



2528-9705

## Örgütsel Davranış Araştırmaları Dergisi

Journal of Organizational Behavior Research

Cilt / Vol.: 8, Sayı / Is.: S, Yıl/Year: 2023, Kod/ID: 23S0-837



### Dialectical Oscillation between the Semiotic and the Symbolic in Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*

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#### ABSTRACT

The present article is an analysis of three short stories of Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber* in terms of Julia Kristeva's major theoretical concepts closely related to "the semiotic". It considers Kristeva's notion of dialectical oscillation between the semiotic and the symbolic and their consequences in *The Bloody Chamber*, *The Tiger's Bride* and *Wolf-Alice*. For Kristeva, dialectical oscillation between the semiotic's disruptive and revolutionary aspects and the symbolic's terms puts the subjects always in process. In this regard, this article examines and demonstrates Kristeva's major critical concepts related to the semiotic such as the subject in process, difference and identity, and the significance of mother. As a result, by the application of Julia Kristeva's outstanding views in Angela Carter's masterpiece, this article not only intends to discover their common ideas but also to demonstrate how Kristeva's philosophical and psychological theories of the semiotic differentiate from the other critics and philosophers in the way they cover a range of various discourses in our life.

**Keywords:** *The Semiotic and the Symbolic, The Subject in Process, Semiotic Chora, Jouissance, Semiotic Drive, The Thetic Phase*

#### INTRODUCTION

Angela Carter's knowledge and commitment to folk and fairy tales makes *The Bloody Chamber* "her most brilliant adult tales" (Sheets 633). In reading *The Bloody Chamber*, alternate voices of fairy tale authors are available to be heard and interrelationships among Carter's multiple sources such as Charles Perrault, Giambattista Basile and Walt Disney can enrich an understanding of the heterogeneous frames in which Carter worked (Roemer and Bacchilega 16).

Julia Kristeva in her *Revolution in Poetic Language* explains that the word "semiotic" has a very specific meaning which cannot be understood properly unless it is considered within the polarity that characterizes what she has termed the "symbolic" (Kristeva 4). In Kristeva's view, as the child takes up the "symbolic" disposition, it does not leave the "semiotic" behind. The "semiotic" will remain a constant companion to the "symbolic" in its all communications. "Semiotic" is preverbal, pre-oedipal and maternal and "symbolic" is paternal, verbal and oedipal. According to Kristeva, "semiotic" represents discharge of pre-oedipal energies and drives within language and is associated with what she, following Plato, designates as the "chora", a space or womb. The "semiotic chora" precedes and underlies figuration (is only analogous to vocal and kinetic rhythm) is in turn connected to the maternal body. Mother's body mediates symbolic law, organizes social relations and becomes the

principle of “semiotic chora” (Kristeva 25-27). Kristeva, by “subject in process” or “subject on trial” expresses the double bind of subject hood. The semiotic dimension frees the subject from stasis and gives us a vision of the human venture as a venture of innovation, creation, opening and renewal (Leitch 2167).

The semiotic is “a drive-affected dimension of human experience that disrupts (even as it interfuses with) the symbolic” (Barzilai 297). The semiotic is a process or a “disposition that is definitely heterogeneous to meaning but always in sight of it” (qtd. in Barzilai 297). Joshua M. Hall in his article, “Choreographing the Borderline Dancing with Kristeva” characterizes the semiotic as “the natural bodily process that infuses the symbolic’s artificial, intellectual product” (Hal 49). Thus, according to Kristeva, the semiotic can be understood as pre-thetic, preceding the positing of the subject and ego thinking. Hall identifies Kristeva’s semiotic as creative and self-multiplying which poses a kind of temporal and musical ordering function (Hall 49). Hall investigates Kristeva’s conception of dance in regard to the trope of the borderline. He begins with her explicit treatments of dance, as practice erupting on the border of chora and society (Hall 49). He takes dance in three different senses. First, he explains that dance resonates with the semiotic modality of language as “spontaneous expressive bodily motion”. Hall characterizes dance “as ‘fragmentary’ a word Kristeva has used to describe the psyche of the borderline analysand” (Hal 53). He alludes to Kristeva’s reference of “pictorial or dancing gesturality” (qtd. in Hal 53) and according to her, explains that one can witness direct somatic discharge of the drives through the limbs of the body by dance.

In this regard, Hall considers the second sense of dance as what exhibits the symbolic modality of language in “the fully articulate rules, steps and directions of given composition”. Finally, he explains that “in the historical act of a person channeling her energy into the basic step of the Latin rumba, dance crosses the borderline of the semiotic-symbolic as the rising of the soma’s spontaneous motion to the psyche’s structured choreography” (Hal 50). As a result, he observes Kristeva’s the semiotic and the symbolic oscillation through the notion of dance. Therefore, he suggests that dance is a borderline practice between the semiotic and the symbolic modalities (Hal 50).

Kristeva in her *Revolution in poetic language* exemplifies two types of events in the social order: Sacrifice and Art. She refers to sacrifice as a violence that puts an end to semiotic and pre-symbolic violence by focusing violence on a victim. The social order confines the violence to a single place or object by making it as a signifier. Thus, the social norm will be maintained without any danger. “The sacrificial objects” may be assigned to “an animal, a crop, a slave, a warrior, or a god representing the subject as pure signifier” (76). Therefore, sacrifice presents the sacred murder. For Kristeva, another event in the social order is Art. According to her art, represents the flow of jouissance into language, whereas sacrifice assigns jouissance its productive limit in the social and symbolic order. Kristeva explains that:

Art specifies the means – the only means– that jouissance harbors for infiltrating that order. In cracking the socio-symbolic order, splitting it open, changing vocabulary, syntax, the word



itself, and releasing from beneath them the drives borne by vocalic or kinetic differences, jouissance works its way into the social and symbolic. (80)

By the same token, Kristeva also refers to schizophrenia as the explosion of the semiotic in the symbolic and loss of the symbolic function. In this regard, Shuli Barzilai in her article “Borders of Language: Kristeva’s Critique of Lacan” describes Kristeva’s characterization of the borderline that reflects her twofold theoretical orientation as a linguist and psychoanalyst. “Borderline in clinical sense of the term, usually designates special category of cases ... on the fringes of madness” (qtd. in Barzilai 295). Borderline subjects have problems in maintaining stable identity. They have lost their hold on the symbolic and their semiotic charges are in a state of revolt against symbolic order. In such cases the language function would be disintegrated. Borderline patient refuses ordered and regulating articulations. Barzilai refers to two types of interpretation in the cure of Borderline patient: construction and condensation that points to Kristeva’s analytic approach.

According to Barzilai, Kristeva describes construction as constructive interpretation that entails repetition and reordering in order to build connections. Therefore, the analyst should build meaning out of disparate, empty elements of the patient’s speech. “The task of this constructor is to repair the paternal function”, to reestablish the signs and logical sequences and to construct interpretation that reestablishes meaning and signification (Barzilai 301).

