

Demythologizing the Conventional Notion of Femininity in Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*

Abstract

With reference to Angela Carter's The Bloody Chamber this research paper examines how and why she demythologizes the prevailing conventional notions of femininity. Angela Carter, a British novelist and a modernist female writer, with the help of this novel, tries to create a harmonious and rational relationship between males and females where they can go hand in hand with due mutual respect. The researcher here ponders into why Angela Carter, the author, feels important to demythologize the conventional fairy tales, myths and mythologies in a reformed and restructured ways in her novel, The Bloody Chamber and for that draws theoretical insights from Rudolf Bultmann's theorization on 'demythologization' from The Mission of Demythologizing and other relevant texts. Furthermore, the researcher brings some theoretical parameters from Judith Butler's Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity and her other texts along with other theorists' and critics' ideas on gender and sexuality. This research finally concludes that Carter demythologizes the conventional narratives, myths and mythologies in order to redefine the traditional gender roles and cultural orientations and to establish a rational and harmonious relationship between males and females with mutual respect to each other in the same society.

Key Words: Demythologization, Fairy Tales, Femininity, Masculinity, Gender role, Mythologies, Identity, Sexuality

This research paper examines how the modern British writer Angela Carter demythologizes the prevailing conventional notions of femininity in *The Bloody Chamber*. The researcher also probes into why Carter depicts the existing societal

phenomena in an ironic way rendering ancient fairy tales with the modern flavor. With reference to Angela Carter's novel *The Bloody Chamber*, this paper further analyzes the conventional notion of femininity along with the modern feminist school of thoughts and tries to trace out how this novel defies conventional femininity and at the same time inculcates modern notions of femininity.

As a modernist female writer Carter in *The Bloody Chamber* deploys the issues of gender role, sexuality, marriage, identity, love, sex, and violence with mythical references. It conveys a story of a newly married girl at the tender age of seventeen with an aged renowned, wealthy business man of France, The Marquis. The bride, narrator and protagonist, conceives marriage as submissive process which is culturally and traditionally followed throughout the world. She, from her early days of marriage, is quite unsatisfied with her husband, Marquis-the business man. The protagonist's mother, Mother is the most significant female character who shows masculine character in the story as she saves her daughter from untimely death by her own husband Marquis. She shoots him for death while he was in course of murdering his newly married wife. He tries to kill her, The Heroine, because of the fear that his earlier bloody murder of three wives be revealed out as she finds a 'chamber' full of blood inside his heavenly 'castle'. The Heroine finally marries with a piano tuner and lives a happy life celebrating a freedom and carefree life.

Angela Carter, in *The Bloody Chamber*, makes female characters as a protagonist and deploys a mother figure in a heroic role. The Mother is savior of her daughter. Traditionally, heroine's father was supposed to protect his daughter, but in the novel conversely mother saves her daughter from deaths and dangers. This event implies that females are also equally capable enough as male to deal with the problems of critical situations that occurred in one's life. In the story, The Mother

isgenitally female but she deserves masculine quality in her actions which is one of the most intriguing aspects of this novel. Carter, in this novel, has assigned an unconventional role to the female.

In order to challenge the conventional definition of female and femininity, the author applies a technique of demythologization. The term ‘demythologization’ is coined by an essentialist critic and theorist Rudolf Bultmann. She demythologizes the traditional concept of female, femininity and gender role giving a masculine, and radical gender roles to her female characters for re-writing an ancient tales and narratives situating in a modern society and social values. The character ‘Mother’, therefore, is an embodiment figure of masculinity that breaks the conventional patriarchal boundary of femininity in the novel *The Bloody Chamber*.

Traditionally females were considered as submissive, passive, docile, dependent, kind, and passionate and the likes, but conversely in the modern day’s world the conventional gender role is reversed as in the novel *The Bloody Chamber*. Carter, with the help of this literary endeavor, seeks to defy and deconstruct previously formulated phallogentric gender roles. The feminine quality of female character is demythologized by subverting the traditional female role of loving, caring, nurturing, kindness, and passionate into heroic figure as the character of heroine’s Mother who appears to kill Marquis. Carter deploys the female characters in a victorious and triumphant positions while the male in a defeating situation. In doing so, Carter’s female characters deserve masculinity in terms of identity, sexuality, gender roles, and family responsibilities.

Angela Carter’s *The Bloody Chamber*, instead of extremist radical feminist line, tries to maintain a rational balance between male and female in terms of responsibilities and the sexual orientations. She seeks a humanistic and harmonizing

point where male and female can exist with no gender and sexual binaries and demarcations. She attempts to develop a mitigating point of rational and humane relationships between male and female irrespective of their caste, creeds, cultures, religions, and gender and sexual orientations.

