

A Study of New Feminism through in Novels of Angela Carter's

Sunil Kumar^{1*} Dr. Puran Singh²

¹ Research Scholar of OPJS, University, Churu, Rajasthan

² Professor, OPJS University, Churu, Rajasthan

Abstract – Carter recovers what makes her dramatic works feminist in nature par excellence in stories adapted for theatre, depicting the complexity of sexuality in men and women with the sexual persecution that finally develops to be women who are victims but are emancipated. Her stories in a patriarchal company have explored themes of absent moms, neglectful dads and young women that have been awakened to human beings. Carter has successfully developed a perfect image of unconciliated parallels in the life of the post-modern woman, which differentiate her feminist approach to dramatic writings, superiority against submissively and predation versus preying. Carter was strongly influenced by the surrealist situationist cultural movement of the sixties with a focus on Absurd theater and sexual populism, contributing to a tapestry of picaresque feminist postmodernism in which he weaved and formulated Western social and sexual ideals. Roberts outlined her view, and noted that the mainstream imagination was dominated by male desire. In fact Carter's feminist approach in writing simply works by depicting men as surgeons and lancets in her fiction and drama in which they discern the mind of women and find "an alternative way of playing with language and imagination" (Roberts 3). This is how women want to be squeezed, refused, warped and twisted. In an attempt to break the dominant patriarchy of men in this world, she unconsciously adopted that approach in the misogynistic world in which she lives. Carter is continually concerned with the aesthetics of postmodernism and the strategies of conservatism by this feminist approach, putting women at the forefront of a critical inquiry into the dramatic realm of the feminine and grotesque. Therefore, her work illuminates the postmodernist debate so that the feminine lurks behind a universal masculine masculinity that suppresses contemporary women. The feminist approach to Carter is thus to be defined and extended to include feminist writing and knowledge (Moss iii). This approach includes a feminist approach.

Keywords: Feminism Through, Angela Carter's, Novels, Feminist Approach

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INTRODUCTION

The feminist movement is obviously understood as a social movement pursuing women's equal rights. Feminists are calling for equal status and equality for men to determine their own life-styles and occupations. From the days when A Vindication of Women's Rights appeared to Mary Wollstonecraft (1792), the idea that women live only to please men has been questioned by women. There is no unturned footing in the growing feminist movement that has transformed the prevailing stereotypes of women into relatively weak, passive and dependent, more logical and emotional individuals. Men,' as Eva Figs says,' were mainly made by human beings.' In the years following World War 11, more women understood that conventional values and definitions of culture are detrimental to women's emancipation.

In the 60s, 70s, 80s and 1900s the surge during feminist thinking was unprecedented. In terms of

women's views of self and status in relation to men the question of feminism has always been raised. Feminism created an identity for women from the litany of their discontent. This articulated the expectations and ambitions that would change men and women's social conditions. The writings and campaigns by feminists in these three decades have stressed the focus on women as objects of sexual desire, and have tried to overthrow laws and practices which have reinforced women's lower status. After dismantling the Eve notion as a "temptress", a "sinful," a "wild" and an "inferior," feminists realized that it was necessary to build an "New Eve."

Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own (1929) and Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex (1949) are among the most influential feminist classics of the twentieth century. The main thesis in Beauvoir's research is that women have been reduced to objects for men throughout history. Woman' was

created as the other one, denied the rights to her own subjectivity and responsibility. In the late 1960s, feminist theory entered a new stage and since then, feminist critics have become more and more discourse, institutionalized and varied. In the 1970s, leading feminist theoreticians such as Betty Friedan, Kate Millett and Ann Oakley researched the subject of stereotyping gender roles and drawn attention to the stereo-typical impact of women as sex objects. In Beauvoir's portrayal of women as "that" man, other French feminists such as Helen Cixou, Julia Kristeva, and Luce Irigaray explored the role of Phallographic culture in maintaining the inferior position of women.

