

Angela Carter: A Radical Prescience?

Conference Saturday 5 March 2022

Cloisters, Bishop Otter Campus, University of Chichester

8.45-9.15 a.m.	Registration
9.15 – 10 a.m.	<p><u>Welcome and Keynote I</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Natsumi Ikoma, 'Angela Carter as a Global Literature Author'
10.00– 11.20 a.m.	<p><u>Critical panel I: Challenging Binaries</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caighlan Smith, 'Carter's Radical Subversion of Post-Apocalyptic Dystopia' • Arwa F. Al-Mubaddel, 'The Radical Feminist Cultural Politics of Emotion in Angela Carter's The Passion of New Eve (1977)' • Nadia Saleh, 'When Love and Death Embrace Angela Carter's Asexual Erotics'
11.20-11.35 a.m.	Tea break
11.35 a.m.-1 p.m.	<p><u>Critical Panel II: "Eco-criticism, Angela Carter's place-making and memorialising an icon?"</u></p> <p>With the Angela Carter Society delegates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marie Mulvey-Roberts and Charlotte Crofts, "Angela Carter's Place-Making: Memorialising an Iconoclast?" • Dr Caleb Sivyver, 'Angela Carter's Ecocriticism Explorations' • Stephen Hunt, 'Mapping "Year One": Finding Angela Carter in the West Country'
1 – 2 p.m.	Lunch
2-2.45 p.m.	<p><u>Keynote II</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarah Gamble, 'Angela Carter's Artist-Assassins: Collage, Assemblage and the Politics of Recycling'
2.45-4.15 p.m.	<p><u>Creative panel</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heidi Dahlsveen – Fragility: A Performance • Brenda Tolian – Ba'lat Ov • Dr Lara Glenum, 'White Trashed' • Dr Jess Richards, 'Transformations, Illusions and Iterations: Storytelling as Fiction, Image and Artefact' <p>Plus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dagmara Rudkin – art exhibition proposal • Vanessa Marr, embroidered tablecloth <p>(no papers but brought in for audience questions)</p>
4.15-4.30 p.m.	Tea break
4.30-5.50 p.m.	<p><u>Critical panel III: Beyond Human</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anna Kérchy - Posthumanist philosophy and humanimal ethics in Angela Carter's wonder tales and contemporary feminist body art • Dr. Wiem Krifa - Mythic deconstruction in Angela Carter's The Magic Toyshop and Nights at The Circus • Dr. Elizabeth Howard, 'The Rewilding of Fairy: Queer Desires in Angela Carter's The Bloody Chamber'

Keynote I

Natsumi Ikoma, 'Angela Carter as a Global Literature Author'

International Christian University, Japan

To say Angela Carter is an author of Global Literature might sound like an obvious statement. Her oeuvre has been studied all over the world and translated into many languages. Carter's strength and progressiveness as an author of Global Literature is in her powerful and playful interrogation and deconstruction of hegemony including gender, national, and racial identities, and also in the fact that the targeted practices include herself and her own writing. Because of these, her literature is being appreciated and has a particularly strong resonance among the globalized world in the 21st century where former hierarchy and boundaries of gender, nation and race are questioned. She was ahead of time, and now the world is catching up.

I have been teaching Carter's fiction to Japanese college level students for decades. Angela Carter and Japan have a strong connection; her interrogation of the powerful hegemony can be found in her works created before Japanese years, but there is no doubt that it was raised to another level while she was in Japan where Carter herself became an object of interrogation. Even with this strong connection and familiarity of some of the depictions, however, Carter has not reached popularity in Japan. Japan ranks 120th in the Global Gender Gap report in 2021. Carter's progressiveness is too advanced for the readers who are still deeply embedded in patriarchy and orientalism.

Yet, I am feeling a sea change in Japanese students recently. Feminism at last has started to take roots among the young people, and I find Carter's literature helps them grasp the significance of feminist thought in their life. It is therefore rewarding, though challenging, to teach Carter to Japanese students. With a careful guidance, helped by additional reading materials on feminism and orientalism, their preconceived notion of gender, power and race often go through a total restructuring. Carter's fiction helps Japanese students deconstruct their own internalised orientalism and gender stereotypes, ready to face the wider world freed from social constraints. Carter's literature has such a great potential beyond classroom and can bring about empowerment and liberation to today's Japanese students.