Through *The Bloody Chamber*, Carter vehemently comments on social conditions and tries to expose culturally constructed image of femininity and masculinity. For her, even in the modern day world females are still in a subjugated position and will also be until and unless they demystify the phallogocentric cultural practices of gender role existed whether in the Western or in the Eastern world. In this vein, she urges to fight against the constructed false beliefs and traditions either by the female or the male.

Re-visioning the well-articulated myths and traditionally believed narratives, Angela Carter advocates new possibilities for male-female relationships. She, through her literary endeavor, seeks to create a well-organized and mutually adjustable society where there is no masculinity and femininity at its core but rather there is a well copulated gendered society. Through the demythologizing technique, she bestows (gives) a message that male and female are not complementary to each other as defined and mythologized in an ancient tales and in practices in the society.

The Bloody Chamber presents female characters in two ways. Firstly, it glorifies the assertive female sexuality giving them a powerful role making more powerful than the male characters. And secondly, it exposes women's entanglement within the cultural narratives of femininity. This very technique suggests that each male and female should perform their cultural tasks in a rational basis as in this novel. Mother and her daughter both follow a rational path as the daughter agrees to perform cultural and ritual tasks- marriage, and Mother appears to shoot dead to Marquis while

he was going to kill her daughter. This shows that Carter is not in the line of radical feminist rather she tries to seek a new way of femininity where there are both reformed conventionality and newly emerged rational radicalism. More precisely, that is the society with no boundary at all between male and female as per their sexual and gender orientations.

With the fictional representation of the societal reality, Angela Carter through this novel, not only delineates gender and sexual issues but also contemplates on the class hierarchy. In this novel the unnamed bride, an orphan child with no father, belongs a lower middle class family in France but at the same time Marquis, her husband is a renowned wealthy businessman. Throughout the story/novel Marquis is violent presented at her while she seems to be innocent and submissive in front of him. Carter tactically gives vivid descriptions of Marquis's 'Castle' and precious ornaments offered to his newly married wife, while she employs hardly a single sentence to describe her maternal house. This shows societal reality that how people regard wealth and their prosperity. However, at the end of the novel, the untimely death of Marquis vitalizes the uncertainty of one's life and more importantly meaninglessness of the unnecessary gatherings of the wealth and luxuries.

Carter in *The Bloody Chamber* inculcates both the mythological references of Eve and her attempts to eat 'the forbidden fruit- apple' and of the fairy tales narratives of 'Bluebeard' and postulates how from the ancient time of origin females were considered and at the same time how the ancient tales, myths and narratives play role to construct a culturally defined a role of male and female. Marquis's wife, the heroine, in the story, is forbidden to unlock her husband Marquis's Chamber but she could not control her curiosity and unlock the chamber where there were skulls, dead bodies and pool of blood of his earlier three wives, that leads her to the mouth of

death as ill and evils begins in the myth of Christianity –the story of Bible after Eve’s attempt of blurring the given boundaries. Through the very story Carter criticizes those traditional myths and fairy tales.

Revisiting such gender biased conventional tales and myths Carter employs new technique of demythologization in her literary enterprise. She rewrites such myths in reversed forms. Kristine Jennings in “Moonlit Mirrors, Bloody Chambers, and Tender Wolves: Identity and Sexuality in Angela Carter’s “Wolf-Alice”” states:

In her well-known collection of “stories about fairy stories,” *The Bloody Chamber*, Angela Carter revisits and revises traditional folklore; or, rather, she continues the tradition of revision inherent in this originally orally transmitted literary form. The shifting structures inherent to folklore, she claims, made it easier for her “to deal with the shifting structures of reality and sexuality.”

(98)

After the bride’s disobedient of unlocking the bloody chamber it was supposed to come some unimagined dangers as in the Biblical myth but she finds a happy and carefree life with Jung-Yung, a blind piano tuner as Marquis died with Mother’s shoot. As Carter revisits and rewrites well traditional tale of ‘Bluebeard’ she supposed to employ the plot structure in third person point of view, but this story is written in first person point of view. Carter, hereby, provides a subjective role in order to subvert the traditional false beliefs and conventionalities.

Angela Carter’s renowned literary enterprise *The Bloody Chamber* has been read from multiple perspectives by numerous critics. MerjaMakinen reads Carter’s literary piece from gender perspective and in “The Decolonization of Feminine Sexuality” claims that, “Carter’s work has constitutively dealt with representations of physical abuse of woman in phallogentric cultures, woman alienated from themselves

within the male gaze, and conversely of women who grab their of sexuality and fight back of women troubled by and even powered by their own violence” (3). As Makinen argues *The Bloody Chamber* rightly constitutes that the heroine, initially is abused by her own aged husband but she gradually gathers brevity within herself though she does not expose it explicitly, but her mother appears to murder son-in-law who symbolically represented the phallogocentric world view. At the same time the death of Marquis symbolizes the death of phallogocentric/male centric view point- the conventional patriarchy.

