

Tribhuvan University

**Shifting Identities in Angela Carter's *The Passion of New Eve***

This thesis submitted to the Department of English, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus, Tribhuvan University, in Partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in English

by

Pitambar Oli

Roll No: 400379/071

T.U. Regd. No: 9-2-279-76-2009

July 2017

Tribhuvan University

Faculty of Humanities and Social Science

**Letter of Approval**

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “Shifting Identities in Angela Carter’s *The Passion of New Eve*.” submitted to the Department of English, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus by Pitambar oli has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

.....

Prof. Dr. Anand Sharma

Supervisor

.....

External Examiner

.....

Pradip Sharma

Head

Department of English

Date: 17 July 2017

## **Acknowledgements**

Encouragement, support and proper guidance play a vital role in every step of life for the success. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my respected teacher and supervisor Prof. Dr. Anand Sharma who directly helped me to accomplish this research work.

Meanwhile, I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Hari Adhikari and Pradip Sharma Head of the Department of English, Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus and Pradip Raj Giri, lecture of the Central Department of English, for granting me the opportunity to carry out this research work. I extend my thanks to Mr. Toya Nath Upadhyay and all teachers of Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus who helped me directly and indirectly to the completion of the study.

Credit goes to my parents for their financial support and moral encouragement. In the meantime I should not forget my friends who helped me and guided me for my work.

July 2016

Pitambar oli

## **Abstract**

The major thrust of this research is to expose the complexity of shifting identities in *The Passion of New Eve* by Angela Carter. In the novel *The Passion of New Eve* through the representation of Evelyn's metamorphosis from a culturally constructed powerful male to a female suffering from gender anxiety and identity crisis. Angela Carter reveals the various cultural and social myths and images which limit and control the social outlook concerning sex and gender related issues. The narrative follows the protagonist, Evelyn on his journey through two binary oppositions: that of male and female. Subject and object, in term of gender and sex, get reversed as Evelyn experiences a transformation from being a misogynistic powerful male, into powerless oppressed female Eve. On his journey he meets various colorful characters who have some bearing on his metamorphosis, and via these characters, the author examine the identity modification that Evelyn undergoes and the gender anxiety that he suffers the result.

This research mainly deals with the complexity of shifting identities of Evelyn and Tristessa. With many references from critics and quotes from the text, this research claims that there is complexity of shifting identities between the characters. Their differences in gender brought themselves in the state of suffering. The research paper demonstrates how the characters face the problem in different gender forms. Evelyn/Eve and Tristessa s/he has been completely disillusioned by different types of prejudice on both sides of the gender spectrum.

## Contents

	Page No.
Declaration	I
Letter of Approval	II
Acknowledgements	III
Abstract	IV
Introduction	1-4
Identity Crisis and Gender Anxiety in <i>The Passion of New Eve</i>	4 -10
Exposing Transgender: Discourses of (In)authenticity in <i>The Passion of New Eve</i>	10-12
Violent Operations: Sexualized Violence and Transsexual Surgery in <i>The Passion of New Eve</i>	13-15
Immune to Rape? Transphobic Violence in <i>The Passion of New Eve</i>	15-17
The Double Wedding: Reproducing Sex in <i>The Passion of New Eve</i>	17-19
Conclusion	19-22
Works Cited	23-25

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis/research/term paper entitled, “Shifting Identities in Angela Carter’s *The Passion of New Eve*” is my own original work carried out as a Master’s student at the department of English at Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus except to the extent that assistance from others in the thesis/research/term term paper’s design and conception or in presentation style, and linguistic expression are duly acknowledged.

All sources used for the thesis paper have been fully and properly cited. It contains no material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree at Tribhuvan University or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis/research/term paper.

---

Pitambar oli

---

Date

## Shifting Identities in Angela Carter's *The Passion of New Eve*

### Introduction

Angela Carter, the novelist, who has died age 51, was one of the most important writer at work in English languages. Her fiction has been described in the terms of many genres, from magic realism to Gothic and feminism. As a child she grew up surrounded by strong women and throughout her life she wrote about strong, characterful women in varying appearance or images. Her interest in the farther shores of the imagination, in fantasy, and most specifically in fairytales, was lifelong. Their presence informs her novels from *The Magic Toyshop* (1967) to *Wise Children* (1991). She was educated at a direct-grant school in Balham and experienced a pre-television childhood in which she read omnivorously. She also ate copiously and at school, she recalls, she spent much of her time brooding fatly alone. Her nickname was "Tub". Despite her wide reading she did not do well enough in examination at school to win a place at university, and her father fixed her up with a job as a Journalist.

