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Feminist Rewritings of “Bluebeard”:
Angela Carter’s “The Bloody Chamber” and
Nalo Hopkinson’s “The Glass Bottle Trick”

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1. INTRODUCTION

Women have always struggled to have a voice in the discipline of literature. Female writers and female artists in general have always been underrated, women being heavily shadowed by men, in the sciences and in the humanities too. This gender discrimination was traditionally grounded on a belief known as “biological essentialism”, which affected women’s lives for years and years, and states that men’s and women’s differences are a consequence of their biological sex. Indeed, in our Western culture biology and the body have always worked together in order to determine your opportunities in life, but these conditions are unchangeable and universal. This theory completely shuts down any opportunity for women to progress or demonstrate their value in a specific field, because of their being regarded as less than men, and moreover, unable to change their condition as it depends on a biological matter.

An important impulse to feminist struggle came from the idea that gender is a construct: one is born as a man or a woman, but masculinity and femininity are constructed socially and culturally. That is to say, gender is not biology as it is cultures, traditions and laws that assign male and female gender roles. Feminism involves the undermining of the kind of femininity “constructed” by patriarchal ideology and starts by politically fighting against the institutions that reinforce the idea of women’s inferiority because of their biological sex and that privilege men by giving them more power. The first wave of feminism was the first ever public movement that made feminist struggle a political issue and whose aim was fighting the patriarchal society of the time, in the 19th century. Women had no economic or political rights, this meant they could not vote or own property, as everything belonged to the husband. First-wavers succeeded in getting the right to vote for women in the early 20th century, and after that achievement the feminist movement declined until the

1960s, when a new wave started rising. The second wave of feminism was heavily influenced by thinkers like Simone de Beauvoir, who was a French writer, activist, and well-known philosopher in the orbit of existentialism. The development of feminism thus benefited from the writings of intellectuals like her, but also from the ideas in the works of some literary writers, even before the 20th century as is the case with the Brontë sisters, who also influenced the gender equality theories that developed through time. Writers like Simone de Beauvoir, or the Brontë sisters in the 19th century and Virginia Woolf in the 20th century, asked themselves why women were so often misread and misrepresented by men, as they were always polarized and divided into two categories, one being the kind of women idealized by men and described as angels or dolls and, the other, the women feared by males, presented as crazy or demonic. Men's authority in public and private realms contributed to women internalizing these stereotypes against themselves. By seeing women as inferior by nature, men "validated" or justified their superior moral and intellectual value, and wrote themselves in the way they wanted to be represented in literature. Thus, women have traditionally been regarded as weak and emotional throughout history, and so had they been portrayed in books. Moreover, these and other stereotypes have been internalized by them to the point that women themselves have contributed to gender inequality by believing these sexist ideas.

On the basis established by earlier feminist waves, a third wave developed in the 1990s as a continuation of the last one but with some differences, such as stating that feminism is not universal but covers many variables and kinds of struggle around the world. Third-wave feminism opens its doors to women from around the globe, aims to give visibility to women from other cultures and races (not just from Western societies, whose concerns mainly defined previous waves), and recognizes the different problems women face depending on their country, social and economic status, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, etc. This third wave of feminism makes the same claims as the second wave, but it is more

inclusive and focused on diversity and the different forms of oppression and discrimination that may overlap and intersect in each and every woman.

Narrowing down the focus to the field of literature and to how feminist writers and critics have contributed to the development of feminism as described above, one of the first things that they did was to re-read the canon in order to call attention to how women have recurrently been misrepresented in literature (and culture in general). Historically, the canon consisted of white, male authors, so it was time to question it. The second task they had to deal with, then, was to rewrite the canon by focusing on female writers of the past that had been excluded from it. While these tasks were more associated with literary critics, literary writers also tried through their works to change the patriarchal portrait of the female, sometimes by rewriting those works of the past that contributed to the creation and perpetuation of stereotypes, and therefore, of gender inequality. An example of this is Angela Carter, who is connected with the second wave of feminism, as reflected in her writings.

