Postmodernism has a nebulous or an unmapped zone of bogs and briars as it lends itself to “evasion and ambiguity” (Grosz 8). Postmodernism is a slipshod term. The charm of postmodernism lies in the fact that it is able to focus with dazzling exuberance on the problem of boundaries. The problem of boundaries is the central issue in many theoretical writings about literature. Postmodernism is in a special way the nexus of boundaries that traverse each other. It is a secret boundary that lies between radically disparate dimensions of experience or between different ways of perceiving that experience, which ultimately blanks out each other’s vision. In postmodern theory certainties become uncertainties and boundaries tremble and collapse.

Postmodernism as a genre does not possess boundaries. If it is considered as a period, it will have to be marked by boundaries. So it is thought of as an analytic-descriptive term capable of isolating conventions, devices and techniques. It is very much an “aesthetic genre or style” and very little
a period term. It is difficult to separate postmodernism from modernism. 'Postmodern' suggests the existence of multiple genres within a text. The postmodern texts defy any simple classification or conclusion. The shifting of generic boundaries allows the writers to explore and explode the distinctions between fact and fiction or fiction and reality. According to Terry Eagleton, postmodernist culture and literature will "dissolve its own boundaries and become coextensive with ordinary commodified life itself, whose ceaseless exchanges and mutations in any case recognize no formal frontiers which are not constantly transgressed" (Against the Grain 141). Carter exploits the postmodern tendency to blur boundaries, to meet her feminist ends. In Carter's texts there is an interaction of postmodernist and feminist tendencies. Since the female sex is multiple in every sense, the writings of women also articulate many voices. Postmodernism too insists on multiplicity, plurality and ambivalence. Combined with the feminist perspectives, the blurring of boundaries and the shifting of genres help in creating a space from which to question and explode the norms of realism, colonialism and patriarchy.

M.F. Salat is of the opinion that "a refusal to accept all certainties and fixities, subversion of hegemonies and a questioning impulse constitute some of the chief features of postmodernism" (Subversions and Contradictions 35). Feminist writers like Carter too go in for devices like discontinuous
narration, polyvalent narratorial perspective, reader participation, genre-blurring, repudiation of received hegemonies, search for new forms of expression, parody, subversion etc. There is a continuous breaking down of borders and decanonization. According to Anne Cranny Francis "the deliberate blurring of boundaries between the two discursive operations, fiction and criticism, with its implicit challenge to notions of authority, is also characteristic of postmodernism" (Feminist Fiction 127). Postmodern representational practices refuse to stay neatly within accepted conventions and traditions. In these representational practices hybrid forms are deployed and seemingly mutually contradictory strategies are used to "frustrate critical attempts to systematize them, to order them with an eye to control and mastery - that is to totalize" (Linda Hutcheon 37).

Postmodernism suggests an 'in-betweenness'. There is a kind of paradoxical mixing of seeming opposites to present something inevitably ideological. Since feminism is political, Carter's mixing of opposites and blurring of their boundaries have a political axe to grind. Postmodernism does not limit itself to mere genre-boundary crossings, but goes forward to make the boundaries nebulous in every aspect of representation. It is a breaking down of the boundaries between various kinds of relationships. The blurring of the boundaries between texts, bringing in echoes, references and traces of several texts leads to what is termed as 'intertextuality', which is a potent postmodern device wielded by feminists. The use
of irony achieves the purpose of blurring boundaries between expression and intention. Postmodernist parody is a value-problematizing, denaturalizing form. Parody makes vague the borders between the original and the imitated or between the serious and the comical. The political implications of these techniques are indeed great as far as the feminists are concerned. Magic realism does away with the borders between the real and the unreal. Ambivalence is yet another method establishing a kind of 'in-betweenness' especially in attitudes towards women. Postmodernism facilitates the breaking down of boundaries between man and woman, the oppressor and the oppressed, the dominator and the dominated, the observer and the observed, the man and the beast, the civilized and the barbaric, the past and the present, the normal and the pathological and between the writer and the reader.

Some of Carter's novels are works that sit on the borderline between fiction and personal history. The vague and indistinct positions and relationships thus created do much to engender doubts regarding the positions established by the patriarchal system and pave way for the new order visualised by the feminists, breaking down the hegemony of men over women. It is a way of challenging the value systems of the colonial, the patriarchal and the upper class.

Brain Mc Hale says that the dominant of postmodernist fiction is *ontological*. By this term he means that the postmodernist
imagination does not limit itself to a single world. It does not allow the 'closure' of a single, fixed mode of experience and expression. Instead it celebrates the play of millions of possibilities and creates infinitely many worlds of sense and shape. However the dominant of modernist fiction is **epistemological**. It tries to limit itself to the interpretation of the world of which the reader is a part. In postmodern fiction which is **ontological** there is an exploration of the other worlds and their constitution. It tries to find out to what degree the worlds differ from ours. It attempts to find out what happens when different kinds of worlds are placed in confrontation, or when boundaries between worlds are violated. Mc Hale says that two complementary strategies are used in the postmodern narratives. The first is to transport representatives of our world to a different world, the second, its inverse involves another world's intrusion into this one (*Postmodernist Fiction* 60). This is exactly what Carter does through transgression of boundaries and the blurring of border lines. It provides greater possibilities of interpretation and facilitates a better understanding of the world of women.

Feminist literature does not by any means form a homogeneous body of texts. There is an interaction between diverse literary texts erasing all the boundaries between them. Intertextuality is a new emerging strategy of communication between the text and the reader. It is fascinating to note that it has very clearly definable effects within the social
groups in whose context they arise and to which they relate. All the feminist texts, though diverse in form and content, share one feature: everyone of them endeavours to convey authentically female experience. They are authentic because they all insist upon the veracity and verisimilitude of the suffering depicted in feminist literature. This suffering is inflicted by patriarchy. Intertextuality is of the utmost importance in this context. The intertextual references are significant because applying familiar literary strategies in texts renders alien material more accessible to the reading public. Intertextual references also play a decisive role in shaping our response to a pathographical text. Literary texts also adjust certain shortcomings and deficits in the groups with which they are attached. This interaction between literary texts is closely bound up with the structure of our counter-cultures. Intertextuality is frequently used clearly understanding that a text is regarded as a 'stratified structure' containing echoes and references and traces to other texts, or a whole array of literary conventions. The critic responds to the intertextual potential of a text by taking out its parts layer by layer. The text is like a palimpsest. A palimpsest is a piece of writing material or manuscript on which the original writing has been effaced to make room for other writing. This notion of intertextuality gives a seemingly unlimited liberty to the critic in interpreting.

Roland Barthes provides a fine working definition of intertextuality:
We know that a text is not a line of words releasing a single "theological" meaning (the "message" of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture (*Death of the Author* 146).

The text according to Barthes is "plural". It not only allows for a number of varied interpretations but more than that it is an 'irreducible plural'. The text is woven entirely with citations, references, echoes, cultural languages which cut across it through and through in a vast stereophony Julia Kristeva also states that "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (*Word, Dialogue and Novel* 37).

Brenda K. Marshall in her work *Teaching the Postmodern* says that Intertextuality refers to the notion that all writing, all 'texts' are penetrated by and composed of traces of previous texts. Each text must consist of a network of known or recognizable intersecting texts. Otherwise it would have no meaning. Intertextuality is a postmodern concept in the sense that it denies the word or the text transcendental, representative status. Instead of representing some exact thing, idea or presence, the word or the text is the conditional moment which indicates all the words or texts that have gone into making it understandable, approachable and meaningful.
The concept of intertextuality is understood as situated within a system of meaning based on identity and difference. Within a semiotic system signs do not remain fixed. A given form will not always have the same meaning wherever it appears. The meaning is determined by the system or structure that provides the boundaries for that sign. In literary works, intertextuality is a factor as works draw upon signs existing prior to them, combining them and drawing from them new meanings (Teaching the Postmodern 42).

Postmodern novels affirm that meaning is irrevocably ambiguous and plural. It cannot be taken for granted that reality can be directly mirrored by a novel. Postmodern writers take great delight in playing with this idea. Instead of mirroring reality, linguistic structures are very often mirrored. Terry Eagleton says:

All literary texts are woven out of other literary texts, not in the conventional sense that they bear the traces of ‘influence’ but in the more radical sense that every word, phrase or segment is a reworking of other writings which precede or surround the individual work. There is no such thing as literary ‘originality’, no such a thing as the ‘first’ literary work: all literature is intertextual (Literary Theory 138). Intertextuality is indeed a literary development of Saussure’s theory of difference. Saussure said that “language is a system
of independent terms in which the value of each term results solely from the simultaneous presence of the others" (Course in General Linguistics 114). This is true of literary text too. Postmodern texts stress their multiplicity of meaning because of the plurality inherent in the language. The structure of the text should be disentangled.

Carter skilfully uses the device of intertextuality to analyse femininity and female subordination as cultural constructs. The Magic Toyshop reworks episodes and motifs from three texts, namely the biblical story of the Garden of Eden, E.T.A.Hoffman’s tale The Sandman and Freud's accounts of the psychic structures relating to the family unit. It is her reinterpretation of the motifs of Hoffman's tale The Sandman that deconstructs the patriarchal hierarchy in an effective manner. By reworking motifs from Hoffman she allows certain cracks and fissures to become visible in patriarchal structures and roles. When Freud in his psychoanalytic analysis foregrounds male experience and marginalises the motif of the female puppet, Olympia, Carter makes the puppet central (Palmer, From Coded Mannequin 184).

