



folk/ed. 2021; 27(2) 106 Ek  
DOI: 10.22559/folklor.1410

*Araştırma makalesi/Research article*

# **Marianne's Body Politics in Angela Carter's Heroes and Villains \***

Angela Carter'in Heroes and Villains Adlı Eserinde  
Marianne'nin Beden Politikası

**Çelik Ekmekçi\*\***

## **Abstract**

Body politics is seen as a mechanism that imposes male-dominated norms upon the female body which is thus expected to be regulated according to the expectations of societies. Throughout history, the female body has been seen as a commodity and the theoretical premise of body politics is created based on how the female body is categorised by patriarchy. According to patriarchal ideology, women's bodies are considered to be meaningless and secondary substrata whose values are ignored. However, feminism scrutinises women's bodies from a literary viewpoint and it conceptualises and also offers alternatives for recreating various women's identities by analysing the females.

Geliş Tarihi (Received):26.09.2020 - Kabul Tarihi (accepted) 22.05.2021

\* I hereby declare that this paper has been extracted from the dissertation of mine entitled: "Body Politics in Angela Carter's Works" and it includes the literary and theoretical analyses scrutinised within the scope of my doctoral study.

\*\*Dr. Öğr. Üyesi. Bartın Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı. celikekmekci@bartin.edu.tr. ORCID 0000-0002-7123-2621

In this respect, there is a different attitude toward the historical and hypothetical explications of female body politics in Angela Carter's works, and especially in *Heroes and Villains*. Most of Carter's female heroines abuse and provoke male bodies. Thus, these female characters reflect abused and distorted forms of male bodies. Therefore, in *Heroes and Villains*, the female body, regarded as the power of femininity, is used as a weapon against patriarchy. In addition to the expression of theoretical and critical views of Carter, this paper analyses Carter's *Heroes and Villains* in terms of the protagonist's (Marianne) conduct which is in contrast with the patriarchal view on body politics. In this study, the protagonist's rejection of patriarchal norms by using her body as an apparatus for claiming power, and her body politics for 'survival' in the male-oriented world is also examined.

**Keywords:** *body politics, the female body, the power of femininity, Angela Carter, Heroes and Villains*

## Öz

Beden politikası, toplumların beklentilerine göre doğal olarak düzenlenmesi beklenen kadın bedeni üzerindeki ataerkil kaideleri benimseten bir mekanizma olarak görülmektedir. Tarih boyunca, kadın bedeni bir araç olarak görülmüş olup beden politikasının kuramsal dayanağı, kadın bedeninin ataerkil ideoloji tarafından düzenlenmesine dayalı olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Ataerkil ideolojiye göre, kadınların bedenleri, değeri olmayan değersiz, ikincil bir zemin olarak görülmektedir. Fakat feminizm, kadınların bedenlerini edebi açıdan inceler ve kavramsallaştırır ayrıca kadınları inceleyerek çeşitli kadın kimliklerini yeniden yaratır ve alternatifler üretir. Bu bağlamda, Angela Carter'ın eserlerinde özellikle de *Heroes and Villains*'da kadın bedeni politikasının tarihsel ve varsayımsal açıklaması üzerine farklı bir tutum vardır.

Carter'ın birçok kadın kahramanları erkek bedenlerini provoke edip onları istismar eder. Böylece bu kadın karakterler, erkek bedenlerinin istismar edilmiş ve çarpıtılmış hallerini yansıtır. Böylece, *Heroes and Villains*'da kadın bedeni, kadınlığın gücü olarak görülmekte olup ataerkilliğe karşı bir silah olarak kullanılmaktadır. Bu çalışma, Carter'ın kuramsal ve eleştirel düşüncelerine ilaveten, Carter'ın *Heroes and Villains* adlı eserindeki ana karakter Marianne'in ataerkil düşüncenin beden politikası üzerindeki görüşlerine zıt olan tutumunu incelemektedir. Çalışmada ayrıca, ana karakterin bedenini güç elde etmede bir araç olarak kullanarak ve erkek egemen dünyada hayatta kalmak için beden politikasından faydalanarak ataerkil kaideleri reddetmesi incelenmektedir.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** *beden politikası, kadın bedeni, kadınlığın gücü, Angela Carter, Heroes and Villains*

## **Introduction to patriarchy and female body politics**

In her *Theorizing Patriarchy* (1990), Sylvia Walby defines patriarchy: “as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women” (1990: 20). The definition of the term is significant since it basically conveys the impression that men are in superior roles; whereas women are in inferior ones in the system of social relations. As Friedrich Engels puts it in his *The Origin of The Family, Private, Property and The State* (1884): “in the beginning of the society woman was the slave of man” (2020: 46). Engels states that women’s inferior social conditions make them victimised especially when the system of division of sex and labour is created. This Marxist view explains women’s subordination as a social system. In this regard, it can be said that in patriarchy, men hold supreme power which controls women in society.

Throughout history, patriarchy as a system of beliefs and relationships values the supremacy of men by having absolute authority over women. The problematic reasons behind women lie in history because as Gerda Lerner contends in her *The Creation of Patriarchy* (1986), women are seen as “half and sometimes more than half of humankind [...]” (1986: 4). Therefore, women are classified as marginals and they are kept out of the system of history because they are excluded and discriminated against. However, no men are barred from history “because of their sexes, yet all women are [...]” (Lerner, 1986: 4). This shows that women’s contributions to history are prohibited because women are placed into segregate positions in which they are seen as a minority. In other words, it also means that it is the historic subjugation of the female sex.

According to Engels, within this defeat of women in history, “the men seized the reins also in the house, the women were stripped of their dignity, enslaved, tools of men’s lust and mere machines for the generation of children” (2020: 54). Thus, it is the domestication of patriarchal policies which make the women domestic captives. This is also considered to be the birth of the patriarchal family model in which women’s roles are defined as “domestic slaves by the supremacy of men” (Engels, 2020: 54). Women are trapped in the house in this patriarchal family model because, “the monogamous family” (Engels, 2020: 58) exists to perform the dictations of patriarchy. According to Engels, the antagonism between men and women appears in monogamy since “women become the servants of the house and they are excluded from participation in social production” (2020: 70). This social oppression in patriarchal family model is also considered to be “domestic slavery of women” (2020: 70). Accordingly, women, as domestic slaves, are usurped and exploited both socially and sexually in this patriarchal system.