One of Carter's most popular works is *The Bloody Chamber*, a book consisting of a number of traditional fairy tales rewritten with a feminist twist. For instance, the story that opens the volume, "The Bloody Chamber", is a version of "Bluebeard". The female protagonist of this classical tale is mostly passive regarding her role in the plot, but she nearly has a tragic ending for which she has been traditionally blamed, her near death somehow justified as a punishment for curiosity and disobedience. The young bride has the courage to use the key to open the forbidden room that her newly married husband has told her not to enter. She does it anyway, out of curiosity and suspicion. She then encounters a pile of dead bodies, the corpses of her husband's previous wives. He discovers her and so he tries to kill her, but her brothers arrive and kill him before he assassinates her. This is an example of how women were portrayed in literature: a woman cannot be curious or do things that men do not allow them to, and if they do so, if they decide to break the rules even if it is for their own

good, they will be punished; if saved, it is men that appear as rescuers. This is a sexist view of women as it shows how women can be regarded as bad for discovering a man's crime, but still be blamed for it instead of questioning the criminal man. Aware of the patriarchal values at the core of the traditional tale and its interpretation, Angela Carter rewrites the story by creating "a woman in process". This is a term that describes how Carter builds the character of the female protagonist by making her oscillate between feeling insecure and sure of herself, innocent and blameful, thus avoiding the typical binaries and polarized stereotypes mentioned above and granting her a voice, the power to tell her story: "She is a woman in process, someone who is exploring her subject position and beginning to tell her own story" (Manley 71). Carter modifies the portrait of the woman throughout the story in a way that she is not seen as the weak and indecisive character that bears the guilt of her psychotic husband, but rather as a woman who can change the destiny he had planned for her. Carter produces this feminist rewriting in the context of the second wave of feminism, when there is an awakening of the feminist movement as a universal fight for every woman's rights, but without taking into account the different factors for which each woman may be discriminated as much as later feminist waves do.

Regarding the last point made in the paragraph above, it must be said that, with the passing of time, second-wavers were accused of being too focused on the realities of Western women, mainly white and middle class. That is one important aspect that distinguishes third-wave feminists from previous ones, being more intent on giving a voice to each woman from every part of the world, taking into account their nationality, race and ethnic factors, and other variables. The development of feminism beyond the second wave also blends with the processes of decolonization, as imperial powers like Britain progressively disintegrated and the voices of those whose cultures had been suppressed made themselves heard, thus bringing together the variety of concerns mentioned above in connection with third-wave feminism. An

author who illustrates some of the factors intersecting in this context, and affecting how feminism works in literature, is Nalo Hopkinson, now a Canadian citizen but born and raised in the British Caribbean. At the beginning of the 21st century, Hopkinson rewrote “Bluebeard” again according to the new and more inclusive feminist standards of her time, that is to say, with a view to questioning the patriarchal portrait of women, while also considering non-Western cultures and realities by setting the story and its characters in the Caribbean. In this feminist rewriting, Hopkinson makes black women visible and brings to the fore the racial issues that may affect their lives and cause them suffering, such as being stigmatized for the colour of their skin, sometimes even by black men, as “The Glass Bottle Trick” shows. In this rewriting, otherness plays a key role as gender (other than male), race (other than white), and Caribbean (therefore non-Western) culture and folklore become central issues to the understanding of the story.

In the light of the above, then, the purpose of this undergraduate dissertation is to separately analyze Carter’s and Hopkinson’s versions of “Bluebeard” by approaching them as feminist rewritings of the same tale, thus considering what they have in common, but also comparing them in a way that takes into account the historical contexts in which each tale was written and the main concerns of feminism at the time: the 1960s and 1970s of the second wave for Carter —*The Bloody Chamber* came out in 1979— and the 1990s of third-wave and later feminist developments for Hopkinson —“The Glass Bottle Trick” was first published in 2000, in an anthology of Caribbean fiction, and then included in *Skin Folk*, a 2001 short-story collection by the author.

2. ANGELA CARTER AND NALO HOPKINSON'S VERSIONS OF "BLUEBEARD"

The purpose of this section is to analyze “The Bloody Chamber” to then go on to discuss “The Glass Bottle Trick” so that I can establish the basis to comment on their similarities and differences in my final conclusion. I will be focusing on the relevant features that support my thesis on how these two feminist writers give the female protagonists in their short stories a more prominent and active role, so that, at the end, we can consider both rewritings of “Bluebeard” and compare these two types of female empowerment.