Henrik Ibsen’s play A Doll’s House (1879) categorically states that a woman’s place in an exclusively masculine society has been relegated to that of a doll. Nora in Ibsen’s play plays the role of a doll just as Melanie plays the role of a toy in The Magic Toyshop. Carter's dreams of the day...
of freedom for women is expressed in her novel *Nights at the Circus* recalling to our mind Ibsen’s play:

The doll’s house doors will open, the brothels will spill forth their prisoners, the cages, gilded or otherwise, all over the world, in every land, will let forth their inmates singing together the dawn chorus of the new, the transformed—(*Nights 285*).

Melanie’s experience as an orphan has several resemblances to those of Jane Eyre in the novel of Charlotte Bronte. Carter herself says “Melanie had never even known an orphan before and now here she was an orphan herself. Like Jane Eyre” (*Magic Toyshop* 32). And Victoria is compared to Mrs. Rochester:

Victoria like Rochester, a dreadful secret in the back bedroom, beaming vacantly playing with kiddi bricks, simple constructional toys and wooden jig-saw puzzles, pushing her indecent face against the bannisters to coo at unnerved guests (*Magic Toyshop* 8).

Like several other of Carter’s fictions, *Nights at the Circus* too represents a skilfully contrived exercise in intertextuality. “Shakespeare, Milton, Poe, Ibsen and Joyce are some of the writers to whom she alludes, with the effect of creating a polyphonic interplay of European cultural attitudes and moments” (*From Coded Mannequin* 197). There is medley of
paradoxically reconstructed quotations which unite the serious, the comic, the high and the low. The dance of disintegration by the clowns led by Buffo, the great has the mockery of gracefulness as "the dance of the rude mechanicals in A Midsummer Night's Dream" (Nights 123). Both Madame Schreck (62) and the Princess of Abyssinia (233) are compared to Lady Macbeth. Describing Buffo the Great, Carter says reminding us of W.B.Yeats' The Second Coming (1920), "Things fall apart at the very shiver of his tread on the ground. He is himself the centre that does not hold" (117). Echoing Shakespeare's Hamlet, Walser who is carried away by the Shaman to the oncoming Siberian dawn exclaims, "What a piece of work is man!" (238)

Emily in Shadow Dance has been moulded by Carter in the frame of the revengeful and immortal Madame Defarge in A Tale of two Cities by Charles Dickens. Reminding us of all the vehemence of the French Revolutionaries, the augmenting strength of the feminists awaiting the day of revenge against male oppressors is expressed by Honeybuzzard by saying:

I am working on a little toy guillotine, Morris; a razor blade in a frame, powered by a rubberband. Emily can play Madame Defarge and sit and knit and I will make a tiny figure of Bruno out of pipe-cleaners and kneel him down and off with his head (121).
Carter's short stories too are heavily overcoded and calls upon a number of intertextual frames. Her short story collection, *The Bloody Chamber* (1979) rewrites the stories of Bluebeard, Beauty and the Beast, The Vampire, The Elf-King, puss-in-Boots and Red Riding Hood. *The Werewolf* and *The Company of Wolves* are two stories based directly on the Red Riding Hood story. The story entitled *Lady of the House of Love* calls to mind the houses in the medieval literature, like the houses in works such as *The Faerie Queene*. In Carter's story, *The Love of the Lady Purple*, there are obvious references to Hoffman's 'Sandman' story, Freud's *Uncanny*, *Pygmalion* and even to Mozart.

*The Passion of New Eve* is another reworking or deconstruction of the story of the creation of the New Eve in the book of Genesis of the Old Testament. Posing a challenge to the traditional conception of a man's God creating a woman according to the patriarchal tastes, Carter creates a feminist version of the creation of woman. In this novel, she also deploys material from the myths of Oedipus, Tiresias, Lilith and many more sources. Allusions to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* are also discernible in the text. Anne Cranny Francis says:

Shelley also wrote about gender ideology in *Frankenstein*. Victor Frankenstein's non-sexual production of a living creature is more than just a challenge to the role of women under patriarchy; it is a deconstruction of the appropriation of
reproduction by the male gender in a patriarchal society. So the deformity of a creature, its quasi-human status, can be read as emblematic of the woman produced by patriarchal gender ideology. This woman is an expression of the ‘feminine’, a masculinist construct which has little to do with the experiential world of women. The feminine woman is the ‘other’ the defining opposite of the male, which in turn defines the human, humanity, 'mankind’. The feminine woman is therefore, not quite human, less than human; a deformed and disabled version of women (Feminist Fiction 44).

But there is a perfect woman created in a woman's world to please woman.

The novel Wise Children is an excellent example of intertextuality with its very title evoking associations of Shakespeare's play The Merchant of Venice which gives us an inversion of the old saying, "it is a wise child that knows his own father". Launcelot in The Merchant of Venice says, "it is a wise father that knows his own child" (Act II. Sc. ii). Both are apt in the context given in the novel Wise Children. Moreover, the novel can hardly be meaningful if Shakespeare's plays are detached from the text. Their frontiers have become so nebulous that they cannot be easily separated. There is no other novel so full of Shakespeare as Wise Children. The characters are actors and actresses in Shakespearean plays. Geardine Meaney
says that Carter has attempted a rewriting of the Heathcliff 'demon lover' motif in *Heroes and Villains* [[Un]Like Subjects 93]. The rape scene in *Heroes and Villains* can be compared with the scene in *Wuthering Heights* where Catherine is savaged. Thus there is a deliberate proliferation of texts within the main text. The vague and indistinct borders between these texts created by Carter opens new opportunities to examine women's authentic experiences. It makes the literary text self-conscious and multivocal. The meaning of the text becomes ambiguous and plural.

Parody is a typical postmodern paradoxical form because it uses and abuses the texts and conventions of the tradition. The use of parody signals the awareness that literature is made first and foremost, out of other literature. By recalling the text of the past, either of literature or even of history, postmodern novels use parody to question whether there is such a thing as a final, definitive 'inscription' of selfhood or subjectivity in fiction. Parody imitates the serious manner and characteristic features of a particular literary work, or the characteristic style of an author and applies the imitation to a lowly or comically inappropriate subject. Angela Carter uses parody to exploit and undercut several recognizable traditions of the representation of women. Since parody blurs the borders between the serious and the comic, the reader is left to his freedom to arrive at a refined resolution of the crisis.
Parody is the postmodern form arising from the paradox created by the feeling that we can never get out from the weight of a long tradition on the one hand, and our losing faith in the inexhaustibility and the power of the existing system on the other. Parody in postmodern fiction de-naturalizes traditional representations. Angela Carter like Salman Rushdie, uses it to deal with social concerns and at the same time meets aesthetic needs. Postmodern parody is a kind of contesting revision or re-reading of the past that both confirms and subverts the power of the representations of history. Parody creates nebulous frontiers as it is doubly coded in political terms: it both legitimizes and subverts that which it parodies. It is this authorised transgression that makes it the apt vehicle for the political contradictions of postmodernism. The deconstructive potential of parody is great. Postmodern parodic strategies are often used by feminist artists to point to the history and historical power of those cultural representations, while ironically contextualizing both in such a way as to deconstruct them.

Evidently, the psycho-surgery conducted in the chthonic complex of laboratories to create Eve is a parody of God’s creation of Eve from the ribs of man in the Garden of Eden. Carter’s feminist intention to subvert the existing notions about the inferiority of women that was caused by the story of creation, is fulfilled. The Passion of New Eve presents yet another parody breaking down the established ideas on
marriage which is constructed to be a relationship formed between a man and a woman. Parodying a matrimonial ceremony in a church, Zero solemnises the marriage between the New Eve and Tristessa. Eve slips a ring on to Tristessa's finger. "So he made us man and wife although it was a double wedding — both were the bride, both the groom in this ceremony" (Passion 135). The indistinct borders created between this parody of marriage and the serious matrimonial ceremony opens up new possibilities like the relationship between one woman and another woman. "The margin or the border is the postmodern space par excellence, the place where new possibilities exist" says Linda Hutcheon (The Canadian Postmodern 4).

Carter's novels have much to say about absent fathers. Even their presence in the family is seen to be detested because of their tyrannical tendencies. Hence fathers are removed from the site of their domination. If that is not possible, at least those things that represent the authority of the father are disposed of. The importance that is given to the father in the patriarchal set-up, is very much reflected in the Christian prayer, "Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in heaven". To subvert this notion of the father, this prayer is parodied by Carter in her novel, Several Perceptions. During the ball in Kay's house, he seizes his father's photograph from the mantelpiece and pitches it into the fire saying,
"My father who aren’t in heaven, I hate your lousy face and always have" (Several Perceptions 145).

Linda Hutcheon in her work, The Politics of Postmodernism points out Angela Carter’s Nights at the Circus as an excellent example of postmodern parody:

For instance, in a feminist parody of Leda and the Swan, the protagonist of Angela Carter’s Nights at the Circus (known as Fevvers) becomes no longer an imagined fiction but a plain fact .... (206) The novel’s parodic echoes of Pericles, Hamlet and Gulliver’s Travels all function as do those of Yeats’s poetry when describing a whorehouse full of bizarre women as ‘this lumber room of femininity, this rag-and-bone shop of the heart’ (69) : they are all ironic feminizations of traditional or canonic male representations of the so-called generic human- ‘Man’. This is the kind of politics of representation that parody calls to our attention (The Politics of Postmodernism 98).

