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GENDER AND LITERATURE: A FEMINIST APPROACH TO READING ANGELA CARTER'S  
NOVELS

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ABSTRACT

The present article is an analytical study of Angela Carter's novels from a feminist approach. The study shows how Carter retrieves the often-overlooked reconstructive features of post modernity that unfolds in an integrated manner which ends the feminism of the victims as a result of continuous changes in female psychology and women's lives, so that feminism does not restrict itself to hostility, brutality, dominance and sexual exploitation of women by men. Carter recovers what makes her works feminist in nature, depicting the complexity of sexuality in men and women. This article argues the importance of Angela Carter's novels with a feminist tinge that questions the foundations of patriarchy. Her novels do not simply reverse patriarchy but subvert it from within. The themes of Subjugation, Alienation, Impact of Patriarchal society, Inequality, Gender sexuality, Identity are evident in the novels. The novels are penned in extravagancy to match the feminist requirements of all the ages. The novels establish the gender concerns aptly and augur the themes of gender in an appealing manner. Her novels highlight the perverse gender politics lying beneath.

**Keywords:** Patriarchy, Feminist, Gender Sexuality, Sexual Exploitation, Subjugation

The title of the article reflects its content, and its purpose as one of the articles on 'Gender as an approach to literature'. The emphasis is to analyze literature with reference to Gender, which belongs to social or cultural category.

Literature is defined as a body of writing that aims to be creative. It includes poetry, prose, and drama but usually excludes shopping lists, business letters and news paper journalism for instance. Gender refers to ways of seeing and representing people and situations based on sex difference. Literature acts as a platform to perform the gender concerns. It is a medium to juxtapose the gender issues. Feminist writers prefer literature as a mode to express their views, feminist approach to literature has made it possible the writers to discuss the gender concerns and issues and make them reach the society ultimately.

One of the prominent British feminist writers Angela Carter has successfully conveyed her feministic notions through her novels. The novels written by carter represent women and primarily focus on women and

their problems most of her novels follow the saga of the characters as they eventually become aware of themselves and their sexuality. Carter belongs to the group of second wave of feminism writers and this era witnessed much of the social reforms; more equal rights for all was demanded and carter has used the reformative ideals in her novels. She attempts to destabilize patriarchal power.

Feminists tend to challenge the traditional power of men (patriarchy) and revalue and celebrate the roles of women and celebrate the roles of women and this very feature can be seen in the novels of Carter. Carter celebrates womanhood in her writings, sexuality of the characters regarding their own sexuality and identity. Her notions specifically deal with the anxieties and conflicts from female perspectives.

Carter is rendered success in portraying women as victims of violence and will always be subordinate and be manipulated by men. She has pictured violence as the male principle whose sex give them right to inflict pain as a sign of mastery in the novels. Her novels are the account of hostility, brutality, dominance and sexual exploitation of women by men. Carter neatly depicts the complexity of sexuality in men and women which makes her works feminist in nature.

Carter sheds light on many different types of strong female characters showing certain diversity in the term, making it more of an umbrella term rather than one solid mould from which all female characters come from. In reality carter's feminist approach drives her to focus on esthetics of postmodernism and feminist politics, putting women at the core of critical investigation which explores the grotesque and feminine in her dramatic corpus. Her works reveal how the female lurks behind a patriarchal male's sexuality that oppresses modern women. The feminist approach is to be described and extended to include feminist writing and understanding.

Carter re-examines the subjects of marriage, sexuality, the relation of power between men and women, the role of class, and the equality of women by calling into question archetypal characters and traditional women and men. As many scholars have foreseen, the influence of language and speech is the main weapon in carter's works. The study shows how carter's use of language and speech is the main weapon in carter's works. The study shows how carter's use of language fits her feminist needs with a feminine stylistic approach to carter's novels. Upon performing a close persual of carter's works along with her notions of feminist approach there is a revelation that she objectively examines patriarchal marriage, narcissism and submissive womanhood, fiction will always recognize the elements of her womanly approach. Through her explanation and use of ironic plots, carter calls the reader into question the answer to erotic violence, rejecting polar concepts of virtue and vice as abstractions of human sexuality and as ideological constructions which show their feminist views.

The works of carter intend to reclaim rebuilding aspects of post-modernism that defines the pre conditions of modern feminism, thus re-building the imaginary revision of the world and finally showing modern women in a victimized yet emancipating way. Angela carter created the leitmotifs for her works in order to show that falling into the pit of lust is not a cultural phenomenon but a work of nature, however she doesn't fail to keep the readers in ambiguity and compels them to think if it is all the outcome of the circumstances and desire is all together has been given a new precision and has been modeled to meet the demands of feminism in her works.

Carter exploits the motifs of gothic literature which includes fairy tales, partners, blood and sexual initiation. Carter has successfully penned the forbidden, profane subjects of pornography, sexual obsession, murder, incest and cannibalism. She describes the bestial male and victimized female, in which women remain fractured in her plots by the pressures around her. Carter sketches the struggle of life through the characters in the novels. The characters can wrestle with the existential conditions and attempt to change their state which fulfills the prominent principle of the feminist philosophy.

Though carter belonged to the second wave of feminism, she was ahead of her time in her views. Her novels highlight the perverse gender politics lying beneath. Despite of the dark content of carter's works, which are filled with references to sex, pornography and gendered violence, her lasting legacy is a hope. Her urge to raise voice whenever patriarchy tries to suppress it definitely gives us the entire powerful feel.

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