



MAGICAL REALISM AND ANGELA CARTER



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ABSTRACT :

In the mid-twentieth century in Britain at the end of the British Empire the imperialist ideas of the superiority of British patriarchy exerted a strong influence over the society and provides writer like Carter with a weapon magical realism to attack and to write against the accepted gender superiority. The trend of magical realist writing in English postcolonial nations has given platform to a debate for the use of magical realism as a postcolonial strategy of writing. This debate on magical realism and its relation has developed magical realist writers a new ground. Many other writers who were in conditions of oppression have also adopted magical realism as a means to write against dominant British Culture. These writers wrote against the prevailing culture and myth of western culture. It is because of this feature many writers use it as a means of expressing their ideas. When I read the history of magical realism, I found that, no other writer attacks the authority of the male British ruling classes and their dominant culture more strongly than the feminist Angela Carter, by using magical realism as her weapon to attack.

KEYWORDS : *postcolonial strategy , British Culture , magical realism.*

INTRODUCTION :

The 20th century English short story writer, novelist, journalist, dramatist and critic, Angela Carter was born on May 7, 1940 in Sussex, England. She is well known for her magical realism, adding into it Gothic themes, postmodernism, and violence. Throughout her career, Carter utilized the language and characteristics motifs of the fantasy genre. Carter has described her childhood as carefree. She married Paul Carter in 1960 at the age of twenty. After the marriage she earned a degree in English literature with a speciality in medieval literature at the University of Bristol. Her work represents a successful combination of post-modern literary theories and feminist politics. Before starting her studies at the University of Bristol, Carter worked for the Croydon Advertiser and wrote features and record reviews. After the completion of her graduation, she began her literary career. She had worked in a various cultures and so we can see the influence of the same in her works. In the beginning of her career she questioned against the accepted views of sexuality and relations between men and women. In the late 1980s Carter's writings gain the central position about feminist pluralism and post-modernism. In her novels Carter presents how the cultures of the Western world were breaking down. She wrote, " I am the pure product of an advanced, industrialized, post-imperialist country in decline". Her interest in changing gender roles formed the basis for her novels. Carter

was intrigued by folk and fairy tales. She was a pioneer who created imagery about female story and used magical realism for female purpose. All these factors mentioned above made the basis for her novels.

She won the John Llewellyn Rhyss Prize, Somerset Maugham Award and James Taylor Black Memorial Prize for literature. Angela Carter, the most examined British writer died at the age of 51, in 1992 at her home in London.

The present paper studied the concept of Magical Realism in the novels of Angela Carter. The term, 'magical realism' is originated from the word 'German Magischer Realismus', which was translated into the 'Dutch Magisch-realistiek', the English 'magic realism' and eventually the 'Spanish realismo magico'. After its introduction, the term 'lo real maravilloso' was translated from Spanish into both the terms 'marvellous realism' and 'marvellous reality'. Later again, the Spanish term 'realismo magico' was translated to magical realism and 'magico realism'. The first name of the term was 'Magischer Realismus' and was created in Germany by the German art critic Franz Roh in the 1920s in relation to the painting of the Weimar Republic. The second term, 'lo real maravilloso' was introduced in Latin America during the 1940s. The third term, 'realismo magico' was introduced in the 1950s in relation to the Latin American fiction. Thus the first period is set in Germany in the 1920s, the second period in 1940s in Central America and the third period in 1950s in Latin America. The key figures in the development of magical realism are Franz Roh, Alejo Carpentier, Massimo Bontempelli, Angel Flores, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Angela Carter. The term magical realism is described with the devices like allusions, incest, carnivalesque, feminine sensibility and surrealism.

The present paper studied magical realism of Angela Carter in the novel, *Wise Children*. The use of the concept like incest, carnivalesque, allusions and reality are studied which constitutes magical realism in the novel. The spirit of carnival which is used as a means to point out social boundaries, such as illegitimacy and highbrow, i.e. high culture. The concept of incest which means sexual intercourse between persons who are closely related is used to point out social hierarchies and boundaries. The elements of reality and allusions are also explored throughout the novel with special references to the works and impact of William Shakespeare. Angela Carter focused on the elements of fantasy and charlatanry in the novel, 'Nights at the Circus'. The fantasy is a concept that evokes wonder, mystery or magic, a sense of possibility beyond the ordinary, material, rationally predictable world in which we live. Fantasy is a word which is related to the stories of myth, legend, fairy tale and folklore from all over the world. The animals and humans are endowed with magical features for example, the image of Fezzik, the character in the novel, *Nights at the Circus*, is shown as half swan and half human. Thus she has used the elements of fantasy and charlatanry which constructs the magical realism.

Angela Carter threw light on her approach to feminine sensibility that is protest for social justice in the novel, *The Passion of New Eve*. She has attacked the follies and tried to seek social justice through the weapon of magical realism. This chapter constantly focused on the issue of sexuality and social injustice in the novel, *The Passion of New Eve*. For example, the character like Evelyn in the novel, considered woman as disposable sex toy. Thus this chapter talked about feminine sensibility and social justice with the help of magical realism for female purpose.

Surrealistic revolution and the use of the element of surrealism in relation to magical realism that explored human psychology from Carter's novel, 'The Infernal Desires Machines of Doctor Hoffman'. The novel talked against the old order to develop new ways of thinking in relation to primitive aspects of human experiences. She focused on Doctor Hoffman's use of desire machines to fuel energy into his new reality. Thus surrealism is studied in relation to the use of magical realism in Carter's novels.

Carter's technique of magical realism which exposed the real condition of human existence and her quest for identity in the novel, 'The Magic Toyshop'. It is full of abundant imagination and the elements of the fantasy which constructs magical realism. It focused on the boundary of the real and unreal in the novel. It focused on the fantastic, an element of magical realism that grows stronger and stronger so as to confuse readers.

Thus, Angela Carter has been considered as the most acclaimed English writer. Her works represent a successful combination of post-modern literary theories and feminist politics. Carter is notable exponent of

magical realism. Throughout her career, Carter utilized the language and characteristics motifs of fantasy genre. She has used the term magical realism as a weapon to attack and expose the authority of male British ruling classes and their dominant culture. Through her novel she has brilliantly exposed realistic pictures of society. She also focused on the life and exploitations of women, and protest for social justice. Her novels, *Wise Children*, *Nights at the Circus*, *The Passion of New Eve*, *The Infernal Desire Machines of Dr. Hoffman* and *The Magic Toyshop* which have been selected for this study talked about liberty and developed a new way of thinking through the concept of magical realism.

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