The whole patriarchal set-up in which men dominate over women under the pretext of religious needs is clearly satirised through the presentation of the community of centaurs in Carter’s novel, The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman. It is a parody of the religious and social conditions of a civilized society. The doctrines and services of the Church
are parodied with the intention of blurring the frontiers between the unreal and imaginary society in the novel and the society in the world of reality. Lost in the landscape of Nebulous Time, Desiderio and Albertina came across fabulous creatures which were half-horse and half-men. Parodying the pride with which men consider themselves superior to all other animals, Carter says, “though they were men, they did not know what a man was and believed themselves to be a degenerate variety of the horse they worshipped” (174). Their community was governed by a spiritual junta comprising of the Cantor, the Scrivener, the Smith and the Tattoo-master who were occupying posts equivalent to some of those in the hierarchy of the present Catholic church. They were the cardinals in their church.

Parodying the belief in the church about the manifestation of God in bread and wine, Carter remarks:

These hippolators believed their god revealed himself to them in the droppings excreted by the horse part of themselves since this manifested the purest essence of their equine natures, and it was quite as logical an idol as a loaf of bread or a glass of wine, though the centaurs had too much good sense to descend to coprophily (Nights 175).

While their women were only the rank and file of the devotees, the men held the secrets of the mysteries of the church
and religion. They gave undue importance to the virtue of fidelity. On close examinations of these eccentricities, we find they were not totally different from the practices of our own civilized society. The logic behind all these religious practices that sound so awkward, is the same as the logic behind the inferiority attributed to women. Even the centaurs held their women in low esteem based on the myth of the Bridal Mare and the Sacred Stallion (Nights 185). This myth that appears to be so far-fetched and incredible is not so strange and eccentric as the myth of the Fall of Man which labelled women as detested and inferior. Carter engages herself in a kind of demythification business. She wants to nullify the effects of the myths on the women, especially in increasing their oppression and degradation. By demythifying the deep-rooted myths through parodies she exposes them as politically motivated social and cultural constructs. The parody of the civilized society through the world of centaurs blurs the distinction between the two worlds, especially in their treatment of women and thus serves as an eye-opener for the fanatics in patriarchal society.

Irony in postmodern discourse performs the function of positing a critical distance and then undoing it. Postmodernism paradoxically legitimizes culture even as it subverts it. There is a danger in subverting. But if the edges between legitimizing and subverting are made indistinct or nebulous, the danger can be averted. It is a kind of doubleness created by the
use of irony that prevents any possible danger. This doubleness prevents any possible critical urge to ignore or trivialize historical-political questions. It becomes a useful framework to discuss the obsessive dualities that exist in real life. Reality is full of nebulous frontiers.

Marriage as an institution in a patriarchal society provokes several ironical statements from Carter. Fevvers in *Nights at the Circus* was brought up by whores. Whores were women of the worst class and were considered to be defiled. Yet Walser says that there are whores whom any man might have been proud to marry. On hearing the term, 'marriage' Lizzie says, "Marriage? Pah! ... out of the frying pan into the fire! What is marriage but prostitution to one man instead of many?" (21) Carter ironically says that even married men cannot be absolved of prostitution. Thus the word 'prostitution' itself has vague boundaries.

Similarly, Melchior in *Wise Children* had no qualms about changing his wives one after another. He had three wives. Carter ironically calls it "serial monogamy" (*Wise Children* 148). After narrating the myth of the Sacred Stallion and the Bridal Mare in *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman*, Carter ironically states, "so that was why they held women in such low esteem!" (185). She intended to say that the existing Myth of the Fall of Man or rather the Myth of the Fall of Eve is not reason enough to hold
women in such low esteem. Carter takes exception to the fact that privileges are heaped upon men just because they are men. Desiderio among the centaurs was not deprived of this privilege. He says:

Because I was male, they did not let me do any work and seemed happy enough to let me wander around the village, learning what I could learn (Doctor Hoffman 187).

Women on the other hand are thought to be specially created for cruelty and abuse. Carter infuses irony into the description about the treatment of women by the Cannibal Chief:

And, since my early researches soon showed me that the extent of a woman's feelings was directly related to her capacity for feeling during the sexual act, I and my surgeons take the precaution of brutally excising the clitoris of every girl child born to the tribe as soon as she reaches puberty. And also those of my wives and concubines who have been brought from other tribes where this practice is not observed. Therefore I am proud to say that not a single one of my harem, or, indeed, any of the tribe of more than Roman mothers you see before you, has ever experienced the most fleeting ecstasy, or even the slightest pleasure, while in my arms or in the arms of
any of my subjects. So our womenfolk are entirely cold and respond only to cruelty and abuse (Doctor Hoffman 161).

The Count who gave more importance to his desires than to anything else is just the 'other' of the Cannibal Chief. The Count even strangled a prostitute solely to augment his own erotic ecstasy. Carter ironically points out his heartlessness, by making the Cannibal chief express his desire to know whether the Count has a heart or not. "Now I should like to see if we have a heart at all dear Count" (162). Thus Carter's deliberate ironic position creates nebulous frontiers between the 'expressed' and the 'expected' or between the 'expressed' and the 'actual' forcing the readers to seek the best desired position.

The purposeful blurring of edges or boundaries is best achieved by the extensive use of 'magic-realism'. Carter transgresses the boundaries between realism and fantasy and tricks her readers into confronting the challenge of patriarchy. Thus she turns into a magician. Fantasies juxtaposed with realism creates a borderline territory where female experiences can be analysed better. Carter's worlds are often the worlds of circus and fairground. The peep-shows in The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman, the travelling circus in Nights at the Circus, the crazy world of puppets and puppet-shows in The Magic Toyshop, the itinerant Shakespearean drama troupe in Wise Children and the superstitious nomadic barbarians
in *Heroes and Villains* produce unreal worlds of extraordinary vividness and colour. But all these intertwine with the highly realist world of everyday experience. Below this seeming unreality there exist hard realities.

Magic realism creates an arena in which conventional boundaries between appearance and reality are broken down. The best representation of magic realism is shaman, the dreamer in *Nights at the Circus* who believed that dreams "dissolved the slender margin between the real and the unreal" (*Nights* 260). Fabulous creatures, fantastic settings, unreal situations and strange characters are found in galore in Carter's novels. Her early novel *The Magic Toyshop* is the nearest to the traditional realism, but its use of fairy-tale motifs, fantasy and dreams ensure its exclusion from the ranks of the conventional or the realistic. These literary techniques from Carter's repertoire contests the hegemony of the males by making an indistinct and vague boundary between fiction and reality which makes the readers aware of the existing realities and of the new possibilities.

Breaking down the boundaries between the personal and the political is of paramount importance in feminism. In Angela Carter the discourses of male erotic representation of women and those of female and colonial self representations are juxtaposed with a certain political efficacy. Though the dominance of male gaze, the masculine aggression entailed
in the brutality of rape and the marginalisation of clitoral sex are often quite personal, these are seen by the radical feminists as leading to a kind of collective oppression. Areas of life previously regarded as purely ‘personal’ such as sexual relations, marriage, child care and domestic violence come increasingly to be examined for a larger meaning in our culture’s treatment of women. “The personal is political” means for radical feminists, that the original and basic class division is between the sexes, and that the motive force of history is the striving of men for power and domination over women. To continue acquisition of more power men cunningly keep certain areas of life limited to what they call ‘personal’, covering up their political intentions. Keeping these areas purely ‘personal’ prevents women’s resistance to male power in such areas. Hence feminists feel the need for a politicization of such private and personal spheres of life as sexuality and sexual relationships.

Carter exposes the political impact of certain personal experiences of women thus breaking down the distinction between the personal and political. She points out that these personal areas can be chosen by women for a political struggle against patriarchy. The oppression by tyrannical males imposed on women like Mignon, Lady Atlanta and Aunt Margaret is of a highly personal nature. But Carter exposes them to show that there are several women in the same plight awaiting liberation. What takes place in the privacy of the home or in the purely personal area of sexual intercourse
is often a reflection of a wider conspiracy of the male-dominated society to subjugate women.

In *Heroes and Villains* Jewel admitted that he had certain political reasons behind raping Marianne. It was not purely a personal affair. Jewel wanted to maintain his status (90). Moreover, Marianne is told that there is no choice in being a wife and becoming pregnant. (114) In her work, *The Sadeian Woman: An Exercise in Cultural History*, Angela Carter herself says:

Sexual relations between men and women always render explicit the nature of social relations in the society in which they take place and, if described explicit, will form a critique of those relations. *(Sadeian Woman 20).*

The division between the ‘private’ and the ‘public’ realms has been challenged and to a degree eroded by the feminist focus on sexual politics. Integral to it is the slogan, ‘the personal is political’. The women who took shelter in the House of Correction run by Countess P. in *Nights at the Circus* were women guilty of killing their husbands. The oppression they had to face in an exclusively private sphere forced them to do that. Carter says:

There are many reasons, most of them good ones, why a woman should want to murder her husband, homicide might be the only way for her to preserve a shred of dignity at a time, in a place where
women were deemed chattels, or, in the famous analogy of Tolstoy, like wine bottles that might conveniently be smashed when their contents were consumed (Nights 210-11).

The House of Correction was a private penitentiary. But it assumes political importance. What women did as a part of their struggle against patriarchy, is once again treated as a personal aberration and they are confined in a private penitentiary to make reparations in private. Carter turns this private penitentiary into a place where political struggle brews. The private and personal feelings of love engendered by the proximity of other women also assume a political significance. They break down the boundaries that separate them and emerge with the idea of forming a lesbian Utopia as a challenge to patriarchal oppression in their personal relationships.