Based on this framework, “patriarchal relations in sexuality” appears as one of the structures of patriarchy (Walby, 1990: 20), which contain patriarchal practices that

interfere with women's body politics. Therefore, patriarchy and particularly patriarchal norms have interfered the female body so that women cannot have control over their bodies. Men for centuries have created politics and policies over women's bodies, whose dynamics are also defined by men. However, women are excluded from the privileges of body politics which are only granted to men and they are alienated since male-oriented policies and politics are implemented on women's bodies. Therefore, to control their own bodies, women recreate politics of their own. As Susan R. Suleiman summarises the necessity of creating body politics for women in her article titled (Re) writing the Body, the Politics and Poetics of Female Eroticism (1985):

“Women, who for centuries had been the objects of male theorizing, male desires, male fears and male representations, had to discover and reappropriate themselves as subjects; the obvious place to begin was the silent place to which they had been assigned again and again, that dark continent which had ever provoked assault and puzzlement. The call went out to invent both a new poetics and a new politics, based on women's reclaiming what had always been theirs but had been usurped from them: control over their bodies and a voice with which to speak about it” (Suleiman, 1985: 43).

What is significant to know is female body politics is a reaction to male body politics on the female body because there is a discrepancy that differs the two politics from one another. On the one hand, there is a power-structured relationship between man and woman for patriarchy. On the other hand, what makes a woman react is the very fact that she does not want to be seen as a sole 'sexless object.' On the contrary, she wants to find alternatives for her own body politics. It can be deduced that 'power' has a role in determining the political relations between men and women. As Kate Millett asserts in her *Sexual Politics* (1969), the politics: “shall refer to power-structured relationships, arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled by another [...] although an ideal politics might simply be conceived of as the arrangement of human life on agreeable and rational principles [...]” (2000: 23-24). Thusly, a common feminist view is expressed as a reaction to these power relations, which are based on the authority of power held by patriarchy. Patriarchy's authoritative dicta are used against women; whereas, men make use of the authority and domination provided by patriarchy.

According to Millett, “[i]f one takes patriarchal government to be the institution whereby that half of the populace which is female is controlled by that half which is male, the principles of patriarchy appear: [...] male shall dominate female [...]” (2000: 25). Millett underpins that privileges, having been given to men by patriarchy, create exceptions and contradictions putting women out of the system. Therefore, power and power relations are not fairly distributed among the sexes, which results in patriarchy's corruption in female body politics. As a result, women react and want to create their own body politics whose mechanisms and characteristics are defined and united since body politics is associated with women's bodies regardless

of differences. As Debra Walker King writes in *Body Politics and The Fictional Double* (2000), body politics “brings [...] gendered, sexualized and racialized bodies together in an attempt to demonstrate how the boundaries of difference and the limits of universality converge upon women’s bodies” (2000: viii). Therefore, the female body politics contains a system of beliefs and ideas for female empowerment for women to gain their autonomous yet perverse and subversive selves to get away from patriarchy and its rigid dicta which dehumanise women by defining and shaping their roles in a gendered patriarchal society. It is also asserted that body politics enables women to explore their real essences so that women resist the phallogocentric and the phallogocentric thoughts. To sum up, body politics performs the function of demythologising and deconstructing the existing order of things, traditional beliefs, rituals and established roles defined by patriarchy. In most cases, the relationships between genders, regardless of discriminative contents, are reflected through the representations of body politics. So, *Heroes and Villains* deconstructs the ideological construction of pre-established gender roles through autonomous, but perverted subjects. In *Heroes and Villains*, it is also possible to trace the subversion of ideological paradigms and established orders through the autonomous female characterisation of Marianne who resists and reinforces patriarchal, androcentric norms.

### **A critique of *Heroes and Villains***

Angela Carter’s *Heroes and Villains* (1969) is known as one of the books of the ‘Bristol Trilogy’ which is at the same time, her fourth novel. Carter’s *Heroes and Villains* is considered to be a gothic romance as a genre in which the main character, Marianne’s self-journey is expressed. As Linden Peach states in his *Modern Novelists: Angela Carter* (1998): “*Heroes and Villains* is a futuristic, post-cataclysmic fantasy in which a young girl, Marianne, leaves the security of what remains of established society to join a nomadic tribe of so-called ‘Barbarians’ who exist outside” (1998: 71-72). The novel starts with Marianne’s conscious attempt to escape from her home to the unknown land in which nomadic Barbarians live. In a similar vein, Merja Makinen, in her *Feminist Popular Fiction* (2001) writes that “Angela Carter’s *Heroes and Villains* explored a young girl’s maturing within a post-apocalyptic world” (2001: 150). Thus, *Heroes and Villains* can also be called a picaresque novel in which the protagonist, Marianne, wanders like a picaro/picara throughout her adventurous quest to find her identity. Hence, *Heroes and Villains* is a “post-apocalyptic form of writing – the wandering serial formula of picaresque narrative” (Peach, 1998: 72). Carter uses a variety of motifs and sources in producing *Heroes and Villains*. “It also draws on motifs from European Romance fiction in it, for example, the use of wilderness and the demon lover. There are also clear fairy tale elements” (Peach, 1998: 72). In *Heroes and Villains*, Marianne’s escaping with ‘Barbarians’ into debts of the forest with her brother’s killer are those mentioned motifs and similarly, fairy tale elements are also included. As Peach puts it:

“Zipes (1988), drawing on Freud’s theory of the uncanny, suggests that fairy stories have remained popular because they are concerned with the quest for an idealised notion of home which has been suppressed in the adult consciousness. In discussing the liberating power of feminist fairy tales, Zipes suggests that they present us with a means by which the idealised home may be reclaimed. [...] Zipes’ argument is particularly relevant to Carter’s fiction where a number of characters are motivated by a desire to release the ideal of home” (Peach, 1998: 78-79).