Challenging Binaries

Caighlan Smith, 'A Power Struggle Between *Heroes and Villains*:¹ Carter's Radical Subversion of Post-Apocalyptic Dystopia'

(PhD student at Memorial University of Newfoundland)

Carter's *Heroes and Villains*, unlike many dystopian and post-apocalyptic narratives released since, features neither heroes nor villains. While many post-apocalyptic dystopian narratives are ostensibly about the moral grey of humanity – its capacity for atrocity, oppression, ignorance – in everything from *The Hunger Games* to *The Walking Dead*, dystopian titles often ultimately boil down to tales of heroes and their villain(s). While villains of such narratives may be allotted character depth, or even character development towards a redemption arc, they are still framed narratively to the reader predominantly as villain to the protagonist's hero. Likewise, the heroes may be flawed but, still, they save the day, be it in the form of saving their family, their survivor group, their district, their nation, or the world itself. The dystopian genre largely unveils, across narrative mediums, the grey-tinged battle between the 'Good' and the 'Bad'. This battle is not so much reflective of real-life dynamics as

¹ Angela Carter, *Heroes and Villains* (Simon and Schuster, 1969).

it is of a desire for such categories to produce moral signposts and justifications for individual or group actions taken against others/the Other. Carter, however, toys with the idea of 'Good' and 'Bad', 'hero' and 'villain', to the point of exposing the core of any dystopian story of heroes and villains: not the struggle of Good vs Evil, but a very human and complex struggle for power, in which no character fits a comfortable and clear-cut morality.

Arwa F. Al-Mubaddel, 'The Radical Feminist Cultural Politics of Emotion in Angela Carter's *The Passion of New Eve* (1977)'

(PhD Researcher, Cardiff University, UK)

Abstract

Carter's *The Passion of New Eve* describes the journey of Eve as she undergoes a forced transsexual operation from male to female as the prototype of a radical feminist biological experiment in a civil war-torn dystopian America. Utilising Sarah Ahmed's discussion of feminist attachments and the cultural politics of emotions,² I discuss how Evelyn becomes an object of feminist anger, but also a subject of feminist wonder and hope. Eve experiences primal fear and pain in the feminist womb-like utopian town of Beulah. Yet these feelings prime her to move from the site of wounding into a new affective economy of love and passion. Hence, I argue for the mediative role of Beulah in Eve's journey as Eve reflects upon it as the place of her origin. My reading offers an appreciation of positive feminist emotions, often overlooked due to the satire of radical feminism in the novel. I tie my discussion with Angela Carter's 'demythologizing' of certain aspects of radical feminism, discussed in her critical study *The Sadeian Woman: An Exercise in Cultural History* (1978). I argue that Carter herself had an ambivalent attitude towards radical feminism as she critiqued its inversion of patriarchal oppression, leading her into her own understanding of feminist metaphysics. I contend that this can be seen in the ending to *The Passion of New Eve*, where Eve undergoes a transcendent experience in which she embraces her feminine interiority.

Nadia Saleh, 'When Love and Death Embrace Angela Carter's Asexual Erotics'

(MFA student at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst)

Originally published in the United Kingdom in 1979, Angela Carter's anthology of short stories, *The Bloody Chamber*, extracts the latent material from folk and faerie tales and re-presents them as feminist stories of love, death, and eroticism. Under the veneer of faerie wings, these short stories reveal the workings of an asexual erotics, an erotics not based in sexual love or sexuality, but in care. This paper examines a story from the anthology, 'The Lady of the House of Love'. A loose retelling of 'Sleeping Beauty', the story features a pair of characters bound by an asexual erotics, leading to the 'rescue' of one by the other. Using the seminal essay by Audre Lorde, 'Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power' and the work of Ela Przybylo on asexual erotics, this paper argues that the plot of 'The Lady of the House of Love' is fueled by, and cannot reach completion without, asexual erotics. This allows the characters to engage in an erotic that is relational and decoupled from sex, but still intimate and indicative of care.

Eco-criticism, Angela Carter's place-making and memorialising an icon?

Marie Mulvey-Roberts and Charlotte Crofts, 'Angela Carter's Place-Making: Memorialising an Iconoclast?'

² *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*: Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, 2014).

It is ironic that the iconoclastic Angela Carter was 'canonised' as the White Witch of English Literature following her death, which raises the question of whether this form of commemoration actually contained or limited her reception? This paper will draw attention to under-researched areas of her life and work through an analysis of her literary treatment of memorialisation and desecration, whilst at the same time critically exploring our own impulse to memorialise her connections to/in Bristol.