In The Magic Toyshop, the tyranny of Uncle Philip was experienced by Melanie, Finn, Aunt Margaret and Francie in a personal way in their own private sphere. Very personal relationships were formed between Melanie and Finn, and Margaret and Francie. At the same time they had political reasons why they should form such relationships. There is a blurring of the boundaries of these two spheres of experiences. When it came to fighting the tyranny of Uncle Philip they joined hands and fought it out together. It became more
of a political struggle than a personal one. A woman’s supposedly ‘personal’ problems too, rather than reflecting her own inadequacy, stem from a collective oppression originating in the imbalance of power between the sexes.

Postmodern narrative techniques used by Carter in her novels too leave nebulous frontiers to be traversed. One of the most prominent strategies used by her is to give an open-ending to her novels. Resistance to final closure is seen as a postmodern narrative technique. Carter criticizes the usual device of a happy ending accorded to novels in *Nights at the Circus*. And happy ending is usually interpreted as ‘marriage’. Carter says:

The Prince who rescues the Princess from the dragon’s lair is always forced to marry her, whether they’ve taken a liking to one another or not. That’s the custom. And I don’t doubt that custom will apply to the trapeze artist who rescues the clown. The name of this custom is “happy-ending” (*Nights* 281).

In *The Nights at the Circus*, even though it is the woman who rescues a man, Carter does not feel the need to end the novel with a marriage between Walser and Fewvers. Fewvers says, “he’ll have the decency to give himself to me when we meet again, not expect the vice versa” (281). She even says, “I will make him into the New Man, in fact fitting mate for the New Woman, and onward we’ll march hand
in hand into the New Century (281). But still Fevvers does not speak of a marriage. Jack Walser thinks of her as Mrs. Sophie Walser but does not ask for her hand in marriage. The novel ends in an uncertainty whether Fevvers will marry him or not. Fevvers instead speaks of having fooled Walser. The nebulous frontier created here opens up new possibilities, especially the possibility of forming a love-relationship without marriage.

A similar resistance to closure is seen in The Magic Toyshop also. After the devastating fire in Uncle Philip's house, only Finn and Melanie are found to have escaped unscathed. Carter does not say what has happened to Francie and Margaret. Melanie's brother Jonathan and sister Victoria aren't heard of any more. The novel merely ends with the sentence about Finn and Melanie: "At night in the garden, they faced each other in a wild surmise" (Magic Toyshop 200). But it is a sentence that stands in a nebulous border and makes numerous suggestions. It has been interpreted as a parody of Adam and Eve chased out from God's presence. Deprived of God's love and protection they stand in the Garden of Eden to decide their own fate. It is also an act of defiance against Philip to fight against him and his laws and then to go out into the night. Carter does not end the novel with a marriage even though Finn and Melanie are successful lovers. Carter seems to suggest that outside patriarchy, there is nothing like marriage. If patriarchy can be consigned to the flames, the institution of marriage will also disappear.
The resistance to final closure in the novel *Love* suggest that the narrated events are rampant and explosive. The novel has a tragic end with Annabel committing suicide after a prolonged struggle against male impersonation. When Lee deserts her, she is forced to reject him and commit suicide. When the novel ends Lee and his brother are seen squabbling drearily as to which of them is most to blame. Carter does not fix the responsibility of her death and punish the villain. Neither Lee nor Buzz is sent to prison, even though that is what is most expected. But Carter says:

[T]hat is because the essence of naturalist fiction is plausibility, in order to create the willing suspension of disbelief, the writer is forced to allot his or her characters lives that are the most plausible, not the most like life, which, since it is not the product of human imagination, holds infinite surprises (*Love* 116).

It is only in the Afterword that she surprises the readers with the information that Buzz leads a successful life and that Lee is rehabilitated. The only punishment given to Lee is an unstable relationship with his new wife Rosie who is quarrelsome and forces him to do the cooking and see to the care of the children. It is a kind of role reversal effected by Carter.

Subversion is an effective literary device used by Carter to create a kind of disturbance that would lead to a
re-visioning of the dominant ideology that the feminists struggle against. The deliberate blurring of boundaries through role reversals brings subversion of fixed notions. Carter sees the need to rewrite history. Postmodernism repudiates history’s claim to logicality and rationality. Nothing can be accepted as certain or fixed. It interrogates received histories and tries to undo the wrongs of received cultural histories. Postmodernism reflects and expresses the change in society and culture in its preoccupation with questioning received structures and concepts. It calls into question all the structures in the society and cultural practices that are accepted as natural and logical. For postmodernism ‘natural’ and ‘logical’ are human constructs. Devices like intertextuality are used to subvert received hegemonies. Carter subverts all old myths about women. These myths have established certain things about women as natural and logical. But by presenting things that appear ‘unnatural’ and ‘illogical’ as natural and logical she exposes the falsehood of the old myths. Masculine women and bird-like women in Carter’s novels are not so unnatural and illogical as the docile, slave-like, ‘feminine’ women created by patriarchy. Carter is trying to demythologize women. It is achieved by blurring the boundaries between the logical and illogical, the natural and unnatural. Subversion and demythologizing are made effective only when it is proved that the authority of patriarchy and the inferiority of women, considered as natural and logical, are merely social constructs.
From the very beginning of the novel, *The Magic Toyshop*, a patriarchal unit represented by the family dominated by Uncle Philip occupies the attention of the readers. Uncle Philip's awe-inspiring presence in the family is given much importance. The laws of patriarchy remain unchallenged till the end. When it comes to be challenged, Uncle Philip acts with great vengeance and destroys the house. Carter speaks of the discontent brewing within Philip's house. She does not make it clear whether the struggle against patriarchy was successful or not. All that the readers are told is about the narrow escape of Finn and Melanie. The authority of Uncle Philip and the suffocation and lack of freedom experienced by his dependants loom large in the novel. That subversion is possible in such a set-up is hinted through the symbolic gesture of Finn's destruction of the Swan and Francie's incestuous relationship with Margaret. The myth that wives are silent sufferers is broken down by making Aunt Margaret free of dumbness.

In *Heroes and Villains* too authority is always seen to be vested in men and not in women. Society has to obey their dictates inspite of the fact that women are able to rescue men from the greatest of dangers. Though Jewel is rescued by Marianne twice, his authority over Marianne remains unchallenged. He asserts his right over Marianne through acts of violence like rape. Religion and its rituals too are framed for their advantage. "Religion is a device
for instituting the sense of a privileged group" (63) Marianne is forced to accept Jewel as her husband even though he had killed her brother. “And since she and the murderer were now incarnated as bride and groom, she felt the only action available to them was to go to bed together’ (80). Inspite of the fact that she was more educated, civilized and he a murderer, a coward rescued by her, he continued to be privileged. Marianne admits the power patriarchy has granted him. “Well, you needn’t be frightened of me. You’ve made me bleed twice, no, three times already, you’re much stronger than I and, as far as it goes more powerful’ (80). But patriarchy is subverted when Marianne stands against Jewel’s decision to recall Donally. The patriarchal authority handed down to generations is challenged by Marianne who asserts her iron will against the decision of the patriarchal society to subjugate her even after the death of her husband.

In *Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman*, Doctor Hoffman stands for the subversion of all that has been made according to male desires. And when everything goes against the existing order, the patriarchal system begins to break down. Desiderio sets out to stop the havoc brought about by this subversion. *Several Perceptions* places side by side men deserted by women and women jilted by men. Joseph who is deserted by Charlotte is plunged into despair. All his internal struggles ultimately turn him into a psychotic. Patricarchy very often foregrounds the sufferings of man, whereas the sufferings of women are marginalised. But Carter
brings in Anne Blossom who undergoes even greater sufferings in the hands of a man. The novel shows how both the man and the woman who are victims of the patriarchal system join hands to overthrow patriarchy and regain normalcy.

The postmodern highlights what Schechner calls “in-betweenness” (News, Sex and Performance Theory 190). Carter appropriates this postmodern technique of creating an ‘in-betweenness’ especially in the most sensitive feminist area of gender difference. Breaking down of the gender differences is achieved by blurring the differences between man and woman. This ‘in-betweenness’ is in fact the purpose behind the introduction of bisexuality. Hermaphrodites in novels like The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman and Nights at the Circus blur the boundary lines between male and female. Transvestites like Tristessa and Albertina suggest that very often gender differences are just the matter of dress or cultural constructs. Transsexualism as is found in The Passion of New Eve goes a long way to break down all fixities of gender. Besides these, the masculine characteristics bestowed upon her heroines like Marianne, Fevvers, Leilah, Emily and the Mother of Beulah create a strong position for women where gender distinctions will no longer hold water.

Women in a patriarchal society have been degraded to the level of beasts of burden. The suffering women of such a society in the eyes of Carter are somewhere between
beasts and men. To represent the suffering women she arrays fabulous creatures like the Centaurs. The Centaurs “believed women were born only to suffer” (Doctor Hoffman 172). When Carter tells us of womenfolk among Centaurus suffering oppression under patriarchy, she wants to focus on the fact that such a situation is not in the remoteness of a fully animal world, but a feature of a beastly patriarchal society. The nebulous frontiers created between man and beast give enough room to equate the sufferings of womenfolk among the centaurs to the closest possible reality. The Centaurs believed that “man is a horse in a state of ultimate, biped, maneless, tailless decadence” (190). If the Centaurs become more refined and less cruel they rise to the status of a horse. But when they become cruel and unrefined they degenerate into men. So Carter’s intention behind the creation of ‘in-betweenness’ is very clear.