‘The notion of ideal home’ is related to a traumatic situation known as ‘the uncanny,’ which is a Freudian psychoanalytic concept. As Freud writes in *The Uncanny* (1919): “*Unheimlich* is clearly the opposite of *heimlich*, *Vertraut*, and it seems obvious something should be frightening precisely because it is unknown and unfamiliar. [...] Something must be added to the novel and the unfamiliar if it is to become uncanny” (2003: 125). Therefore, those unknown and unfamiliar traumas are questioned in Carter’s narratives since most of the characters, including ‘Marianne’ in *Heroes and Villains*, have the same potential problematic desire for which they strive. So, Marianne’s ‘early home life is severely disrupted by trauma. After being raped by Jewel, on whom she projected her erotic phantasies’ (Peach, 1998: 79). In the novel, Marianne’s ‘early home life’ is expressed because “Marianne wanted to escape as if somewhere there was still the idea of a home [...]” (Carter, 2011: 58). Moreover, when Marianne sets her eyes on the lighthouse, she starts comparing it with her homeland again ‘the land of Intellectuals’. Marianne describes that “[i]t was a lighthouse. Its light was put out, like the woman’s eyes but here it stayed and if there were no longer any storm-tossed mariners to give thanks for its helpful beams, yet, functionless it was, it was intransigent” (Carter, 2011: 151). Marianne’s uncanny feelings about her homeland make her ready for traumatic idealisation. As Freud writes: “the uncanny element we know from experience arises either when repressed childhood complexes are reviewed by some impression, or when primitive beliefs that have been surmounted appear to be once again confirmed” (2003: 155). Hence, Marianne’s childhood traumatic complexes are inspected again within her recollection of the idea of home.

In a similar vein, in his *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (1970), Tzvetan Todorov writes that the Freudian sense of the uncanny “is linked to the appearance of an image which originates in the childhood of the individual [...]” (1975: 47). Thematically, that tower reminds Marianne of her childhood memoirs. In other words, “[t]o Marianne, it looked the twin of the white tower in which she had been born and she was very much moved for, though neither tower any longer cast a useful light, both still served to warn and inform of surrounding dangers” (Carter, 2011: 151). However, Marianne identifies herself with the lighthouse because she knows that to wage war against darkness, what she needs is pure illumination, the illumination of wisdom and reason. Thus, Marianne sees her body as a source of illumination through which she holds power because she is an autonomous woman.

“This tower glimpsed in darkness symbolized and clarified her resolution; abhor shipwreck, said the lighthouse, go in fear of unreason. Use your wits, said the lighthouse. She fell in love with the integrity of the lighthouse” (Carter, 2011: 151).

Thereby, in *Heroes and Villains*, “there is a female focalization and Marianne’s acts of independence are similarly the acts of transgression” (Peach, 1998: 86). Transgressional movements of Marianne are significant Carterian motifs since they are related to the representation of Marianne’s body politics. Furthermore, *Heroes and Villains* is built on a panorama of binarism, in which two types of societies, including the ‘Professors’ and the ‘Barbarians’ are put into polarisation. However, Carter does not show it as a part of her rigid narration; rather, she prefers to show it under post-apocalyptic fantasy which is intentionally shaped in Carter’s narrative. According to Peach:

“Carter appears to establish a clear polarisation between the two societies. The community of the Professors and soldiers is rigidly hierarchical, totalitarian, militaristic and sexually repressive. The society of the Barbarians is more strongly linked to the natural world, has a quasi-tribal structure and regards the community as a family. However, Carter does not establish, as the conventional post-apocalyptic novel would have done, a rigid binarism between the Professors / soldiers and the Barbarians or pursue the tensions between the soldiers and the intellectuals. The post-apocalyptic fantasy becomes a narrative space in which Carter explores the blurring of conventional boundaries and binarisms and the ways in which such artificial boundaries are maintained” (Peach, 1998: 86-87).

In the novel, while the land of Professors is depicted as hierarchical in which authoritative systems are conducted; the land of the Barbarians is a tribal community in which familial relationship is represented since it is a nomadic community, whose people live under tribal conditions. Therefore, Carter portrays two different societies, through which such polarisations as race and gender relationships are reflected. As Sarah Sceats writes in her *Flights of Fancy: Angela Carter’s Transgressive Narratives* (2005): “Carter seeks to subvert received truths and conventional thinking on many levels and in diverse areas. This is particularly so both in gender relations and their intersections with class and race and also in terms of radical potential of literary and popular genres” (2005: 143).

In *Heroes and Villains*, Carter’s subversive politics is represented through Marianne’s rejection to the imposed norms throughout her overall quest, in which Marianne resists pre-defined rules introduced by the male-oriented world. As Dani Cavallaro also asserts in her *The World of Angela Carter: A Critical Investigation* (2011): “[i]n *Heroes and Villains*, the demythologizing quest seeks primarily to provide a rigorous, albeit occasionally facetious, critique of patriarchy [...]” (2011: 78). Marianne is portrayed against patriarchal norms so that, in Carter’s logic, Marianne can disrupt “the male symbolic structure” (Peach, 1998: 87). Marianne

achieves her disrupting quality through her identity and her “autonomous sense of self” (Peach, 1998: 87). However, such an autonomous identity is only able to be shaped through the sense of otherness. In *Heroes and Villains*, the sense of otherness is profoundly used in the description of both societies, the ‘Barbarians’ and the ‘Intellectuals.’ In producing that sense of otherness, mythology and fairy tales are used as prominent sources for the employment of both communities “to maintain their geographical, cultural and intellectual boundaries including those which define the ‘otherness’ of outsiders” (Peach, 1998: 87).