2.1. ANGELA CARTER'S “THE BLOODY CHAMBER”

Angela Carter's version of “Bluebeard” is entitled “The Bloody Chamber”, which makes reference to the forbidden room where the corpses of Bluebeard's wives are hidden. Writing at the time when the second wave of feminism developed, Carter shared the claims of the feminist movement and her ideas are reflected in this rewriting, which draws attention to the ideological changes fostered by feminism, and that will shape the plot in a new form. As mentioned above, second-wave feminism benefited from the works of literary writers —the Brontë sisters and Virginia Woolf were my examples— and also from the ideas and writings of intellectuals such as Simone de Beauvoir. These writers asked themselves why men so often produced polarized portraits of women, always relying on binaries as a way of representing them in their novels, opposites that trapped them in the roles of angels or demons, saints or monsters. The context in which Carter lived and wrote helped the writer to become more critical of the stark contrast between women's and men's roles that were both reflected in, but also strengthened by traditional tales or novels. Carter was political in her works. More pointedly, as Easton explains, “she declared ‘All art is political and so is mine, I want readers to understand what it is that I mean by my stories.’ This does not imply that she

wrote agitprop. [...] Instead, she needed to redefine the word moralist before it could be a possible description of her work" (Easton 1-2). That is, she did not want to tell people how to behave but rather find the way to explain things in her novels. In Carter's eyes, arguing was "to explore rather than persuade" (Easton 2). All this, together with her daring inventions camouflaged in reality, her aim to cross the invisible line drawn between the ordinary and the forbidden, and her mastery while using an exuberant language gave birth to one of her most famous works, *The Bloody Chamber*. As Makinen puts it, Carter "was best known for her feminist rewritings of fairy-tales; the memorials blurring stories with story-teller stand testimony to that" (Makinen 21). In the case of "The Bloody Chamber", the tale is trying to show people how different a plot can be depending on the different roles men and women play in a story. Far from being a writer that did not step out of her comfort zone, Carter was described as "the avant-garde literary terrorist of feminism" (Makinen 20), meaning she would innovate as well as portray situations that had never been spoken about before and she would take a stand on sexism while giving the narrative a violent touch.

Without further due, I will analyze Angela Carter's "The Bloody Chamber" and her treatment of female roles. Carter's protagonist is always defined by her role as a wife and her dreadful adventure starts the moment she marries. Though determined to marry the Marquis, she is not in control of the situation, as revealed by her inner thoughts, her doubts, her wondering about her own decisions. All this serves us to gain perspective over the way she is being manipulated like a puppet. On the one hand, there is the Marquis' influence on her. On the other hand, there is her mother, who takes a very active role from the beginning, trying to question her decisions and make her think twice before taking the step: "Are you sure you love him?", she asks, "I'm sure I want to marry him", answers her daughter (Carter 1). These two sentences are a part of a short dialogue between mother and daughter, but of extreme relevance. Usually, in the past, mothers would be happy to see their daughters marry a

wealthy man, no matter what the desires of her young daughter were. Families overlooked the child's emotions or worries about her commitment and focused more on what would be better for the family (sometimes without even thinking about the daughter), especially economically speaking. This is the reason why the author, Angela Carter, presents this conversation to us, readers: she portrays from the beginning a caring mother that worries about her daughter's happiness, and a daughter that is given the freedom to choose what she wants, to be the one that decides her future despite her mother's doubts that she is choosing well: "She sighed, as if it was with reluctance that she might at last banish the spectre of poverty from its habitual place at our meager table" (Carter 2). This is another sentence that presents the same attitude from the mother, who values her daughter's well-being and feels that riches do not compensate for the unhappiness that may come from marrying the wrong husband.

Even if there is a phase when the protagonist follows the script of the Marquis, who manipulates her as mentioned above until the shock of seeing the dead wives makes her react, it can be said that she still has a partial responsibility for what happens. Interestingly, the future wife affirms to be sure of wanting to marry him but does not say anything about loving him, and so, from the beginning, we can see how she has a voice and the opportunity of narrating the events, which gives the reader direct access to her side of the story, presented through her eyes and words. In that sense, an important change introduced by Carter is that the protagonist is the narrator of her own story, instead of the typical heterodiegetic narrators of tales. As she narrates after the events, and from her point of view, the reader can follow her in her decisions, feelings and doubts. And as she tells the story retrospectively, we can also see her evolution and how she takes a critical stance, judging herself for things she did. By taking certain decisions freely, her part of responsibility in what happens is highlighted.