To represent women who aspire towards liberation, once again Carter resorts to ‘in-betweenness’. Fevvers in Nights at the Circus is “a queen of ambiguities goddess of in-between states, being on the borderline of species, manifestation of Arioriph, Venus, Achamatoph, Sophia’ (Nights 81). She is a bird-woman, a “creature half of earth and half of air, virgin and whore, reconciler of fundament and firmament, reconciler of opposing states ....” (81) The oppressors of women too have been placed in a borderline between man and beast, evidently to foreground the reality that they have
grown more beastly than ever before in their attitude towards women. Zero, the poet in *The Passion of New Eve* was a 'one-eyed, one-legged monomaniac' (99) who abandoned verbalisation as a means of communication and used everyday human speech only in circumstances of absolute necessity, preferring for the most part a bestial locution of grunts and barks" (85). He loved his dogs and pigs more than his women. Carter considers him "masculinity incarnate" (104). Several other intermediate beings like the Sybil, the Ape-man and the Shaman's bear weave nebulous frontiers between the real and the unreal to tell men in a patriarchal society about some unspeakable and painful truths of life.

Carter breaks down the distinctions between the oppressor and the oppressed. She hints that the time is at hand when there will be a role-reversal phenomenon. Women who are now the oppressed might take up their position as oppressors. In *Several Perceptions*, Joseph is seen to suffer in the hands of women. He is deserted by Charlotte and wallows in misery and despair until he goes to the extreme of attempting suicide. The distinction between the oppressor and the oppressed is once again blurred in the novel, *The Passion of New Eve* where Evelyn suffers harsh treatment to the extent of castration by the Mother of Beulah. Leilah who plays the role of the oppressed in the beginning of the novel transforms herself into an oppressor of men in the latter half of the novel.
Women cannot be fully absolved of their responsibility in increasing the sufferings of other women. Adrienne Rich uses the term 'horizontal hostility' to denote women's fear and mistrust of other women. There is a destructive combination of self-contempt and scorn for members of one's own sex. Countess P. in Nights at the Circus who runs a penitentiary for women virtually imprisons women guilty of killing their husbands. Soon the women in the House of Correction come to the realisation that they have fallen into a greater snare and make attempts to free themselves. Mrs. Green, the foster mother of Jewel in Heroes and Villains always worked for the perpetuation of patriarchy. Carter describes Mrs. Green's role in the patriarchal plot thus:

Mrs. Green might also feel a certain pleasure that her wild foster-son should marry so far above his class, pleasure and revenge, perhaps. Clearly she thought that Marianne had learned a lesson and would not try to run away again for, after she had fed the girl the next morning, she left her to her own devices while she went off on her tour of inspection of the camp (Heroes and Villains 59-60).

But Mrs. Green herself tells us how she was oppressed by her husband, an old man who often beat her and demanded unnatural practices in bed (38). Thus Carter's novels provide various instances of blurring the border lines between the oppressor and the oppressed with the purpose of highlighting
even the subtlest of impediments in the way of women’s liberation.

The erasing of edges between the roles of the observer and the observed is also evident in Carter’s novels. Finn who made Melanie an object of his gaze by peeping through the hole is soon transformed into an erotic object subjected to Melanie’s gaze (*Magic Toyshop* 109). This role reversal is of great importance since feminists consider male gaze as a potent weapon of domination and control. The heroine of *Heroes and Villains* very often “moved uneasily under the absolute intensity of Jewel’s gaze” (82). But Carter at other times pictures Jewel as being the ‘object’ of Marianne’s gaze. “He was a curiously shaped, attractive stone; he was an object which drew her. She examined the holes pierced in his ears to contain earrings” (82). Marianne thus becomes both the observer and the observed. This device used by Carter unsettles the existing codes and beliefs of the patriarchal society.

‘Ambivalence’ is a term frequently used in association with postmodernism. Postmodern stresses on ambivalence especially when it speaks for women whose sense of subjectivity has been traditionally assailed and constrained. Feminism is a politics. Postmodernism is politically ambivalent, doubly coded as both complicity and critique, undermining any fixed metanarrative position. But Carter takes advantage
of postmodernism's ambivalence to create nebulous frontiers where greater possibilities of challenging patriarchy exist. This ambivalence is very often projected in man's attitude towards women. Ambivalence is the uncertainty or fluctuation caused by the inability to make a choice. It is a simultaneous desire to say or do two opposite things. In psychology it is the co-existence within an individual, of positive and negative feelings towards the same person, object or action simultaneously drawing him in opposite directions. It is the co-existence in one person's mind of opposing feelings, especially of love and hatred. Carter's use of ambivalence is probably to suggest that women are not alone in their fight against patriarchy, but there are like-minded men who having undergone similar tragic experiences, are willing to back up women in their struggle against oppression. Or it may be to point out that men by themselves are in favour of women's liberation, but they are constrained by the existing codes and beliefs in patriarchy. It is an attempt by Carter to expose the hidden corners of a man's mind. Marshall Mc Luhan says: "The hidden borders in men's minds are the great vortices of energy and power that can erupt and spiral any where" (Canada: The Border Line Care 241). During psychotic states, too, the boundaries between the mental localities implode and subsequently the consciousness is flooded with unconscious material. Hence there is an ambivalence in psychotics too with their expression of grief and laughter simultaneously.
Carter herself attributes ambivalence to one of her characters in *Wise Children*. Peregrine is the twin brother of Melchior Hazard. There is a persistent history of daughters unacknowledged by their fathers in the Hazard family. Though Saskia and Imogen were biologically daughters of Peregrine Hazard, they were considered to be the daughters of Melchior Hazard. While Melchior Hazard in his mad pursuit of fame and glory had refused to recognise his daughters both legitimate and illegitimate, Peregrine always followed a middle path. His attitude towards them was ambivalent. When on the hundredth birthday of Melchior, he made his appearance, he was seen to be wreathed in butterflies and announced that he had named his butterflies after his daughters. Carter ironically remarks, "the unmistakable language of male affection. Was it : absence made the heart grow fonder? Or shall we put it down to ambivalence, perhaps?" (*Wise Children* 207).

Morris in *Shadow Dance* was partly responsible for the scar on Ghislaine's face that made her ugly and unwanted. He was also guilty of neglecting Edna, his wife until she thought of showing her affection for Henry Glass. But Morris always felt remorse for the sufferings he had inflicted on women. Though Morris was full of compassion for Ghislaine who wished to stay in his house, he hypocritically refuses to allow Edna to take Ghislaine into his house (50-53). There is a notable difference in the attitudes of Morris and Honeybuzzard towards women. Morris is sorry about their sufferings. But
Honeybuzzard says, "They are all shadows. How can you be sorry for shadows?" (87). This makes Morris angry with Honey and thinks, "I wish I could simply walk away from him. He has no heart. He has a computer in his breast" (87). Morris wanted to be kind to women. He was undecided.

[He did not know whether he should] go and try and comfort poor Henry Glass? And go with grapes or flowers to poor Ghislaine? And go, with warnings to poor Emily who smiled with such radiance at Honeybuzzard and did not know how he would treat her in the end? And go, with his own ragged love tidied into whatever shape he could, to poor Edna? He wanted to take his pity into the world like a missionary (Shadow Dance 87-88).

This ambivalence in the attitude of Morris creates an uncertainty in the minds of the readers.

Joseph's ambivalence in his attitude towards women is much more pronounced than that of Morris. The novel Several Perceptions shows Joseph's girl friend Charlotte deserting him when he needed her most. He is plunged in despair and regrets his behaviour towards Charlotte. He was cruel to her when she was with him. He becomes a psychotic and shows an unsteady response to women and their sufferings. Though he wants to take revenge on Charlotte for deserting him, at times he feels sorry for her. After hearing the pathetic
story of Anne Blossom he feels pity for her, but he desires no involvement with her. This ambivalence is kept up by Joseph till the end of the novel. The prescriptions and restrictions of the patriarchal society disallows a man's favourable attitude towards women. He is forced to be ambivalent.

Women too evince this ambivalence seeing the sufferings of the same sex. Mrs. Green, though a woman, aids patriarchy in the barbarian society of Jewel in *Heroes and Villains*. When the drunken brothers of Jewel were on the verge of raping and even murdering Marianne on their return from hunting, Mrs. Green did nothing to prevent it:

They directed her inexorably towards the table. Mrs. Green wrung her hands and emitted small news of distress but she, too, was ambivalent, she would be distressed but also perhaps obscurely satisfied at what would certainly take place (*Heroes and Villains* 49).

Doing away with the boundaries between the civilized and the barbaric is yet another way of opening up new fields for the challenging of male hegemony. The oppression of women taking place in a seemingly barbarian and yet civilized world will serve as an eye-opener to the male-dominated societies of today which claim to be civilized and yet are barbaric in their dealings with women. No society that subjugates women, believing in baseless myths and having fanatic religious
beliefs can call themselves civilized. The nebulous frontier created between these two groups provokes an examination of conscience. Jewel, the hero of *Heroes and Villains* is a civilized barbarian. He is the cleverest and the most sophisticated of all the savages. With his face painted, he is "a perfect illustration of the breakdown of social interaction and the death of social systems" (*Heroes and Villains* 24). He is so civilized that he gives the zoological name of the snake, 'viperus berus' (28). Donally, his tutor does not want him to be fully civilized. So he maintains him in a middle state. "He wanted to maintain him in a crude state of unrefined energy" (62). Jewel’s sophistication has always been superior to his opportunities. Donally, by keeping Jewel in a half-civilized and half-barbarian state ensures the survival of his religion and society. Jewel's behaviour towards Marianne too evince both civilized and barbarian tendencies.