Throughout the novel, some of the ‘warning tales’ about both ‘Barbarians and Intellectuals’ are introduced to clarify ‘otherness.’ The Barbarians, “slit the bellies of women after they have raped them and sew cats up inside” (Carter, 2011: 12), and the Barbarians also “wrap little girls in clay just like they do with hedgehogs, wrap them in clay and bake them in the fire and gobble them up with salt. They relish tender little girls” (Carter, 2011: 4). When Marianne first meets Donally, “a renegade Professor and the tribe’s witchdoctor” (Meaney, 2000: 88), he ironically explains a belief among the Barbarians. “It’s a well-known fact that Professor women sprout sharp teeth in their private parts, to bite off the genitalia of young men” (Carter, 2011: 55). This thematic point is related to the *vagina dentata* [italics added]. The myth of ‘Vagina dentata’ represents men’s fear of women. It is at the same time used for female power thusly. In her *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson* (1990), Camille Paglia points out that “[...] The North American Indian myth of the toothed vagina (vagina dentata) is a gruesomely direct transcription of female power and male fear. Metaphorically, every vagina has secret teeth, for the male exits as less than when he entered” (2001: 13). Thus, those tales and myths in *Heroes and Villains* are depicted to show Carter’s reactionary attitude because, Carter attacks ‘the mythical sense of the integration of the female body,’ which is a system of belief shaped by patriarchy on the representation of the female body. So, Carter creates subverted body representations by crossing the boundaries. As Lynda Nead asserts in her *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality* (1992): “[t]he feminist claim of the 1970s to ‘our bodies, our selves’ put the issues of control and identity at the centre of the movement’s political agenda. For women to reclaim power over their bodies meant to reclaim both control and regulation of the female body [...] to create a different kind of visibility for women [...]” (1992: 64). Thematically, Carter deals with the same purpose of re-creating the visibility of women through her depictions of the female body politics in *Heroes and Villains*, in which traditional representations of the female body are subverted. Therefore, it is not surprising that Carter draws most of her material from mythology, fairy tales and Anglo-American literary sources in her *Heroes and Villains*. However, Carter’s purpose is to make those fairy tales unaffected from the misogynist phallogocentric discourse of the androtexes, whose contents are shaped and formed under ‘misogynism’ represented by patriarchy. So, Carter’s reactionary attitude is mainly related to her conscious

affords on her narrative. According to Peach, “Carter, like many feminist critics, recognizes fairy tales as a reactionary form that inscribed a misogynistic ideology” (1998: 74). Hence, the notion of the misogynistic expression which is represented in the narration is stressed through a prevailing eerie mood. Because, throughout the novel, the sense of misogyny is caused by ‘men’s fear of women.’

“A key text which the two societies in *Heroes and Villains* share, and which is tattooed on Jewel’s back, is the myth of Adam and Eve. Encapsulating the story of Adam bewitched by Eve’s smile, the tattoo signifies the ideologies through which Jewel’s view of Marianne is mediated. So, *Heroes and Villains* places misogyny within a larger ideological and cultural context. Jewel’s fear of Marianne is given as his explanation for raping her. However, *his fear of her is also a product and reflection of the way patriarchal societies more generally fear the loss of control to women* [italics added]” (Peach, 1998: 88-89).

The tattoo on Jewel’s back is about the creation myth in which the fall of Adam and Eve is depicted. Jewel’s fear of Marianne is represented by Adam’s fear of Eve on the tattoo. What Jewel sees is that his fear stems from the lack of control over Marianne. As Gerardine Meaney writes in her article titled History and Women’s Time: *Heroes and Villains* (2000): “Marianne is recognised by Jewel as a kind of doom upon him” (2000: 88). In other words, that ‘fear’ or ‘doom’ for Jewel can be interpreted as the reason for his dominating oppression and cruelty through which misogynistic expression is produced since patriarchy is unable to control women. Therefore, ‘the tattoo’ is also a cause of hatred for Jewel; yet, it is efficacious because it is “the monstrous tattoo, the Garden of Eden, the tree, the snake, the man, the woman and the apple” (Carter, 2011: 104). Thus, it causes Jewel to suffer because the tattoo reminds him of his inadequacy. Furthermore, it also causes him to suffer from pain which makes him cruel to others. He treats Marianne with extreme cruelty when the snake bites her. He shows his indifference by saying “the snake bit her but she didn’t die.” (Carter, 2011: 38).

In *Heroes and Villains*, Carter’s narrative qualities and techniques are revealed in such a way that she enables a sense of suffering for men to be trapped by “violence and aggression” (Peach, 1998: 92). This thematic point is referenced by Marianne as “[i]t is like the mark of Cain” (Carter, 2011: 105). Moreover, the same violence and aggression are seen as the causes of women’s domination. Carter subverts traditionally accepted male domination over females in her narrative by demythologising male power. According to Sceats, Carter’s viewpoint is “fundamentally political, emphatically and often subversively on the side of the disempowered and disenfranchised. We are, she claims, the creatures of history, from which nothing offers a refuge” (2005: 142). Carter realises this form of subversion in the relationship between Marianne and Jewel.

“In the relationship between Marianne and Jewel, Carter also rewrites a further traditional story, that of the demon-lover, of whom Jewel has many of the characteristics – he is powerful, mysterious, supernatural; and he can

be cruel, vindictive and hostile. However, in her depiction of him, Carter challenges the male-female binarism which ascribes so-called ‘masculine’ qualities to men and ‘feminine’ characteristics to women. In discovering the nature of her own desire, Marianne finds that male-female attributes exist within each individual.” (Peach, 1998: 95-96).

As a result, the female focalisation, which Carter represents, is achieved through the subversion of traditional roles of men and women, since it is possible to see that in *Heroes and Villains*, a woman, who might be considered to be a victim, can turn out to be a demon. Marianne becomes a demon since she is called “a little Lilith.” (Carter, 2011: 136). Thereby, Carter focuses upon the female power and the autonomous female self which is gained through rejection of the oppression by males. Marianne achieves this quality by refusing the norms that she is expected to obey, especially when Jewel tries to assert his authority on her.

‘You’ll go in the cart with Mrs. Green, like a bloody lady.’

‘I’ll go wherever you go.’ [...]

‘Oh, no, you won’t, you’ll do as I say.’

‘Oh, no, I won’t, I’ll do as I want’ (Carter, 2011: 106).