A number of women novelists began to explore new ways of presenting women and their struggles to take part in the women's liberation movement. They are very varied in their contributions to modern fiction. They use a mix of the experiences, observations and imaginations, in different proportions. In accordance with her times, Angela Carter also joins her work to "prove that gender docs do not prevent women from writing about an experience which comprises the terrible and the squalid" (Flora Alexander 13). In the last thirty years of the twentieth century, her novels tell the truth about the body and mind of women. 14] Angela Carter was one of the English's most innovative novelists who sought to balance Postmodernism with the news of the world. "Angela Carter, Emma Tennant, and Sara Maitland all go beyond realism and employ a power of imagination, driven by the rich cultural heritage to build insider diagnostics of issues from a poor viewpoint.

Angela Carter has identified conditions and cultures in which women are not only equal, but also more equal than men. They crack the fetters that patriarchal hegemony has built for them. The Amazing Toyshop Aunt Margaret, the Circus Nights Fevvers, the Heroes and the Villains Marianne, the Perce Bloom of Miss, Lady Atlanta, and the Shadow Dance of Emily are women who pose a challenge on the patriarchal conceptions of gender. Their work is based on a series of different concepts. As Julia Kristeva suggested in the Women's Time, feminism today will deconstruct every identity, every binary opposition and every phallographic logic. Women would "reject as irrational the dichotomy between men and women" (The Feminist Reader 128). In their own way, women have equal human worth. Angela Carter also took great steps towards postmodern approaches as part of a recent movement amongst feminist theoreticians in France, England and the United States to reconsider feminism in the light of postmodernism. In this sense, the main postmodern procedure is to analyze, evaluate, reverse and interrupt. These techniques can be used to "naturalize" questionable subordinations, to present seemingly plain, but actually corrupt representations of gender and human characteristics, and to hide partiality and bias from other existing theories and ideas on the human condition.

The feminist theories take due account of the issue of femininity. Patriarchy would like us to assume that there is such an element of femininity as femininity. On the other hand, feminists seek to disentangle this ambiguity and argue that while women are without doubt women, this does not guarantee that they are feminine. In order to make all biologic women believe that the chosen norms of 'feminism' are normal, patriarchal repression consists in enforcing certain social standards of femininity. "Femininity" is a cultural concept, according to the feministic. Julia Kristeva took the matter of women's rights into consideration and declined flatly to describe the word 'femininity.' Although femininity in the Kristevan language can be said to have a meaning at all, it is simply 'what the patriarchal normative order marginalizes' (The Feminist Reader 126). As marginality she saw femininity. To order to make all feminine and all men ultimately male, patriarchal forces need to decide, not femininity, but the marginality of all women to symbolic order and culture. This objective interpretation is as changeable as the different patriarchal structures themselves and allows people to argue that they also can be constructed as marginal to the symbolic order. The emphasis Kristeva puts on marginality allows us to interpret this repression of women rather than essences as positionality. It's this status that has allowed male culture to shame women as dark and messy, secret and sinful. Angela Carter tries to create the 'New Woman' or 'New Eve' by developing postmodern strategies which break the current 'Femininity' constructs from these theories. What is a woman's question? Is femininity human, social or subjective in the dominant culture? Does feminism rest in biology? When designing women characters, several women's innovators questioned the norms. Females are preparing for a new discovery of themselves. "There is no practical association with a self-discovered heroine on her way to her own life" (Rosalind Coward 46-47, Lessing). "Both Angela Carter and the images are beautiful and romantic in their ways. The concept of a new woman or Angela Carter's Modern Eve is a deconstruction and subversion of the story of creation in the Bible of the New Eve and the myths about women that have been created by, and spread by patriarchy from, this myth. When Evelyn in Beulah, the 'where contradictions occur together,' was transformed into Eve, Carter subverted women, which were produced in subjection to men and transmitted by religions.