Having said this, it is also true that a contrast can be perceived between her determination and her lack of experience: "I was seventeen and knew nothing of the world"

(Carter 2). Carter here focuses on how young she was when she met the Marquis and decided to commit herself to a relationship with an older man: “He was older than I. He was much older than I; there were streaks of pure silver in his dark mane” (Carter 2). And yet, he attracts her as she sees him as a man that can guide her in life. As everything is presented from her perspective, we see that she does know there is a considerable gap —in terms of age, cultural baggage, social status— between them and is aware of his past relationships with other women. She is a teenager, beautiful and delicate, and a virgin, almost nothing compared to him, a wealthy man with a wide culture, knowledge of the world, and of sex. However, although she is young and inexperienced, she is no fool; clues are given that she is not completely ignorant about the kind of man the Marquis is and the effects he may have on her. This can be seen, for instance, when he gives her a necklace as a gift, clasping it around her neck, which she describes as she sees her image in the mirror: “And, for the first time in my innocent and confined life, I sensed in myself a potentiality for corruption that took my breath away” (Carter 3). The protagonist sees herself as a woman for the first time, not a girl. The necklace announces her entrance into the adult world, a world in which corruption can come into play as she is about to discover. By acknowledging that potential for corruption in her, she is also taking an active role in her process of making decisions, and so, when the time comes, she will be able to choose the path to follow. Later, in her retrospective narration, she will face her guilty feelings, since what is freely decided makes us responsible for our choices. In that sense, the protagonist is not angelical and pure, like other female protagonists of tales. She occupies a grey area, which sets her apart from polarizations.

Regarding sexuality, we find evidence of her gradually discovering sex and remembering how she had already learned some things thanks to what her mother had told her: “My mother, with all the precision of her eccentricity, had told me what it was that lovers did; I was innocent but not naïve” (Carter 6). Once again, she escalates the ladder towards

adulthood when she discovers the Marquis' porn collection in his library. She had never had sex before, and she recognizes herself as lacking experience, but willing to leave that behind for good. But when she at last loses her virginity, this is seen as something quite different for him and for her. He is quite violent in their first sexual intercourse, the verb used to describe penetration is "impale", which suggests sex is harmful to her and that she is the passive object that he penetrates. He reaches climax, she cries. Strangely, she accepts this role, the role of a masochist that a sadist like the Marquis needs. His treating her as an object to be possessed and looked at (twelve mirrors in the bedroom) is confirmed by the violence of this first sexual intercourse. He is proud and tempted to show the proof of her virginity, the sheets of the bed stained with her blood: "We do not hang the bloody sheets out of the window to prove to the whole of Brittany you are a virgin, not in these civilized times. But I should tell you it would have been the first time in all my married lives I could have shown my interested tenants such a flag" (Carter 6, 7). She then realizes that this is what caught his eye and drew him to her. Her youth and innocence were seen as virtues by him, as was her unknowingness, almost as if her understanding little about the world was an advantage to him. This was what attracted a fully experienced man like him, her inexperience and her potentiality for corruption, because he thought he could easily mold her into the woman he wanted her to be.

As Merja Makinen explains in her study about the decolonization of feminine sexuality in "The Bloody Chamber", "Carter stresses the relationship between women's subjective sexuality and their objective role as property: young girls get bought by wealth, one way or another. But in the feminist re-write, Bluebeard's victimization of women is overturned and he himself is vanquished by the mother and daughter" (29). This is very relevant to support the argument stated just before, the younger a girl is, the more she will attract wealthy older men that can "buy" her love. Historically and by default, women have been treated as objects and it was believed they could be bought in exchange for material

things or wealth, all the more so if they were young, as they were then considered even less capable of deciding for themselves about their life. Carter highlights in her rewriting the idea that the Marquis shares this belief. But he goes beyond that. His name is a wink to the Marquis de Sade (he is just the Marquis, no name given). He is a sadist who objectifies the girl for his sexual pleasure, a pleasure he also seems to get from murder. This is confirmed when we learn that he had killed all his past wives. Traditional readings of Bluebeard in the well-known tale present him as almost the “good guy”, the “poor” man that cannot find a woman he can trust, the husband guided by morals who wants to teach a lesson to his nosy wife. Indeed, the tale was interpreted for a long time as warning about the dangers of female curiosity and disobedience. All this is rewritten in Carter’s version, where it is impossible to see the Marquis as a victim of the weaknesses of the female sex.