In other words, female focalisation in *Heroes and Villains* is ascribed through the female power, “in which the initiative is shifted from the demon-lover to the so-called victim, and [...] Marianne subverts the role of the female in traditional demon-lover stories” (Peach, 1998: 96). As soon as Marianne gains her autonomous self and identity, she knows she can fight against the oppression and she achieves “the strength of an independent spirit” (Peach, 1998: 96). After Marianne marries Jewel, she “gradually turns from victim to predator, surmounts rape and humiliation, and takes Jewel’s place as a leader” (Peach, 1998: 96). Therefore, the female consciousness and the autonomous female-self in becoming a powerful woman are depicted as the main objectives of Marianne’s body politics.

### **Body politics of ‘Marianne’ and overall conclusion**

*What knowing powerful, caring women taught me a lesson is that [...] women do not need to depend on men for our well-being and our happiness - not even our sexual bliss. This knowledge opened up a world of possibility for women (Hooks, 2000: 95).*

The traditional, male-oriented view sees the female body as a commodity. The feminist view, on the other hand is concerned with showing the female body and its essence as the power of femininity as a representation of female body politics in literature. Thus, the norms and policies which control the female body are applied to Marianne, who confronts the authority by claiming power. Therefore, Carter’s *Heroes and Villains* is about the life and the power struggle of Marianne who has enough courage to bear the hardships and the obstacles of the male-oriented world.

Cavallaro writes that “Marianne is courageous, resolute, self-reliant and playfully androgynous, and is shown to be intrinsically drawn to practically anything outlandish, bizarre or taboo” (2011: 79). Marianne is aware of the fact that her journey is perilous; however, she also knows that it is necessary for her self-discovery. In the beginning, the protagonist, Marianne, flees from her homeland, the land of Intellectuals, to the forest, the land of Barbarians. As Cavallaro puts it: “Carter’s ideologically subversive heroine, Marianne, declares her independence of spirit in the most radical fashion imaginable within the novel’s parameters. She forsakes the rational and orderly culture of the Professors, in which she was born and raised, to elope with a member of the rival culture, the magic-oriented Barbarians [...]” (2011: 79). Marianne abandons her Intellectual-homeland where Professors reign supreme. In ruling the state, Professors have rational methods of keeping order; however, Marianne becomes rebellious and opts out of living among them.

Carter writes in the ‘Introduction’ of *Heroes and Villains* (2011) as follows: “Marianne chops off her golden plaits, burns her father’s books, drowns his clock in the swamp, flees her protective white tower and, in the company of her brother’s killer, ventures into the dark and mysterious forest beyond the fringes of her known world” (2011: vii). Thereby, Marianne’s alienation from the society, in which she has had an intellectual upbringing, makes her decisive enough to leave the ‘white tower’ though it is the land of Professors. What Marianne strives for, is to be more powerful in her quest in which she comes across many obstacles but, Marianne knows that all of these obstacles can be overcome by challenging the authority.

“Her ruling passion was always anger rather than fear.’ This is a girl who is bored with the impotent intellectual life of the Professors, hates their community festivals and rituals, including marriage, and disdains their self-referential language -- a ‘severe’ child who won’t play the games of others, upending the little boy who in his somewhat nasty innocence, only wants to play the hero, leaving him yowling in the dust. The boy calls her a Barbarian and a villain, and she becomes one.” (Carter, 2011: vii).

Marianne becomes a ‘Barbarian’ through her endless passion, it is the passion of anger that makes her life unbearable among the land of ‘Professors’ since she cannot stand living with her intellectual community and sets off to be the hero of her own. Marianne is also so decisive that neither ‘rape nor savagery’ can prevent her from her goal. She is fearless, “strong-willed and independent young woman, unfazed by rape or savagery, fearing only the loss of her own autonomy [...] Marianne knows herself to be too tough to be eaten” (Carter, 2011: viii). Marianne is well built, vigorous woman, therefore she knows that nothing causes her any harm, neither sexual abuse nor ferocity. Hence, Marianne also knows that she is a stranger among the Barbarians; though she breeds sympathy and fellow feeling. Therefore, she wants to disappear again, since she knows she does not belong to the culture of the Barbarians either. Marianne gets out of the Barbarians’ clutches. As Carter puts it:

“For however dangerous the open country might be, she would be safer there than among these strangers; whatever romantic attraction the idea of the Barbarians might have held for her as she sat by herself in the white tower, when her father was alive, had entirely evaporated. She was full of pity for them but, more than anything, she wanted to escape, as if somewhere there was still the idea of a home. So she ran away into the wood, not much caring if the wild beasts ate her; but Jewel found her, raped her and brought her back with him [...]” (Carter, 2011: 58).

Marianne is such a stout-hearted woman that nothing hinders her attempts even though she is brought back to the Barbarians. But, Marianne keeps on fighting. As Carter further states, “Marianne had sharp, cold eyes and she was spiteful but her father loved her” (2011: 1). Marianne’s deadly look treats her enemies with the terrifying ordeal, since she notices the danger as quickly as possible. In her *The Medusa Gaze in Contemporary Women’s Fiction: Petrifying, Maternal and Redemptive* (2017), Gillian M. E. Alban states that “[d]espite her being raped by the Barbarian Jewel, the defenceless young Marianne subjects Jewel and the other Barbarians to her deadly look, expressing a coldly intellectual fury learned from her professor father” (2017: 52). Marianne’s ‘Medusa-like’ deadly gaze makes her fearless and it also forces the Barbarians including Jewel to submit her. By being fearless, she tests her own limits and engages in power struggles. Marianne’s fearlessness shows her ‘Medusan power,’ since whoever would like to inflict harm on her turned into stone instantly. Thusly, Marianne retains her strength by having Medusa’s gaze when Jewel rapes her. “‘You’re nothing but a murderer,’ she said, determined to maintain her superior status at all costs. [...] Feeling between her legs to ascertain the entrance, he thrust his fingers into the wet hole so roughly [...] but she did not make a single sound for her only strength was her impassivity and she never closed her cold eyes” (Carter, 2011: 61-62).