Condensation calls for free play of signifiers and seems analogous to deconstructive criticism. The analyst responds to non-sense with non-sense (the play of metaphors, puns and manipulation of words). The analyst imitates the patient’s rhetoric, rhythm and intonation, thus invokes heterogeneous dispositions (the semiotic), and tries to reassemble linguistic signs (the symbolic). The analyst echoes the “echolalia” of the patient. Therefore, Kristeva explains that this type of interpretation activates maternal transference, and condensation prompts the reemergence of a pre-symbolic infantile organization which attempts to reestablish the paternal function. This participation of the analyst enables the patient to experience a fusion or “death in the mother” and then a second birth (Barzilai 301- 302). As a result, the analyst helps the patient by making a balance in the semiotic and the symbolic oscillation and by returning back to pre-symbolic infantile organization in order to have an experience of second birth.

In this article reading the stories in *The Bloody Chamber* by Julia Kristeva’s “semiotic” concept will lead to “subject in process” and female significance. At the first sight, the stories of Angela Carter’s *The Bloody Chamber* seem eminently readable, but at the same time there are many elements such as “subjectivity of woman”, the role of mother, system of signification, and verbal richness that require a profound study to accomplish a Kristevaian reading of *The Bloody Chamber*. Therefore, the article hopes to change the view of the readers “who are outraged when they recognize their childhood stories newly have been changed to tales of sex and violence” (Simson, *The Guardian*). According to Harriet Kramer Linkin, *The Bloody Chamber* focuses on Carter’s feminist rewriting of patriarchal plots and perspectives that inscribe gendered roles in traditional tales (307), thus the article concentrates on details in the



stories in order to prove that they are not violent modern fairy tales - they are worthwhile for their semiotic studies that lead the protagonists to position as subject (subject position) which changes their destiny. Therefore, when those stories are regarded under the light of Julia Kristeva's theories, Carter's work will be brought into the higher level of significations that lie beneath the surface.

The ideas of "subject in process", self discovery and identity formation lead to gender freedom in all of the short stories of *The Bloody Chamber*. For Kristeva, we become who we are as a result of taking part in signifying process and "she offers us one of the self that is always in process and heterogeneous" (McAfee 41). In the first story *The Bloody Chamber*, the protagonist's curiosity as a nature of female leads her to enter the bloody chamber. Some contemporary critics have noted and commented on link between the Eve and the forbidden tree and the heroine of *The Bloody Chamber*. The knowledge that the protagonist gains from forbidden room can be the knowledge of self; it encourages her to see herself as a subject and attempt to fashion her own story as "subject in process". When she decides to discover the forbidden room, she walks toward the room and asserts: "I felt no fear, no intimation of dread. Now I walked as firmly as I had done in my mother's house" (25). As a result, this courage comes from the sense of transformation from "girlhood to womanhood". In the story of *Wolf-Alice*, the girl's contacts with mirror by her imitation of her gestures and examination of her body with curiosity, menstruation and the power to have control over her mirror image bring to mind the notion of "subject in process".

This habitual, at last boring fidelity to her every movement finally woke her up to the regretful possibility that her companion was, in fact no more than a particularly ingenious variety of the shadow she cast on sunlit grass...A little moisture leaked from the corners of her eyes, yet relation with the mirror was now far more intimate since she knew she saw herself within it. (152)

Thus, little by little she comes to realize her own identity as a woman and at the end she feels compassion for Duke.

Kristeva asserts in her "Women's time" that we should refuse to choose identity over difference rather, explore multiple identities, including multiple sexual identities, "along with the singularity of each person and, even more, the multiplicity of every person's possible identifications" (35). In Carter's work, we will also find the world where we can be man and woman, animal and human, lamb and tiger. Margaret Atwood in her article "Running with the Tigers" explains that Carter seems to be looking - among other things - for ways in which "the tiger and the lamb, or the tiger and lamb parts of the psyche, can reach some sort of accommodation" (Sage 120). Therefore, "lambhood" and "tigerishness" may be found in either gender and in the same individual at different times (Sage 117-13). In "Women's Time", Kristeva declares that Female subjectivity comes to have problem with respect to certain conception of time: time as linear and as departure and arrival - in other words time of history. She explains that the time has perhaps come to emphasize the multiplicity of female expressions (13-35). The article has observed the relevant issues in Carter's short stories.



Carter offers “an alternative to the dominant myth of singularity. Her endless transformation from sex to sex, state to state, story to story- indulge a denial of hierarchical ordering in defiance of any linear progression” (qtd. in Lau 92). Characters of the short stories become who they are as a result of taking part in their dialectical oscillation between the semiotic’s disruptive and revolutionary aspects and the symbolic’s terms that puts their subjects in process.

### **Expression of the Semiotic and the Symbolic through Music and Communication in *The Bloody Chamber***

In Kristeva’s view the semiotic will remain a constant companion to the symbolic in all its communications. According to Noelle McAfee, Kristeva focused on what she saw as the foundation of the symbolic: the imaginary realm of signification with its accompanying semiotic modes of signification. In other words, the semiotic/imaginary level has to function before one could ever start speaking. So, in her treatment of the boy with delayed language, Kristeva took to singing. She and he began communicating through operas. They made up songs together, speaking in melody. The patient, Paul took increasing pleasure in hearing his own voice. As he became more adept at communicating in song, he began to use his new oral (McAfee 40-41).

In this regard, the protagonist in the title story *The Bloody Chamber* is a musician, who expresses her feelings, nature and courage by music. Her semiotic is remaining as a constant companion to her symbolic in her communication. She watches opera twice in the story; she saw opera first as a child and second with her husband before her marriage. “The opera might have had a profound effect on impressionable musical child and later on a young bride who envisions herself a princess traveling to a castle” (Roemer and Bacchilega 89). When Marquis leaves her for a business trip, she practices piano for a long time to express her curiosity, feelings and nature. We have again her piano playing after she discovers the bloody chamber:

I thought my own particular magic might help me, now, that I could create a pentacle that would keep me from harm, for if my music had first ensnared him, then might it not also give me the power to free myself from him? Mechanically, I began to play but my fingers were stiff and shaking. At first I could manage nothing better than the exercise of Czerny but simply the act of playing soothed me and, for solace, for the sake of the harmonious rationality of its sublime mathematics, I searched among his scores until I found *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. I set myself the therapeutic task of playing all Bach's equations, every one, and, I told myself, if I played them all through without a single mistake--then the morning would find me once more a virgin.  
(30)

The young narrator plays piano after she discovers the truth about her husband in the bloody chamber. She finds out that Marquis has killed his former wives and kept their bodies in the forbidden chamber. She desperately becomes afraid, since she has discovered the embalmed corpse of the opera singer, the veiled skull of the artist’s model, the still- bleeding body of the Romanian Countess. When she remembers that her husband has left France, this idea calms



her agitation, thus at first, she chooses the exercise of Czerny which calms her by its progressive harmonious rationality and sublime mathematics. Then, she tries *The Well-Tempered Clavier* of Johann Sebastian Bach with its wide range of styles in order to discharge her semiotic drives, disruptions and revolutions. The narrator wishes to become once more a virgin if she plays Bach equations without a single mistake.