Carter uses demythologizing technique to counter the patriarchy and the conventional role of female as she makes Mother, a heroic, masculine, powerful, brave and bold character in this novel. Mother figure is a recurring image in her literary articulations. In *The Bloody Chamber* she eliminates the conventional figure with a luminous, lucid, and obedient and kindness creating a fierce, dangerous and deadly figure. Mine Ozyurt Kilic, in the same vein, in his “Demythologizing Business: Angela Carter’s Representation of Motherhood” claims:

She manages to present her *argument* with her mother in the form of stimulating novels contemplating the nature of femininity. And she does that often through completely erasing mother figures or creating unpleasant ones. As such, her fiction presents motherhood as a problematic process functioning in the paradigm of patriarchy. Carter’s works reveal that in such a paradigm where motherhood is defined in terms of discipline and power, all family can offer to a girl is a series of conflicts with her mother. Both to illustrate this argument and suggest a paradigm shift, Carter eliminates the conventional mother figure from her texts. In a sense, she refuses to reproduce the old

established myths of motherhood to be praised, celebrated and inevitably emulated. (95-96)

Mine Ozyurt rightly argues that Carter in order to discard and/or to challenge the patriarchal conventionality uses mother figure quite distinctly. She presents Mother as bold, brave and elegant instead of disciplined and powerful. She rejects to continue such a bias of conventional primitive mythologies of luminous motherhood.

Angela Carter, herself, opines that, "A narrative is an argument stated in fictional terms" (79). As she states, through her fictional rendering *The Bloody Chamber*, she claims that the myths of motherhood turn women into mere agents of patriarchy who transmit conventional biased ideas about what it means to be a woman in patriarchal culture. For the very reason, she contemplating on modern, most importantly the postmodern, notion of gender equality, divorces herself from the biased patriarchal myths through demythologizing that these myths and narratives are mere designed to produce generations of passive dependent, incomplete half of male, docile and subservient woman in the society. However, in contrary to Carter's opinion Nicole Ward Jouve argues, "indeed, to refuse to explore . . . the mother-daughter relationship is to perpetuate an ancient repression, refuse one's own womanhood" (162-63). Jouve hereby problematizes Carter's business of demythologizing through literary work of art. But in the line of Carter's motto, Mine Ozyurt Kilic, in "Demythologizing Business: Angela Carter's Representation of Motherhood" claims:

She gives the material base of her fiction and suggests that when women writers reproduce and fortify myths of motherhood, they lose their contact with themselves and merely perform estranging feminisms. Then, Carter proposes that what remains to be done for a viable feminism is an act of severing the umbilical cord which binds women to those estranging myths. For

Carter, this is the very step of female writer should take to liberate not just herself but also her reader and to create alternative models of existence. (103)

Angela Carter does not reject mother-daughter relationships with the maternity, and importantly the male-female relationships rather she urges for the sound relationships between them. Critic Adriane Rich in her "The Kingdom of the Fathers" comments, "the idea of power has for most women, been inextricably linked with maleness, or the use of force; most often with both" (79). As she argues male and female are not compatible in absence of another rather they have to collide each other rather than seeking sole legacy of power. This means to say that power relations between mother and child are often simply a relation of power-relations in patriarchal society. Therefore, Angela Carter is not in position of rejecting all social-gender values and practices constructed by the conventional patriarchy but she wants to reform it erasing/eliminating all the biased and inhuman practices and seeks an unbiased mutually penetrating world.

In this line, Carter follows the humanitarian path that is she focuses on rational human nature/behavior to each member in the society irrespective of gender, sex, caste, creed, race and geographical location. Ann Ferguson in "Resisting the Veil of Privilege: Building Bridge Identities as an Ethno-politics of Global Feminism" highlighting the modernist world view focuses on human/ moral ethics and states that:

The modernist worldview is based on the following beliefs: that human nature is rational and self-interested; that each individual human has inherent human rights regardless of his or her culture of origin; that capitalist economic development is good because it leads to progress; that such development will benefit all humans in the long run; and that human ethics and knowledge are capable of being developed from a universal, impartial standpoint. (97)

Ann Ferguson argues in line of Angela Carter-as both of them valorizes the human ethics and seek a rational human being.

Margaret Atwood, a renowned modern feminist writer praises Angela Carter's audacious impertinent wit and magnificent imagination, her sharp rationalism and her highly forwarded intellectualism as she explores herself to change the old conventions and cultures in a right path. Atwood comments, "she was a born subversive, in the sense of the original root: to overturn" (61). Carter, through her literary endeavor, explores the roots of social cultural and historical discourses which give a real foundation for analyzing the source of social, cultural and more significantly gender and sexual misery caused due to patriarchal hierarchy.