Additionally, the ideology of feminism on ‘equality’ between the sexes is reflected through Marianne. In her *The Irigaray Reader: Luce Irigaray* (1991), Margaret Whitford writes on Irigarayan sense of struggling the equality between the sexes as follows: “[e]qual to what?, what women want to be equal to?, men?, wage?, a public position?” (1991: 32). The primary concern is to express women’s yearning for equality; however, it has to be clarified in what way they want to be equal. ‘Equal’ means accepting the inferior positions of women. Therefore, being equal means, being equal to man and being “equivalent to the imposition of a male norm” (Whitford, 1991: 23). Hence, Marianne’s reactions to patriarchal ideology share similarities with the struggling feminist viewpoint on equality, since Marianne challenges and questions patriarchal impositions and institutions hindering women. Among those questionings, Marianne raises her doubts about the sense of equality between men and women in ‘marriage’ as a social institution because Marianne already resists and rejects the matrimonial relationship between men and women in which women’s roles are pre-defined having no sense of equality. Marianne’s state of mind is depicted as follows:

“[...] her vindictiveness increased for she was more cruelly wounded in her pride than in her body and, besides, she feels herself quite trapped and entirely without hope. She remained in an agony of despair [...] refusing food and speech. [...] At last Mrs. Green arrived [...] “Tomorrow you’ll have to sleep with Jewel, won’t you. That’s the way of the world.” At that, Marianne sprang up, her cold eyes sparking. ‘All this is a dream.’ she said. It can’t happen, it didn’t happen and it won’t happen. “Young men will always take advantage, dear, said Mrs. Green and we’ll have to take what we can get.” (Carter, 2011: 66).

Marianne does not surrender any idea putting her into an inferior position. She is not a woman who accepts authority on her body since she sees herself the only one who can only decide on it. Hence, she questions the presence of a woman of patriarchal mentality on marriage. In a similar vein, Simone de Beauvoir in her *The Second Sex* (1949), shares her critical thoughts about a woman’s presence in patriarchy in which the ‘true woman’ concept is represented.

“Woman is lost. Where are the women? The women of today are not women at all’ We have seen what these mysterious phrases mean. In men’s eyes --- and for the legion of women who see through men’s eyes --- it is not enough to have a woman’s body nor to assume the female function as mistress or mother in order to be a ‘true woman’. In sexuality and maternity woman as subject can claim autonomy; but to be a ‘true woman’ she must accept herself as the Other.”(de Beauvoir, 1997: 291).

For de Beauvoir, women can only claim their autonomous identities through their sexuality, however, they are lost, they cannot claim their autonomy because of the fact that a woman’s body is seen either as a sexual object, or an apparatus as a carriage for mothering. In other words, “women represent a container for men” (Whitford, 1991: 165). However, according to de Beauvoir, women should alienate themselves from the patriarchal atmosphere so that they can see themselves as ‘the other’, if they really want to be a ‘true woman.’ Thereby, Marianne knows that she is ‘the other’ since she has an autonomous identity. As Elisabeth Mahoney writes in her article titled ‘But elsewhere?’: the future of fantasy in *Heroes and Villains* (1997): “*Heroes and Villains* signals the opening up new spaces for sexual identity [...] from autonomous feminine subjects” (1997: 77). In other words, because of having an autonomous feminine subject, Marianne is a ‘true woman’ who claims her sexuality and she knows her autonomous body. Marianne tells Jewel that “you’re nothing but the furious invention of my virgin nights” (Carter, 2011: 150). Barbarians, on the other hand, also see Marianne as ‘the other’ and they also know that their authority is questioned and challenged by her since Marianne, unlike the Barbarians, seeks power to evolve, to enlarge her capacity, free from the norms. Marianne tells Donally that “[w]hy it’s necessary for you to marry me to that Yahoo who raped me yesterday [...] / ‘Consider and make the best of things’ said Donally, the leader of the Barbarians. [...] There must be something you want. Power? I can offer you” (Carter, 2011: 68).

Marianne is against the male-oriented world's impositions putting women into inferiority so, she wants a kind of power through which she gets rid of such enforcing things. Marianne knows that what she needs is not the phallic power but the feminine power, enabling her to gain a sense of autonomy. As Julia Kristeva puts it in her *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (1969): “[f]eminine power must have been experienced as denied power, more pleasant to seize because it was both archaic and secondary, a kind of substitute for effective power in the family and the city but no less authoritarian, the underhand double of explicit phallic power” (1980: 319). Marianne already knows that the feminine power is opposing power since it is not easily seized but she is determined to have it so that she replaces it with the phallic power.

Jewel, on the contrary, is a ‘Barbarian raider’ who expresses his patriarchal values as follows: “[i]t’s a patriarchal system. I need a son, don’t I, to dig my grave when I’m gone. A son to ensure my status. ‘Give me another reason.’ ‘Politically. To maintain my status.’ ‘I suppose these are both good reasons, given the initial situation, but I think here is a less abstract one’” (Carter, 2011: 99). Jewel belongs to a culture, in which traditional values are esteemed. He is a part of the patriarchal system and he wants it to circulate around through the patriarchal sense of kinship. As Whitford writes: “[p]atriarchy is defined by Irigaray as an exclusive respect for the genealogy of sons and fathers and the competition between brothers” (1991: 23). In this system, there is an acute difference between men and women and both have certain roles that they are forced to obey. Thus, being a father and being a mother gain primary importance for the distribution of the main roles among the sexes. As Plato states in his *The Republic* (380 B.C.): “[t]he only difference between men and women is one of physical function-one begets, the other bears children” (1974: 157). This Platonic statement can be considered to be one of the origins of dictating the basic roles of women and men in a patriarchal system.

On the other hand, the mother-daughter relationship is also thematically explored in *Heroes in Villains* thanks to Marianne and Mrs. Green. However, there is a symbolic mother-daughter relationship between Marianne and Mrs. Green since they have no biological kinship. Yet, mutual and shared relations unite them among the Barbarians. According to Irigaray, patriarchy and patriarchal atmospheres break the mother-daughter relationship; on the contrary, for Chodorow, it persists even in patriarchy. As Alison Stone writes those different perspectives, in her article titled *Mother-Daughter Relations and the Maternal in Irigaray and Chodorow* (2011): “Irigaray seeks to create an as-yet-nonexistent sexual difference and to create mother-daughter bonds that she thinks patriarchy has fairly comprehensively broken. Chodorow wishes to revalue women’s already existing “different,” feminine traits-relationality, empathy-including empathetic mother-daughter bonds that, she thinks, persist despite patriarchy” (2011: 50-51). Thus, in Carter’s *Heroes and Villains*, Mrs. Green and Marianne help one another in such an atmosphere that mutual feelings

are provided to develop that symbolic mother-daughter relationship and at the end, Marianne sees Mrs. Green as a mother whose maternal power is highly sensed. Moreover, the Barbarians also see Mrs. Green as their mother figure for her domestic responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, caring and loving. However, the way Barbarians see Mrs. Green as a mother is totally different from that of Marianne's.

