**[How Carter subverts the gothic genre](http://a2englitgem.blogspot.co.uk/2010/03/how-crter-subverts-gothic-genre.html)**

Carter subverts the gothic genre by altering the traditional structure of a gothic text. In stories such as ‘The Tigers Bride’ the typical gothic structure has been altered. The heroine transforms into the beast she has longed to become, ‘I shrugged off my beautiful fur’, and the structure consists of the protagonist suffering to succeeding. This mimics the style of a fairy tale rather than that from the gothic genre which conventionally end tragically, demonstrated in Shakespeare’s ‘Macbeth’ and in Mary Shelley’s ‘Frankenstein’.

Although Carter uses gothic language to set a chilling atmosphere there are also references which jump out to the reader as being not gothic. She uses phrases from different fairy tales within the text, which links to the contextual background of the stories being based on the fairy tales by the French writer Perraut. For example in, ‘The Bloody Chamber’, the well known quotation from ‘little red riding hood’ is used ‘All the better to see you’ and in ‘The Lady of the house of Love’ the phrase form ‘Jack and the bean stalk’ ‘fee fi foe fum’ is used. As a reader one can immediately recognise that these phrases have been selected form the fairy tale genre and therefore are not conventionally gothic however the effect of using them can create a shocking effect suitable to the gothic nature. Immediately before the fairy tale reference in ‘the Bloody Chamber’ Carter has built up the suspense in a gothic style and uses ellipsis to show the hero is giving into the fear building inside of herself, ‘’ I stammered foolishly: We’ve not taken luncheon yet: and, besides, it I s broad daylight…’. By suddenly incorporating the contrast of an opposing suitable for young children this makes the gothic elements more apparent, and the perversity is shocking for the reader – a desirable effect of a gothic novel.

Feminism is strongly portrayed through the stories, which is not a gothic element, and is complimented by the female voice used in many of the stories; notably ‘The tiger’s Bride’. Carter draws attention to the feminine tendencies she incorporates within a gothic style by repeating, ‘Are you not a woman of honour,’ This reinforces the concept that the female protagonists has a duty to fit in with that in order for women to be deemed respectable they must submit to men. Again reference is made to women dutifully obeying men through the typical gothic nature of using a doppelganger; ‘That clockwork girl who powdered my cheeks formed; had I not been allotted only the same kind of imitative life amongst men that the doll-maker had given her?’

As well as feminism, themes of sexuality are strong and alliteration is used to highlight this, ‘beasts in bondage’. Direct use of perverse sexual practice is explored within ‘The Bloody Chamber’, and Carter writes about having sex with her husband on the, ‘bed on which he had been conceived, ‘ the repetition of calling his lover after having sex with her ‘baby’ , ‘have the nasty pictures cared Baby? Baby mustn’t play with grownup’s toys…’ highlights the theme of sexuality. In addition the word ‘cunt; is used which is powerful as the strong masculine ending compliments the protagonists feeling of contempt for her lover and it is shocking for a reader due to the negative connotations surrounding the word. In ‘wolf Alice ’ active verbs such as ‘erect’ are used when not being openly explicit demonstrating Carter’s skill to subtly suggest the underlying themes of sexuality within a gothic text.

Perhaps the most unusual theme in combined with the gothic elements adopted by Carter, is the element of comedy. ‘Puss-in Boots’ is comparable, to a farce, which Carter has herself said was intentional when writing, as there are with elements of bawdy humour, ‘And if he don’t like me to knead his nipples…’ The comedy is further enhanced and at times verges on absurdity by the use of a cat as a narrator, ‘A tom, sirs, a ginger tom and proud of it. The ‘happy ending’ traditionally used in a ‘Fairy tale is perhaps most evident in this tale as well, ‘so may all your wives, if you need them, be rich and pretty’, ultimately down playing the gothic nature in this piece entirely.

In conclusion Carter’s influence from fairy tales can not be ignored. Whether or not this can be interpreted as making her stories less fitting with the gothic genre or that the contrast in the genres makes the gothic elements stand out, depends on the individual story. For example I feel that it is more suitable to describe ‘Puss in Boots’ as fitting with the fair tale genre; however this is not the case for all the other stories. The incorporation of themes of feminism and sexuality add a contemporary layer to the gothic genre and are methods used to make the reader feel repulsed which is suited to the gothic genre. Despite Carters unique approach to the gothic genre after reading stories such as, ‘The Bloody Chamber’ and ‘The Lady of the house of love’ you are left with the gothic experience which justifies her work as literature that fits in with the gothic genre.