In the religious circles, the Biblical story of Eve made of the Almighty God was interpreted as giving the ruling men unlimited powers. Through these definitions, male chauvinists have earned the greatest benefits. In the Bible, God chose an appropriate companion for humanity to support (Gen. 2:18). Instead, from the ribs of the man, God created a woman. When Adam first saw Eve, he said, "It's a man's name for a woman" (Genesis 2:23). The theory is that God's intention to make Eve was to please people, support them, and remove their isolation. In fact, it was formed by an

unimportant human rib. She is therefore less than man and ought to be subjected to him. With this development of Eve in the Bible, femininity was created. A marginal place was granted to her. This same Eve was later accused of having sought and taken Adam to sin. She was thus the most angry of all men. Eve's decision to lead people to sin in the Garden of Eden made them a despised, a necessary evil. The "Ugly Eve," or mother of all sins on earth, came to be called. She was the temptress of the bridge. The original sin is the root of all its hideousness and sorrow. "I will increase your difficulty with pregnancy and your distress with childbirth, but yet your wish will be for you and you will be subject to it"(Genesis 3:17, p. 5). The patriarchal God has judged her and made her servant of men. Eve became a devilish projection of man's sexual resentments and fear from then on. So Eve and Pandora were the origins of all evil, created by patriarchy. Destructive sensual temptations such as Circe and Delilah embodied the fallacious feminine building of man. Carter shows us how patriarchy is trying to maintain this feeling towards women in novels like Heroes and Villains. A woman or the concept of a woman as an evil tempter who leads a person to sin is in the interests of the patriarchal system. Stcm caused all of the pain to her from this skewed and incomplete attitude towards women. The society holds her in chains to keep her from creating further trouble with all her sinfulness. Eve was driven from Eden's Garden. It's a bad influence that must be avoided. It is only maintained for social procreation purposes. When Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, it remains infinite to her scar from sin. The very young girl named Ghislaine, in Carter's novel Shadow Dance, was knifed Honey Buzzard and left an ugly scar. Everyone felt a fear of her with this scar on her forehead. Going to a bar, she realised that attitude towards her did not remain the same as before:

But everything had changed. The bar was full of her friends but none of them would say a word to her because they know (or thought they knew) about the scar and why she wore it. They were all staring at her but nobody greeted her. Cruel backs pushed past her and sharp elbows dug into her and when the brown glow of her regard caught a face half turned towards her, that face swung away immediately (Shadow Dance 6).

FEMINISM THROUGH

The strength of a woman is her fantasizing ability. It is her capacity to believe it continues. Women's writing is the location where dreams and grievances are rewarded. Feminism is in the first place concerned with female power and its subversion of conventional ties of government. Power is the ability to force oneself on someone else or to defend oneself from being imposed. Most of the novels by Angela Carter are control fantasies. Others struggle

with fantasies that free women from patriarchal influence. Some fantasies increase women's strength. The dreams of Carter demonstrate very well that people have become very concerned about the unfair inequalities of power between men and women. When feminists concentrated on political power, they also tried to fight patriarchal literary authority and traditional ways of expressing the realities of life. They research that women's impotence can only be articulated in a totally different way. Their ambitions therefore awaited them unequivocal bravery in the art of writing. The feminist issues of Angela Carter led her to dreams and fantasies. Subversion, indirection and disguise, normal techniques of the poor, are required by the very camouflage of male power and by their design and level of disguising. This is largely made possible by illusions.

The feminist theory of Carter needs new forms of expression. "The literary discourse of women is aimed at the need for an arbitrary select private world to fence female identities" (102) Jancy James writes in her article, "Canadian Paradigms of Post-Novel Feminism"(25). Women try to dissipate themselves meaningfully from certain inhibitive legacies that they have colonized over the years. In both philosophy and language, this ability to turn, exploit and even subvert the legacies obtained reflects characteristic of postmodernism. The frustrating surface realism of the conventional fiction style has lead writers such as Carter into the realm of fantasy and has turned her novels into open and fragmented discourse that maintained the indeterminacy and ambiguities that females face in the dominant male power environment.

Carter tries to write something that can't be written. In comparison, she examines how much patriarchal representation is, and to what degree it becomes both the source of conflict and repression. Flora Alexander says: Significant fields of knowledge do not best be approached by the social realism and involve the suspension or never attempt of the perception of everyday reality. Similar ideas may be discussed by authors of fantasy, magical realism, or modern gothic, which are typically overlaid within the work of the same author (Modern female novelists 61).