As Hall identifies Kristeva's semiotic as "creative and self-multiplying which poses a kind of temporal and musical ordering function" (Hall 49), the protagonist as the subject in process expresses her semiotic and symbolic oscillation through playing piano. Thus to the extent that anyone is a subject in process, art as life-enhancing venture helps the narrator control and express her nature.

Kristeva avoids sexual difference because she does not want to perpetuate traditional accounts of binary sexes by focusing on the limiting way in which sexual difference operates in western culture (Oliver 97). Carter also challenges definition of masculinity based on domination (Sheets 654). Therefore, in *The Bloody Chamber*, she introduces a character named Jean-Yves who is a blind piano tuner and is the protagonist's lover and confidant. In this regard, the following text considers the protagonist and Jean-Yves communication through Kristeva's concept of the semiotic and the symbolic.

No paint nor powder, no matter how thick or white, can mask that red mark on my forehead; I am glad he cannot see it--not for fear of his revulsion, since I know he sees me clearly with his heart--but, because it spares my shame. (44)

At the end of the story, the protagonist's mother rescues her. They convert the castle into a school for the blind. The protagonist gives most of her inheritance to charities. She opens a little music school on the outskirts of Paris and they all live together. The narrator finishes the story by describing her lover, Jean-Yves. She is glad that he cannot see the red mark, which was made by Marquis on her forehead, since he sees her with his heart.

In *The Bloody Chamber*, Carter emphasizes on sensory experiences of the characters. As Daniel M. Roemer explains, her text has a variety of reported sights and tastes as well as smells, textures, and sounds (Roemer and Bacchilega 115). Marcelo Santos in his article "A Semiotic Approach to Blind Wayfinding: Some Primary Conceptual Standpoints" explains that many researchers from variety of fields such as psychology have found that blind persons are incapable of formulating complex mental diagrammatic representations, which are schema based on the similarities found within internal logical relations between sign and object (Santos 1). Robin Ann Sheets mentions, if Carter were to continue the story, she would continue male sexuality centered on smell, touch, and sound since this is implicit in Jean-Yves sensitivity to music (Sheets 655).

In this light, blind people's senses are much stronger than regular ones. Brian Alexander in NBC News Health refers to a study on sighted people by a team of Canadian



researchers from the auditory neuroscience lab of François Champoux at the University of Montreal. Alexander explains according to Simon Landry, a graduate student, the researchers exposed subjects to a harmonic tone which had layers of “harmonicity”. The team altered one layer until the subjects could notice it. In comparison between blindfolded participants and non-blind ones, the blindfolded performed better than non-blindfolded participants. Landry explains “the idea is that the brain doesn’t actually change, but vision no longer suppresses the processing of other modalities, which have existing pathways, in the visual cortex”. Alexander mentions by modalities, Landry means type of “sensory input” (Alexander, *NBC News*).

Since the semiotic is a drive affected modality and is based on senses and energies, Jean-Yves’s semiotic modality makes him different from other persons. He does not have the characteristics of a fairy tale prince. The narrator describes Jean-Yves as a sweet and “lamb-like” person who speaks shyly, loves music and adores her art. She says “his speech had the rhythms of the countryside, the rhythms of the tides” (32). Since he is blind, he will never see the red mark as the mark of shame on the narrator’s forehead and as the narrator explains, he sees her clearly with his heart. His “sensuous sensitivities” gives him the capacity to appreciate the world around him. Therefore, Jean-Yves’s vision does not suppress the processing of other modalities such as the semiotic.

Kristeva refers to inseparable relation of the semiotic and the symbolic as the two modalities of the signifying process. According to McAfee, someone who lacks any semiotic energy might already be dead, yet someone who is governed exclusively by semiotic charges is psychotic, out of touch with meaning and identity (McAfee 104-105). Jean-Yves is not out of touch with the symbolic. The narrator despairs when Jean-Yves compares her to Eve, “a woman often considered the first victim of curiosity” (Roemer and Bacchilega 86). When Marquis returns and orders the narrator to get ready for decapitation, Jean-Yves tells her: “you disobeyed him”. “That is sufficient reason for him to punish you”. When the girl says she only did what he knew she would, Jean-Yves associates her with the original sin and says “Like Eve” (40). Thus, Jean-Yves refers to the logic of the symbolic order which is based on an “archetypal” representation of women.




### **The ‘I’ in the Mirror and the Significance of Mother in *The Bloody Chamber***

This part considers the protagonist’s subject formation in the mirror scenes and through her language in *The Bloody Chamber*. Moreover, it compares the two characters, Marquis and protagonist in the way they express their semiotic and symbolic oscillation and violence. Finally, it focuses on the significance of Mother which is considerably highlighted in *The Bloody Chamber*. In this regard, there are two quotations in this part. The following one demonstrates inner struggles of the protagonist and Marquis in the story.

Our bed. And surrounded by so many mirrors! Mirrors on all the walls, in stately frames of contorted gold, that reflected more white lilies than I’d ever seen in my life before. He’d filled the room with them, to greet the bride, the young bride. The young bride, who had become that multitude of girls I saw in the mirrors, identical in their chic navy blue tailor-mades, for

travelling, madame, or walking. A maid had dealt with the furs. Henceforth, a maid would deal with everything. See,' he said, gesturing towards those elegant girls. I have acquired a whole harem for myself! (10)

The narrator is taken to the castle of her husband. Their bedroom is surrounded by so many mirrors and white lilies. The narrator notices that she becomes like multitude of identical girls in the mirror as her husband declares that he has acquired a whole harem for himself. There are several mirror scenes in the story. Before marriage, the girl in the opera sees Marquis is watching her in the mirror and says: “for the first time in my innocence and confined life, I sensed in myself a potentiality for corruption that took my breath away” (6). In the bedroom she says “A dozen husbands impaled a dozen brides while the mewling gulls swung on invisible trapezes in the empty air outside” (13). When Marquis arrives from the trip she aims to seduce him and she is no longer a naïve girl. “I forced myself to be seductive. I saw myself, pale, pliant as a plant that begs to be trampled underfoot, a dozen vulnerable, appealing girls reflected in as many mirrors, and I saw how he almost failed to resist me if he had come to me in bed, I would have strangled him, then” (36).



The first mirror scenes indicate the protagonist’s lack of a sense of herself as subject and her dependence on her husband. As the story goes on, the mirror scenes provide the signifying process for her to recognize herself as the “subject in process”. Julia Kristeva’s “Herethics” demands an always only tentative identity, an identity full of alterity. The subject or agent of this ethics is always in process (Oliver 109). According to Scott Dimovitz, “the *I* that is born by mirror image is the *I* of language” that places the subject into the realm of social discourse. “The *I* disrupts the unreflective sense of a uniform character, but it also has the possibility to fragment the self through the sense of gap between *I* and she” (Dimovitz 9). Due to the semiotic and the symbolic oscillation, the protagonist finds herself in a position both subversive and dependent on her husband. As Kristeva in her “Stabat Mater” displays the position of writing after “after the virgin” that posits the self on the border of the semiotic and the symbolic, this position of writing is recognizable in the language of the protagonist in the story. Thereby, as the story goes on, the narrator seeks to describe the events with more confidence and permits her drives to pursue their course.