*The Passion of New Eve* is a novel by Angela Carter, first publish in 1977. In this novel Evelyn, a male English professor is taking up a new post in a university in New York. He arrives in a dystopian New York, a city in its last stages of rotting death, overrun by huge rats and human emotions distilled to their most primeval. He becomes fascinated with Leilah, an exotic young African American night club dancer, and while they have a short relationship he makes no emotional link, seeing her only in terms of sex. He becomes repelled by her when she falls pregnant and abandons her to an abortion. In the desert Evelyn captured by a woman city of Beulah. Evelyn encounters with Mother, a cruel mother goddess figures who fashioned herself with surgeon's knife.

She changes Evelyn into New Eve. The transformation from male to female, seems to be absolute as despite the fact that Eve struggles to learn become the woman that her body. Eve, escapes but is enslaved by Zero, a cruel male cult leader. Zero rapes Eve and makes her his newest wife.

Shifting identities means change the identity from one form to another, from one gender to another gender. The word “shifting” is used deliberately also with two meanings. Firstly, that identities are constantly variable renegotiable. The second sense convey through this phase is that the shifting of identities, whether intentional or not. In the novel protagonist Evelyn was forcefully changed his identity from male to female. Tristessa also change himself male into female by using female customs. Carter is contesting the traditional paradigm with her characters of Evelyn/Eve and Tristessa s/he has been completely disillusioned by different types of prejudice on both sides of the gender spectrum.

Identity is the quality, personality, belief, look or expression that make a person or a group. The process of identity can be creative and destructive. Weinrich gives the definition “A person's identity is defined as the totality of one's self-construal, in which how one construes oneself in the present expresses the continuity between how one construes oneself as one was in the past and how one construes oneself as one aspires to be in the future”; this allows for definitions of aspects of identity, such as: “One's ethnic identity is defined as that of the totality of one's self-construal made up of those dimensions that express the continuity between one's self-construal of the past ancestry and one's future aspirations in relation to ethnicity” (302). “Identities” in its present



incarnation has a double sense. It refers at the same time to social categories and to the sources of an individual's self-respect or dignity.

Gender was adopted as means of distinguishing between biological sex and socialized aspects of femininity and masculinity. Moreover, Gender was considered achieved and more and less stable after it is acquired in early childhood. Gender according to West and Zimmerman, is not a personal trait: it is "an emergent features of social situation: both as an outcome of and a rational for various social arrangements, and as a means of legitimating one of the most fundamental division of the society" (126). Contemporary constructionist perspective as proposed by Fenstermaker and west, proposes treating gender as an activity of utilizing normative prescriptions and beliefs about sex categories based on situational variables. These "gender activities" constitute our belonging to a sex as based on the socially accepted dichotomy of women and men. It is noted, however that these activities are not always perceived as a being either "masculine" or "feminine" they are at constant risk of being assessed as more or less "womanly" nature. Male or female, is usually the only categories world relates to when it comes to gender.

Gender identity means one's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither- how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth. External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine. Gender identity is not a stable, fixed trait – rather, it is socially constructed and

may vary over time for an individual. Simone de Beauvoir's quote. "One is not born women, but becomes one" (14) is applicable in this topic Shifting identities. The notion of womanhood or femininity is accomplished through an active process of creating gender through interacting with others in particular social context. Society typically only recognizes two genders. Therefore, when transgender individuals want to have a sex change operation, they must prove that they can as a man or woman – so even the choice of changing one's gender is socially constructed.

In the novel *The Passion of New Eve* through the representation of Evelyn's metamorphosis from a culturally constructed powerful male to a female suffering from gender anxiety and identity crisis. Angela Carter reveals the various cultural and social myths and images which limit and control the social outlook concerning sex and gender related issues. Shifting Identities manifest through: Identity Crisis and Gender Anxiety; Exposing Transgender: Discourses of (In)authenticity; Violent Operations: Sexualized Violence and Transsexual Surgery; Immune to Rape? Transphobic Violence; The Double Wedding: Reproducing Sex (Carroll 241-55).

### **Identity Crisis and Gender Anxiety in *The Passion of New Eve***

Gender anxiety refers to the emotional and psychological turmoil undergone by individuals as a result of facing conflicting emotions when the gender role prescribed to them by the society they live in is often in clash with how they themselves feel about their own gender roles. Identity crisis and gender identity are themes which build the foundation of the novel *The Passion of New Eve*. Here we can see the views of Evelyn's on sex and gender identity:

Our external symbols must always express the life within us with absolute precision; how could they do otherwise, since that life has generated them? Therefore we must not blame our poor symbols if they take forms that seem trivial to us, or absurd, for the symbols themselves have no control over their own fleshly manifestations, however paltry they be; the nature of our life alone has determined their forms. (Carter 6)

