

The Analysis of Wolf Imagery in *The Company of Wolves*

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Imagery analysis is a commonly used analytical method in literary analysis. In Angela Carter's work, the image of wolves is particularly prominent. Her "Werewolf Tetralogy" rewrites traditional culture and subverts traditional consciousness, and is the research object of many scholars. Starting from the analysis of the wolf image in *The Company of Wolves*, this paper uses Deleuze's Becoming-Animal Theory to explore the construction of harmony between nature, humans and gender relations in *The Company of Wolves*.

Keywords: *The Company of Wolves*, Wolf imagery, Becoming-Animal

Introduction

A large part of Angela Carter's work is an adaptation of classic fairy tales. She deconstructs and rewrites fairy tales, dissecting their moral and social metaphors, while combining elements of werewolf stories with the ideology of fairy tales to create a werewolf tetralogy (Lai, 2012a, p. 152). Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the figure of wolf in Angela Carter's werewolf works. In *The Company of Wolves*, on the surface, the wolf is just an animal, but from a deep perspective, the wolf is a representative of the male in a patriarchal society, but also a victim of the patriarchal society. In the novel, Carter breaks the gender boundaries between men and women, and even the boundaries of life between animals and humans. Her new fairy tales, which contain her views on sexes and on humans and animals, are still useful in reality and worthy of exploration.

The Harmony between Nature and Human

In *The Company of Wolves*, it is clear that this is a union of two worlds. Animals and humans are completely different creatures, but they share many common qualities in this novel. In the second paragraph at the beginning of the novel, the author writes: "The wolf is carnivore incarnate" (Carter, 2015, p. 139), which confirms the assimilation of animal and human characteristics. "Carnivore", meaning carnivorous mammal, and the meaning of "incarnation" is unique to the human body, illustrating the combination of the animal (natural) world and the human (civilized) world; The second appearance of "carnivore Incarnate" is when the werewolf is about to go to eat the little girl's grandmother, which the author repeats, literally illustrating the meaning of carnivores, who feed their appetites by eating human flesh; The third appearance is at the end of the article, where the girl consecrates her chastity to the werewolf, from which it follows that only perfect flesh can appease him, and here the carnivore needs to satisfy physiological desires. Thus, the role of carnivore Incarnate in this story shows the connection between the animal (natural) world and the human world (Tan, 2011, p. 85).

In the natural environment, the forest is the territory of the wolf. The wolf is a staunch follower of the forest, the forest is also to some extent the wolf's "complicity": Fluffy branches wrap around you, trapping unsuspecting passers-by in the net, and all the plants seem to have conspired with the wolf. The village is the human world, and although sometimes wolves lurk in and eat people, most of the time people enjoy a peaceful and comfortable life in the countryside (Xiong, 2014, p. 154). However, the moon is owned by both forests and humans, so to a certain extent we can say that the moon breaks the binary opposition between the natural world and the human world. The moon is described in many places in the novel: if wolves only reflect moonlight in their eyes, then they will flash a cold and unnatural green; When the girl and the wolf make a bet, even though the moon has risen by this time, she deliberately lags behind to get a kiss; When the girl opens the window to look at the garden, it is a white night created by the moon and snow, and the wolves are howling at the moon; And at the end of the novel, after the snowstorm subsides, the ground is snowlight, moonlight and chaotic wolf paw prints. In Western novels and movies, moon is often associated with vampires, and in Angela Carter's *Werewolf*, the opening fourth paragraph writes: "wreaths of garlic on the doors keep out the vampires" (Carter, 2015, p. 136). Thus, the vampire is used as a metaphor in Angela Carter's novel, full of suggestion. The physical state of vampires as "undead" is uncertain and permanently ambiguous, and it resonates with issues such as embodying and defining life, death, and immortality. The greed and instability of vampire desires focus on the nature of desire itself, which is a combination of dependence and greed, and their sexual desire is strong. The connotation of blood in vampires includes wounds, death, and menstruation (thus nourishing blood, sexual blood), as well as its food or semen substitutes (Sceats, 2001, p. 1), which we can see in *The Company of Wolves* with many descriptions of blood: corpses killed by hunters in traps are bloody, illustrating that the process from wolf to man sometimes costs lives; The menstrual blood of the little girl's menarche, the girl has become a woman from a little girl who does not know the world; A trace of blood on the werewolf's chin, "he has been snacking on his catch" (Carter, 2015, p. 145) shows that the werewolf is still a wolf by nature, and drinking blood itself is an absolute carnal desire; The bright red cloak of the little girl, red is the color of poppies, the color of sacrifices, the color of menses (Carter, 2015, p. 148), it also carries the meaning of menstrual blood and sacrifice here (Tan, 2011, p. 86). Therefore, in the novel, Carter borrows the implicit image of vampires through moonlight to break sexual stereotypes, and the stubbornness and unruliness of vampire desire also give the characters characteristics.