In line of Atwood, Salman Rushdie in "Angela Carter, 1940-1992: A very Good Wizard, a Very Dear Friend" also praises her and her literary contributions and states:

I repeat: Angela Carter was a great writer. I repeat this because in spite of her worldwide reputation, here in Britain she somehow never quite had her due. Of course, many writers knew that she was that rare thing, a real one, nothing like her on the planet; and so did many bewitched, inspired readers. But for some reason she was not placed where she belonged at the center of the literature of her time, at the heart. (132)

Rushdie hereby praises Carter not being of her contemporaneous but because of her rational rejection of patriarchal and other social dissimilarities with the help of her demythologizing business as she argues, "I'm in the demythologizing business. I'm interested in myths- though I'm much more interested in folklore- just because they are extraordinary lies designed to make people unfree. . . . it turned out to be easier to

deal with the shifting structures of reality and sexuality by using sets of shifting structures from orally transmitted traditional tales” (25).

One’s literary endeavor as a byproduct of society and social affinities inculcates the social cultural realities. A literary text is not an isolated phenomenon but is constituted many beliefs, thoughts, practices and cultural codifications that have already gone before it intertextually. For Julia Kristeva, a literary text is transmitted, “from one signifying system to another” intertextually (60). Kristeva links a text with one’s locality and/or cultural beliefs. Angela Carter’s *The Bloody Chamber* intertextualizes the traditional myths and fairy tales in a modern tale. She also opines that, “Myths are the product of the human mind and reflect only aspects of material human practice” (70). Furthermore, she describes myths as “a feminist tract about the social creation of femininity” (71). According to her fairy tales and myths are simply constructed in order to define feminine roles in the earlier societies. Carter, with the help of demythologizing and intertextuality revises women’s imprisonment within gender cultural traditions of femininity.

The Bloody Chamber, rewriting traditionally known western mythology of the Bible, the story of Eve and Adam, and fairy tale narratives of ‘Pandora’s Box’ and ‘Bluebeard’ incorporates the social realities and social discourses simply constructed by the elite male dominated society. It also delineates how the discourses constitute a cultural values and norms. Marquis, in the story, treats female figure as a commodity to devour his sensual thirst-throughout his life. This vitalizes the phallogentric notion of prevailing even in the modern world. His third marriage with a seventeen years’ young girl also shows his only sexual affinities with female. MirjaMakinen, in “Erotic Infidelities: Love and Enchantment in Angela Carter’s *The Bloody Chamber* by Kimberly J. Lau(review)” analyzes:

The Bloody Chamber as an acknowledged major literary text repays such a lengthy focus on its content and context. As Lau argues, despite the collection's patriarchal baggage, Carter never gives up on her exploratory and challenging renditions of heterosexual love . . . which enable Carter to escape not only phallogentric but also, more controversially feminist expectation in a textual recuperation of heterosexual desire, love and companionship. (296)

Carter utilizes her literary creations in order to dismantle the prevailing patriarchal beliefs, thoughts, and cultural practices. She not only demystifies the societal gender discourses and cultural ideologies but also sees both the positive sites of them. As she regards masculinity and femininity are both constructed phenomena, she precisely emphasizes on the cultural social discourses about gender role to be revived in right manner that is the humanly manner.

Angela Carter revises the traditional tales and mythologies in order to postulate the root cause of bias and inhuman gender roles and practices. For her demythologization of the conventional tales and narratives constitutes a path to surge a modern gender discourse where there is no binaries between male and female or between masculinity and femininity. In order to prove the hypothesis formulated by the researcher, she/he draws theoretical concepts as a tool to analyze the novel *The Bloody Chamber* from Rudolf Bultmann's theorization on 'demythologization' from *The Mission of Demythologizing* and other relevant texts. Furthermore, the researcher brings some theoretical parameters from Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* and her other texts along with other authors', theorists' and critics' ideas on gender and sexuality.

The term 'demythologizing' is coined by an essentialist thinker Rudolf Bultmann just after the aftermath of the Second World War. That is for seeking out the

New Testament through the Old Testament and to give justice to the text. It breaks the boundary of mythology that means false concepts and creates the demythologization that determines the reality and truth in the modern time and rejects the traditional notion of false thoughts and belief in classical era. Demythologizing simply is a modern concept emerged for revising and reviving or for rearticulating of traditionally constructed and protected cultural notions more importantly constituted by the structural fairy tale narratives and mythologies. Demythologizing, therefore, “is a mode of radical reconstruction, which arises from recognition that modern scientific man simply cannot accept the traditional natural- super natural designations. It rejects initially any literal or fundamentalist interpretation of the psychology and cosmology” (Nielsen, 55). As Nielsen defines, it simply re-reads ancient narratives and tales and also sees socio-cultural practices in a humanitarian manner. Rudolf Bultmann in Carter’s line of argument suggests us, “to embrace a situational ethics” instead of traditional out dated philosophy of ethics driven by the imaginative, surreal and unreal narratives.

