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FEMINISTIC APPROACH TOWARDS ANGELA CARTER'S THE TIGER'S BRIDE: TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract:

Women issues and their predicaments have always been a centre of attention for most of the researchers in developing and developed countries. These issues and concerns for women have constantly been raised by many writers and critics in the field of literature. This article aims at conducting a textual analysis through feministic approach on one of the most popular novelist Angela Carter's novel The Tiger's Bride. This article deals with the women issues as highlighted by Angela in her masterpiece and how she raised her concern by connecting its work with the current scenario of the society. In order to conduct this study, the researcher has used textual analysis approach that helped him to understand the feministic view of the novelist.

Introduction:

Angela Carter was one of the most creative English novelists of the twentieth century, when feminism was given a high priority in literature. Carter always tried to bring the new and modernized women to the frame. Her novels are about the encounter of a woman towards the biases of the society towards men. This work provides several pieces of evidence from The Tiger's Bride to prove her feminist attitude. The feminist writers are always prone towards literary criticism. The feminist theory and feminist principles are vital and essential elements of their work (Suleman & Mohamed, 2019; Suleman, Mohamed & Ahmmed, 2020; Suleman & Rahman, 2020). Carter celebrated the inception of an era in fiction that presents the liberation of woman. The major intention of her work was to empower the paradigm of the females. She

contributed twenty fictions in this context that dealt with the themes of moral, social and economic problems affecting women. Most of the times she presents an interaction among male and females to elaborate the feminist concerns and the conflict of interests. Almost all of her work contains the same essence. *The Tiger's Bride* presents the personal contradictions of women between her abilities and way they have been used and dealt. The author implicitly put a great stress on womanhood and strives to snatch her status from the society. The protagonist of *The Tiger's Bride* is a helpless woman who is sold like some inanimate thing to a beast. Through the character of this Russian woman, Carter intends to augment self-awareness among women. She hates the dominant men and their profound desire to maintain the status quo and authority on them. This tension is the binding force throughout the story that inter-relates the incidents and characters with each other. The paper intends to argue that *The Tiger's Bride* by Angela Carter is a feminist story that presents the common objectives of woman's pursuit of quality, freedom and self-expression in the community dominated by men.

Objectification:

Objectification is probably the most significant and the central theme of *The Tiger's Bride*. The wicked and drinking father of the heroine loses her in a card game to a beast. Here the heroine is presented as something that can be used for barter trading. The woman had no authority for refusal. She could not help abiding her father. A woman loves to be called as 'diamond', 'treasure' or a 'pearl'. She blushes when loved by a man in that way, but these words are obviously used for a woman in a different way. Carter has shown how a woman is actually used exactly like some inanimate precious jewel (Makinen, 1992). The complementary word served to objectify the woman. She is merely an ornamental thing that can be leveraged for the pleasure of the owner. Her hate for objectification is seen twice when she rejects the earring with the pearl presented to her by the beast.

Woman's Comparison to the animals:

According to the Christian beliefs, none of the things possess the soul except the human and animals, stones, trees or anything like that do not have one. The beast in the story is not human hence not possessing a soul. He was pursuing the one like him. The reason he loved the heroine is because of the fact that men see women as soulless as animals. Men always considered her as an item of having no more than the physical worth. The heroine was reluctant to accept the beast because she didn't know that he was also soulless like her (Bryant, 1989). Rather longing to have a soul she proffered to live in the castle and loved the valet and his horses. Carter expresses this idea through the words of her protagonists saying, "all the best religions in the world state categorically that neither beasts nor women were equipped with the flimsy". She defames them calling 'flimsy' and 'insubstantial'.