The marriage bed in the story is Marquis’s ancestral bed. He has given his bride his mother’s ring that had been given to his former wives. Kristeva in her essay, “On the Melancholic Imaginary”, declares that “objectal depression” results from a loss suffered after one has made thethetic break into the symbolic. This loss is in consequence, conducted through a making manifest of the fact that self-reproach is hatred directed against the other and the bearer of an unsuspected sexual desire (Kristeva 6-7). Marquis is suffering from this loss. By designing several mirrors in his bedroom, he tells his wife that he has acquired a whole harem for himself. He has planned to “inscribe upon her his continuing tale of punishment for wives’ disobedience” (Roemer and Bacchilega 85). According to Sheets, “The domination of women by the male gaze is part of men’s strategy to contain the threat that the mother embodies, and to control the positive and negative impulses the memory traces of being

mothered have left in the male unconscious” (qtd. in Sheets 648). Moreover, Kristeva refers to sacrifice as a violence that puts an end to semiotic and pre-symbolic violence by focusing violence on a victim (Kristeva, *Revolution* 85). Marquis calls her wife for “the lustratory ritual and the ceremonial robbing and; after that, the sacrifice” (39). As a result, Marquis sacrifices his wives to put an end to his semiotic violence, while his wife tries to express her semiotic oscillation by her curiosity and her art (playing piano). She lets her “jouissance work its way into the social and symbolic” (Kristeva, *Revolution* 80).

According to Kristeva, “No language can sing” “unless it confronts the Phallic Mother” (qtd. in McCance 149). The protagonist was raised without a father. She explains that her father never returned from the wars and left her and her mother a legacy of tears. The mother is the protagonist’s ideal ego. When she thinks of courage, she thinks of her mother, thus the protagonist has a positive empowering relationship with her mother. Therefore at the end of the story, it is the “mother’s telepathy” that sent the mother to rescue her daughter. In this light, the following text mainly concerns with Kristeva’s theoretical concepts about mother which is the base of her theoretical concepts of the semiotic.

Until that moment, this spoiled child did not know she had inherited nerves and a will from the mother who had defied the yellow outlaws of Indo-China; My mother's spirit drove me on, into that dreadful place, in a cold ecstasy to know the very worst. I fumbled for the matches in my pocket; what a dim, lugubrious light they gave! And yet, enough, oh, more than enough, to see a room designed for desecration and some dark night of unimaginable lovers whose embraces were annihilation. (26)



Marquis leaves the protagonist for a business matter and gives her all the keys for all the rooms of the castle, but forbids her to enter one of them when he is away. Convinced that the room holds the key to her husband’s identity, she decides to explore it. As a result, the heroine enters the dark room and feels no fear as she identifies herself with her mother. The room is located in a far dark corner of the castle. As she explains, her mother’s spirit drives her into that dreadful place. There is absolute darkness, so that she uses the matches to light up the place and finds some instruments of mutilation.

According to Madelena Gonzalez, the stories and the title of *The Bloody Chamber* can be interpreted as a “chamber of horrors or metaphorically as a womb, a heart, the unconscious or sexuality” (Malcolm 508). Therefore, a womb is reminiscence of Kristeva’s “semiotic chora” which is connected to maternal body (ordering principal of semiotic chora) and significance of mother. Carter’s protagonist grasps that she had inherited nerves and a will from the mother who had defied the yellow outlaws of indo-China; her mother’s spirit drives her on, into that dreadful place, in a cold ecstasy to know the very worst. As Kristeva explains that the semiotic is made up of archaic representatives of drives and the senses that depend on the mother and biology, the protagonist identifies herself with her mother and that puts her subject in touch with the semiotic chora, excessive and nonsensical modality of her semiotic. When she decides to enter the forbidden chamber, she mentions that: “I felt no fear, no intimation of dread. Now I walked as firmly as I had done in my mother’s house” (25). Thus, the protagonist wants to

take up position in new ways. She disobeys her husband and changes her destiny which was inscribed by her husband.

Kristeva in her *Revolution in Poetic Language* explains that the thetic phase is organized at two points: the mirror stage and the discovery of castration. Castration makes the subject separate and always confronted by “an other: *imago* in the mirror”. Then, “the mother occupies the place of alterity and her body, the receptacle and guarantor of demands,” takes the place of all gratifications. Thus according to Kristeva, the mother is in other words, the phallus. The subject will be detached from his mother by the discovery of castration and the perception of this lack makes the phallic function a symbolic function. As a result, the subject finds his identity in the symbolic separated from the fusion with mother, “confines his jouissance to the genital, and transfers semiotic motility onto the symbolic order” (46- 47). The protagonist is well aware of her mother’s adventures. The mother “had outfaced a junkful of Chinese pirates, nursed a village through a visitation of a plague, shot a man- eating tiger with her own hand” (1). The heroine declares that: “Until that moment, this spoiled child did not know she had inherited nerves and a will from the mother”, thus the heroine feels no fear because of the transference of her semiotic modality onto the symbolic order.

### Identity Formation and the Subject in Process in *The Tiger’s Bride*

*The Tiger’s Bride* is the third short story in *The Bloody Chamber* which is based on the Beauty and the Beast with the same virginal heroine. In this story, Carter presents a profound exploration of female’s nature by her interest in “role-remaking” and “role-breaking”. There is an unnamed protagonist who struggles to find her identity based on her inner experiences rather than patriarchal codes of her society. In this context, Julia Kristeva’s theories of identity formation will be investigated in the following quotation.

Take off my clothes for you, like a ballet girl? Is that all you want of me?  
 'The sight of a young lady's skin that no man has seen before--' stammered  
 the valet.  
 I wished I'd rolled in the hay with every lad on my father's farm, to  
 disqualify myself from this humiliating bargain. That he should want so  
 little was the reason why I could not give it; I did not need to speak for The  
 Beast to understand me.  
 A tear came from his other eye. And then he moved;  
 he buried his cardboard carnival head with its ribboned weight of false hair  
 in, I would say, his arms; he withdrew his, I might say, hands from his sleeves  
 and I saw his furred pads, his excoriating claws. (70)

The story is about a girl whose father loses her in a card game to masked Milord, a tiger beast. The Beast and the father both made their deal that when the Beast sees Beauty naked, the deal is concluded and she is free to return back to her father. This is the second time that the tiger asks her to get unclothed and the girl refuses. The Beast does not speak, his valet conveys his message. At first, the girl is shocked by the Beast’s desire which does not involve her virginity

but a desire to see her naked. At the end, a tear came from the Beast's eye when Beauty rejected him.