Rudolf Bultmann defining myths and mythologies, in his “New Testament and Mythology” states that myth or mythology, “is the use of imagery to express the other worldly in terms of this world and divine in terms of human life, the other side in terms of this side” (10). According to him myths are full of symbols and imageries and used to explore the contemporary world views so that the myths should be studied in terms of a literary piece. He further suggests, “Myths should be interpreted not cosmologically, but anthropologically, or better still, existentially”(10).

In the same vein, Angela Carter, through her literary piece *The Bloody Chamber* revisits and rewrites the old worldly narratives. She reevaluates conventional thoughts, beliefs and cultural practices and rewrites them as per the

present (modern) world view. Likely, Niels Nielsen Jr., analyzing Rudolf Bultmann, in “Demythologizing and the *Philosophia Perennis* Bultmann, Jaspers, and Heidegger” states:

Bultmann’s demythologizing brings the possibility of reevaluation of this position. Exegesis can no longer proceed from a self-contained doctrine of scripture, in view of the findings of higher criticism. Demythologizing has encouraged a much needed revival of interest in epistemology as well as the history of ideas . . . Bultmann’s acknowledgement of the relevance of philosophy as a prolegomenon to theology may in the end requires to speak more directly to questions of Being. (65)

Bultmann argues that the traditional beliefs, thoughts, and philosophies must be reread and reevaluate. For him demythologizing technique in literature counts much for the possibilities of re-evaluation and reconstruction of the traditional position that is the biased and inhuman position and practices in the society. But for Carter demythologizing traditional fairy tales and myths or the conventional philosophy counts to be tool to dismantle the gender binaries, male-female and deeply rooted patriarchy.

Carter, in her *The Bloody Chamber*, examines traditional patriarchal notions of love and marriage, desire and sexuality and resituates them in the modern society. She contemplates on rewriting, reconstructing and historicizing the patriarchal philosophy and, at the same time, the consideration of the patriarchy by feminism as universalizing ‘repressive’ and ‘regulatory’ structure. She, as Marina Warner comments, “kept her eyes on the ground, with reality firmly in her sights” (xi). This process of looking back simply characterizes new notions on reconstructed and restructured beliefs and philosophy. Adriane Rich in an article, “When We Dead

Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision” argues:

Re-vision - the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction is for us more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival. Until we can understand the assumptions in which we are drenched we cannot know ourselves . . . We need to know the writing of the past, and know it differently than we have ever known it; not to pass on a tradition but to break its hold over us. (18-19)

As Rich envisages the rewriting of the previously existed discourses values norms and practices, Carter, rereads and rewrites traditional ritualistic tales and narratives which are the prime factors of constructing the social discourses, cultural values and the gender and sexual orientations by means of literary enterprises *The Bloody Chamber* and the others.

Traditional gender and cultural conventions are revisited in a feminist way in *The Bloody Chamber*. The author demythologizes the earlier gender notions and resituates in the existing ground realities. She does not advocate for the universal feminism, ‘the brand Western Feminism’ rather for the culturally accepted femininity in this novel. She as a feminist writer claims herself, “I would regard myself as a feminist writer, because I’m a feminist in everything else and on cannot compartmentalize these things in one’s life” (37). She hereby not only talks about feminist legacy that the brand western feminism developed simply by Lucy Irigari and Helen Cixous but also unyielding gender practices that are traditionally followed. She doesnot compartmentalize each belief regarding gender orientations rather focuses on reformative approach that is good practices should be continued while the ill and evil should be shot death as in this novel *The Bloody Chamber*.

But at the same time Carter tries to continue the legacy of Helen Cixous's ideas of patriarchal rejection as she also uses the conventional fairy tales as a tool to fight against the existing social cultural gender roles and orientations. Carter's views on language bear strong affinities with Cixous's idea of a liberating female language as Cixous in her *The Newly Born Woman* asserts, "Women must write their body, must make up the unimpeded tongue that bursts partitions, classes, and rhetoric, orders and codes, must inundate, run through, go beyond the discourse with its last reserves, including the one of laughing off the word-'silence'" (94-95). Suggesting the possibility of using voice as an alternative female language in texts, Cixous, furthermore, mentions, "First I sense femininity in writing by a privilege of *voice*: *writing* and *voice* are entwined and interwoven and writing's continuity/voice's rhythm take each other's breath away through interchanging, make the text gasp or form it out of suspense and silences, make it lose its voice or rend it with cries" (92). Carter hereby uses the same technique as Cixous has already used in order to counter the patriarchal dominations through literary creations.

