

Feminism and Mythopoeitics in Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber* and *Other Stories* and *Nights at the Circus*

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This thesis explores Angela Carter's use of myth and her specific approach to feminism. The theoretical part outlines the characteristics of postmodernism and magic realism and Carter's deconstruction of myth, particularly within the context of 'second wave' feminism, whilst the second part analyses these aspects through the prism of two books, the story collection, *The Bloody Chamber* and the novel *Nights at the Circus*.

In the theoretical section, after exploring the postmodern aspects of Angela Carter's work, the author outlines the historical background of feminism of the so-called second wave in order to define Carter's feminism by pointing out how she feels her approach to gender issues differed from that of other feminists. Her characterisation of 'the usual feminist' is, unfortunately, rather crude - "Moreover, unlike the usual feminist practise, she liked men ... and did not feel dismissive towards them as her feminist contemporaries tended to do" (p. 29), a characterisation she repeats later in the thesis - "she does not desire a vindictive war against men" (p. 63). Her statement that "Carter was not a 'regular' type of feminist either. She was the one who scrutinized work of Marquiz de Sade" (28) is both over-simplifying and also overlooks important views of de Sade expressed by other feminists, most famously by a leading feminist of the 20th Century, Simone de Beauvoir, in 'Must We Burn Sade?'. These crude statements are unfortunate as they undermine an otherwise good exploration of the unique nature of Angela Carter's 'ambiguous' feminism, which the author finally characterises through highlighting what Russo termed the "ongoing dialogue" (p. 86) represented by the discussions between Lizzie and Fevvers in *Nights at the Circus*.

The thesis is written with great fluency and the analysis of the various features of *Nights at the Circus* is particularly impressive in its breadth. The author's ability to marshal a vast number of sources is very skilful and the thesis presents many critical responses to Carter's work well. On the whole, the style is admirable and the language accurate, with only occasional unfortunate errors (e.g. Woolstencraft for Wollstonecraft on pp 75 and 76). I therefore recommend it for acceptance.

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