The narration opens with a description of the protagonist as “an archetypical male chauvinist of the worst kind” (Palmer 29), sadistic, conceited and egotistical. He is an individual whose gender identity has been socially constructed in accordance with his sex and the patriarchal principle of the male dominance world he lives in and consequently, the “systematic mistreatment of his lovers is not an innate sexual drive but is instead the result of how he has been culturally taught to view femininity” (Makinen 156). His views on female are predominantly superficial, the only thing he wants from them is “Body, all body, to hell with the soul” (Carter 7). The author portrays this situation by the manner in which Evelyn handles the various women he encounters throughout the narrative; they are insignificant in his eyes and they are playthings which he uses for his sexual pleasure and then discards them. He has been “raised on a diet of Hollywood films” (Makinen 156), many of them featuring his favorite actress, Tristessa, and although her vacation Evelyn “learns to denigrate women and regard them as victims (Carter 56). For him, she embodies the “essence of idealized femininity” (56), the act of suffering being her primary occupations.

Evelyn moves to New York for the position of a lecturer at a university, which marks the beginning of the transformation he will eventually be subjected to. The

development of his transformation is created by his encounter with diverse types of female icons created by the patriarchal principle. The first female he meets is a black dancer and prostitute named Leilah, Leilah represents a type of femininity which Carter examines in the novel, ironically reproduced as “a mirror that reflects back on one of the stereotypical images of the feminine that men have created and then projected into women” (Perez-Gil 4). In Evelyn’s eyes, Leilah represents sexuality, ecstasy and lust, and his behaviour towards her is expressed accordingly – their sexual encounters quickly turning into aggressive acts of rape as he gets tired of her. When Leilah gets pregnant by Evelyn, she demands him to stay with her, which initiates fear him, the fear of being “chained down by domestic life, thus retaining his male ego in the feminine unconscious” (58).

Power struggle and authority is heavily voiced in the novel where is the struggle between the sexes through the Evelyn’s metamorphosis from a powerful man into a powerless women. Adopting Lacanian theory, Carter turns the image of the phallus into tool of power, i.e. “to be the phallus is to be signifier of the desire of the other and to appear as this signifier” (Butler 59). This power, according to Lacan, varies between man and women:

For women to be the phallus means, then, to reflect the power of the phallus, to signify that power, to embody the phallus, to supply the site to which it penetrates, and to signify the phallus through being its other, it’s absence, its lack, the dialectical confirmation of its identity. (Butler 59)

This signifies that only men can attain the phallus, which gives them power and authority over women, who lack the phallus, and thus women are expected to signify it by being its

opposite and its lack. This ideology is very evident in Evelyn's case, when he is in England and New York; he has the power and is in control of his destiny, simply because he is the phallus. But as soon as he leaves the city for the desert, a realm unknown to him, his power diminishes and the symbol of the phallus becomes insignificant.

He is taken in Beulah by the warrior women. Thus, he comes from the purely patriarchal world where the man is considered superior but in matriarchal world of Beulah where man is considered inferior and the woman are superior. When Evelyn is captured by women and bring him to Beulah, he immediately notices a "structure, chipped out of granite dragged from god knows where, it was twenty or thirty feet tall . . . representing a stone cock with testicles, all complete, in a state of massive tumescence. But the cock was broken off clean in the middle" (Carter 47), with a vulture sitting on its cracked surfaced. This phallus statue is symbolic for the gynocentric world he now finds himself in. Ironically, the broken phallus statue symbolizes Evelyn's fate: the end of his manhood – he is to be emasculated and made into a women against his will. Thus he is deprived of his masculinity, the source of power assigned to his sex in the patriarchal society.

According to Evelyn, she is a person whose mind seems completely disconnected with body, which is made evident when she looks in the mirror and "she become absorbed in the contemplation of the figure in the mirror but she did not seem to me to apprehend the person in the mirror as, in any degree, herself . . . and then become her own reflection" (28). Evelyn does not care about her personality, the only feelings which comes in his mind is the feeling of lust and therefore she is nothing rather than a sexual object. Later on when he is changed into a women, he is left alone in front of a mirror to

look closely and critically his new body and become experienced with it. But Evelyn's thought on the subject are:

When I look in the mirror, I saw Eve; I did not see myself. I saw a young women who thought she was I, I could in no way acknowledge as myself, for this one was only a lyrical abstraction of femininity to me, a tinted arrangement of curved lines. (74)

Mirrors becomes one of the key elements to Evelyn's doubled self-identity. Evelyn thought it is his reflection he perceives in the mirror, which has been turned into "the playboy center fold" (75), he does not connect the female body with male mind. Evelyn perceives his new body as something to be desired, as he has become his "own masturbatory fantasy. And – how can I put it – the cock in my head, still, twitched at the sight of myself" (75). The mirror becomes the significant part of the Evelyn's metamorphosis, by means of mirror he becomes to identify with himself. Thus, Carter reveals the premises of the novel pertaining to the connection between gender and sex: "gender is culturally constructed: hence, gender is neither the causal result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as a sex" (Butler 8).