As JagoMorission argues she through literary texts tries to create a new female identity as per the modern society digests. Morrison in "Angela Carter: Genealogy" states:

In *The Bloody Chamber* . . . Carter focuses on the processes of subject formation, and especially the formation of gender and sexual identities. But here the reasons for this again, as the writer makes clear in 'Notes From the Front Line', are solidly rooted in sexual politics: 'It turned out to be easier to deal with the shifting structures of reality and sexuality by using shifting structures derived from orally transmitted traditional tales'. The major methods deployed in this book, as in the earlier works, are an archeological

investigation of gender representation, coupled with a set of creative attempts at subversion. (168)

As Morrison comments Carter uses fairy tales and traditional mythological stories in her literary articulations in a quiet different ways unlike her contemporaries. She draws traditional stories in order to reveal existing societal belief systems and its historical roots, and to reveal out the contemporary popular cultural representations.

The mother figure is characterized as a reformist who keeps on continuing cultural gender roles as love, affections, motherhood, marriage etc. and eliminates inhuman and biased practices. She never sees a man over reaching on a woman. For the very reason she tries to dismantle traditional biased and inhuman patriarchy which sees woman as inferior. Carter in this novel characterizes the character Mother, as a revolutionary figure who fights against discrimination and inhumane. The narrator sees her mother as:

You never saw such a wild thing as my mother, her hat seized by the wings and blown out to see so that her hair was her white man, her lisle legs expose to the thighs, her skirts tucked round her waist, one hand on the reins of the rearing horse while the other clasped my father's service revolver and, behind

her, the breakers of the savage, indifferent sea, like the witnesses of a furious justice. And my husband stood stock-still as if she had been Medusa, the sword still raised over his head as in those clockworks tableaux of Bluebeard that you see in glass cases at fairs. (40)

She (daughter) sees her mother as a savior and a reformist as she says 'being her breaker of the savage' and like a 'furious justice.' Angela Carter deploys the mother

figure as a social patriarchal reformist who fights against inhumanity, inequalities and biases treatments as a furious justice.

The death of Marquis is a symbol of the death of inhuman patriarchy and Mother's attempt to shot him dead is justice to her daughter that she had already under gone his dominations, discriminations as he treats her as an object of devouring his sexual thrust. As he decorates his room and bed with mirrors:

And there lay the grand, hereditary matrimonial bed, itself the size, almost, of my little room at home, with the gargoyles carved on its surface of ebony, vermilion lacquer, gold leaf; and its white gauze curtains, billowing in the sea breeze, ourbed. And surrounded by so many mirrors! Mirrors on all the walls in stately frames of contorted gold that is reflected more white lilies than I'd ever seen in my life before. He'd filled the room with them, to greet the bride, the young bride. The young bride, who had become that multitudes of girls I saw in the mirrors, identical in their chic navy blue tailor-mades, for travelling, Madame, or walking. (10)

The vivid description of the room and the bed full of precious ornaments and decorants clarifies how Marquis considers the woman and more objectively the wives he had married before and now. This is how women are taken to be in a patriarchal society. He enjoys a lot in his very first days of marries with her but she as a half-companion to him does not entertain at all. This incident exemplifies that the male do not concern about woman (wife) particularly of their dreams, desires, feelings and emotions as the bride comments, "I could not meet his eye and turned my head away, out of pride, out of shyness, and watched a dozen husbands approach me in a dozen mirrors . . . his movements seemed to me deliberately coarse, vulgar" (10).

Marquis frequently discriminates and dominates his wife. He not only takes woman as a play thing but also dehumanizes and denigrates. He threatens and warns his wife repeatedly. Once, while he finds that she (his wife) has unlocked the 'bloody chamber,' he threats her, "Don't loiter, girl! Do you think I shall lose appetite for the meal if you are so long about serving it? No; I shall grow hungrier, more ravenous with each moment, more cruel . . . Run to me, run! I have a place prepared for your exquisite corpse in my display of flesh!" (39). He also raises the 'sword' and cuts bright segments from the air in order to show his power over her. This shows the patriarchy as repressive and regulatory.

However, Carter not only portrays the male figure quite repressive, regulatory, discriminatory and insane like Marquis but also humanistic, rational, helpful and just as she characterizes Jung-Yung, 'a piano tuner.' He is a humble husband of the heroine/ the narrator. Jung-Yung is quite helpful as he has patience to listen all the dreadful experiences she had to occur in her marital house. In this way the author depicts an objective reality and discards the binaries between the male and female. Judith Butler, a modern feminist, in the same line, opines that the consideration of patriarchy by feminism as a universalizing repressive and regulatory structure misleads the essence of feminism as she is in her landmark work *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, threatens to, "promote a politically problematic reification of women's experience in the course of debunking the self-reifying claims of masculinist power" (35). Carter, just like Butler, contests the common modern view of women. Writing as homogeneous landscape that simply serves specific consciousness-raising goals that is the new sets of gender and social values groundings on humanity and humanism.