While the conventional realistic fiction produces worlds that people recognize by the use of language as mediator, postmodern fiction disfamilarizes the world with its own words. Postmodern texts pose questions on the nature of reality, while modernist texts tell us how to recognize a truth that essentially remains undisputed. All words, accounts and visions have been implied by psychoanalytic theories, though they do not necessarily directly apply to external reality. The use of dreams, fables, imaginings and metaphors to say something about social, historical or psychological realities is part of

the postmodern strategy. Postmodernism is concerned with the way to interpret and express reality, but it is also mindful of the unpredictable nature of reality. In her work *Flights from Realism*, Marguerite Alexander notes that there are numerous fields of life which require realistic flights. So various postmodern texts are fantasized and are not true. According to Marguerite Alexander, practical writing has been revitalized in many new women's novels on specifically women's fields of experience. She says, however, that Angela Carter is a non-realist (Realism Flug 143) approach to this issue. In the case of "postmodernists," she uses the term "unrealistic." The anti-realistic rebellion of Postmodernism is intended to work as a dissident art that reveals realism's unreliability and even deception. It complicates the monological closure of a rational epistemology by means of dialogue, by using the incredible, the mystical and the fantastic in a variety of ways (*Flights from Realism* 143).

Postmodern theory and practice have forced us to reconsider many of the assumptions that we derive from the classical realist novel of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Kathryn Hume too says that the postmodern writers qualify for the name in that they go beyond realism and enjoy an extraordinary success in creating a new, positive anti-mythic universe. But it does not mean rejecting science and realism, but postmodernists juxtapose the absurd, the fantastic and the homely human behaviour with physics, chemistry, biology and mathematics of the developing universe and create a new sense of wonder, a new human scale for measuring and admiring the infinite. Kathryn Hume gives us the example of Doris Lessing who "seems to be looking at her world from a supernatural perspective - mythology from the god's point of view, as it were" (*Fantasy and Mimesis* 49).

Postmodernism as a concept in contemporary cultural criticism has figured prominently in a wide range of academic disciplines—literary studies, visual arts, architecture, philosophy, social theory, and cultural studies—and has variously been used to designate a plethora of incommensurable objects, tendencies and emergencies (Nicol 1; Hebdige 181). Though, the first recorded use of the term postmodern occurs as early as 1870s in John Watkins Chapman, an English Painter, who used it to designate painting that was allegedly more modern and avant-garde than French impressionist painting, it was not until the 1950s that it gained momentum and came to be used to identify a reaction against the modernist movement in art and architecture. A decade and a half later, Susan Sontag in "One Culture and the New Sensibility" (1965) identified a "new sensibility" in art which was "defiantly pluralistic," "extremely history-conscious" and challenged all boundaries between "art" and 'non-art'" (PCN 160).¹ In 1967, John Barth came up with his appeal for a literature of replenishment as opposed to "the Literature of Exhaustion" and Ihab Hassan in "POSTmodernISM: A Practical

Bibliography" (1971) identified postmodernism with anti-formal anarchism. Hassan recognized the "anarchies of the spirit, in humor and play, in love released and freedom of the imagination to overreach itself, in a cosmic consciousness of variousness as of unity" as values intended by postmodern art (PCN 205). Critics like William V. Spanos and Richard Palmer entered the postmodern debate in early 1970s. Spanos connected postmodernism with "absurdism and existentialism," and projected postmodernism as a movement with an international reach (PCN 135). Palmer in "Postmodernity and Hermeneutics" (1977) associated it with a rebellious and a more inclusive way of thinking (366). Thus, postmodernism moved out of the purely aesthetic literary sphere into the philosophical spheres. It cemented its place in the philosophical lexicon in 1979 with the publication of *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* by Jean-François Lyotard (c.f. "Postmodernism" Stanford Encyclopedia on Philosophy). Lyotard in his report on the condition of knowledge in highly developed societies defined the postmodern "as incredulity toward metanarratives" that has marked modernity (PC xxiv). For example the metanarratives of:

. . . the progressive emancipation of reason and freedom, the progressive or catastrophic emancipation of labor. . . , the enrichment of all humanity through progress of capitalist technoscience . . . the salvation of creatures through the conversion of souls to the Christian narrative of martyred love. (Lyotard, The Postmodern Explained 18)

According to Lyotard, the Enlightenment thinking with its focus on reason and its capacity to direct humanity towards ultimate emancipation has perpetuated itself through the metanarratives of modern religion, politics, philosophy and science. In postmodernity, these metanarratives, which falsely impose a sense of "totality and universality," are thrown into crisis and are replaced by what Wittgenstein calls "language games," contends Lyotard (PC xxiv). Thus, knowledge which in modernity was assumed to be universally applicable becomes, in the climate of postmodernity, localized and partial. This antitotalizing strain in postmodernity is further elaborated in the writings of Jean Baudrillard who posits the postmodern world as characterized by "simulation" and "reality as fabricated by technology." Baudrillard in "The Precession of Simulacra" (1981) argues that we have entered a phase where simulation is not of ". . . a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal" (PCN 91). Other critics such as Fredric Jameson, David Harvey and Andreas Huyssen perceive postmodernism as a result of profound as well as interdependent shifts across the social, economic, philosophical and cultural spheres since the end of the nineteenth century, argues Bran Nicol in his introduction to *Postmodernism and the*

Contemporary Novel: A Reader (2002). For Jameson, postmodernism is the "cultural logic of late capitalism" and he attempts to combat the totalizing tendencies of late capitalism through the procedure of "cognitive mapping"—"the dogged effort to locate and classify all its cultural effects" (Nicol 14). Harvey considers postmodernism as a "historicalgeographic condition" associated with the "sea-change" in cultural, political and economic practices since 1972 inextricably bound with "the emergence of new dominant ways in which we experience space and time" (Nicol 14). Andreas Huyssen in "Mapping the Postmodern" (1984) posits the postmodern as,

. . . different from both modernism and avant-gardism. . . . [and as operating] . . . in a field of tension between tradition and innovation, conservation and renewal, mass culture and high art, in which the second terms are no longer automatically privileged over the first; a field of tension which can no longer be grasped in categories such as progress vs. reaction, left vs. right, present vs. past, modernism vs. realism, abstraction vs. representation; avantgarde vs. Kitsch. (PCN 66)

Thus, we see that postmodernism is a site of conflict, negotiation and debate where the ideas of a stable and autonomous being, possibility of grounding knowledge in truth and certainty, and the primacy of reason come under the scanner and the spirit of dissension, tolerance of difference and small and localized resistance are celebrated. Furthermore, there are multiple strands of postmodernism or postmodernism(s) in circulation that concur perhaps only on one point—the lack of consensus.

POSTMODERNIST FICTION: POETICS AND THEMATICS

The majority of discussions about postmodernism begin with the term modernism that is continued from or opposed to the term postmodernism and distinguishes between 'postmodernity' as an historical era and cultural context and 'postmodernism' as a deliberate arts, culture, theory and policy movement that discusses issues of representation of styles and modes. (cf. "Approaches to Po"). Modernity is the term "a posttraditional post-medieval period" which was marked by the transformation from feudalism to the term "industrialism, capitalism, national-style and forms of monitoring," as described by Chris Barker in the book "Theory and practices" in 2000. It is characterized as a "privileged locus of reality" and a basis for systemic knowledge by the intellectual discourses of modernity from Descartes through Enlightenment.² As Steven Best and Douglas Kellner correctly argue, in Postmodern Theoretic Interrogations (1991), modernism was an esthetically moving revolution, which was triggered by radical changes in c. Modernist artworks are distinguished by self-

awareness, isolation and creativity. Just like contemporary art captured the contemporary experience, postmodernism captures the postmodern experience.