Socially constructed female figure is the castration – fixated matriarch, as known as "Mother". Mother is a vital character in the narrative, and can be used to be Evelyn's antagonist, as she is the one responsible for his metamorphosis. "She has a several names, including the Great Parricide and the Grand Emasculator, which symbolizes her intent in life: to change the world into a utopian society of women and only women. Mother has turned herself into a mythic four-breasted figure" (Makinen 160). By having "undergone a painful metamorphosis of the entire body and becomes the abstraction of a natural

principle” (Carter 49). Evelyn (New Eve) is terrified of mother because in his eyes, she represents power. Mother proves herself to be the suppressive maternal figures, as the subjects Evelyn (New Eve) to a violent rape, which makes Evelyn (New Eve) realize “how degrading it is to be the object of pity” (65). Carter places Mother as Evelyn’s ultimate cause for metamorphosis who reprimand him from his misogyny in the past: “And you’ve abused women, Evelyn, with this delicate instrument that should have been used for nothing but pleasure.

When Evelyn captured by female guerilla and arrived in Beulah city, it is clear that he is completely powerless, under the command of women. The way which lies before him has been decided, forward “our destinations choose us, choose us before we are born” (39). He surrenders himself to the power of Mother, who informs him of her plans for this future and say that: “Hail, Evelyn, most fortunate of men! You’re going to bring forth the Messiah of the Antithesis!” as she is “about to make a start on the feminism of Father Time” (67). Being removed of his masculine identity, Eve becomes “terrified of motherhood as any women born” (80), and uncertain about her identity and existence:

I KNOW NOTHING. I am a tabula erasa, a blank sheet of paper, an unhatched egg. I have not yet become a women although I possess a women’s shape. Not a women, no; both more and less than a real women. Now I am a being as mythic and monstrous as Mother herself; but I cannot bring myself to think of that . . . I had only the one thought – I’m in the most ludicrous mess in the world! (83, emphasis in the original)

Here Eve found herself with confusing identity when he was transform from powerful male into powerless female by Mother in desert. Eve looks like female but mentally he was male. His mind was tabula erasa, a blank sheet of paper after changed into female. Before mother gets to inseminate Eve, she escapes from Beulah and heads for the desert, processing a women's body and a man's psyche, New Eve becomes a "hybrid; he/she does not belong to any community: he/she has no history, no tradition, no shared life and finally, no gender" (Vallorani 4).

### **Exploring Transgender: Discourses of (In)Authenticity in *The Passion of New Eve***

Transgender is a term which has emerged in recent decades to describes a particular configuration of identity, a specific community and a growing body of theory, influenced by but not identical to queer theory. Transgender, according to Judith Halberstam, is a term which "can be used as a marker for all kinds of people who challenge, deliberately or accidentally, gender normativity", this expansive definition includes those who "pass or cross - dress or simply refuse normative gender categories." As a term referring to cross-identifying subjects it is not simply another way of describing - and certainly not of conflating - transsexuals and transvestites. By identifying as transgender, transgender people are not seeking to conceal a prior sexed identity or current cross-gender identification but to embrace the lived integrity of an identity position as transgendered. Much feminist anxiety around transgender has its roots in a concern that the person who cross dresses or changes sex is complicit in normative gender in an essentialist fashion. However, emphasis on transition across or between sexes and/ or genders is not as a transitional route to a fixed destination but as a condition in its own right. As Prosser has put it:



If transsexual has been conceived conventionally as a transitional phase to pass through once the transsexual can pass and assimilate as nontranssexual - one begins as female, one becomes a transsexual, one is a man - under the aegis of transgender, transsexuals, now refusing to pass through transsexuality, are speaking en masse as transsexuals. (32)

(In)Authenticity is a central concept with transgender people. Transgender individuals are often questioned by others as to whether their trans-sexuality is genuine or feigned. It can also be seen as a question of nature verse nurture? However, transgender people have tried to own the concept of trans-sexuality and define it in their own terms. Authenticity, they claim, is their sole authority and they do not feel the need to prove or disprove anything to others. However where new discourses of transgender seek neither to disavow a differently sexed/ gendered history nor to arrive at a normatively fixed end, Transphobic discourses continue to seek to expose or unmask what they construct as inauthenticity and deceit.

