

**Angela Carter
Estranging Feminism?**

**Conference organised by CELEC research centre
University of Saint-Etienne – France**

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Keynote speakers Paulina PALMER Aidan DAY

Angela Carter is no wise child in British literature. Her handling of femininity and the challenging and potentially disturbing relationship her texts have with violence contributed to make of Carter an extravagant figure in the field of women's studies. Besides, her literary and ideological impropriety unsettled readers and estranged her from some feminist critics.

The conference will explore the way in which Angela Carter was indeed a pioneering figure in gender studies and, however provocative and disorientating her writing might have been, she can be said to have anticipated a queer approach to writing and reading which challenges all gender and sexual essentialism.

The following points may serve as guidelines to explore the topic of the conference but are not restrictive. An approach that gives pride of place to textual analysis will be favoured.

- Norms and Boundaries

What sorts of norms and boundaries does Carter cross? Is Carter's transgressive endeavour conducive and/or necessary to her feminism?

- "Queer Carter"

Carter's texts address gender as a cultural and discursive construction — how is gender constructed and performed? If gender raises the question of a subjective position that is fundamentally unstable and undetermined, in what way does her fiction create figures that foreground this "gender trouble"?

- The Relationship between the Sexes

If Carter's texts supposedly challenge representations of femininity and masculinity, what gendered politics emerges from the relation between the sexes? What roles do sexual violence and *jouissance* play in the representation of this relation?

- Theory, Fiction and Style

Can Carter's writing practice of essays be in any way related to the style of her fiction? To what extent do her essays and her fiction inform each other in terms of style? Is a cross-reading of sorts constructed through fictional and theoretical (Beauvoir, Barthes, Lacan) intertextuality?

- Reading Carter

The extravagance and the provocative quality of Carter's texts challenge conventional feminist readings. In what way do her texts unsettle such reading? How is reading undone? Do Carter's texts demand a queering of reading?

Contact

beatrice.bijon@univ-st-etienne / beatrice.bijon@wanadoo.fr