David Lodge described postmodernism as a "contemporary, avant-guard art," not "modern or anti-modern" in his essay "Postmodernist Fiction" (1977): he was modernist in his critique of mimetical art and his dedication to creativity, but he had his own methods for achieving those goals (PCN 250). The postmodernist literature, Lodge notes, goes beyond or below modernity (PCN 250). It goes above, or under it. He describes further how important "the distinction of metaphor / metonymy" is to postmodern literature, stating that all postmodern writing appears to use radically different methods of metaphoric and metonymous writing and tries to defy the duty to choose these two concepts (PCN 258).

For example, since there is selection and consequently exclusion in both metaphorical and metonymous prose, Post-modernist writers are, in defiance, inserting alternate narrative lines into the same text, offering a multitude of termination, utilizing discontinuity, inconsistency and random techniques; sometimes using metaphor and metonymic devices to expand them to satire or other purposes. He uses John Fowles' "The French Lieutenant's wife" (1969) as an example of post-modernistic literature, with interruptions and numerous endings. The events in the novel are portrayed from various narrational viewpoints. In Metafiction, Patricia Waugh, Self-conscious Fiction theory and practice (1984), is about fiction, which is self-conscious, self-reflective or self-referential, that is, fiction, which draws the attention to its own role as a fabrication, rather than to a realistic way of representing, which sustains the illusion of the reproductions of the real world. It refers to metaphoricism as a metafiction, and identifies that metaphoricism may concern itself with the upsetting of certain novel conventions, the parodying of a specific text or recognizable fictional style or the development of alternative linguistic structures, or the creation of fiction. For her, modernism and post-modernism "began with the view that both historical and artistic worlds are arranged and viewed" by frames and both accept that "in the end, there is no distinction between" framed "and" unframed" ""(Waugh 28). What sets postmodern metafiction apart from modernist is the fact that the "framing" process in fiction and in the real world is foretold and problematized as it is, that is, postmodern metafiction is intended to demonstrate, as we encounter fiction, that "fiction is fictional and true, more than it is" as it is mediated by speech structures. Therefore, postmodern metafiction represents a postmodern understanding of the role

of language in constructing and maintaining the essence of daily reality.

For Brian McHale, as elaborated in *Postmodernist Fiction* (1987), postmodernism signifies “a poetics which is the successor of, or possibly a reaction against, the poetics of early twentieth century modernism”(5). According to him, the historical consequentiality—that is “how one set of literary forms emerges from a historically prior set of forms”—of POSTmodernISM to modernism can be explicated using the Russian formalist concept of the “dominant” (5-6). The dominant, he quotes:

[. . .] may be defined as the focusing component of a work of art: it rules, determines, and transforms the remaining components. It is the dominant which guarantees the integrity of the structure . . . a poetic work [is] a structured system, a regularly ordered hierarchical set of artistic devices. Poetic evolution is a shift in this hierarchy. . . . The image of . . . literary history substantially changes; it becomes incomparably richer and at the same time more monolithic, more synthetic and ordered, than were the membra disjecta of previous literary scholarship. (PF 6)4

THE POLITICAL IN POSTMODERNISM

The previous sections clearly highlight the numerous conceptions and reconceptions of the term postmodernism that have circulated in the artistic and literary circles since the 1960s. The postmodern label initially associated with anarchistic and thought provoking ideas, owing to its rethinking of traditional values of reason, rationality and objectivity in Western society, later came to be associated with ideas of eclecticism, complexity, scepticism and relativity. Postmodernist fiction—an exemplar of postmodern art—with its love for experimentation, redefined conventional narrative techniques and the concept of representation through artistic creativity that explored the function of fiction and challenged the barriers between art and life. The emphasis on irony and self-reflexivity in postmodern art and culture as undermining its political thrust has regularly figured in critiques of postmodernism. For instance, David Harvey in “POSTmodernISM or postMODERNism?” in *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (1990) states that postmodernism,

with its emphasis upon the ephemerality of jouissance, its insistence upon the impenetrability of the other, its concentration on the text rather than the work, its penchant for deconstruction bordering on nihilism, its preference for aesthetics over ethics, takes matters too far. It takes them beyond the point where any coherent politics are left, while that wing of it that seeks a shameless accommodation with the market puts it firmly in the tracks of an entrepreneurial culture that is the hallmark of reactionary neoconservatism. (116)