In the novel *The Passion of New Eve*, Tristessa's gender identification is posited as inauthentic by Eve who describes her as a “female impersonator . . . forever cheated of experience (Carter 33);” Eve is insistent in denying the reality of Tristessa's experience, pronouncing that “he had been she; though she had never been a women (34).” For Eve, it seems, the discovery of Tristessa's transgendered identity is equivalent motif in transgendered life stories, as Judith Halberstam has noted:

Eccentric, double, duplicitous, deceptive, odd, self-hating: all of these judgements swirl around the passing woman, the cross-dresser, the non-operative transsexual, the self-defined transgender person, as if other

lives-gender normative lives-were not odd, not duplicitous, not double and contradictory every turn. (35)

Halberstam describes transgender biography as “a sometimes violent, often imprecise project which seeks to brutally erase the carefully managed details of the life of a passing person and which recasts the act of passing as deception, dishonesty and fraud” (36).

Taking its cue from Eve's narrative perspective, a recurring motif in Carter scholarship on this novel is the interpretation of the discovery of Tristessa's transgendered condition as the “exposure” of Tristessa as a “male across-dresser”.

Hence Makinen claims that “Tristessa's cross-dressing is a male appropriation of femininity, not a radical form of gender-bending” (Carter 42). Tristessa is depicted as suffering a form false consciousness in succumbing to a lie of femininity, but as a sexed male she is also regarded as an agent of male colonization of female experience.

Femininity is understood only as patriarchal construction imposed on a woman and not as a gendered mode of being, with complex and multiple manifestations, which can be assumed by differently sexed agents. Moreover, there is a tension between an insistence that the femininity assumed by the transsexual is culturally constructed, and hence inauthentic, and a presumption that women have a prerogative to femininity based on real female experience.

### **'Violent Operations': Sexualized Violence and Transsexual Surgery in *The Passion of New Eve***

Sexualized Violence is something that transgender people are more exposed to than people with traditional sexuality. Transgendered people's very appearance and existence provokes a reaction from many people. As if that were not enough, when

people undergo transsexual surgery they become further vulnerable to ridicule and sexual violence. It is ironic to note that, the very operation that makes changes their traditional or biologically given gender into something they prefer being, is actually a kind of violence on their body. It can be seen as a voluntary and conscious violence by the transgendered person on the biological body they are born with and their own way of cutting through the pre-defined roles as a result of their by birth sexuality and gender.

The initially male narrator's involuntary sex reassignment and her subsequent sexual servitude - inflicted by matriarchal and patriarchal and her subsequent autocrats respectively - is made to stand for the war between the sexes. The depiction of sexualized violence in feminist fictions generally, and in Carter's work specifically, as a contentious issue which scholars have examined in detail. In the novel sexualized violence is committed by both male and female characters; Evelyn is raped by Mother as a man and repeatedly by Zero as a women. In her 1997 article, "Sexual and Textual Aggression in *The Sadeian Women* and *The Passion of New Eve*", Merja Makinen suggests that such reversals of gendered paradigms of oppression challenge "passive stereotypes that uphold suffering and eroticise victimization" (19). She places Carter at the forefront of a generation of Second Wave Feminist writes shattering myth of femininity: Depictions of women wielding violence can be both demystifying and cathartic. The violence exercised by Mother on behalf of the community of women at Beulah is certainly provocative; however, male to female transgendered body in a context where textual violence is waged in terms which rely on binary categories of sex.

The relation between corrective medical practices and heteronormative imperatives for sexed, gendered and sexual bodies is an especially complex one where

transgendered subjects are concerned. In the novel *Tristessa* seeks sex reassignment surgery from Mother, in her former civilian capacity as a cosmetic surgeon; the latter justifies her refusal of *Tristessa*'s request on the grounds of what she as her 'ineradicable maleness' inaugurating a denial of *Tristessa*'s elective trans identity which persists, often in violent form, throughout the novel and its critical reception. Jay Prosser acknowledges the popular conception of sex reassignment surgery as a form of self-inflicted violence:

Without doubt what renders transsexuality most unnatural in the cultural imagination is sex reassignment surgery. The logic of its conception as mutilations is that if the bodies operated on are not already wounded or deformed, then the surgery itself must wound or deform. (24)

The equation of this surgery with castration is more than clinical; it mobilises symbolic associations which provoke fear and aversion at the prospect of the 'emasculated' man. The sex reassignment surgery denied to *Tristessa* is, of course, imposed on the involuntary Evelyn in the novel; moreover, the way in which it is depicted as a punishment for his transgressions against women as a man has important implications for the ways in which trans identity is constructed in this novel. On discovery of the surgical fate planned for him by Mother, he asks "of what crime had I been guilty to deserve such punishment" (Carter 25)? Later, apprehending Leilah's possible role in his abduction and enforced reconstruction, Eve wonders; "was my body her revenge" (26)?

In this novel surgical sex reassignment becomes an act of retributive violence which permanently wounds Eve; in this context, elective surgery would seem an act of radical self-harm. It seems deeply ironic that when Eve later refers to a violent operation

she has in mind not her own coercive surgery but Tristessa's freely chosen decision to pass woman.