As Nancy Chodorow writes in her *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978): "women's mothering is of profound importance for family structure, for relations between sexes, for ideology about women, and for the sexual division of labour and sexual inequality" (1978: 3). For Barbarians, "Mrs. Green put the cooking pots and the dishes from which they had eaten out to wash clean in the rain" (Carter, 2011: 112). For Marianne, however, Mrs. Green's tender, motherly care is felt especially when "she had taken in the black pot and boiled the water it contained: she washed Annie's face and hands, took off her clothes and persuaded her to lie down, rocking her in her arms till she slept [...] Marianne could not cry anymore; she sat propped vacantly against the wall" (Carter, 2011: 115).

However, there are acute differences between Mrs. Green and Marianne in the role of a woman and a woman's place in society, including social status and responsibilities. But, the mutual respect and love make Marianne and Mrs. Green build a good relationship. Marianne is a woman who seeks power and rejects the authoritative rules that she is forced to obey; on the contrary, Mrs. Green is a submissive woman and she sacrifices herself for patriarchal traditions. She even sacrifices her womanhood and her maternity in that atmosphere. Yet, for Marianne, 'the reaction' is a must to show her eagerness and power against patriarchal dictations. This ideological reaction is conducted through her body, because patriarchal ideology ignores women and their social existences. Thus, Marianne is ready to remove authoritative norms that she is forced to obey. According to Alban: "Marianne proves her strength while rejecting the wifely role assigned to her, developing her indomitable psyche despite her youth and the vulnerability of her position in the tribe. She achieves this by reinforcing her cultivation of sharp mental acumen [...] combining her erotic cerebral powers against them" (2017: 54).

Therefore, Marianne uses her body and its perverse politics to reach her purpose in gaining self-victory. The idea of betrayal makes her think that it will be a good opportunity to use her body against oppression. And "[i]t was the half-witted boy" (Carter, 2011: 124), with whom Marianne quarrelled about being a woman and a wife signalling that her body is her faculty of politics. Marianne thinks that the boy is inferior because of his disability. The boy has a crippled body; on the contrary, Marianne has a powerful body, through which she can have absolute authority over the boy and his crippled body. Therefore, thanks to the sexual intercourse with the crippled boy, Marianne symbolically and physically challenges the patriarchal mentality. As Carter puts it: "[s]he could have pushed him away maybe with one finger, even have thrown him into the stream had she wished to defend herself but

she realized this was the first opportunity she had had to betray her husband and instantly she took advantage of it” (2011: 125-126). Marianne’s intent is to exact revenge by having sex with the crippled boy. In other words, Marianne chooses that way to revenge Jewel. On that account, Marianne is motivated by revenge because she exacts it for Jewel’s wrongdoings that took place in the past. Marianne’s revenge on Jewel can also be considered to be ideological revenge on patriarchal values for creating obstacles and prejudices over women’s existences. Marianne wondered:

“if he were too young to do it so she unbuttoned her shirt and rubbed his wet mouth against her breasts for him. The tips of her breasts were so tender she whined under her breath and he became very excited [...] She roughly seized hold of him and crushed him inside her with her hand for she had not sufficient patience to rely on instinct. He made two of three huge thrusts and came with such a terrible cry it seemed the loss of his virginity caused him as much anguish or at least, consternation as the loss her own had done. He slid weakly out of her, shivering, but she retained him in her arms and kissed the tangles of his hair. She was unsatisfied but full of pleasure because she had done something irreparable, though she was not quite sure what it was” (Carter, 2011: 126).

The ‘half-witted’ boy loses his virginity with Marianne for the first time, or in other words, Marianne takes it therefore, the boy is agonised. Marianne is discontented for what she does with the boy; though she fills herself with gladness since she knows that it is an irredeemable act. Marianne gains her self-victory since she declares her sexual independence. More accurately, she satisfies herself, her sexuality and her body through this sexual intercourse.

Towards the end, when Marianne quarrels with Jewel, he tries to set his authority again by choosing a vulgar way of expressing his demonstration of power over her. Jewel gives Marianne a beating. However, Marianne is not a woman who can easily be converted into a submissive, and she reacts again by threatening Jewel that “that’s the second time you’ve hit me. How could you hit me, at such a time. If you ever hit me again something terrible will happen to you” (Carter, 2011: 155). Marianne’s severe reactions make Jewel understand that she is not a woman who can be subjected to violation. Marianne is such a strong woman that she is fearless and highly decisive enough to overthrow the oppressions of Jewel. So, when Marianne is exposed to the last attack by Jewel, she breaks his authority by yelling that “‘that’s the third time.’ She said with spiteful satisfaction. ‘I warned you and now you haven’t a hope. You knew I’d be the death of you’ [...] She thought that [...] ‘I have destroyed him’ and felt a warm sense of satisfaction” (Carter, 2011: 159-160). Then, when a group of soldiers kill Jewel and advance directly toward Marianne, she realises that she is more powerful than ever so, she considers herself to be the ‘Tiger Lady.’ Marianne says: “[...] ‘they won’t get rid of me as easily as that. I shall stay here and frighten them so much they’ll do every single thing I say.’ ‘What, will you be Queen?’--- ‘I’ll be the ‘Tiger Lady’ and rule them with a rod of iron’” (Carter, 2011: 163). So, Marianne achieves her goal by being powerful in her life struggles.