According to the contract of Beauty's father, the Beast is allowed to view her unclothed like an object. Her self-identification or signification is covered by her father and her society, but as Patricia Brooke mentions, "the heroine is highly self-aware narrator". Her central weapon against her father is her linguistic, manifesting of the self-awareness that is reflected through her narrative (Brooke 77-78). The first time Beauty confronts the Beast's request, she insists on keeping her face covered. She cannot "yet presume to see sex outside its moral connotations" (Brooke 81). She reacts according to her symbolic modality and places herself in the victim's position. This time, her tone is more aggressive and she deliberately compares herself to a ballet girl or the mechanical puppet in order to highlight the predicament of women's existence. There are similarities between Beauty and the Beast. Beauty describes the Beast as a carnival figure since he hides his nature behind a painted mask. Meanwhile, the heroine, Beauty if she had a name is unnamed because she has retreated far from civilization like the Beast, but she misunderstands the Beast's request as degradation rather than "a complete exposure of the self" (Brooke 81).

Bettina Schmitz explains that Kristeva's theory can be understood as a "non-sacrificial model of identity" (qtd. in Schmitz 77). According to her, Kristeva has positive conception of identity in opposition to other postmodern and poststructuralist conceptions of a dissolved identity. For Julia Kristeva, it is at first vital to develop an identity that dominates and claims the position of the subject within the symbolic order. Only in a second step and from the standpoint of an already existing identity can this identity be dissolved, albeit with the implicit aim of developing process of the subject (Schmitz 77). Therefore, the task of this theory is "to develop a model of self-identity as a capacity for participation in a social world" (qtd. in Schmitz 77). In this regard, Beauty controls her situations by using "every recourse within her means" (Brooke 80). She holds her head high as she walks and confronts the Beast, thus she rebels at being a mere item of barter. "Her pride precludes the humiliation of the passive, victimized sacrifice" (Brooke 81). She struggles to establish her subjectivity and identity as her "drive charges undergo stases and become susceptible to semiotization: voice and gesture" (Kristeva, *Revolution* 28).

The following text focuses on Julia Kristeva's concept of the subject in process in *The Tiger's Bride*. In this regard, Kristeva's concepts of the semiotic and the symbolic will be indicated through the protagonist's experiences. In the previous quotation, the protagonist was struggling to find her own identity, however in this quotation she discovers her inner emotions as a result of her semiotic and symbolic oscillation. Thus, she finds herself as the subject in process.

A profound sense of strangeness slowly began to possess me. I knew my two companions were not, in any way, as other men . . . This knowledge gave me a certain fearfulness still; but, I would say, not much ... I was a young girl, a virgin, and therefore men denied me rationality just as they denied it to all those who were not exactly like themselves, in all their unreason. If



I could see not one single soul in that wilderness of desolation all around me, then the six of us - mounts and riders, both - could boast amongst us not one soul, either, since all the best religions in the world state categorically that not beasts nor women were equipped with the flimsy, insubstantial things when the good Lord opened the gates of Eden and let Eve and her familiars tumble out. Understand, then, that though I would not say I privately engaged in metaphysical speculation as we rode through the reedy approaches to the river, I certainly meditated on the nature of my own state, how I had been bought and sold, passed from hand to hand. That clockwork girl who powdered my cheeks for me; had I not been allotted only the same kind of imitative life amongst men that the doll-maker had given her? (72-73)

The narrator is invited to ride with her master and the valet. As they ride away from the castle, Beauty's assessment of her situation deepens along with her affinity with the Beast and she begins to sense the strangeness in herself. She meditates on the nature of her own state. She feels similarities between herself as a girl and animals and beasts that moves from social codes of civility and religions, since for religions neither beasts nor women were equipped with souls. She had been bought and sold and passed from hand to hand. Thus, she compares herself to the clockwork girl or a doll again because she feels the same kind of imitative life that her social norms have dictated to her.

According to Patricia Brooke, the similarities between these figures move from material, external conditions to internal definitions of selfhood (Brooke 82). This time, the girl is driven into nature with her non-human companions. As Julia Kristeva's signifying subject is undecidable process between the semiotic and the symbolic which is the "undecidability of a sexual identity", the girl starts to explore her subject in position and identity. She feels closer to the Beast, the valet and their horses, than she ever has to a man, thus she accepts the animal nature in herself. In her mediation of her own nature, she feels her semiotic modalities give rise to her as the speaking subject and instead of wishing for a soul, she denigrates them by calling them 'flimsy' and 'insubstantial', since the men who claim to possess souls consider her no more than a physical object.

Kristeva in her "Women's Time" emphasizes on "multiplicity of every person's possible identifications". In this light, Margaret Atwood explains that in Carter's work, the tiger and the lamb parts of the psyche, can reach some sort of accommodation, therefore nature of men or women is not fixed by Carter. Thus, "lambhood" and "tigerishness" may be found in either gender and in the same individual at different times (Sage 120-121). Beauty was expected to be a woman of honor during her life. She was warned by her nurse that if she did not behave in the correct manner, the tiger-man would gobble her up. When they approach the river, she feels that she is so far away from her home and from her constructed symbolic identity. She is no longer afraid of the Beast and later she realizes that "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" (74). Kristeva's subject goes beyond the limits of the subject in phenomenology and undermines the transcendental ego. It is what emerges from the semiotic and the symbolic oscillation. In this context, the heroine is the subject to mutability and as the subject in process.

### Self-Awareness as a Result of the Semiotic and the Symbolic Oscillation in *The Tiger's Bride*

According to Patricia Brooke, “Carter self-consciously adapts and expands fairy tale form, one that encompasses both confirming and confrontational traditions” (Brooke 84). In this respect, the present section, including two quotations, elaborates on the heroine’s self awareness as a result of her semiotic and symbolic oscillation. In this light, the three characters: Beauty, the valet and the Beast expose their true ‘selves’ in this story.

Then the wind blew the valet whirling along the passage. He must have decided that, if one should go naked, then all should go naked; without his livery, he revealed himself, as I had suspected, a delicate creature, covered with silken moth-grey fur, brown fingers supple as leather, chocolate muzzle, the gentlest creature in the world. He gibbered a little to see my fine furs and jewels as if I were dressed up for the opera and, with a great deal of tender ceremony, removed the sables from my shoulders. The sables thereupon resolve themselves into a pack of black, squeaking rats that rattled immediately down the stairs on their hard little feet and were lost to sight. (77)

When all three characters return to the castle, Beauty looks at the mirror again. She is disgusted to see her father smiling at his good fortune since she recognizes her action as a kind of economical exchange. The Beast has kept his word and paid her father’s debts. Beauty recognizes that she does not want to leave the castle. She strips naked, wraps herself in a fur and goes to the Beast’s den. On the way, she meets the valet who is also naked. She describes him as a gentlest creature in the world. When the valet sees her furs and jewels, he removes the sable from her shoulders. The sable turns into black rats that rattle down the stairs and flee.