### **'Immune to Rape'? Transphobic Violence in *The Passion of New Eve***

Another myth – and a dangerous myth at that – is that transgendered people cannot be raped. It is a logic that is similar to the logic that views sex workers as incapable of being raped. This is also a result of transphobic mentality, which views transgendered people as some sort of sexual deviant and, hence, already morally corrupted. What else could explain the pervasiveness of transphobic violence and the way it is underreported or even passed as something trivial in our society? The novel is replete with instances of this kind of transphobic violence and the way it is normalized by the society. The stunning cruelty that is inflicted upon homosexuals and transsexual people is the very expression of this innate transphobic violence that resides in the hearts of the people and the society at large.

The violence which is directed at Tristessa's body can be understood as homophobic not because its object is homosexual, but because its motivation is to do with fear of and hostility towards the possibility of same sex desires. The forms which sexual intimacy take for Tristessa, if any, prior to her encounter with Eve are not revealed; the text reinforces prevailing assumptions about transsexuals as a sexual beings, although she does weep over the death of her devoted Chinese male companion. However, Zero's long - planned assault on Tristessa and her ultimate demise are both implicated in homophobic violence; Zero hunts Tristessa down as “dyke” and Tristessa is summarily shot by a boy soldier on whose cheek she has placed a kiss. However, the rape to which Tristessa is subjected can be considered more specifically Transphobic.

Rape is repeatedly and explicitly depicted as a weapon of sexualised violence in the novel; the prominence of this motif would seem to firmly locate Carter's 1977 novel within the sexual politics of its time - an era. In the novel, Eve suffers marital rapes by Zero so furious that she fears "I would die of it" (49); she describes this regime of sexual terror as "savage an apprenticeship in womanhood as could have been devised for me" (50). Jean Wyatt offers the following exposition of Carter's feminist literary strategies:

What Carter is unwilling to compromise or soften in these early novels is her depiction of woman's structural position within patriarchy: becoming a woman requires, in *The Passion of New Eve*, a literal castration and, in *The Magic Toyshop*, a rape, an alienation of a woman's subjective agency that amounts to a mutilation. (51)

In their introduction to *Rape and Representation*, Lynn A. Higgins and Brenda R. Silver writes that rape and rapability are central to the very construction of gender identity, the problematic assumptions about sexed bodies and heterosexual sexualities which are latent in this formulation.

Carter's audacious to imagining of female - perpetrated rape is symptomatic of her complex relationship to emerging feminist orthodoxies but where the rape of Evelyn by Mother reverses hierarchies of gendered power Tristessa's rape arguably serves to reinforce sexed categories of identity. As one of Zero's many wives, Eve is in effect a sexual slave; she is violently raped by Zero more than once as an assertion of his power and contempt. Eve's body has been constructed as a male 'masturbatory fantasy' as if to ensure that she will suffer sexual objectification and exploitation; she is raped as a woman, but seemingly punished for the man that she was.

In order to compel the consummation of the forced marriage between Eve and Tristessa, Zero instructs one of his wives to arouse Tristessa with her mouth. Staring in amazement at her own erection, Tristessa falls against Eve's body to whom she whispers: "I thought I was immune to rape" (Carter 60). In an act which echoes that of Leilah - who tears an orgasm from the barely conscious Evelyn - Eve now draws Tristessa into her where the latter ejaculates.

### **The 'Double Wedding': Reproducing 'Sex' in *The Passion of New Eve***

One of the crucial questions transgender feel and face is their role in reproduction and the sexuality and upbringing of their child. This at once poses complications and turmoil of gargantuan proportions. Having gone through the emotional and psychological turmoil themselves, the burden and excruciating experience of defying their own parents, how are transgendered people likely to see themselves as parents? Moreover, how are they going to understand themselves and then explain to their children about their own role in reproduction and child rearing? The whole concept of wedding centers around the concept of reproduction. How then, are transgendered people to come to terms with this hitherto unfamiliar and confusing situation?

The queer quality of the 'double wedding' resides in a secret to which Zero is not party. Eve's status as a post - operative transsexual. Both Eve and Tristessa are individuals are sexed male at birth but living as women; hence multiple identification and relations are possible, depending on how sex and gender are interpreted and how desire is expressed. By doubling an elective male-to-female transgendered person - Tristessa - with an involuntary of Tristessa's gender identity is implicitly called into question by the narrative. The reversion to tropes of reproductive sexuality to signify the future arguably

reinforce the very categories which Carter's text offers to question. In her 'Posttranssexual Manifesto' Sandy Stone argues that:

To attempt to occupy a place as a speaking subject within the traditional gender frame is to become complicit in the discourse which one wishes to deconstruct. Rather, we can seize upon the textual violence inscribed in the transsexual body and turn it into a reconstructive force. (73)

The novel dramatizes the “textual violence inscribed in the transsexual body” (Carter 74) within the context of a radical feminist polemic, but where Eve survives Tristessa ultimately remains its victim.

