Università di Firenze Dipartimento di Formazione, Lingue, Intercultura, Letterature e Psicologia

Corso di traduzione in inglese John Gilbert

"The Snow Child” by Angela Carter from the short story collection *The Bloody Chamber* (1979)

Midwinter — invincible, immaculate. The Count and his wife go riding, he on a grey mare and she

on a black one, she wrapped in the glittering pelts of black foxes; and she wore high, black, shining

boots with scarlet heels, and spurs. Fresh snow fell on snow already fallen; when it ceased, the whole

world was white. “I wish I had a girl as white as snow,” says the Count. They ride on. They come to a

hole in the snow; this hole is filled with blood. He says: “I wish I had a girl as red as blood.” So they

ride on again; here is a raven, perched on a bare bough. “I wish I had a girl as black as that bird’s

feathers.”

As soon as he completed her description, there she stood, beside the road, white skin, red

mouth, black hair and stark naked; she was the child of his desire and the Countess hated her. The

Count lifted her up and sat her in front of him on his saddle but the Countess had only one

thought:how shall I be rid of her?

The Countess dropped her glove in the snow and told the girl to get down to look for it; she

meant to gallop off and leave her there but the Count said: “I’ll buy you new gloves.” At that, the furs

sprang off the Countess’s shoulders and twined round the naked girl. Then the Countess threw her

diamond brooch through the ice of a frozen pond: “Dive in and fetch it for me,” she said; she thought

the girl would drown. But the Count said: “Is she a fish to swim in such cold weather?” Then her

boots leapt off the Countess’s feet and on to the girl’s legs. Now the Countess was bare as a bone

and the girl furred and booted; the Count felt sorry for his wife. They came to a bush of roses, all in

flower. “Pick me one,” said the Countess to the girl. “I can’t deny you that,” said the Count.

So the girl picks a rose; pricks her finger on the thorn; bleeds; screams; falls.

Weeping, the Count got off his horse, unfastened his breeches and thrust his virile member

into the dead girl. The Countess reined in her stamping mare and watched him narrowly; he was

soon finished.

Then the girl began to melt. Soon there was nothing left of her but a feather a bird might have

dropped; a blood stain, like the trace of a fox’s kill on the snow; and the rose she had pulled off the

bush. Now the Countess had all her clothes on again. With her long hand, she stroked her furs. The

Count picked up the rose, bowed and handed it to his wife; when she touched it, she dropped it.

“It bites!” she said.