As happens in “Bluebeard”, the Marquis says to the young bride: “But you must promise me, if you love me, to leave it well alone” (Carter 9), referring to the key at the moment when he puts the loyalty of his wife to test. Not only does he want to test her, but also make her feel the need to prove how worthy of his love she is. For this, she will have to show him that she possesses all the good qualities that a wife must have according to him, not taking into account his own actions, far from mentioning the fact that he had killed all his past wives. To him, a good wife must not be nosy but faithful and obedient to her husband. If she fails, he can justify the murder of the woman as she has given him a reason through her “inadequate behavior”. However, clues are dropped that the ending (murder by decapitation) planned for his wife was decided beforehand, even the ruby choker he gives her as a gift prefigures the kind of death planned for her. To put it simply, murder gives him pleasure. If disobedience was the reason, what was the first wife’s mistake? Which corpses did she see if she was the first to be killed? Carter empowers the young wife as she behaves in the same way that the other wives who died for that reason, but it is precisely this —breaking the

husband's prohibition and opening the forbidden door— that makes her react and decide that she does not want to be one more corpse in bloody chamber of the title. Carter reassesses the role of the female protagonist by presenting her disobedience in a positive light, as giving her knowledge and conscience about the situation. She also introduces another female figure who will save her from her husband at the end of the tale. Just when the Marquis is about to kill her, her mother reappears in the story and ties the plot together by acting as she did at the beginning: suspicious of him and caring of her daughter. It is significant that the one who saves the main character is another female, because women are traditionally saved, but they are not saviours. Carter rewrites the hero figure as a woman and as a mother. As to the protagonist, she evolves and matures, and the way she judges her past actions throughout the narrative shows her as neither unquestionable good nor bad, but better equipped, after her experience with the Marquis, to start a new life with a man that is the antithesis of what the Marquis was: the blind piano tuner. They live and work together, in a more equal partnership, and are happy without the need to get married. All this shows that female characters can play leading roles other than the traditional ones they had in tales and they can gain independence and strength, just as antifeminist stereotypes can become weaker and weaker through rewriting.

2.2. NALO HOPKINSON'S "THE GLASS BOTTLE TRICK"

This version of "Bluebeard" explores not only misogyny but also colourism. Nalo Hopkinson's tale presents a marriage between two black people, Samuel and Beatrice. One interesting fact about this rewriting is that it pretty much illustrates some main concerns of the third wave of feminism and of the author's time. As mentioned above, this third wave is thought to have begun in the 1990s as a continuation of the previous one (the one Carter is related to) but with some differences too, such as the conviction and emphasis on the fact that

femininity is not universal but covers many variations and kinds of struggle around the world. That is, the third wave of feminism makes the same claims as the second wave, but it is more inclusive and focuses on diversity and the different forms of oppression and discrimination that may overlap and intersect in each and every woman's case. Thus, to the critique of patriarchal ideology at the core of Carter's rewriting, Hopkinson adds the issue of race, setting her tale in a Caribbean village and blending gender and racial discrimination: "Through her tale, she addresses the destructive racial and gendered teachings which have been internalised by the rather safe, stuffy Samuel who courts Beatrice, who has been considered a little too liberal with her ways and needs to settle down" (Wisker 145). Hopkinson makes room to include a critique of the double discrimination some women suffer in becoming victims of both sexism and racism. This racism is also exercised by black men, who are influenced by the hate of white men towards them on account of their race and which somehow accounts for their preferring a skin as light as possible. This phenomenon is called colourism, and it differentiates dark-skinned from light-skinned black people. Black women that suffer the consequences of this prejudice may thus be doubly discriminated because of their race and gender. Moreover, they suffer this discrimination from different sources: not only white men but black men as well, who in spite of being black like them would want them to be paler. This is the case of Samuel, who hates his own blackness and, as a result, hates his wife's too: "Samuel didn't like her to spend too much time in the sun [...]. Beatrice knew he didn't want her to get too brown. When the sun touched her, it brought out the sepia and cinnamon in her blood [...] and he could no longer pretend she was white" (Hopkinson 265). This is an example of colourism. He loathed being black and did not want his wife to be so, either. We see that, although the story is set in the present, the racial discrimination against Caribbean people survives far beyond British colonization and the end of white political domination. The fact that Samuel would like to pretend that his wife is white demonstrates a level of racism

against his own race, which can be understood as the product of past history and of a society ruled by white oppressors.