At the end of the story, the little girl takes off her own clothes and then takes off the werewolf's clothes and throws them into the stove to burn, in this way, the werewolf becomes a wolf, the girl eventually tames the fierce wolf. However, in the process of changing from wolves to humans, in addition to wearing human clothes, they still retain some animal marks, such as eyes, so they are not trustworthy. But sometimes removing animal marks comes at the cost of life (Lai, 2012b, p. 34): once a wolf fell into the hunter's trap, and when the hunter jumped out of the trap, slit the wolf's throat and cut off its limbs as trophies, what appeared to the hunter was not a wolf, but the corpse of a dead man without a head and feet; In the second short story, when the groom, who disappeared on his wedding night, returns home to find that his former wife now has a new family, he turns into a wolf and angrily bites off the foot of the woman's eldest son, and is then hacked to death with an axe by the woman and her current husband, and the hacked body becomes what he was, just as he did many years ago. In this process, the wolf representing nature and the human being reach harmony and unity.

The Harmony between Two Sexes

The discussion of gender relations is an extremely important core topic in *The Company of wolves*. But for Angela Carter, women's liberation is not just about women's independence and denial of men. Any gender differences should be respected, and subverting either gender in the relationship cannot achieve the true liberation of the other. So men and women can respect each other while maintaining their own uniqueness, and living in harmony is the real female liberation. In order to achieve this goal, it is first necessary to recognize human desires, admit that women have desires just as much as men, and also need to relieve desires. So that only when the sexes recognize their true desires and achieve a state of physical harmony can the relationship between the sexes be truly harmonious (Wu, 2010, p. 117).

In the traditional context of patriarchal culture, it generally seems that all women can do about men's desires is to be vigilant, defensive and self-protective, while women's own desires are never mentioned or even need to be hidden. But the little girl in the novel is not ignorant in front of sex from the beginning. She fell in love at first sight when she first met a werewolf, which is different from the woman in the second story of the novel: the bride needs to wait for her groom on her wedding night. The girl took an active gesture the moment she saw the werewolf. And when the werewolf in the novel bets with the girl, the bet is a kiss, the girl grinds along the way and deliberately loses to the werewolf. In the original novel, the little girl lagged behind the wolf because of her own playfulness, while in Carter's version, the girl deliberately lost to the werewolf in order to get a kiss. Women are no longer passively dominated by men, but new women who can have their own independent thoughts and can act as they think. Besides, when little girl found that she was in danger, instead of passively waiting for the hunter or God's redemption like other women, she redeemed herself with her own calmness and wisdom. She undresses the werewolf and throws it into the fire, and the werewolf will be trapped in wolf form for the rest of her life without clothes, so she can no longer transform into an adult to deceive other girls, and she finally succeeds in taming the fierce wolf.

Although Carter is using the image of wolves and werewolves to criticize patriarchal society, they also have some characteristics that are different from traditional patriarchal men. In the second story, the first husband disappears only because he insists on going outside to the toilet, just for the sake of decency. The word "decency" has traditionally been used for women. The shyness, which is traditionally considered to be a feminine shyness, also appears in men. This shows that men are also victims of a patriarchal society. They are also defined and can't be freedom to become themselves. At the beginning of the description of the wolf, the howl of the wolf is distressing, murdering, and the reason why the wolf is the most feared creature in the forest is that he "cannot listen to reason" (Carter, 2015, p. 139). But when the girl talks to the wolf, there is a great howling rose up, the girl asks: "Who has come to sing us carols" (Carter, 2015, p. 148), the change from a painful roar to a carol to them is that the girl decides to conquer the werewolf with her lust. In the same way, wolves who have lost their minds need perfect flesh to appease them: "Carnivore incarnate, only immaculate flesh appeases him" (Carter, 2015, p. 150). The word used here is not meat, but flesh, which also illustrates the importance of women to male desires, and only when women's desires are liberated can men be truly calmed. At the end of the article, the blizzard died down, the girl sleeps in her grandmother's bed, in the arms of a gentle wolf, and this day is Christmas Day and the birthday of the werewolf. Christmas is a Christian holiday to commemorate the birth of