The novel is a retrospective and often prolepsis narrative, its narrator anticipating the change of Evelyn is to undergo from a vantage point in perspective, with the New Eve confessing to retaining a “clock in her head” (71) which renders her accounts of her own sexual sensations as a woman curiously voyeuristic. Hence, when Eve claims Tristessa as her double, she appropriates her in her own image. But Tristessa is no more a person without a past than Eve is; she may not be able to coherently recount her history after the ordeal of her passion but to suggest that it does not exist is to deny her lived reality. In the queer union of Eve and Tristessa any number of cross identifications are possible between individuals sexed male at birth but living lives as women. The doubling of Eve and Tristessa serves ultimately to reinforce the binary logic on which categories of sex, gender and sexuality relies.

### **Conclusion**

In the novel Angela Carter deals with the gender transformation relating to identity crisis and gender anxiety. With these issues Carter tries to show how the



characters transform the gender identities and their struggles or sufferings to identify their own gender. By observing the social formation of femininity, the narrative displays the social and cultural myths which minimize and control modern day society. Title of work centered on Biblical myth that Carter deconstruct and rewrites according to these assumes namely the myth of the creation of Eve. The work deals with shifting identities where sex and gender related issues are constantly put question, corresponding with the most common themes of contemporary literature. This thesis examine how the identity crisis and gender anxiety have been seen in this novel.

Transgender is a term which has emerged in recent decades to describe a particular configuration of identity, a specific community and a growing body of theory, influenced by but not identical to queer theory. In The novel, Tristessa's gender identification is posited as inauthentic by Eve who describes her as a female character. Eve is insistent in denying the reality of Tristessa's experience, pronouncing that he had been she; though she had never been a woman. For Eve, it seems, the discovery of Tristessa's transgendered identity is equivalent to - and as irreversible as - the exposure of a falsehood. Evelyn's story is very much a fictional, science - fiction - laced version of a transsexual autobiography; speaking in the first person as s/he does for majority of the novel. Eve/lyn's graphically depicts his/her history, owning his/her newly sexed female body. However, Eve/lyn's ambivalence and confusion about relationship between body and the identity resulting from his/her surgery is an ironic upending of a central convention in transsexual autobiography: the transsexual subject's sense of being in the wrong body.

Angela Carter's *The Passion of New Eve* is one of her most combative texts and one in which motifs of insurgency, sabotage and sexualized aggression are rife; situated in a landscape ravaged by guerrilla warfare, and transgendered body becomes the site on which a violent conflict is waged. The initially male narrator's involuntary sex reassignment and her subsequent sexual servitude - inflicted by matriarchal and patriarchal autocrats respectively - is made to stand for the war between the sexes. In the novel sexualized violence is committed by both male and female characters; Evelyn is raped by Mother as a man and repeatedly by Zero as a woman. The violence exercised by Mother on behalf of the community of women at Beulah is certainly provocative; however, male to female transgendered body in a context where textual violence is waged in terms which rely on binary categories sex.

Disturbingly, Eve's conviction that Tristessa had never been a woman is little different to Zero's whose exposure of Tristessa's biological sex is the impetus for a terrorizing ordeal. Evelyn's sex reassignment surgery, seems to have a punitive, corrective function: namely, to forcibly inscribe on Tristessa both a biological maleness and a male heterosexuality, the latter constructed as an inevitable consequence of the former. The violence which is directed at Tristessa's body can be understood as homophobic not because its object is homosexual, but because its motivation is to do with fear of and hostility towards the possibility of same sex desire. Rape is repeatedly and explicitly depicted as a weapon of sexualized violence in the novel, the prominence of this motif would seem to firmly locate Carter's 1997 novel within the sexual politics of its time – an era. An understanding of sexual violence as playing a key role in the

induction of women in patriarchal roles is a defining legacy of radical feminist second wave thinking and reflected in Carter's fiction and its reception.

Eve and Tristessa's marriage – both the forced nuptials overseen by Zero and the consensual sexual encounter in the desert – are potentially queer moments in Carter's novel. The queer quality of the double wedding resides in a secret to which Zero is not party: Eve's status as a post – positive transsexual. Both Eve and Tristessa are individuals sexed male at birth but living as women; hence multiple identification and relations are possible, depending on how sex and gender are interpreted and how desire is expressed. The 'interpenetrating undifferentiated sex' experienced by Eve and Tristessa in the desert seems to dispense with sexed identity as a determinant of sexual identity but the motif of the restitution of Tristessa's maleness through heterosexuality. In the novel Eve's inferred pregnancy promises to authenticate her status as a biological woman, problematically reviving motherhood as the final sanction of true femininity. It simultaneously acts to affirm Tristessa's maleness and by implication her heterosexuality.