To conclude, in Carter's *Heroes and Villains*, Marianne's body can be considered an apparatus that is directly related to her sense of rejection, and to the power in shaping and challenging the norms of patriarchal authority. Marianne uses her body politically and powerfully to resist and reject the male-dominated world's authority. Marianne's body can also be considered to be the successful outcome of the female body over the male body. In the long run, she faces self-victory because she is enlightened. As Heidi Yeandle writes in her *Angela Carter and Western Philosophy* (2017): "Marianne is on the philosophical quest for enlightenment and discovers what the Barbarians are really like by living with them, making her potential Philosopher-Queen" (2017: 31). At the end of her quest, Marianne achieves her purpose by being noticed as a powerful woman who declares her self-victory through her subversive and perverse body politics.

### Endnotes

- 1 Suleiman's necessity of body politics of women is related to Hélène Cixous' The Laugh of The Medusa, in which 'Dark Continent' image, is reflected. For further details, see Cixous' The Laugh of The Medusa, Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen (Trans). *Signs*, vol.1, no. 4, Summer, 1976, 875-893. The University of Chicago Press, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3173239>. (Accessed: 11.03.2017)
- 2 Phallogocentrism is "a term relating to the advancement of the masculine as the source of power and meaning through cultural, ideological and social systems" (Gamble, 2006: 272).
- 3 Phallogocentrism is "a portmanteau word combining 'phallogocentrism' and 'logocentrism', which connects patriarchal authority and self-legitimizing systems of thought which define themselves in relation to an authoritative centre" (Gamble, 2006: 273).
- 4 According to Freud: "[...] the German word *unheimlich* of which the nearest semantic equivalents in English are 'uncanny' and 'eerie,' but which etymologically corresponds to 'unhomely' [...]" (2003: 124).
- 5 Todorov also states that "[i]n the uncanny, [...], we refer the inexplicable to known facts, to a previous experience, and thereby to the past" (1975: 42).
- 6 Marianne makes a traumatic idealisation of her home (The Freudian view of Uncanny).
- 7 Literally, 'the fear' stems from 'Jewel's fear of Marianne'.
- 8 As Andrea Dworkin writes in her *Intercourse* (1987): the mark of Cain is a 'Stigma' and this "[s]tigma comes from the Latin for 'Mark,' The Greek for 'tattoo'; its archaic meaning is 'a scar left by a hot iron,' a brand; its modern meaning is a 'mark of shame or discredit' or 'an identifying mark of characteristic' [...]" [my comment added] (2007: 45).

### References

- Alban, G.M.E. (2017). *The Medusa gaze in contemporary women's fiction: Petrifying, maternal and redemptive*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Carter, A. (2011). *Heroes and Villains* (R. Coover. Introd) Penguin Modern Classics.
- Cavallaro, D. (2011). *The world of Angela Carter: A critical investigation*. McFarland & Company Inc. Publishers.
- Chodorow, N. (1978). *The reproduction of mothering: Psychoanalysis and the sociology of gender*. University of California.
- de Beauvoir, S. (1997). *The second sex* (H. M. Parshley. Ed. and Trans) Vintage.
- Dworkin, A. (2007). *Intercourse: The twentieth anniversary edition*. Basic Books.
- Engels, F. (2020). *The origin of the family, private property and the state*. Gece Kitaplığı.
- Freud, S. (2003). *The uncanny* (D. McLintock. Trans; H. Haughton. Introd) Penguin Modern Classics.

- Gamble, S. (2006) (Eds). *The routledge companion to feminism and postfeminism*. Routledge.
- Hooks, B. (2000). *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate politics*. South End.
- King, D. W. (2000). *Body politics and the fictional double*. Indiana University.
- Kristeva, J. (1980). *Desire in language: a semiotic approach to literature and art* (Leon S. Roudiez. Eds; T. Gora and A. Jardine. Trans) Columbia University.
- Lerner, G. (1986). *The creation of patriarchy*. Oxford University.
- Mahoney, E. (1997). 'But elsewhere?': The future of fantasy in heroes and villains. *The infernal desires of Angela Carter: Fiction, femininity, feminism*. J. Bristow and T. L. Broughton, A. W. Longman. Eds), 73-87.
- Makinen, M. (2001). *Feminist popular fiction*. Palgrave.
- Meaney, G. (2000). History and women's time: *Heroes and Villains. New casebooks: Angela Carter* (A. Easton. Eds) Macmillan, 84-106.
- Millett, K. (2000). *Sexual politics*. University of Illinois.
- Nead, L. (1992). *The female nude: Art, obscenity and sexuality*. Routledge.
- Paglia, C. (2001). *Sexual personae: Art and decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson*. Yale University.
- Peach, L. (1998). *Modern novelists: Angela Carter*. Macmillan.
- Plato. (1974). *The republic* (D. Lee. Trans) Penguin.
- Sceats, S. (2005). *Flights of fancy: Angela Carter's transgressive narratives*. A companion to Magical Realism (S. M. Hart, and W. Ouyang. Eds) Tamesis, Athenaeum Press, 142-150.
- Todorov, T. (1975). *The fantastic: A structural approach to a literary genre* (R. Howard. Trans) Cornell University Press.
- Walby, S. (1990). *Theorizing patriarchy*. Basil Blackwell.
- Whitford, M. (1991). (Eds). *The irigaray reader: Luce Irigaray*. Blackwell.
- Whitford, M. (1991). *Luce irigaray: Philosophy in the feminine*. Routledge.
- Yeandle, H. (2017). *Angel Carter and western philosophy*. Palgrave Macmillan.

## Electronic resources

- Cixous, H. (1976). The laugh of the Medusa, Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen (Trans). *Signs*, vol. 1, no. 4, Summer, 875-893. The University of Chicago Press, Accessed 11.03. 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3173239>.
- Stone, A. (2011). Mother daughter relations and the maternal in Irigaray and Chodorow. *philoSOPHIA*, 1, 1, 45-64. *Project MUSE*. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/478299>.
- Suleiman, S. R. (1985). (Re)writing the body, the politics and poetics of female eroticism, *Poetics Today*, vol. 6, no. 1/2, *The Female Body in Western Culture: Semiotic Perspectives*, 1985, 43-65. Duke University Press, Accessed 31.10 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1772120>.



Bu eser Creative Commons Atf 4.0 Uluslararası Lisansı ile lisanslanmıştır. (This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License).