According to Sheets Carter’s narrator is not using language to provide sexual entertainment for male readers and Roland Barthes would see the protagonist’s control of language as evidence of shift in power (Sheets 649). Therefore, the heroine is expressing her double bind of subject hood. Her semiotic modality is gaining the upper hand at the constraint of her “ego’s judging consciousness”. Robin Ann Sheets refers to female castration as “an imaginary fact that pervades the whole of men’s attitude towards women and our attitude to our selves, that transforms women from human beings into wounded creatures who were born to bleed” (qtd. in Sheets 653). At the beginning of the story, Beauty was sold like an object to the Beast. When she was leaving her father, she gave him a rose. But, she pricked her finger and he got his rose all smeared with blood. Some critics relate Beauty’s bleeding to the loss of her innocence and virginity in the future. However, Patricia Brooke calls Beauty’s offer of a blood stained rose to her father as confrontation of her humiliation on her own terms (Brooke 78).

Kristeva in her “Women’s Time” introduces herself as the “attacker of victim”. According to Oliver, Kristeva suggests that women can “conceive and construct a new comprehensive legitimacy for their jouissance, an ethics guaranteed not by constraint but by a logic that is always a poly-logic, of love” (qtd. in Oliver 110). She suggests an ethics that goes beyond restrictive laws either matriarchal or patriarchal (Oliver 110). The heroine confronts

traditions and the Beast's desire on her own way as she rejects the scary stories of her childhood. She calls them as "old wives tales, nursery fears". When the heroine sees the valet naked, she says: "He must have decided that, if one should go naked, then all should go naked". This time, she describes the valet as "the gentlest creature in the world". Therefore, they all display their animal nature because of the sense of their intimacy which is connected to their semiotic oscillation. Her semiotic modality makes her lose the "egocentric sense of herself as morally superior being" (Brooke 83) that prevented her union with the Beast. Then, all three will have a complete exposure of themselves which was hidden behind their masks of humanity.

In this sense, the following text considers the last part of the story of *The Tiger's Bride* in which the protagonist transforms into a tiger. According to Margaret Atwood, the narrator of *The Tiger's Bride* finds herself "as animal, as beast-as- appetite, as energy rather than the object of energy" (Roemer and Bacchilega 126). Thus at the end of the story, the narrator finds her way and gains a new awareness of her 'self'.

And each stroke of his tongue ripped off skin after successive skin, all the skins of a life in the world, and left behind a nascent patina of shining hairs. My earrings turned back to water and trickled down my shoulders; I shrugged the drops off my beautiful fur. (78)

As mentioned in the previous section, the heroine was invited to ride with her master in the nature. There, the Beast got unmasked and his valet held out his cloak. She declares that nothing about him reminded her of humanity. After all, she striped her clothes on her own decision. As she describes, the wind clattered in the rushes, purred and eddied in the river until the Beast told her enough. After that, the Beast cloaked and masked and once more, "to all appearances, a man" (75). Returned to the castle, Beauty recognizes that the deal is concluded and she is free to leave the Beast's house, but she sends the mechanical maid back to play her father's daughter. She prepares to confront the Beast again, this time freely and uninvited. She strips herself of all clothing while the mechanical maids watching her "peel down to the cold, white meat of contract" (76). She goes to his den and she declares that he was far more frightened of her than she was of him. The tiger licks off her skin, and underneath it "she is- behold!- a tiger herself".

At the tale's opening, the narrator believes this to be the land "where the lion lies down with the lamb" (58). Upon viewing the Beast, she realizes that "the lamb must learn to run with the tigers" (74). The naked girl approaches the tiger in his lair and according to Brooke, "her offering is not that of the lamb on the altar, but rather one without fear, between equals"; "she joins a new order of existence" (Brooke 83). As mentioned earlier, the girl is a self-aware narrator who struggles to establish her identity as the subject in the process. According to Anny Crunelle- Vanrigh, she is letting herself cross the line, "the state of in-between". "She moves from one layer of identity to the next as she divests herself of her clothes" (Roemer and Bacchilega 140). Kristeva offers us a self that is always heterogeneous and in process which occurs in "an open system" and displays the politics of the micro level, the level of internal



experience. In this regard, the narrator gains a new awareness of her ‘self’ and its construction through her internal experience.

According to Oliver, sexed bodies are always matters of representation and Kristeva is concerned with how we represent difference. Thus as Brooke explains, the heroine repudiates the status of victim and stops sacrificing herself for the good of others. She prevails over the cultural stereotypes and sexist ideologies that have limited her subjectivity by making the choice her own (Brooke 86). For Kristeva oscillation between the semiotic and the symbolic is productive and necessary. This oscillation is the movement between “rejection and stasis, separation and recuperation, difference and identity” (Oliver 96). The heroine oscillates between her symbolic modality that prevents her union with the Beast and her semiotic modality that gives her venture for renewal and change, thus she feels she is liberated by her nakedness. Hence, “she strips herself of all clothing- that of her former daughter – role, that of her present sex object- down to her real nakedness” (Roemer and Bacchilega 125) and at the end, she follows her semiotic energies and drives.

### **The Semiotic as a World of Sensual Immediacy in *Wolf-Alice***

*Wolf-Alice* is the last story of Carter’s wolf trilogy. According to Lau, *Wolf-Alice* gestures toward other narrative traditions such as legends of feral children and myths of famous children raised by wolves. In this respect, *Romulus and Remus* and according to Bacchilega the medieval poem *De puella a lupellis servata* can be mentioned as the examples (Lau 89). The story of *Wolf-Alice* is different from the other stories of *The Bloody Chamber* in the way it deals with direct psychological development of animalistic wolf-girl from the semiotic to the symbolic. In this regard, the following section analyzes Wolf-Alice’s feelings and understandings through Kristeva’s theoretical concepts of the semiotic.



She grew up with wild beasts. If you could transport her, in her filth, rags and feral disorder, to the Eden of our first beginnings where Eve and grunting Adam squat on a daisy bank, picking the lice from one another's pelts, then she might prove to be the wise child who leads them all and her silence and her howling a language as authentic as any language of nature. In a world of talking beasts and flowers, she would be the bud of flesh in the kind lion's mouth: but how can the bitten apple flesh out its scar again?

Mutilation is her lot; though, now and then, she will emit an involuntary rustle of sound, as if the unused chords in her throat were a wind-harp that moved with the random impulses of the air, her whisper, more obscure than the voices of the dum. (149)

*Wolf-Alice* is a story of a feral girl who was raised by wolves since the townspeople shot her wolf mother to death. Then, she was brought to a convent and some nuns tried to civilize her by teaching her standard social behaviors. However, they could not break her of her animal habits and they sent her to the castle of a vampire Duke. She is not afraid of the Duke because she has been raised with “fresh-eaters” and they are both expelled away from civilization. Her innocence is animal, “pre-human”, belonging to the Eden of our first beginnings where Eve

and grunting Adam squat on a daisy bank. So that, she would have been a wise child who leads them all as she is mutilated.

Wolf-Alice has no direct notion of past or future. She lives in “dimensionless, immediate moment” (Carter 150) Like the wild beasts. Wolf-Alice is not a quite child, not a quite wolf. She cannot speak and she has a strong sense of smell. Although the nuns tried to teach her language, she did not learn it. Wolf-Alice was found in a wolf den next to her foster mother who was killed by town people and her howling is a language as authentic as any language of nature. Hence, she has lost her mother in her semiotic phase before she could distinguish her mother from herself. This loss hampers her entry into the symbolic. Thereby, she cannot properly make break between subject and object.