The [Angela Carter Society](#), which was co-founded in 2017 by Charlotte Crofts, Marie Mulvey-Roberts and Caleb Sivyer (since joined by Stephen E Hunt), all based at UWE Bristol, has undertaken various memorialising activities to claim Carter as one of Bristol's most important writers. The society grew out of the [Strange Worlds Exhibition](#), organised to commemorate the 25th anniversary since Carter's death, which was co-curated by Mulvey-Roberts at the Royal West of England Academy in Bristol where Carter lived for nearly ten years during the 1960s. This was supported by the international Fireworks conference (January 2017), the setting up of the [Get Angela Carter](#) website to document her links with the city, and we have since developed a [guided walk](#) mapping the Bristol locations relevant to her life and work, based on Hunt's book on *Angela Carter's Provincial Bohemia*. The legacy of Angela Carter has also been commemorated by heritage plaques on buildings where she lived, the most recent of which is located in Bristol. As a breaker of icons, would Angela Carter have approved?

For this 30th anniversary symposium, Mulvey-Roberts will revisit the Strange Worlds exhibition by way of a virtual curator's tour and reflect upon the artworks selected and how they relate to Carter's life and work. The ghosts of the art works which never made it to the exhibition will also be revealed. This paper will explore the transformational symbiosis between writer and place through which the civic importance of a local writer, who has received international acclaim, has now been finally recognised in the places where she lived.

Dr Caleb Sivyer, 'Angela Carter's Ecocriticism Explorations'

(University of the West of England, Bristol)

In both her literary texts and in her works of non-fiction, Angela Carter explored a number of related issues which we could call, for the sake of concision, "ecocritical". These include meditations on human-made and "natural" environments, the similarities and differences between human and non-human lifeforms, and the sometimes-problematic relationship between gender, more specifically femininity, and nature. In many of her essays, Carter writes more explicitly about some of these ecocritical issues. In 'Animals in the Nursery' (*New Society*, 1976), for example, Carter suggests, in a phrase reminiscent of Simone de Beauvoir's oft-cited line about becoming a woman, that "the formal division between beast and child is acquired, not inborn" (*Shaking a Leg*, p. 364). This concern with the boundary separating the human from the non-human animal, which has become a hotly debated topic within posthuman studies, also appears in less explicit form in Carter's literary texts, such as in 'The Tiger's Bride', a sort of rewriting of de Beaumont's 'Beauty and the Beast' (1756) which sees the heroine transformed into a beast after realising that her patriarchal society already places her status as a woman on the same level as that of animals. Other of Carter's works mediate on or analyse the threat of nuclear war and/or its imagined aftermath ('Anger in a Black Landscape', *Heroes and Villains*), offer parodic versions of the gender essentialism of ecofeminist theory (*The Passion of New Eve*), and debunk the romanticisation of the so-called "natural" world and its "primitive" inhabitants (*The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman*). Despite Carter's extensive exploration of ecological, environmental and ecocritical issues, very few scholarly works have devoted much attention to them. This paper will offer an overview of what I want to call Carter's *ecocritical explorations*, and will thereby outline a new project that I am currently developing on Angela Carter and ecocriticism.

Caleb Sivyer is Senior Lecturer at the University of the West of England, Bristol, where he teaches on a range of foundation year and undergraduate modules, and on topics including twentieth-century literature, fairy tale and myth, political and cultural theory, and film studies. He holds a PhD in English Literature from Cardiff University, with a thesis that analysed the politics of gender and the visual in selected works by Virginia Woolf and Angela Carter. His research interests include twentieth-century literature, contemporary women's writing, gender and sexuality, film studies, literary and cultural theory, myth and fairy tale, and philosophy. He has published a number of articles and book chapters on Angela Carter, as well as articles on other writers, including J.G. Ballard and Alison Bechdel. His new project is a book-length study of Angela Carter and ecocriticism. He is also the co-founder (along with Marie Mulvey-Roberts and Charlotte Crofts) of the Angela Carter Society and he runs a website devoted to the life and works of Angela Carter (www.angelacarteronline.com) which has a thriving online community.