Harvey is highly critical of postmodernism’s predilection for fragmentation and deconstruction, and designates it as an impediment to the cause of the “other voices” in postmodernism as they are reduced to nothing but “specific language games” (117). Linda Hutcheon, on the other hand, begins her chapter “Postmodernist representation” in *The Politics of Postmodernism* (1989) with the claim that postmodern representation is self-consciously “image, narrative and product of (and producer of) ideology” (31). She contends that for postmodernism there is no respite from politics: The political in postmodernism has to do with its “de-naturalizing critique” than with any “political action” per say, for, postmodernism lacks an “effective theory of agency” (Hutcheon, *Politics* 3). The de-naturalization primarily operates by dwelling on representation and consequently, the mimetic implications associated with it. Hutcheon states that there is “nothing natural about ‘real’” and defines the postmodern as a

. . . questioning of what reality can mean and how we can come to know it. It is not that representation now dominates or effaces the referent, but rather that it now self-consciously acknowledges its existence as representation – that is, as interpreting (indeed as creating) its referent, not as offering direct and immediate access to it. (Politics 34)

Harvey and Hutcheon approach postmodernism from opposite ends of the spectrum, and the difference in their views represent one among the many lines dividing the supporters and detractors of postmodernism. However, there is semblance of a consensus in their arguments on the lack of scope for political action in the postmodern milieu. Angela Carter’s writings try to negotiate this presumed “lack.” The alleged incommensurability between feminism and postmodernism also hinges on the postmodernist tendency to undermine any possibility of political action on the behalf of “women.” This coupled with disagreements among feminists as to what feminism is—resulting in multiple strands of feminism or feminism(s), has further complicated the already complex dynamics between feminism and postmodernism.

FEMINISM, POSTFEMINISM AND BEYOND

Feminism as a philosophy and a movement to eliminate sexual prejudicials and to give attention in the 20th century to fair treatment of women. Sporadic social and cultural struggle has taken place already in 1550s in employment, property ownership, legal rights and the like against the treatment / mistreatment of women. However, the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) coincides with modern feminism, by common consensus. It highlighted the importance of educating girls to become rational, more autonomous and more dignified. While Wollstonecraft’s contribution seems retrospectively important, the writers and critics of the period saw

her writings as an extension of her very maligning personal life, contributing to her writings' unpopularity. In addition, several manuals of conduct including women's social and family responsibilities to ensure proper actions have been issued in response to the *A Vindication of Women's Rights*. The first wave of feminism was recognized in England and the Americas, six decades later, the 1850s started a period of debates on and agitation against women's unequal treatment. The women of the first wave fought primarily to ensure equal rights to women, especially in matters relating to education, jobs, marriage, divorce, ownership of property and voting rights. It evolved through isolated attempts to achieve juridical and economic independence rather than an organized movement. However, first-wave feminists, who were divided by commitment to women's rights or to women's wealth, contributed significantly to the social and political development of women. Simone de Beauvoir wrote *The Second Sex* almost a century later (1949). The *Second Sex*. The question was addressed that women are seen as the "other" of men on the basis of biological differences between the two sexes. It was a crucial catalyst for the feminist movement. Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) began the second wave feminism in America and addressed the "issue without a name" and was characterized by diametrically opposing points of view and a commitment to ideology. Feminists of the Second Wave centered on the rights of women. From the 1960s to 1980s the rise of many sects of feminism – mainstream, conservative, marxist and social–saw a spotlight of feminist practice. When Chris Beasley says, in what is feminism, radical feminists? *The Feminist Theory* (1999) was an innovation that seeks equal rights for men and women and promotes a "fundamentally undifferentiated human nature" (52). The more liberal in nature were the radical feminists, who focuses on the positive values of femalehood, their distinction from men, their repudiation of male dominance and their battle against patriarchy (Beasley 54-56). Body became a central conflict site for radical feminism and discussions on the political arena and related repression and revolt formed the center of discussions and disputes. Patriarchy's dissolution, the main exploitation by means of cultural and political means and the "mediated theft of reproduction" are the key agendas of radical feminist thought, as described by Sue Thornham in her essay "Second Wave Feminism" by Sarah Gamble (37). On the other hand, Marxist feminists have seen sexual inequality "as a classe power dimension" and capitalism— a symbol of male privilege (Beasley 60-61). There are also several forms of socialist feminism, the synthesis of radical feminism, marxist feminism and psychoanalysis. This looks at social inequality "through analysis of sex and class control" and its respective social organizational structures, patriarchy and capitalism (Beasley 62). Patriarchy and exploitation divides radical feminism into different forms of permutation and combinations.