Kristeva challenges the privileged position of the symbolic paternal order as articulated by Lacan. Kristeva calls the real stage and the maternal space; the union between mother and baby, as *chora*. This is phase of extreme mobility and it is governed by rhythm, babble, twist and meaningless articulation which is called “semiotic chora” (borrowed from Plato’s *chora: Timaeus*). That is the phase of nonverbal articulation; therefore it is ruled by feelings. Thus according to Kristeva, the chora is a rhythmic pulsion that constitutes the heterogeneous, disruptive dimension of language. Then the thetic break (threshold of language, borrowed from Edmund Husserl) begins to bring the child into the symbolic phase. In this light, Wolf-Alice cannot speak because she did not experience the thetic break. “Language is the mark of the Symbolic, and she is outside the Symbolic” (Roemer and Bacchilega 141). She could not pass into the symbolic phase properly. “She inhabits only the present tense, a fugue of the continuous, a world of sensual immediacy as without hope as it is without despair” (Carter 146). Thereby, she acts according to her pre-oedipal and maternal semiotic.

Wolf-Alice has no direct notion of time. She “exists in the flux of shifting expression” (Carter 149). For her, time passes and she does not have any idea about it. Wolf-Alice cannot distinguish the state of her dreams, waking and sleeping. Then, she begins to menstruate. Her menstruation leads her to discover the very action of time. In the light of this context, Wolf-Alice’s understanding of time will be investigated in terms of Kristeva’s notion of woman’s time that is directly related to her theories of the semiotic.

Soon the flow ceased. She forgot it. The moon vanished; but, little by little, reappeared. When it again visited her kitchen at full strength, Wolf-Alice was surprised into bleeding again and so it went on, with a punctuality that transformed her vague grip on time. She learned to expect these bleedings, to prepare her rags against them, and afterwards, neatly to bury the dirtied things. Sequence asserted itself with custom and then she understood circumambulatory principle of the clock perfectly, even if all clocks were banished from the den where she and the Duke inhabited heir separate solitudes, so that you might say she discovered the very action of time by means of this returning cycle. (151)

Wolf-Alice experiences menstruation for the second time. Her first time bewildered her. As the flow continued for a few days, it seemed to her an endless time. Meanwhile, she learned to



clean up the blood by some rags she found in the castle. When the flow ceased, she forgot it. After a full moon cycle, Wolf-Alice is surprised into bleeding again. Little by little, this returning cycle makes her aware of the passage of time. She understands circumambulatory principle of the clock.

Kristeva in her article “Women’s Time”, borrows Jame Joyce’s phrase “father’s time, mother’s species” to indicate two dimensions that human being have occupied. “Father’s time” refers to the linear time with the sense of history and progress that men have inhabited. “Mother’s species” suggests the realm that women have traditionally occupied: a space like the “chora” that generates human species in which time is marked by repetition and a sense of eternity of the species (McAfee 94). According to Hall the chora is “the seat of the semiotic modality of significance” (Hall 50). Wolf-Alice was separated from her mother while she was still in the chora and she could not pass into the symbolic phase properly. She realizes and perceives everything based on her semiotic modality. In this respect, she does not understand the very action of time until she begins to menstruate. As she experiences menstruation for the second time, she understands “circumambulatory principle of the clock”.

By the same token, Kristeva in “Women’s Time” mentions, for time “female subjectivity would seem to provide a specific measure that essentially retains repetition and eternity from among the multiple modalities of time known through the history of civilizations” (16). She elaborates on two types of temporality, cyclical and monumental, that are traditionally linked to female subjectivity. For cyclical, we can speak of menstruation, pregnancy and repetition and for monumental we can speak of motherhood and reproduction. According to her, female subjectivity has problems with respect to certain conception of time: time as linear and as departure and arrival-in other words time of history. Therefore, the time has perhaps come to emphasize the multiplicity of female expressions. In this regard, Wolf-Alice’s menstruation, as a returning cycle, helps her discover the repetition of time. She lives in a world of sensual immediacy based on the multiplicity of her semiotic modality. Thus, her perception of time emphasizes on the multiplicity of her expression.



### **The Thetic Phase as a Threshold of the Semiotic and the Symbolic in *Wolf-Alice***

In the stories of *The Bloody Chamber*, Carter indicates the complex subjectivity of female characters. As Lau mentions, “Carter’s women and wolves slip between categories- male, female, human, child, animal, witch - in a way that confuses the sexed conventions of power, authority and symbolic representation” (Lau 92). In this respect, the present section, including two quotations, studies the development of female’s subjectivity from the semiotic phase to the symbolic order in the light of Kristeva’s concept of the thetic break in the story of Wolf-Alice.

This habitual, at last boring, fidelity to her every movement finally woke her up to the regretful possibility that her companion was, in fact, no more than a particularly ingenious variety of the shadow she cast on sunlit grass. Had not she and the rest of the litter tussled and romped with their shadows long ago? She poked her agile nose around the back of the mirror; she found only dust, a spider stuck in his web, a heap of rags. 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.

She pawed and tumbled the dress the Duke had tucked away behind the mirror for a while. The dust was soon shaken out of it; she experimentally inserted her front legs in the sleeves. Although the dress was torn and crumpled, it was so white and of such a sinuous texture that she thought, before she put it on, she must thoroughly wash off her coat of ashes in the water from the pump in the yard, which she knew how to manipulate with her cunning forepaw. In the mirror, she saw how this white dress made her shine. (151- 152)

Wolf-Alice watches herself twice in the mirror. First time, she finds the reflection as her companion and feels freindly towards it , since she does not recognize it as her own. As the story goes on, little by little, she perceives the difference between herself and her souroundings. Finally, Wolf-Alice discovers the truth about her reflection and finds that she sees herself within the mirror when she plays with the Duke's grandmother's wedding dress and the image does the same.

Wolf-Alice's contacts with the mirror illustrates that she has passed through the mirror stage. She had lost her mother in her semiotic stage before she could distinguish her mother from herself and she could not pass into the symbolic stage properly. In the first mirror scene, Wolf-Alice beleives that it is another who mimicked her gestures, because she could distinguish her subject. Her body is agitated by the semiotic motility that fragments her more than it unifies her (Kristeva, *Revolution* 47). In the second mirror scence, she realizes herself as the subject when she wears a wedding dress and watches the "transformation of herself in the mirror" (Dimovitz 13). The white dress makes her shine and she feels the difference between herself and the wolves. She identifies herself with the image in the mirror. Thus, she finds herself as the subject in the process because of the semiotic and the symbolic oscillation. She feels more or less detached from the semiotic chora.