Stephen Hunt, 'Mapping "Year One": Finding Angela Carter in the West Country'

While Angela Carter was not a writer from the West Country, in recent years there have been strong claims that she was a significant writer of the West Country. She wrote five of her nine published novels during her formative years while resident in Clifton, Bristol (1962-9), and major works, including *The Passion of the New Eve* and *Fireworks*, while living in Bath (1972-6). The process of the memorialisation of Carter's relationship to Bristol has been underway, for example, with a major exhibition and a heritage plaque. To complement these ephemeral and static tributes, the Angela Carter Society devised a DIY walking tour as a dynamic, and potentially creative, form of ongoing memorialisation. This map was intended as an invitation to people in the local community and visitors alike to engage with Carter's legacy and the living history of the 1960s and 1970s counterculture. It has proved to be an adaptable way to bring together the disparate influences and creative forces that helped to develop the author's radical persona. She became a successful writer while in Clifton because she was also an adept scholar of medieval literature, a reader and thinker, a folk musician, eavesdropper and people-watcher, who enjoyed hobnobbing with performance artists, anarchists and poets. A more extensive and intensive mapping of Carter's former milieu will enable participants to collaboratively explore the unbounded relationship between the writer and a shifting sense of place, unleashing the ongoing discovery of fresh connections.

Keynote II

Sarah Gamble, 'Angela Carter's Artist-Assassins: Collage, Assemblage and the Politics of Recycling'
[Abstract to follow](#)

Creative panel

Heidi Dahlsveen, 'Fragility: A Performance'

In this research-based storytelling performance, Norwegian storyteller and Associate Professor in Oral Storytelling Mimesis Heidi Dahlsveen tells a Nordic folk tale that deals with abuse and identity. The folktale is about a woman who has to escape from home and gradually turns into a man. In the performance, the storyteller alternates the folk tale with an autobiographical story about escaping from a violent parent.

Nicolas Bourriaud argues that the reality of the contemporary is montages, where one understands temporary versions of reality. The aesthetics are about editing this montage into works

of art.³ The storyteller uses the principle of montage to create a performance, to understand the topic of the folktale, and the performance itself is built around the montage principle through using folktale interacting with the autobiographical. The storyteller seeks to understand the use of folktales in our postmodern time and discusses if narrative identity can consist of fictional parts of a folktale.

Mimesis Heidi Dahlsveen has worked as a storyteller since 1996 both at national and abroad. She has participated in several international festivals and in three EU projects that deal with oral storytelling. She has sold performances to the Cultural Rucksack and toured internationally. She is the Associate Professor in Oral Storytelling at OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway, and in 2008 she published the book *Introduction to Oral Storytelling* (Universitetsforlaget). In 2019 she published her second book on the same topic. She has written several academic articles on oral storytelling, where she uses artistic research as an input to understand oral storytelling and narratives. Her focus is on letting the traditional narratives shed light on contemporary themes.

Brenda Tolian, 'Ba'lat Ov'

Many readers and scholars are familiar with the biblical account found within First Samuel 28, of the necromancer who raised Samuel from the dead for the doomed King Saul. We are told of the female witches who have been outlawed or killed for practising the act of speaking to the dead within the Tanakh and later in the Bible.

Within the retelling I present the Witch of Endor, or *Eshet Ba'alat Ov* who is given a voice and autonomy. In the original telling she is commanded by men and the spirit of Samuel is syphoned though power that only she can hold. The danger she faces through the action is only hinted but never explored but her knowledge and wit are hinted in the words she speaks.

In this story she is imbued with history of her power in a persecuted society of outlawed women. It joins in tandem symbolically with creation, sexuality and the passing of knowledge through generations of women. Angela Carter inspired this twisting of a story (in this case a Jewish/Christian story) by writing, 'It's because they are remarkable lies designed to make people unfree'.⁴ Here the *Eshet Ba'alat Ov* is untied, her mouth opened to speak.⁵

Dr Lara Glenum, 'A Reading from White Trashed: A Snow White Story'

(Assoc. Professor, Louisiana State University)

'White Trashed' is a rollicking exploration of the damage patriarchy does to even the most intimate bonds between women. Across the arc of the book, I recast Snow White and her mother as unique, complex protagonists locked in a brutal struggle for survival. Only one of them can be 'the fairest of them all' and command the blessing of patriarchy and the legitimacy of the throne.

White Trashed is my fifth book of poetry. In my work, I use dramatic personae drawn from fairy tales, mythology and canonical literature to interrogate gender-based trauma and to subvert cultural norms around gender, sexuality, and able-bodiedness. *White Trashed* will appeal to readers who take an interest in contemporary poetry, hybrid texts, experimental narratives, fairy tales, women's and gender studies, disability studies and trauma studies.

