the basic terms such as rewriting ( postmodernist parody), fairy tale, subject, and body adopted in the present study and exploring the interaction of these notions. Chapter Two "Disrupting the Submissive Subject: Body as the Site of Power" endeavors to analyze how Carter shatters the "ideal women" images in authoritative texts. These women are deprived of their autonomy with their bodies objectified in "the eye of power," fetishized in consumer culture, imprisoned in ultimate passivity, disciplined and exploited in familial space, afflicted and bullied by violence and sadism, and trained into "femininity" by various corporeal means. Chapter Three "Reconstructing a More Autonomous Female Subject: Body as the Site of Resistance" aims to analyze Carter's re-representation of the "wicked women." They challenge male aesthetics with huge bodies and coarse manners, rise up with violent bodies against the suffocating patriarchal dominance, expediently strive for subjectivity in a society that institutionally commodifies the female body, initiate into

autonomous female desire suppressed by male discourse, and restore real power to the nurturing maternal body. These women resist the inscription of power and provide possibilities for more autonomous female subjects with subversive bodies. Chapters Two and Three, as an organic whole, echo and reinforce each other to illustrate how Carter breaks the magic spell cast on the female body-subject in her rewriting project of fairy tales.

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## Introduction

The fact that by the mid-1990s, Angela Carter (1940 – 1992), had been the single most popular subject of Ph. D. theses in English Literature at British Universities,<sup>①</sup> makes her nominated as “the most read contemporary author on English university campus”(Barker 14) and playfully called “St. Angela of the Campus”(Dalley 29). As “one of Britain’s most original, iconoclastic, and learned writers”(Tucker 1), Carter’s early death of lung cancer caused great pity and feeling of loss in British literature. Salman Rushdie lamented: “With Angela Carter’s death English literature has lost its high sorceress, its benevolent witch-Queen, a burlesque artist of genius and antic grace”(5). Since her death, Carter has been gaining increasing popularity in the

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① Paul Barker, editor of the magazine *New Society*, who published many of Carter’s essays, comes to the above conclusion on the basis that “...among the requests for grants for doctoral study received by the British Academic in the academic year 1992 – 93, there were 40 proposals to study Carter’s work, more—and this is the punch line—than the council received for the entire eighteenth century”(Gamble 1). Lorna Sage also assumes that “there were more than forty applicants wanting to do doctorates on Carter, making her by far the most fashionable twentieth-century topic” according to what the Academy President reported in the year 1992 – 93(“Introduction” 3).