Having established a frame for the analysis of “The Glass Bottle Trick”, in what follows I will focus more in depth on the way in which sexism and colourism shape the main character’s role as a woman of colour in Hopkinson’s tale, which I see as a most relevant feature of this rewriting. As one critic states, “Hopkinson’s female protagonists regain and reestablish self-worth in the face of that which would deny them” (Wisker 154). This statement applies to the main character of the story, Beatrice, who stands against her oppressive husband and the standards that deny her value as a person, defeating the social obstacles and the interpersonal discrimination that being a woman of colour have condemned her to. Not only do we see Beatrice fighting for self-worth and equality by becoming an increasingly strong female character in the story, but we can also perceive how she tries to change Samuel’s perspective on his own blackness. She knows very well about the deep disgust he feels towards his dark skin and the skin of his fellow blacks in general, but she does not share it by any means. He will not succeed in making her give up sunbathing, just as he will not stop her from having their black babies, as we will see later.

Beatrice does not let the world convince her of any ugliness they might see in her; instead, she rejects this view by seeing and priding in the beauty of being a person of colour. She sees the beauty in her, which is pretty rebellious for a black woman surrounded by forces likely to lead her to dislike herself, just as she sees the beauty in every other black woman or man. In the next quotation we can observe her will to make her husband feel beautiful and happy about his skin, while he refuses and forbids her to do so: “—‘Black Beauty’ —‘Never call me that, please, Beatrice,’ he said softly. ‘You don’t have to draw attention to my color. I’m not a handsome man, and I know it. Black and ugly as my mother made me’” (Hopkinson 267). Although they do not seem to openly talk over this subject, Beatrice can guess that

Samuel feels ashamed of his black skin by reflecting also on how he behaves when he is with white people, as if he could not keep up with them: “Beatrice sometimes wondered why Samuel hadn’t married a white woman [...]. She thought she knew the reason, though. She had seen the way Samuel behaved around white people. He smiled too broadly. He simpered, he made silly jokes” (Hopkinson 266). Here we perceive, again, an interesting contraposition between the two characters in respect of race. Samuel did not marry a white woman because he would have felt inferior to her, but the fact that Beatrice does not regard her colour as a burden makes her superior to him, as she can see how shamefully he behaves when he is with white people. Even though we cannot tell how she behaves in this situation, everything seems to suggest that she is not ashamed of her origins and she will not feel inferior while being with whites. Society might look down on her for being a black woman, but she will not delight their ears by laughing at their jokes or delight their eyes by smiling at them all the time. She does acknowledge her value and this places her in a superior position: she looks down on him for making himself small in front of white people. Her self-assurance leads her to take more and more rebellious steps, which help the reader see her grow in contraposition with Samuel, as illustrated by their views on the issue of having offspring. She takes the initiative and tries to convince him to have babies, showing him how beautiful a black human being can be. This is a sign of determination and black pride, because, once again, nothing can deter her from seeing her own beauty and the potential she has, both as a woman and as a black, and also as a future mother. Instead of feeling diminished, she speaks for everyone who has black skin: “She remembered him joking that no woman should have to give birth to his ugly black babies, but she would show him how beautiful their children would be, little brown bodies new as the earth after the rain. She would show him how to love himself in them” (Hopkinson 267).