³ Nicolas Bourriaud, *Precarious Constructions Answer to Jacques Rancière on Art and Politics* (2009), OnlineOpen: <https://www.onlineopen.org/precarious-constructions>

⁴ Jenny Uglow, 'Notes From the Front Line', in Angela Carter, *Shaking a Leg: Collected Journalism and Writings* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1997), 38

Caleb Sivyer, *A scopophilic fairy tale: Deconstructing normative gender in Angela Carter's The Bloody Chamber*, *Gender Forum* (2013).

⁵ References: Robert Clark, 'Angela Carter's Desire Machines', *Women's Studies* 14.2 (1987): 147-61. Aidan Day, *Angela Carter: The Rational Glass* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1998). Brenda S. Tolian 'BA'ALAT OV', *The Jewish Book of Horror*, ed. Josh Schlossberg (DHC, 2021), 125-33.

There will be a visual element to the reading, which may include puppets and/or slides of Camile Garcia Rose's visual art.

Dr Jess Richards, 'Transformations, Illusions and Iterations: Storytelling as Fiction, Image and Artefact'

(Massey University of New Zealand)

Angela Carter writes third-, second- and first-person narratives and actively works with the tenses, as author and academic Marion Mary Campbell describes in her thorough intertextual analysis of *The Bloody Chamber*. According to Campbell, within Carter's short stories, the unconventional shifts from 'the preterite tense associated with the folk fairy tale to the immediacy of the present'⁶ have a powerful effect. Carter describes her intention in re-telling folkloric texts as 'not to do 'versions' ... but to extract the latent content from the traditional stories and to use it as the beginnings of new stories... ..the latent content is violently sexual.'⁷ As writers who have had our fictional illusion disrupted by Carter breaking conventional grammar and storytelling rules, we are prompted to reflect on our own storytelling and retellings.

In this session, I will read from some of my short stories which explored present tense combined with first-, second- and third-person narration in new stories which incorporated elements from European fairy tales. These were part of my creative practice PhD which was a hybrid fine art and fiction writing project, completed in 2020. It was titled 'Transformations, Illusions and Iterations: Storytelling as Fiction, Image and Artefact'.

Jess Richards is the author of three novels: *Snake Ropes*, *Cooking with Bones*, and *City of Circles* are all published in the UK by Sceptre. She also writes short fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry - many of these have been published in various international anthologies. She is currently working on a creative nonfiction project on the theme of birds and ghosts. Originally from Scotland, Jess now lives with her wife in Wellington, New Zealand where she teaches Creative Writing (undergraduates and postgraduates) at Massey University in Wellington.

Dagmara Rudkin, 'Gerda's Chandelier' and 'Hush, My Fluttering Heart'

I like to describe my practice as storytelling through materials and processes. Inspired by folk and fairy tales, I exploit the narrative potential of humble and everyday materials to create art installations, sculptures, paintings and moving image to talk of female protagonists and their transformation or a desire to transform.

1. *Gerda's Chandelier*

Although originally conceived to represent a transformation of Gerda in the *Snow Queen* by H.C. Andersen, I created this piece as a visual metaphor of the universal journey into adulthood and emotional and sexual maturity of female protagonists in fairy tales. The sculpture is made out of upcycled lampshades which grow in size and complexity, starting with the bare cells of flesh that transform into a lush and sensual apex to form a cross between the Cornucopia and a Regency chandelier. Overembellished surfaces suggest corsets, ballroom gowns and female bodies in one with nature which is lush, sexual, threatening.

2. Part of '*Hush, My Fluttering Heart*' installation.

The bird-like structures with their tattered wings refer to dual qualities of female characters and their experiences in fairy tales: love that is expressed with both tenderness and violence, domesticity and wild untamed nature, beauty and the beast, male and female, humble and decadent.

⁶ Reference?

⁷ Angela Carter, *The Bloody Chamber and other Stories* (publisher, 1979), p.?