We can therefore see that the second wave was split into several groups and subdivided into two. Sue Thornham rightly points out that, while "fragmented along lines of numerous discrepancies between genders," second wave feminism gained prominence in academic circles and beyond for nearly three decades (42). The distinction between sex and gender, the development of class and race consciousness, and the advent of the gay and lesbian movement problematised the male and collective woman category and led to the emergence of the feminism. Psychoanalysis has been influential in discussing femininity and masculinity development and its relation to female oppression. In the 1970s, French feminism was theoretically based on the "psychoanalytic theory as an explication device" in French feminist circles (Thornham 40). Although some women debated Freud's writings as contributing to fighting biological determinism and sexual repression, most feminists saw him as a patriarchal flag bearer and opposed his theories of phallogentrism. Influenced by French feminists, Jacques Lacan and the idea of "symboliccultural significance" as "encoded in words" contributed to the writing of feminine and corporal feminism. Often popular was the writings of women "intending to represent women's writings or writing from women's positions in a way that questions the way women are read into language / culture" (Beasley, 71). Reading feminists saw femininity as 'a good place for a critical evaluation of what the Symbolic / masculine Order respects and legitimizes (Beasley 72). Wish, language and identity as a subject of study were criticized because it put the foundation of women's oppression within language instead of in the context of social identity and political objectives. On the other hand, corporal feminists proposed "that the body may be understood as the primary place of the social practices that are embodied and sexually differentiated, which produce social life and, consequently, as forming the life of the (embodied or sexual) self" (Beasley 77).

CONCLUSION

In Carter's postmodern feminist revisionist plays, this approach incorporate many of the essential elements such as reproduction and economic control that governs one's behavior, gender-based roles and restrictions and a dual movement of attraction and repulsion in the same individual. Carter wrote screenshots for both the stage and the radio, in her widely read anthology, *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (1979), based on myth and fairy tale, although she is deeply depicting the everyday household life in its murder and violence, which illumine rebellious victims, in particular women who live in an unequal and patriarchal society. Carter clarified that in her dramas she was drawn to revive fairy tales because this type of writing lacks a sense of verisimilitude. It argues that, usually in the introductory phrase "once upon a

moment," a fairy tale's mythological sense of time provides a formal structure that allows the reader to evaluate truths concealed in mythology without attempting discreetly to verify certain truths that can parallel the life of the reader. Furthermore, the hierarchical framework of fairy tales usually presents female types of romanticity such as contemporary soap operas focused on the fulfillment of fantasy and desire (Kristeva 81). Carters who are fundamentally wealthy, or living in the abject poverty; who encounter extraordinary good fortune or consider poor luck; and who are clever, stupid, lovely or hideous, are shown in adaptation of fairy tale for drama in Carter's fiction and play. In her dramatic soap operas Carter may draw from traditional fairy tales, which create dramatic situations such as family feuds, fatherly or husband-like exploitation, violence and death which are associated with the modern, dramatic genre.

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Corresponding Author

Sunil Kumar*

Research Scholar of OPJS, University, Churu, Rajasthan