Jesus, and the werewolf, as a male symbol, is reborn through union with the girl. The wolf was not killed, but tamed. Therefore, men no longer have to disguise, because women are also active agents of desire. Under the liberation of female desires, the savage desires of men are melted by women (Wu, 2010, p. 120). The subsidence of the blizzard also means that the desire and reason of men and women have reached a harmonious balance. The relationship between men and women is no longer antagonistic, and a harmonious and harmonious balance can be achieved.

Becoming-Animal and *The Company of Wolves*

As for the image of the werewolf, the wolf can appear as an animal wolf or in human form: when the animal form dies, it will appear in human form; Or the father of a werewolf is a wolf, when he is born, his feet come out first, his head comes out later, his body and torso are human, but his legs and reproductive organs are wolves, and at the same time he has a wolf heart (Carter, 2015, p. 142). However, there is also a warning in the text: "Fear and flee the wolf; for, worst of all, the wolf may be more than he seems" (Carter, 2015, p. 140). This sentence can also be understood to mean that wolves are not just wolves, but what are wolves besides wolves? And do werewolves belong to wolves or to people? The process of going from wolf to man or man to wolf is exactly what Deleuze proposed by Becoming-Animal (An, 2015, p. 80).

Deleuze thinks that the animals we usually call are molecule animals, but for Becoming-Animal, they are not molecule animals. Because the word "animal" was coined by "man", in the process of naming, man has already classified other very different animals under the singular noun "animal". By naming other creatures, man gives his own language rights and deprives "animals" of their right to language (Yin, 2013, pp. 99-100). Human becomes animals are to make people's organisms and animals related to something form a whole, or people should imagine themselves as an animal, imagine how it will see the world, how it will affect other bodies or be affected by other bodies, so as to make himself have "animal movement, perception and generation" (Colebrook, 2002, pp. 136, 133). Therefore, becoming, as an alliance, is a combination of heterogeneous elements, a march without a predetermined route, so it does not aim at evolution or degradation into animals, nor at similarity. In *The Company of Wolves*, the wolf's body is human, but its legs and genitals are wolf's, and it has a wolf heart, which is a stark portrayal of a heterogeneous combination (An, 2015, p. 80). Similarly, the most significant feature of werewolves: people can become wolves, and wolves can become people after wearing human clothes or death, which is another feature of Becoming-Animal, that is, humans and animals will be generated at the same time and repeatedly. Therefore, life is enhanced through becoming, creation and change, and life force can be enhanced through as many encounters as possible, as many becoming as possible. Therefore, Becoming-Animal, like Becoming-Woman, is a way to enhance life (Yin, 2013, p. 101).

Becoming is pure, infinite, never-ending motion. Legend has it that burning the werewolf's clothes can make the werewolf unable to transform into a human form, and the girl eventually burns her own clothes. The dressing and taking off of clothes has become a metaphor for the generation process (An, 2015, p. 80). The girl and the wolf finally reached a harmonious unity. It also symbolizes that women and men, humans and animals are no longer binary opposites. Becoming-Woman creates an escape route between the traditional categories of men and women, thus escaping the patriarchal power structure and the dominant values dominated by men. Becoming-Animal creates an escape route between the traditional binary opposition of "man" and "animal" (Yin,

2013, p. 101), and man is no longer the antithesis of animals, and animals are no longer vulnerable to humans (An, 2015, p. 80). The result is a true harmony between the two sexes and between man and nature.

Conclusion

Thus, in *The Company of Wolves*, Angela Carter exposes the nature of patriarchal societies, where men and women are both victims and whose relationship with nature is equally worrying. She also provides us with an effective solution to escape this dilemma, that is, to overthrow oppressive patriarchy-centrism and anthropocentrism, break the binary system of opposition, liberate men and women, and thus restore calm to nature. This is also what we should strive to show in the new era: man and woman in flesh and soul, and human beings in harmony with the nature.

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