Finally, it can be concluded that the thesis is about the Shifting Identities. In the novel most of all character face the identity crisis, double wedding, Transphobic Violence, Sexual Violence, Transsexual Surgery and worry about their own gender due to the shifting identities. Evelyn was transform from male to female and he/she face the identity crisis. Evelyn (New Eve) was raped by Zero again and again. Mentally Evelyn was male and physically female body. Tristessa's gender identification is posited as inauthentic by Eve who describes her as a female character. Sexualized violence is committed by both male and female characters; Evelyn is raped by Mother as a man and repeatedly by Zero as a woman. Both Eve and Tristessa are individuals sexed male at

birth but living as women; hence multiple identification and relations are possible, depending on how sex and gender are interpreted and how desire is expressed. Carter provide her characters with stereotypical characteristics, drastically dramatized, she depicts the state of contemporary society which has been drowned in false images. In the conclusion that gender is a social construct, made by the patriarchal principle in order to empower men and makes a clear distinction between sexes: that of the male general preferred sex, and the female marginalized others.

## Works Cited

- Beauvoir, De Simone. *The Second Sex*. 1949. New York: Vintage Books, 2009. Print.
- Bristow, Joseph and Trev Lynn Broughton. *The Infernal Desires of Angela Carter: Fiction, Femininity, Feminism*. London: Longman, 1997. Print.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and The Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1999. Print.
- Carroll, R. “‘Violent operations’: Revisiting the Transgendered Body in Angela Carter's *The Passion of New Eve*.” *Women: A Cultural Review* 22. 2:3 (2011): 241-55. Print.
- Carter, Angela. *The Magic Toyshop*. 1967. London: Virago press, 2008. Print.
- Carter, Angela. *The Passion of New Eve*. 1977. London: Virago press, 2008. Print.
- Carter, Angela. *Wise Children*. 1991. Vintage Books, 2006. Print.
- Finney, Brian. “Tall Tales and Brief Lives: Angela Carter’s *Nights At The Circus*.” *The Journal of Narrative Technique*. 28:2 (1988) 161-85. Print.
- Halberstam, Judith, “Telling Tales: Brandon Teena, Billy Tipton, and Transgender Biography.” *Auto/biography Studies*. 15:1 (2000): 62-81. Print.
- Higgins, Lynn A and Brenda R. Silver. *Introduction: Rereading Rape: Rape and Representation*. Eds. Lynn Higgins and Brenda R. Silver, New York: Columbia University Press, 1991. Print.
- Makinen, Merja. “Sexual and Textual Aggression in *The Sadeian Women* and *The Passion of New Eve*.” *The Infernal Desires of Angela Carter: Fiction, Femininity, Feminism*. Eds. Joseph Bristow and Trev Lynn Broughton. New York: Longman, (1997): 149- 65. Print.
- Palmer, Paulina. “Gender as performance in the fiction of Angela Carter and Margaret Atwood.” *The Infernal Desires of Angela Carter: Fiction, Femininity, Feminism*. Eds. Joseph

- Bristow and Trev Lynn Broughton. London: Longman, (1997): 24-40. Print.
- Perez-Gil, Maria Del Mar. "The Alchemy of the self in Angela Carter's *The Passion of New Eve*." *Studies in the Novel*. 39:2 (2007): 216-34. Print.
- Prosser, Jay. *Second Skins: The Body Narratives of Transsexuality*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1984. Print.
- Siann, Gerda. *Gender, Sex and Sexuality: Contemporary Psychological Perspectives*. London: Taylor and Francis, 1994. Print.
- Slemon, Stephen. *Magic Realism As Post-Colonial Discourse*. United States: Duke University Press, 1995. Print.
- Stone, Sandy. "The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto." *The Transgender Studies Reader*. 10:2 (1992): 150- 76. Print.
- Vallorani, Nicoletta. "The Body of the City: Angela Carter's *The Passion of New Eve*." *Science Fiction Studies*. 21:3 (1994): 365-79. Print.
- Weil, Kari. *Androgyny and The Denial of Difference*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992. Print.
- Weinreich, Peter. "The Operationalisation of identity theory in racial and ethnic relations." *Theories of Race and Ethnic Relations*. 2:5 (1986): 299-320. Print.
- West, Candace and Zimmerman Don H. "Doing Gender." *Gender and Society*. 1:2 (1987): 125-51. Print.
- Wyatt, Jean. "The Violence of Gendering: Castration Images in Angela Carter's *The Magic Toyshop*, *The Passion of New Eve*, and 'Peter and the Wolf'." *Women's Studies*. 25:6 (1996): 549-70. Print.