

I agree with Jess's idea that "The Bloody Chamber" does familiarize readers with the female body through the use of metaphor. In the section of the story which Jess discusses, we see a sexual encounter between the Marquis and the heroine during which the heroine is compared to both "an artichoke" and "an etching by Rops" (Carter). The simile which compares him stripping her like "stripping the leaves off an artichoke" asserts her as something merely for her husband's devouring, emphasized even more by the notion that she is still a virgin (Carter). Vegetables such as artichokes are eaten upon their ripening, and so her being compared in such a manner is suggestive of her losing her virginity. The associations behind the loss of innocence and earth-produced food has its roots in the Bible, which further emphasizes the idea that there is something simultaneously sacred and forbidden about their sexual encounter.

Further, the heroine comparing her own self to "an etching by Rops" seen in the Marquis' collection is suggestive of the male gaze being fortuitous enough to sometimes cause women to see themselves through the same lens, as well as reiterates the idea that the Marquis views the heroine as something tangible for his ownership (Carter). As stated by Jess in her response, the power dynamic between the two is reinforced by the comparison of her to tangible items, and the mirrors allow for the heroine to reflect upon herself in the same lens through which her husband sees her.