Denial of being a soubrette:

The comparison of heroine to the animal is further elaborated by likening her to the soubrette. Soubrette powders the cheeks of heroin and they looked identical. Observing the job of the clockwork girl, heroine thinks "had I not been allotted only the same kind of imitative life amongst men that the doll-maker had given her?" (Carter, 1989, p. 151). A soubrette possesses the jejunity that represents the woman in the male-dominated society. A soubrette works entire day like some donkey and sleeps at night. She performs the tasks of a maid and has no time to take care of them. There are always devoted to other and serve as a protocol for comforting

others. This icon no doubt is a social conception of femininity. The climax of the story is actually the denial of female stereotypes crafted by the society. The heroine sent the same woman to her father as her replacement. This is where the pursuit of freedom was ended. The life back there in the society was intended to weaken her character and keeps her from utilizing her potential towards effective things. The heroine realized that no matter what she does to entertain the men, they will always treat her like the soubrette. Moreover, her worth was no more than some imitation of a man or a subhuman.

The beast's disguise:

On the other hand, the beast also realizes the same fact that the heroine does. He could walk into the society without wearing the mask of the man. In that case, he would not have been taken seriously. He preferred to be human and disguise like a man, not a woman. Otherwise, he would have been an exile like Frankenstein's monster. But he is sensitive as the heroine. He sheds tears for her and loves even without the soul. He knew that the woman was exactly like him. He knew that she is also a beast like her disguised within human skin.

Recognizing the self:

The beast and the women who both were tired of pretended to be what they actually were had to accept the animal nature within them. Both of them decided to be free of the human world. They were now intended to build their own identity and social values. The surprising ending conveys the message that the women have to break their inner fragile nature and stop being a doll-like social recognition (Duncker, 1984). Moreover, they have to recognize the strongest part of them. Back there in the society, the things were not working out the way they thought they would. The heroine in *The Tiger's Bride* learned to live with desire and the ugliness inside. Carter censured the conventional mindset and presented the fact that it is that women are weak; they are the men who force them to be. The heroine had been living for many years with the tiger skin underneath and she never knew it. The beauty and the beast are equalized in this way. The perception could not change reality. A society objectifying a woman can never make her actually an inanimate object.

Sex and Birth:

The protagonist was just entered in the stage of adulthood and the idea of being naked and sharing a bed with a beast shudder her. The innocence of the beauty is reflected in these incidents. The rose tainted with blood she left for her father is the metaphor for her virginity will soon vanish. The reason beast wanted her to be naked was to work out the tigers out of her. The sex and lust worked as a catalyst for transforming her into the tiger. Carter could have used any other animal to represent the soullessness of the protagonist, but she used a tiger. The tiger is the metaphor of courage (Fowl, 1991). The heroine refers the beast as the clawed magus, a sorcerer of ancient times who had supernatural power to transform anything. The voyeurism partly plays a part in the plot and it doesn't seem to be the central themes of the story. A reader feels the demand of the beast to be an act of voyeurism but thinking about a beast shedding tears forces the writer to look the scenario in a different way. Carter gradually uplifted the suspense in the end that it was not about the sex but the freedom and courage that beast wanted to grant her. And "stripping off [her] own under-pelt", the heroine observed the combination of the acts of birth and sex. The heroine is reborn with the "nascent patina of shining hair". It is the collaborative act of creation where the idea of sex is not the major objective. In this final scene,

Carter actually presenting the fact that recognizing oneself is a painful act. The woman is giving the birth to herself which is always painful so that she could have a relief and the live in the liberation after being reborn.

Conclusion:

A woman loved to be compared to a precious jewel but never wants to be sold like one as in the story. The objectification of a woman lasts till the protagonists get to know about the reality of the beast. The heroine is compared to the animal without a soul which is the way society expects the women to be like. The heroine denied being a soubrette and sent the clockwork girl to her father as her replacement. The beast preferred to be human but not the woman because he also knew that the society was dominated by men. Carter expressed that there was a tigress inside the woman that represents her courage and potential. Moreover, the final scene of her rebirth implicitly conveys that the women have to go through the pain to work out their inner self. The entire story was based on the reconstruction of a woman and the criticism of the society. Thus, we conclude that *The Tiger's Bride* by Angela Carter is a feminist story that presents the common objectives of woman's pursuit of quality, freedom and self-expression in the community controlled by men.

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