Vanessa Marr, embroidered tablecloth

(Principal Lecturer, University of Brighton)

Angela Carter's reimagining of some of our best loved fairy tales sits at the heart of feminist perspectives on her work. From the young bride who is rescued by her mother, therefore thwarting the gruesome Bluebeard, to Beauty's stance against the Beast who wins her in a game of cards, Carter has timelessly reignited the pre-Grimm origins of such tales as stories that empower rather than oppress women. Historically women told these stories to each other while they worked, often with cloth,⁸ and usually in the home surrounded all things domestic. For this reason, I propose an artwork embroidered upon a vintage tablecloth, featuring a table set for dinner for four of the female protagonists in Carter's *The Bloody Chamber* (1979).

The use of this ubiquitous domestic item, embellished with stitch, references the legacy of female disempowerment⁹ and more recently women's voices of protest through stitch,¹⁰ within a commonplace occasion associated with so-called women's work, and likewise one where stories are often told. The table setting will include embroidered drawings of the usual paraphernalia of cutlery, crockery, and glasses, as well as a candelabra to set the era. Additionally, each setting will include names cards, excerpts from the relevant chapter and visual clues from the stories they represent, for example, Bluebeard's keys with imprinted heart and Beauty's rose. This work will also sit within the context of Judy Chicago's famous *Dinner Party* (1979), created in the same year that *The Bloody Chamber* was published, within which she sets the table for famous women to highlight their achievements. By seating the female characters alone at my table, I also reflect Carter's legacy and empower each of them, placing them in control of their personal narratives whilst reducing the male characters to mere objects.

Vanessa Marr

Vanessa is an artist, academic and designer based in East Sussex, England. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) and is currently Principal Lecturer and Course Leader at the University of Brighton. Her work is underpinned by visual design-theory and process yet embraces an intuitive and physical approach that facilitates self-authorship, which she explores predominantly through hand-stitch and creative writing. She is drawn to cloth as a medium that holds the legacy of so-called women's work and its potential for subversion and quiet activism. She is best known for her hand embroidered dusting cloths, which form part of an ongoing collaborative arts project 'Women & Domesticity – What's your Perspective?' that invites embroidered statements on this theme. Her work has been exhibited and presented widely in academic, community and arts contexts in the UK. Vanessa regularly participates in collaborative, creative and research projects, and never stops learning, making and writing.

Beyond Human

Anna Kérchy, 'Posthumanist philosophy and humanimal ethics in Angela Carter's wonder tales and contemporary feminist body art'

(Associate Professor in English literature and Head of the Doctoral Program in Literature at the English Department of the University of Szeged, Hungary)

⁸ Elizabeth Barber, *Women's Work: The First 20,000 Years* (Norton, 1995).

⁹ Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch* (Tauris & Co. Ltd, 1984).

¹⁰ Betsy Greer, *Craftivism: The Art and Craft and Activism* (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2014).

Angela Carter's 'demythologising business' has been celebrated for fusing revolutionary poetics and politics by conjoining a postmodern narratological destabilisation with a socialist feminist critique of hegemonic power structures. However, one can also argue that her democratising intent goes way beyond the humanist egalitarian agenda: she can also be considered as a precursor of posthumanist philosophers. The Carterian wondertale's leitmotifs of humanimal metamorphosis, cathartic interspecies encounters, or her sentient, sensual enchanted woods all test the limits of human embodiment and cognition, and express an interest in the lived experiences of non-human entities, throughout a play with non-anthropocentric focalisation. The thematisation of the transgression of the fragile borderline between human and animal, human and plant, human and object does not only challenge the speciesist supremacy of humans over other life forms, but also examines the ethical implications of extending subjectivities beyond humankind, and looks into symbiotic and parasitic modes of cohabitation. This posthumanist agenda holds linguistic implications too: the 'exuberant rhetorics' of Carterian fiction self-ironically reflects on human's joyous revelry in lyricism despite our awareness of the limitations of verbal representation, while the strategic somatisation of semioticisation may be an attempt to surpass verbalisation and get in touch with the dynamic vitality of the lifeworld. I will also explore how contemporary feminist body artists' humanimal themed performances revitalise the Carterian posthumanist spirit.

Anna Kérchy is an Associate Professor in English literature and head of the Doctoral Program in Literature at the English Department of the University of Szeged, Hungary. Her research interests include gender studies, body studies, women's writing/art, interfacing of Victorian and postmodern fantastic imagination, fairy tales, children's literature, and transmedia storytelling. Besides more than 100 refereed essays published in international journals and collections, she authored three books: *Alice in Transmedia Wonderland* that won the HUSSE book award, *Body-Texts in the Novels of Angela Carter*, and *Essays on Feminist Aesthetics and Narratology*. She contributed a chapter on 'Angela Carter's Poetics of Space' to *The Art of Angela Carter* edited by Marie-Mulvey Roberts. Her recent publications include *Translating and Transmediating Children's Literature*, co-edited with Björn Sundmark (Palgrave, 2020), and 'The Secret Life of Things: Queering the Museal Gaze in Angela Carter's Postmodern Curiosity Cabinets' published in *Marvels & Tales* (2021).