Donally, Jewel’s tutor is yet another character placed between the civilized and the barbaric. He might have been a Professor of Sociology once. He reads the latest books on society. He is a practical man who believes that religion is a social necessity. But he runs the society through “tortures, mutilations and displays of magic” (*Heroes and Villains* 39). He also cultivates the serpentarium and incorporates rituals of his own invention to keep the society half-barbarian. He is very meticulous about the rituals connected with marriage. Donally knew that patriarchy can best survive only in a
half-civilised or half-barbarian society. Mrs. Green too belonged to one of the fiery religious sects among the Professor communities, but later on took refuge among the barbarians. The barbarian society of Jewel is one that maintains a middle position between the professor community on one extreme and the out-people on the other. The barbaric aspect of the oppression of women is clearly understood only when it is seen as taking place in the 'other' world of the barbarians. Carter also hints that a society that oppresses woman is not fully civilized.

Nebulous frontiers are also created in space and time. The borderlines between past, present and future are broken down. So also geographic boundaries are erased. Carter wants to drive home the point that women's oppression is a pressing problem of the present, irrespective of geographic boundaries. It was not just a phenomenon of some primitive society of the distant past. The movement for the liberation of women too won't be limited by time and space. Carter is well aware of the fact that in order to correct the past and to make the future perfect, the present has to be effectively dealt with. So she breaks down the boundaries that the past and the future have with the present. This idea is expressed by Carter in her novel *Nights at the Circus* where Lizzie lectures to the escapee on time:

Tomorrow never come's which is why you're promised jam tomorrow. We live always, in the here and
now, the present. To pin your hopes upon the future is to consign those to a hypothesis, which is to say, a nothingness. Here and now is what we must contend with. Third place, how will you recognise "perfection" when you see it? You can only define the future perfect by the present imperfect, and the present, in which, inevitably, we all live, always seems imperfect to somebody (Nights 239).

In *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* too Carter speaks of time as something fluid. "Evanescence is the essence of time" (101). Even the present according to her becomes the past in no time. The peep-show proprietor lecturing on Time to Desiderio observed:

The introduction of cinematography enabled us to corral time past and thus retain it not merely in the memory – at best, a falsifying receptacle – but in the objective preservative of a roll of film. But if past, present and future are the dimensions of time, they are notoriously fluid. There is no tension in the tenses and yet they are always tremulously about to coagulate. The present is a liquid jelly which settles into a quivering, passive mass, the past, as soon as – if not sooner than – we are aware of it as the present (*Doctor Hoffman* 102).
Carter makes Doctor Hoffman break the formal rules of time and place. The place where Desiderio and Albertina meet the centaurs is called by Carter, ‘the landscape of Nebulous Time’. In the landscape of Nebulous Time they see strange creatures, plants, flowers and trees. Thus on many occasions Carter makes sustained efforts to breakdown the existing notions of time. According to Carter, time is a great restricting factor. It controls human freedom. In her opinion, Time represents patriarchy. Carter often calls it ‘Father Time’, especially in *Nights at the Circus* (29). In *The Passion of New Eve* she goes on to say that Time being a killer should be killed, for time is a man and space is a woman (53).

The plot of the novel *Heroes and Villains* is set in a vague time. It speaks of incidents that take place after the apocalypse when the world becomes neatly divided into the world of the professors and the barbarians.

Nebulous geographical boundaries too characterise the background of many of her plots. The geographical boundaries of the place termed by Carter as Beulah in *The Passion of New Eve* is vague and indistinct. It is neither a city nor a desert. It can be a state of mind. It is a “place where contrarieties exist together” (*Passion* 48). It stands for the womb. Carter says:

The womb... is a fleshly link between past and future, the physical location of an everlasting present tense that can usefully serve as a symbol
of eternity, a concept which has always presented some difficulties in visualization (Sadeian Woman 108). Woman herself is beyond the limits of space and time.

Through the nebulosity of the frontiers, Carter draws attention to the fissures and gaps existing in the structures and institutions of patriarchy. The indistinctness and in-betweenness achieved through various literary devices like intertextuality, irony and parody make Carter truly a postmodern novelist. These postmodern strategies offer Carter ways to contest the old representations of women and to challenge the hegemony of males that feminists are struggling against.
CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

It can be unequivocally stated that Angela Carter’s achievements as a feminist are clearly understood only if we look at her novels with postmodern eyes. Her novels make no sense unless they are given a postmodern reading which can extricate the challenging thoughts on the essence of womanhood that lie entangled in fantasies, dreams, myths, and parodies. Writing in a postmodern vein does not mean a lack of intention. Her centre of attention is undoubtedly women. When patriarchy dominates, women simply cannot speak out. Moreover in a male-dominated society, women vacillating between patriarchal norms and feminist perceptions are quite unsure of themselves. They cannot have a stable coherent selfhood. Yet they cannot remain out of the patriarchal set-up. Strategies offered by postmodernism can effectively provide them an opportunity to work within and yet challenge the dominant discourse. Social constraints work to produce a multiplicity of voices internalized within a woman’s being. In postmodernism the idea of plurality is encouraged and acknowledged.
To approximate various techniques termed postmodern in order to effect a change in the attitude towards women is Carter's prime concern. Her novels have challenged the established notions and definitions of women that are biased and patriarchal. It is patriarchy that has determined the kind of life that she should lead. The feminist critique of patriarchy and postmodernist critique of representation intersect most fruitfully in Carter's novels. Postmodernist theories and techniques provide feminism with an additional framework enabling it to articulate the diversity and contradictions that spring up not only with various positions but also within various positions.

Carter postulates new ways of constructing femininity, inventing an imaginary world of her own. She buries the Eve of the past and moulds a New Eve as a model for all women. Using magic realism she attempts to bring about changes in the conceptions of women. She appropriates psychoanalysis to study how a woman's psyche has been formed by the patriarchal society. And then by using various devices she erases the boundaries that separate man and woman mentally, socially, physically and politically.

The prophetic role played by Carter in her novels cannot be underestimated. She wanted to transform the world and make it a new and comfortable one for women to live in. Carter prophesies a new era for women in *Nights at the Circus*
through her heroine, Fevvers. “And once the old world has turned on its axle so that the new dawn can dawn, then, ah then! all the women will have wings, the same as I” (285). Women have been shaped in the present fashion by men in the name of bringing about an order in the world. “The harder the bargain men must strike with nature to survive themselves to keep them all in order. They’ll have churches here; and vicars too, even if the vicars have weird cassocks and perform outrageous sacraments” (Nights 281). It is history that has put the notion into man that woman is to be subjugated. Carter knew fully well that man’s ‘soul’ should be transformed and so too the woman’s, but if a complete transformation should occur, history itself must be interpreted anew. “It’s not the human soul that must be forged on the anvil of history but the anvil itself must be changed in order to change humanity” (Nights 240).

Every novel of Carter is a clarion call for the liberation of women. The Magic Toyshop points out that patriarchal power is all-pervasive and yet it can be challenged even in its dominant site and that struggle against it is feasible. The novel Love shows how expedient struggle against patriarchy is, when women are left with no option but suicide against male impersonation and loveless neglect. Shadow Dance instils a kind of regret in the male mind about all the sufferings inflicted on women and moulds women characters poised for revenge like Madame Defarge. Several Perceptions views
the sufferings of women from different angles and makes men aware of the severity of the sufferings of women when compared to their own.

_Nights at the Circus_ heralds the new age of women's liberation in which women will soar like birds out from the gilded cage of patriarchy in which they have been cruelly confined. *The Passion of the New Eve* envisages new ways of constructing femininity and new modes of making a man learn to be a perfect woman and vice versa. *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* demolishes the structures of reason and the principles of reality that discriminate between the desires of men and those of women and attempts to liberate female desire from the stranglehold of patriarchy. In *Heroes and Villains*, the age-old notion that the soldiers are heroes and barbarians and villains, or that men are heroes and women are villains is subverted and women are elevated to the role of heroine and iron-willed rulers. Lastly, *Wise Children* which focuses on the fictionality of paternity, satirises the hypothetical, disputed absent-father which is a feature of our history and demystifies the traditional patriarchal authority through the Shakespearean figure of Melchior.

To achieve this objective of heralding the liberation of women, Carter evidently makes use of unconventional devices. These postmodern strategies are the most meaningful in the given context. Postmodernism and feminism are both
concerned with breaking down received hegemonies. The very fact that postmodernism gives emphasis to subverting conventions makes it closely related to the feminist agenda of breaking down the conventions set by patriarchy. Postmodernism by definition "begins at a point beyond realism" (Graff 311). Postmodern fiction challenges the conventions of realism. Carter equips herself with magic realism to challenge the conventions of realism.