Later in the tale, we see the peak of Samuel's sexism and racism by learning how he punished his previous wives who had tried to have his babies in the past. This version of "Bluebeard" is thus one in which murder is caused by racial hate and racial fear, which come, to complicate things further, from a black man who also wants to impose her male authority on his wives. The title of the tale is related to Samuel's murders, as the glass bottle trick is an act of superstitious belief supposedly granting him protection from his victims: outside his home, Samuel keeps two glass bottles hanging from a tree with the glass coloured blue to keep the spirits of his wives cool rather than allow them to heat in anger at being dead. This, he thinks, will keep him safe from their ghosts. But Beatrice accidentally breaks them just before Samuel returns home the day she has decided to tell him she is pregnant. She sees the broken bottles as an unimportant mishap, but this in fact releases the "duppy wives", as they are called in the tale —"duppies" being, in the context of Caribbean folklore, malevolent ghosts. When the bottles break, the house gets hotter and hotter as the duppy wives' anger has also been set free. The increasing heat makes Beatrice search for the control panel of the air conditioner, which leads her to a room that is always closed due to the fact that his husband's former wives died there. This room stands for the forbidden chamber so important in all versions of "Bluebeard".

A form of gender-based violence consists of hurting the children to hurt the mother, which is what Samuel does, taking it even further in that he does not even allow the babies to be born because they will be born black. Therefore, and figuratively speaking, the forbidden door not to be opened in this tale is pregnancy: having black offspring. Samuel cuts short black lives (the babies') and punishes the wives too, killing them for daring to get pregnant and wanting to be mothers: "This was how Samuel punished the ones who had tried to bring his babies into the world, his beautiful black babies. For each woman had had the muscled sac of her womb removed and placed on her belly; hacked open to reveal the purplish mass of her

placenta" (Hopkinson 269). When Beatrice finds out she is pregnant, she still thinks she can change Samuel and decides to go ahead, which may have cost her her life had it not been for her accidentally breaking the bottles. As she opens the door of the forbidden room she finds the two previous wives dead with their their pregnant bellies gutted. Then she understands everything. She does not recoil, though, but actively contributes to the spirits' liberation just as Samuel arrives home: "She stepped out of the meat locker and quietly pulled the door in but left it open slightly so the duppy wives could come out when they were ready" (Hopkinson 270). The tale leaves us with the uncertainty of whether she will die at the hands of Samuel, or killed by the duppy wives, or if these spirits will just murder Samuel in revenge. By taking into account how women are portrayed in this tale, we could think that the ending will follow the lines of sorority, underscoring the power of women and their mutual support to stand against oppressive men. Sorority is a feminist concept which points to how women help equals, getting together against the oppression of men and supporting one another. This can be applied to Beatrice and the duppy wives: as the latter were in the protagonist's situation before, what the reader expects is that they will not harm Beatrice, on the contrary, they will help her to free herself from her misogynistic husband, in tune with sorority and feminism. And so, just as "The Bloody Chamber" ends with a mother saving her daughter, the more open ending of "The Glass Bottle Tree" may be read as suggesting that the powerful spirits of dead women will kill a murderous man and help another woman to save both her life and that of her baby, that is, they will make it possible for her to be both a free individual and a mother.

3. CONCLUSION

As a conclusion to my dissertation, I would like to highlight the fact that the two versions of “Bluebeard” analyzed here offer us different views of what feminism meant for each author at the time when they were writing. In “The Bloody Chamber”, Carter conveys her commitment with the ideas of second-wave feminism, as she herself was a feminist writer of the second wave. Being a white female author from a Western country, her work engages in the struggle to debunk the traditional gender roles that were assigned to women at that time. She gives her protagonist a voice and portrays her as departing from the typical heroine of tales, thus refusing to present her as devoid of sexual impulses, good and passive, always saved/helped by men. On the other hand, “The Glass Bottle Trick” by Caribbean-born Nalo Hopkinson takes a step further in tune with the developments of feminism in the third wave and later. She makes the same claims as Carter in her tale, but also reflects broader feminist concerns, especially in connection with racial discrimination and the consequences of colonization and decolonization processes. Her rewriting thus consists of a more inclusive and innovative take on “Bluebeard”, one that portrays the problems that women of colour have had to face for being women, and also black, in the context of a culture that has long suffered the consequences of Western imperialism. By analyzing and comparing both stories, I hope to have shown the different approaches to feminism that these two authors took in their versions of “Bluebeard”, which illustrate how feminist rewritings have evolved through time, becoming more inclusive and multicultural, broadening their concern with gender inequality in order to deal with other reasons for discrimination against women, such as racial and cultural identity.

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