As Butler sees, sexuality and gender roles are simply discursively constructed. She adopting Foucauldian concept of discursively purports that, “‘gender’ is constructive notion, of repetition of stylized bodily acts that demonstrates performativity, rather than a core authentic, innate subjectivity” (Butler, 218). According to her the gender and sexual orientations are just socially, culturally constituted by the patriarchal power. Thus, to be objective, the modern society requires due reading, rereading, and of the traditionally performed values and beliefs. JagoMorission in “Angela Carter: Genealogies” interprets her literary styles and her objectives and states:

Angela Carter’s work forms one of the most interesting and provocative counter historical projects in contemporary fiction. History, in her writing, is no longer the domain of facts. It is a self-contradictory, problematic, conglomerated inheritance of meanings. The primary focus of her text is the figure of ‘woman’, and legacy of encrusted meanings and values which come to define her contours. (155)

As Morrision argues Angela Carter in *The Bloody Chamber* rewrites the structured gender roles from the fairy tales tradition and reestablishes a new perception or the consciousness among the readers conversely depicting the just and revolutionary character Mother. She gives prior focus to the body ‘woman’ and the self-acknowledgement of one’s gender and social roles in the story demythologizing the traditional fairy tales and myths. As Carter involves in demythologizing business, Judith Butler emphasizing on the rewriting technique and tradition claims its usefulness to produce an alternative modalities of power and she argues:

Performativity describes this relation of being implicated in that which one opposes this turning power against itself to produce alternative modalities of

power, to establish a kind of political contestation that is not a “pure” opposition, a “transcendence” of contemporary relations of power, but a difficult labor of forging a future from resources inevitably impure. (241)

Butler’s main argument is that whatever we perform determines what kind of psycho-social orientation we develop. As she opines, Angela Carter in *The Bloody Chamber* forges for demythologizing in order to resist passivity of women and the conventional patriarchal considerations female as submissive, docile and inferior one through her narrative power.

For Carter demythologizing conventional femininity simply by rewriting the traditional tales, narratives, and myths as they are vital to create a social and cultural discourse helps enough to develop a new sense of reformed conventionality. Fairy tales and myths not only constituted social, cultural and gender values but also structuralized the society by the philosophical retributions. So that, as Rudolf Bultmann purports for the rereading of theological and cultural philosophies with due focus on the Bible- the Old Testament. He in his enterprise *Theology of the New Testament* argues, “That the basic insight, that the theological thoughts of the New Testament are the unfolding of faith itself growing . . . out of one’s new self-understanding. . . . an existential understanding of myself which is at one with and inseparable from my understanding of God and the world” (239). Just like Bultman argues Carter through this novel tries to postulate a new philosophy which is derived from one understanding of the self. As Bultmann argues for reconstruct and resituate the traditional world views as per the society demands, RababTaha Al Kassasbeh, talking about her writing style and techniques in “Feminism and Postmodern Aesthetics in Angela Carter’s “Wolf-Alice”, “The Company of Wolves”, and “The Werewolf”” argues:

Carter's feminist thoughts about social and psychological aggression against women oblige her into a new notion of narrative. She uses different materials (fragments of modern culture, fairytales, Freud and Jung, mythology, gothic romance and direct narrative) to deconstruct traditional gender constructs, and to dismantle any division of literature from culture. Her fiction is non-realist and extremely self-conscious, and embraces marginality. (28)

Carter uses non-realist stories, myths and fairy tales intertextually in *The Bloody Chamber* in order to exhibit the social realities. She, as Al Kassasbeh argues, employs demythologizing technique to deconstruct traditional gender constructs and social psychological aggressions and discriminations against women urging for a new notion of narratives.

The Bloody Chamber stylistically inculcates a modern experimental feature of intertextuality. Carter brings references of the Biblical myths and fairy tales in the story as she gives role to the heroine as Eve had performed in the Biblical myths. Once while she, the heroine, shares all deeds that she had already done disobeying her husband's warnings to the piano tuner, he compares her to Eve and says, "“You disobeyed him,’ . . . ‘That is sufficient reason for him to punish you’. ‘I only did what he knew I would.’ ‘Like Eve,” (38). As Eve disobeyed, mean, miseries, and troubles occurred, the same story alludes here as she has to undergone troubles and tortures from her own husband. However, in this novel the heroine is protected from her mother and she regains her life. The heroine unlike the mythical character Eve later lives a happy and splendid life with her loving one the piano tuner after her husband Marquis' death as she says:

We lead a quiet life, the three of us. I inherited, of course, enormous wealth but we have given most of it away to various charities. The castle is now a

school for the blind, though I pray that the children who live there are not haunted by any sad ghosts looking for, crying for, the husband who will never return to the bloody chamber, the contents of which are buried or burned, the door sealed. (41)

The role of Heroine hereby not only demythologizes the conventional femininity and female gender roles originated from myths and ancient tales but also bestows a humanitarian views of loving, caring, sharing and donating to the needy people as she donates her husbands' wealth for the charity works. She changes the castle in to a school for the blinds. Carter through this event also emphasizes on humanity and humanitarian world views.