Kristeva in her *Revolution in Poetic Language* explains that the thetic break begins to bring the child into the symbolic phase. The thetic phase is also the threshold of the semiotic and the symbolic. According to her, the thetic phase is organized at two points: the mirror stage and the discovery of castration. "The mirror stage produces 'spatial intuition' which is found at the heart of the functioning of signification". She explains that from that point on, "in order to capture his image unified in a mirror, the child must remain separate from it, his body agitated by the semiotic motility..., which fragments more than it unifies him in a representation". Therefore she mentions that "Captation of the image and the drive investment in this image, which institute primary narcissism, permit the constitution of objects detached from the semiotic chora" (Kristeva, *Revolution* 46).

Castration makes the subject separate and always confronted by "an other: *imago* in the mirror". Then, "the mother occupies the place of alterity and her body, the receptacle and guarantor of demands," takes the place of all gratifications. The subject will be detached from his mother by the discovery of castration. As a result, the subject finds his identity in the symbolic separated from the fusion with mother, and transfers semiotic motility onto the



symbolic order (46- 47). In the light of these concepts, Wolf-Alice experiences the thetic break, passes through the mirror stage and discovers castration. As a result, she enters the symbolic order and realizes her difference from the surrounding. She finds her identity in process.

Angela Carter explains that she is in “the de-mythologizing business” (qtd. in Seago 1). In *Wolf-Alice*, she does not choose beautiful and noble characters. Wolf-Alice does not speak and she is “human manquée” (Sage 131). The Duke is a disgusting figure who does not even have an image in the mirror. At the end of the story, Wolf-Alice does not simply take on the symbols of the patriarchy; she is the one who transforms the Duke into the new being. Therefore, in the following text, Wolf-Alice’s development of subjectivity in the symbolic order is investigated through Kristeva’s concepts of the semiotic and the symbolic.

As she continued her ministrations, this glass, with infinite slowness, yielded to the reflexive strength of its own material construction. Little by little, there appeared within it, like the image on photographic paper that emerges, first, a formless web of tracery, the prey caught in its own fishing net, then in firmer yet still shadowed outline until at last as vivid as real life itself, as if brought into being by her soft, moist, gentle tongue, finally, the face of the Duke. (154-155)

Wolf-Alice puts on the wedding dress belonging to a bride the Duke has eaten and leaves the castle. When she wanders in the graveyard fascinated by the people's chanting, the townspeople and the bride's husband plan to take revenge on the Duke and they manage to shoot his shoulder. Wolf-Alice follows him back to the castle and when the people see her running after the Duke in a wedding dress, they flee because they assume her as the bride's ghost. In the castle, “pitiful as her gaunt grey mother” (154) Wolf-Alice licks the blood and dirt from the Duke’s cheeks and forehead “without hesitation, without disgust, with a quick, tender gravity” (154). As she licks the Duke, his reflection appears in the mirror. The Duke’s face, which ceased to cast an image in the mirror, appears in the glass. As a result, “she licks him into the new being” (Sage 132).

According to Margaret Atwood, Wolf-Alice licks the Duke into the new being, thus he becomes human through “instinctual, merciful, maternal” love (Sage 132). Wolf-Alice’s experience of the thetic break brings her into the symbolic phase. As Kristeva explains, in the symbolic phase, we begin to realize the difference between ourselves and the surroundings and become as “subject position” as well as the “subject in process”. Wolf-Alice leaves the castle wearing the wedding dress and becomes fascinated by the people’s chanting. She wears clothes and learns to walk on two legs. She understands the difference between herself and the others. As a result, Wolf-Alice finds her identity in the symbolic separated from the fusion with her mother. Kristeva insists that without the symbolic dimension, there could be no love. She mentions: “What I call love is openness to the other, and it is what gives me my human dimension, my symbolic dimension, my cultural and historical dimension...” (qtd. in Oliver 101). For her, we are affected by other people around us, especially the people we love. Energy transfers are never made one and for all, we will get feedback from others, energy returned



that will shape our future actions and self understanding (McAfee 30-42). Thus, we become who we are as a result of taking part in signifying process. In this sense, when Wolf-Alice sees the Duke's wound, she feels love and compassion for him and begins to lick his cheeks and forehead.

In Kristeva's view, as the child takes up the symbolic disposition it does not leave the semiotic behind. The semiotic will remain a constant companion to the symbolic in all its communications. Although Wolf- Alice takes up the symbolic disposition, she does not leave the semiotic behind. The oscillation between the semiotic's "disruptive and revolutionary aspects" and the symbolic's "organizational and editorial aspects" puts her as the subject in process. When she sees the blood, she becomes "pitiful as her guant grey mother". Wolf-Alice licks the blood and dirt from the Duke's cheeks and forehead "without hesitation, without disgust, with a quick, tender gravity". She follows her preverbal, pre-oedipal and maternal semiotic.

## CONCLUSION

The article closely addressed some of Julia Kristeva's major critical concepts related to the semiotic while applying them to a critical reading of Angela Carter's collection of short stories, *The Bloody Chamber*. The major argument of this study illustrated how Kristeva's two inseparable modalities: the semiotic and the symbolic operate within human's subjectivity and communication, events in social order and language. In this context, the consequences of the aforementioned modalities were investigated in short stories of *The Bloody Chamber*.

In the title story, the protagonist's expression of the semiotic and symbolic oscillation as the subject in process was investigated through her piano playing. She tried to heal her fears by the semiotic features of the music she chose. Secondly, Jean-Yves's "sensuous sensitivity" as a blind person was investigated through theories of the semiotic. The protagonist's subject formation in the mirror scenes and through her language was studied. In this regard, it compared the two characters, Marquis and protagonist in the way they expressed their semiotic and symbolic oscillation. The protagonist identified herself with her mother and that puts her subject in touch with the semiotic chora and expressed her semiotic modality by her curiosity and art, while Marquis sacrificed his wives to put an end to his semiotic violence.

In *The Tiger's Bride*, the narrator's identity formation and subjectivity were taken into consideration. The narrator was the subject to mutability and as the subject in process emerges from the semiotic and the symbolic oscillation. Thus, she struggled to establish her subjectivity and identity which was reflected through her narrative. The elaboration was on narrator's self awareness as a result of her semiotic and symbolic oscillation. The heroine confronted traditions and the Beast's desire on her own way. Therefore, she gained a new awareness of her 'self' and its construction through her internal experience as she followed her semiotic energies and drives.



In *Wolf-Alice*, the protagonist's feelings and perceptions were concerned with Kristeva's theoretical concepts of the semiotic. Wolf-Alice's menstruation as a returning cycle helped her discover the repetition of time and her perception of time emphasizes on the multiplicity of her expression based on the multiplicity of her semiotic modality. Further to that, the article considered Wolf-Alice's development of subjectivity from the semiotic phase to the symbolic order in the light of Kristeva's concept of the thetic break. Wolf-Alice's contacts with the mirror illustrated that she has passed through the mirror stage. She became as the "subject in process" by the thetic break that brought her into the symbolic phase. As a result, she realized her difference from the surrounding.

**Acknowledgment: None**

**Conflict of Interest: None**

**Funding: None**

**Ethical statements: None**

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