Dr Wiem Krifa, 'Mythic deconstruction in Angela Carter's *The Magic Toyshop* and *Nights at The Circus*'

(Assistant Professor at The Faculty of Arts and Humanities of Sousse, Tunisia)

In Angela Carter's postmodern writings, myths are deconstructed and studied as patriarchal creations to anchor certain ideologies and relegate women to an inferior position compared to males. Feminists in general and Carter in particular engage in an ironic study of myths to end by debunking them from a feminist postmodern perspective. Carter, for instance, revisits W.B. Yeats poem 'Leda and The Swan', from a sarcastic angle. She displays a performance of the poem which goes contrary to Yeats' literary orientation. The modern version which incorporates the Greek myth of Leda and The Swan is inverted into an ironic postmodern show. The deconstruction of the myth is omnipresent in Carter's books, mainly *The Magic Toyshop* and *Nights at The Circus*. The Greek queen Leda who is raped by Almighty Jove is empowered by Carter, who creates subversive postmodern female characters. In *The Magic Toyshop*, the grandeur of the Greek god is downplayed by Melanie, who embodies the new woman. Being forced to enact the role of Leda, Melanie laughs at the god's fake magnificence. Through the deconstruction of the myth, Carter debunks the patriarchal myth and reverses power relations. The disparity between the myth and its postmodern staging is very substantial. The poem bears some hidden mythic ideological meanings which are divulged by Carter. In *Nights at The Circus*, Carter reuses the same poem to convey a different feminist postmodern message. She shapes a fantastic female figure who takes after her father the swan. Fevvers, the

winged woman, embodies the male swan. The difference between the Greek myth and its feminist postmodern performance is very appealing, taking into consideration their embedded ideologies. Through her demythologising business, Carter succeeds to convey the tight link between performance, subjectivity and gender identity.

Dr Wiem Krifa is an assistant professor of English Literature at the English department, faculty of Arts and Humanities of Sousse, Tunisia. She got her doctoral thesis in May 2018, entitled 'Feminist postmodernism in Angela Carter's *The Magic Toyshop, Nights at The Circus, The Bloody Chamber* and *The Saidean Woman: an Exercise in Cultural History*'. Her field of interest includes feminism, postmodernism, postcolonialism and gender studies.

Dr Elizabeth Howard, 'The Rewilding of Fairy: Queer Desires in Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*'

(Instructor of Swedish & Scandinavian Studies at the University of Oregon, USA)

My paper is an investigation of the intersection between queerness and wildness in Angela Carter's 1979 short story collection, *The Bloody Chamber*. In the last few years, wildness has become a concept of interest in queer scholarship, evidenced by Jack Halberstam's 2020 book, *Wild Things: The Disorder of Desire*, as well as the July 2018 edition of *South Atlantic Quarterly*, which had 'Wildness' as its central theme. In their introduction to the issue, Jack Halberstam and Tavia Nyong'o articulate the powerful resonances between queerness and wildness: 'Like another problematic term – *queer* – *wildness* names, while rendering partially opaque, what hegemonic systems would interdict or push to the margins.'¹¹ Halberstam and Nyong'o's remarks on the queer potential in conceptualising wildness resonate with the central claim of my paper, which is that Carter's depictions of wild beings and spaces articulate queer desires and relationships.

Carter's stories depict worlds where the borders between the human and the animal are elastic and constantly shifting. Her stories both interrogate and critique patriarchal structures, and envision queer couplings between the human and the natural world. Through a close reading of her stories, 'The Erl-King' and 'The Tiger's Bride', I argue that Carter's depictions of supernatural encounters with the natural world offer powerful ways to think through otherness and marginality. Her focus on sexuality, and in particular the sensuality of animals and the natural world, make possible a queer imaginary, in which equality is established between humans and animals.

¹¹ Jack Halberstam and Tavia Nyong'o, 'Theory in the Wild', *South Atlantic Quarterly* (July 2018), 453.