It is wrong to see postmodernist fiction as losing all desire to examine specific social conditions and particular backgrounds. Whether these be ethnic, religious, regional or psychological, they all fall within the ambit of postmodernism. In keeping with the trend in postmodern novels, Carter too subjects her men and women to a study based on psychoanalysis and creates a kind of disquiet through border challenges. The self-conscious slipping between the forms of life and those of art is something that characterises postmodernism. The documents of the past especially the myths of the old, folklores and fairy tales are found and interpreted. By doing so we come to the realization that the present is constructed and therefore it is not eternal and unchangeable. The realization of the potential for change too is exploited and exposed by postmodernism. These postmodern traits are appreciated by feminism in its struggle against patriarchy which entails the breaking down of various myths and conventions of the past, identified as purely social and cultural constructs.
Postmodernism both reflects and expresses the change in society and culture in its preoccupation with questioning received structures and concepts. The tendency of postmodernism to decanonicalize all existing codes finds fulfillment in Carter's novels. De-doxification is the main concern of both postmodernism and feminism. Postmodern textual strategies can be used to foreground doubts regarding identity that the female self experiences. The postmodern techniques of rendering the past as the present and the use of parody have clearly feminist intentions. Parody offers an option to feminists to contest the male gaze and male violence. Such and other meeting points between postmodernism and feminism are highlighted in the various chapters of this dissertation.

The chapter entitled 'The New Eve in Carter's Novels' focuses mainly on the breaking down of the cultural constructs of femininity and masculinity and opening up of new possibilities for constructing femininity according to women's own tastes and desires. It traces the possibilities of the evolution of the 'temptress Eve' or 'Ugly Eve' to the stage of womanly perfection called the 'New Eve'. The new model of women that shapes itself in Carter's imagination is termed 'New Eve'. Carter's women characters like Fevvers, Eve, Marianne and Melanie become the prototypes of New Eve. Women on their way to becoming New Eve have to undergo radical transformations both physical and mental. So the symbolic beings, symbolic transformations and symbolic transexualisms
in Carter's novels like *The Passion of New Eve* convey vital messages to women undergoing changes in the wake of the feminist movements gaining ground day by day.

By creating her own characters known for their unfemininity, Carter breaks down the monopoly of man in the construction of femininity. She erases 'femininity' as is constructed by patriarchy, from her texts and reveals her female characters as possessing masculine attributes. When she deliberately gives her biologically female characters qualities that are stereotypically male, she exposes the pretended masculinity of characters like Zero, the poet, whose maleness is only a myth. Thus in Carter's opinion, 'masculinity' too is a social and cultural construct. Even while celebrating masculinity as the accepted behavioural norm, she attracts attention to the problematic aspects of masculinity by juxtaposing weak male figures with masculine women. Walser when compared to Fevvers, Zero in comparison with Mother of Beulah, Morris placed alongside with Emily and Joseph compared to Anne Blossom reveal that masculinity is not an attribute of men alone.

When patriarchy insists on an essence of femaleness or femininity, Carter questions this femininity and makes her characters rise above the usual standards of femininity and are assigned the roles of saviours and rulers that men had monopolised hitherto. Taking advantage of the space
created by the postmodern condition which breaks down
the opposition between ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’, Carter
expresses the feminist dream of ‘wholeness’ by inventing
bisexual women. Indeterminacy in everything is a postmodern
feature. Carter’s attempt is to present woman as a bisexual
being forced to suppress her essential maleness. The postmodern
tendency too is to oppose essentialism and to challenge
the established value systems. Carter’s museum of women
monsters subverts the traditional representation of women.
So half-mythical women with hypnotic attraction and potential
destructiveness abound in Carter’s novels. Fevvers, Leilah,
Marianne, the Mother of Beulah and the prodigies of nature
in Madame Sehreck’s museum exemplify this postmodern
trend.

Carter traces the family as the unit in which women
are forced to submit themselves to male oppression. Her
novels give a death-blow to the concepts of an all-powerful
father and the subjugating husbands by proving that these
are not natural but only cultural concepts. It is a postmodern
peculiarity to subvert the conventions and ideologies of the
dominant cultural and social forces. The problematic position
of the female protagonist trapped in the grasp of patriarchal
power in the family unit, losing her identity and the efforts
she makes to struggle free in order to reconstruct her femininity
is a theme closely drawn by Carter. ‘Single women’ and
‘hatched-women’ are introduced to detach women from conjugal
and paternal relationships. Strong patriarchies under Uncle Philip, Zero and Melchior crumble down in the face of opposition. 'Absent-fathers', 'absent-husbands' and 'disputed-paternity' have become the order of the day as a clear proof that such dominating father-figures and husband-figures are not indispensable and that the prospects of disposing of these father-figures from the family and the society have increased.

'Desire' which is a vital force behind the construction of femininity is problematized. Carter asserts that the construction of femininity will become perfect only when female desire too can find expression. Marriage occasions the sacrifice of the identity of women. The traditional belief that only marriage can give woman an identity is de-doxified and proved a fallacy. Through a change of positions as in the case of Tristessa and Eve who are both bride and bridegroom Carter reminds us that women can very well be granted the man's position in the wedlock. Female friendships and women's communities too are accorded positive representations as sites of the development of femininity, deviating from the patriarchal paradigm. Thus feminist issues of vital importance addressed by the novels of Carter are brought to light in the wake of a postmodern reading.

The third chapter points out that these feminist lines of thought calls for new ways of expression. The extensive use of fantasy in order to express the realities of the life
of a woman clearly turns Carter's novels anti-realist. Postmodernism suggests a state of limbo or a moment of poise between worlds. Magic realism which is an intermingling of fantasy and realism provides Carter with opportunities for flights from realism into the unfamiliar and strange worlds and allows her to juxtapose the absurd and the fantastic with the real and the scientific. She uses 'secondary world fantasy' or 'other-world fantasy' as an estrangement technique to position the reader in such a way that he can examine his society from a different, other world perspective. Since Carter as a feminist has her own political ends, she inscribes fantasies of power.

It is pointed out, first of all, that some of the very titles given to Carter's novels suggest a position between the magical and the real. The titles like The Magic Toyshop, Shadow Dance, Nights at the Circus and The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman are replete with suggestions of the blending of the magical and the real. Carter's return to fantasy which challenges and even threatens and struggles to present women in new roles and new surroundings is indeed a part of the canon of postmodernist fiction. Fantasy has the power to accord nonsense its sense and impossibility its reality. Almost all her women characters freely indulge in fantasies which are the offshoot of their grim realities of life and their intense desire to extricate themselves from them. Fantasies emphasise that a woman repressed by patriarchal
society will naturally act subconsciously to bring about freedom. Fantasy thus used has a reactionary and subversive effect. Carter's novels like *Heroes and Villains*, *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* and *The Passion of New Eve* have plots woven out of fantasies. Reality is contravened by fantasy with the intention of subverting. It does not reestablish reality.

The induction of fabulous creatures like the bird woman, Sybil, Shaman's bear, Fanny Four Eyes, Wiltshire Wonder, Ape-man and the centaurs among ordinary men and women of flesh and blood is an excellent means of projecting women's imaginations and feminist viewpoints. The world of circus and fairground is a conducive background for the play of fancy. A deliberate destruction of the travelling fair and the circus at the end to return to reality is a special feature of Carter's magic realism. A travelling theatrical troupe is used to focus on the fictionality of paternity. Magic toyshops and puppet-shows present her most prominent image of woman—the image of the puppet. Mannequins, like puppets are symbols of the degradation of women. Carter further mystifies her readers with her arcane erudition. The primitive customs and beliefs prevalent in half-primitive and superstitious societies expose the fact that the barbarian religions and rituals are just masks to cover the face of patriarchy. Tattooing instills a magical effect and at the same time exposes the real. Postmodernist literature often resorts to rebarbarization.
Dreams and reveries that dissolve the slender margin between the real and the unreal reveal the political aspirations of the feminists. Carter makes her men realise their inhumanity to women through frightening dreams arising out of guilt. Dreams are windows opening to the real. They occasion a troubled introspection as a preparation of the New Man to be a fitting mate for the New Woman or the New Eve. The Gothic elements in Carter's novels do reveal the grossness of atrocities perpetrated on women in a patriarchal society. The Gothic elements are truly postmodern and frequently addresses the dark aspects of sexuality and hence the right weapon in the hands of a feminist.

The role played by myths in colonizing the minds of women is not overlooked by Carter. Being aware of the fact that they have been deliberately promoted by the phallocratic culture, she considers all the mythic versions of women as consolatory nonsense and thwarts these notions by framing myths of her own. The demonic women in Carter's novels further enhance the effect of magic realism and provide space for challenging existing gender relations and sexual power politics. They are the demonic projections of a woman's urge for revenge and subversions of all the established notions of woman as a loving and docile mother and wife. Women as militants struggling for political power is an unpalatable social reality deftly brought to the notice of men by Carter's novels.
The fourth chapter of this dissertation is fully devoted to the analysis of the psychological aspects touched upon by Carter while discussing the oppression of women and their attempts to liberate themselves. Both postmodernism and psychoanalysis are interested in the undoing of binary oppositions. Psychoanalysis explains that femininity is internalized by women. Women are psychically induced into femininity by a patriarchal culture according to psychoanalysis. Carter's novels that contain a mixture of bisexuality, lesbianism, dreams, fantasies, rape, incest, dumbness, madness, claustrophobia, narcissism and male gaze cannot be fully detached from psychoanalysis that explores this terrain.

First of all, the question of sexual differences which is of paramount importance to psychoanalysis is dealt with in a postmodern way in her novels. She tries to minimize sexual differences and blur the boundaries between masculinity and femininity. Patriarchal society represses the masculine traits of women and specifies that a woman to be called a woman must not have anything 'masculine' about her. To minimise sexual differences Carter portrays female characters with masculine traits. Psychoanalysis accepts that women do not slip into their roles painlessly. Carter's picturing of Albertina proves that it is degrading to be treated as a woman stripped of all her masculinity. Practising a kind of postmodern subversion, Carter makes her women cruel, though cruelty is generally considered a masculine trait. To show that woman's task of acquiring femininity is the
greatest psychic difficulty, Carter performs psycho-surgery on a man to change him into a woman.