As a literary product- a fiction, Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*, also heads towards a destiny to the reconstruction of a new history and a marginal space as a way to tackle prevailing patriarchy. Carter's adaptation of everyday contemporary cultures with certain alterations and modifications is normally an eclectic mixture of literary constructs which is helpful enough to dismantle conventional gender belief systems and the traditions culturally generated. It also shows self-awareness about gender and historical constructs. She, about her own demythologizing business, states that, "I am all for putting new wine in old bottles, especially if the pressure of the new wine makes the old bottles explode" (69). As she argues, she explores the society and social conventions in a new way with the help of demythologizing technique. She presents traditional femininity in a new trend on modern philosophy. She uses traditional subjects in her literary works but in an experimenting way.

In this novel, Carter provides vital roles to the female characters instead of male, but at the same time she does not detaches femininity from traditional masculinity. As heroine narrates, "without a moment's hesitation, she raised my

father's gun, took aim and put a single, irreproachable bullet through my husband's head" (41). As the character Mother uses her husband's gun to kill her daughter's bloody husband, she still follows the traditional masculinity man as a gun fighter, a brave and courageous. Mother performs herself a role of traditional, masculinity but in feminine terms.

Carter's literary endeavors basically highlight the thematic and philosophical aspects. She incorporating the subjects of various experiences of contemplates on how the traditional inhuman and gendered conventions can be rewrite and reevaluate. For the very reason rewriting traditional tales and narratives in a newly constituted and modified form and structure demythologizes conventional femininity in *The Bloody Chamber*.

In this novel, she focuses on self-realization along with radical challenge of patriarchy. The heroine undergoes various experiences as she has to marry at her tender age of seventeen. She initially seems to be passive and helpless but later she herself realizes that she has to dig out the mystery of miseries. For that, she ones says:

Nothing in my life of family love and music had prepared me for these grown up games and yet these were clues to his self that showed me, at least, how he had loved, even if they did not reveal any good reason for it. But I wanted to know still more; and as I closed the office door and lucked it; the means to discover more fell in my way. (24)

Carter symbolically deploys the heroin herself gets acknowledged that she has to discover what plays role behind gender biasness as she has to bear everyday with her husband. As she looks for her husband's secretes as he lends her a bunch of keys she symbolically searches traditional legacies that rendered the inhuman and ill-treated gender roles in the society. The heroine gets keys and happens to unlock the

forbidden chamber where she sees dead bodies of women and when gets out from the chamber she feels she is getting out from, “the door of hell” (28) that is she finds herself safe as she comes out from the traditional hellish patriarchy.

She, the heroine, at the end of the story again marries with a piano tuner and lives a sound life. This shows that Angela Carter, depicting the character like the heroine, tries to maintain balance between the cultures and gender roles focusing on the mutual understanding between male and female. She does not see male as a counterpart of female but as a constitutive half female and vice versa.

Angela Carter, through her literary endeavor *The Bloody Chamber*, rightly delineates that the old traditional things, cultures, and cultural orientations along with the gender roles existed even at the present days are not something that are to be excluded and out dated but they need a new definitions and reformations so that the present society can easily adapts and assimilates as per the time demands. Carter tries to argue that culture is always dynamic. It keeps on changing accordingly. Therefore, the traditional gender roles and gender cultural orientations should be redefined in such a way that the male and female is not a counterpart rather they are incomplete in absence of one another.

Angela Carter as a modern literary artist and a feminist thinker, with the help of her literary creations, tries to construct a new idea that the traditional gender orientations should be redefined and restated as per the present time demands. She, in *The Bloody Chamber*, gives a real picture of the present society with the help of traditional fairy tales, myths and mythologies. She urges for the deconstruction of the patterned and structural vertical patriarchal gender roles and establishes a horizontal structure of the gender roles where male and female can go hand in hand instead of the binary roles and relationships between them.

Carter, using the demythologizing technique, demythologizes the traditional gender concepts and gender roles. She for the very purpose uses ancient fairy tales, myths and mythologies in her literary texts in a reconstructed form and structure so that the past traditional phallogentric social structure can be changed. In this novel Carter giving a major role to a female character unlike many contemporary writers deploys in their literary texts, challenges the traditional femininity. Carter not only makes a female character a protagonist but also gives a masculine role as The Mother, at a sudden, appears to protect her daughter, the heroine in the novel and shots dead to Marquis. With reference to this event the author tries to dismantle the traditional patriarchal gender orientations and femininity.

The fairy tales and narratives not only construct the social discourses but also the social cultural phenomena and the social values norms and traditions. Therefore, Carter in order to dismantle the socio-cultural discourse constructed by the structural ancient narratives, myths and mythologies and to establish a harmonized world where male and females are treated equally. She does not only argue for the resistance of the conventional phallogentric world view but also urges for the equidistance between male and female that eventually establishes a harmonious relationships between them.

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