Bisexuality is also introduced as a challenge to the essentially feminine nature attributed to women. The castration effected on Evelyn to turn him into Eve proves that femininity is thrust on women through a castration of her maleness by the society. Carter's phallic women too pose a challenge to the old concept of femininity. Sexual indeterminacy which has been raised to the level of a theory in psychoanalysis is exploited by Carter to introduce hermaphrodites and bisexual beings.

Besides minimising sexual difference, Carter counters the tyranny of patriarchy that gives undue importance to male desire by foregrounding the energy contained in female desire. Desire is the central concern of psychoanalysis. As a result of the little boy's internalization of the father, his desire becomes always associated with the subjugation of women. This influence and dominance of male sexual desire is very often expressed through the male gaze with a role reversal. Woman becomes the observer and man the observed. Women are driven to looking at themselves in the mirror by force of the male gaze. Since mirrors offer women the possibility of making themselves perfect strangers to satisfy male desires, Carter is for breaking down such mirrors.
The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman is a treatise on the importance and power of desire. Male desire gradually becomes man's own master and blinds him to the desires of women as in the case of the Count. Very often female desire is not allowed to assert itself. Carter comes to the rescue of women who are fed up with the male gaze and the oppression that goes with it, by suggesting that women can seek their own ways to satisfy their desire and get access to pleasure or female jouissance. It is a new era or the lesbian area of sexual involvement between women which feminists have welcomed as a vital tool of feminist resistance to patriarchy. Psychoanalytic accounts do not see a girl's pathway to heterosexuality as either straightforward or inevitable. She can as well be homosexual. Lesbianism as shown by Carter in Nights at the Circus can go beyond the mere satisfaction of feminine desire to a political struggle against the male gaze and male domination. Heterosexuality is a man-made cultural construct.

The adult female psyche expresses itself through dreams and fantasies which are reflections of the unfulfilled and unsatisfied expectations of women. Dreams create new models of reality. There is a pattern in the dreams and fantasies of the characters delineated by Carter. Carter's introduction of dreams, fantasies, fairy-tales, Utopian lesbian communities, criticism of male gaze and male desire have been necessitated by the increasing rate of male violence in patriarchal society.
Violence has always been the method by which men demonstrate their superiority. Male violence against women often takes place in privacy and takes the form of rape. The norm of masculinity is phallic aggression. Carter says that rape and violence are caused by man's feeling of some kind of social and political insecurity. Hence fear is the cause of violence. The male chauvinistic cliche that female pleasure is dependent on submission and victimisation is challenged and as if in revenge men are raped by women.

Dumbness, madness and lameness which are often treated as womanish features are not everlasting in Carter's novels. They are only temporary phenomena brought about by male oppression. Carter's women are able to overcome these debilitating weaknesses and become stronger than ordinary women. Madness is created in women by a feeling of being alienated and dispossessed. Male hypocrisy, impersonation and callous infidelity lead women to the brink of suicide. Some women succeed in resisting the tyranny of men while certain others like Annabel succumb to it. The increasing number of unfeeling, impersonating men moulded by patriarchal culture has created a steep rise in the casualty rate among women.

The psychology of women oppressors is also studied by Carter through her protagonists like Lee, Morris and Joseph. They are found to be psychotics. In them psychosis is engendered from an acute sense of guilt. Focus on male
psychology is also a technique used by Carter to impress upon men the depth and intensity of the mental agony and derangement created in women by male oppression.

The claustrophobic intensity faced by women has prompted them to go in search of new pastures where there is ample space and freedom for their emotional, mental and social development. Carter's women show an intense aversion to closed places. Since families are disintegrating and the kinship rules inscribed on the unconscious psyche of women are challenged, the law of the father is no longer considered inescapable. Therefore a struggle against patriarchy has become feasible and imminent. The father in the family is dismissed and the ties that exist in the family are nullified by Carter as part of her postmodern project. Thus Carter depends much on psychoanalysis to let her readers know that the struggle against patriarchy that is round the corner is necessitated by the depressing mental condition of women.

The chapter on 'Nebulous Frontiers' discusses the problem of boundaries which is one of the most important features of postmodernism. Postmodernism concentrates much on the nexus of boundaries that traverse each other. Such blurring of boundaries help in creating a space from which realism, colonialism and patriarchy can be questioned effectively. The 'inbetweenness' that is effected by the blurring of boundaries is typical of postmodernism. Seeming opposites are mixed to present something inevitably ideological.
Intertextuality, which is the weaving of literary texts out of other literary texts, erases all boundaries between them. Carter skilfully uses it to analyse femininity and female subordination as cultural constructs. Her novels like *The Magic Toyshop*, *Nights at the Circus*, *The Passion of New Eve*, *Shadow Dance* and *Wise Children* are heavily overcoded and call upon a number of intertextual frames. Parody is a typical postmodern paradoxical form that blurs the borders between the serious and the comic leaving the reader free to arrive at a refined resolution of the crisis.

Parody denaturalizes traditional representations. Parodic echoes of the creation of Eve, the Christian prayer 'Our Father' and of several Shakespearean plays abound in Carter's novels. The doctrines and services of the church are also parodied. Irony legitimizes culture even as it subverts it. But the edges between this legitimizing and subverting are made nebulous or indistinct and the reader is forced to choose what is best. Institutions like marriage and the myth of the Fall of Man are treated ironically by Carter. Her deliberate ironic position creates nebulous frontiers between the 'expressed' and the 'expected'.

Magic realism too blurs boundaries between realism and fantasy and tricks the readers into confronting the challenges of patriarchy. Resistance to final closure is yet another postmodern narrative technique that creates nebulous frontiers. The uncertainties
left behind by novels like *Nights at the Circus*, *The Magic Toyshop* and *Love* open up new possibilities. The blurring of sexual differences between man and woman goes a long way to erase gender distinctions.

Creation of nebulous frontiers between man and beast by presenting fabulous creatures like the centaurs, talking pigs and intelligent apes makes it possible to speak out the unspeakable and the painful truths of life. The perpetuation of patriarchy is threatened by the destruction of distinctions between the oppressor and the oppressed. Ambivalence in the attitude of men towards women and that of women towards other women in Carter's novels explore the hidden corners of human mind. It discloses the secret that some men are favourable to women's liberation whereas some women are not. Doing away with the boundaries between the civilized and the barbaric Carter shows that the oppression of women is a barbaric tendency in a civilized society. Nebulous frontiers are also created in space and time by breaking down the boundaries between the past, present and future and by erasing geographical boundaries to make the readers realise that women's oppression is a problem of the here and now and not of the remote past and hence the struggle is not to be postponed for the distant future.

The form of an ideal woman as visualized by the feminists is deducible from the novels of Angela Carter. Since this
form of an ideal woman is against all conventions, Carter is compelled to resort to strange devices that disrupt settled notions of representation. In postmodernism there is nothing that is 'natural' or 'logical'. These are human constructs tied up with some kind of ideology. The ideal woman that Carter visualizes is termed the 'New Eve'.

Carter is indeed radical in her conception of the New Eve. The New Eve is to enjoy unlimited freedom. She would prefer a single life or a lesbian relationship to a married heterosexual life. Man should be mentally decolonized and made a fitting mate for the New Eve. No patriarchal units of domination like family should restrain her freedom. Fathers and husbands are misnomers in her world. She would be masculine in every respect and rise to destroy the law of the father and everything that represents patriarchy. She should be free of all forms of male violence. Marriage for her will be simply prostitution to one man instead of many. So she would be averse to marriage and religious institutions that perpetuate patriarchy. She would prefer men with a redefined masculinity. A man with redefined masculinity will have no aspirations to dominate over women.

Thus Carter's New Eve is a masculine woman capable of soaring high on the wings of freedom; fully independent of men, forming and having relationship with men only for pleasure; not governed by male desires but free to be lesbian
instead of being compulsorily heterosexual. She will abide in a world where there are neither husbands nor fathers. She will establish an iron-rule of women and sit in judgement and mete out punishment to the oppressors of women.

There are several unexplored areas that still demand attention in Carter's novels. She is a person who has understood fully not only women but also men. A similar reading to explore the realities faced by men might reveal much, especially that they are just a cog in a wheel that turns interminably on - the wheel of patriarchy. The swarming fantasies, dreams and fairy tales in her short stories exposed to a postmodern reading might speak volumes for the volcanoes of female minds throbbing and waiting for an eruption.

Angela Carter's place in English literature is not going to remain undecided. It will be made sure and secure among the classics only if her novels are understood not as senseless images rummaged into books but as a marvellously concentrated and packed lexicon of the vicissitudes through a proper reading of it. Her unstinting loyalty and broad commitment to feminism can be judiciously evaluated and sensibly appreciated only if her novels can lead us into the inner caverns of her mind. A postmodern reading of Carter's novels, applying psychoanalysis and understanding the silences and gaps in the nebulous frontiers created by the various techniques used by her will divulge the secrets of the New Eve figuring
in the meaningful pattern of fantasies, dreams and myths as the symbol of women's liberation. By inculcating in women a consciousness of her own power and by making her aware of the possibilities of a change and the means to it, she seeks to place her novels as speed breakers in the path of patriarchy's mad rush towards the Apocalypse.