T.C.

ATILIM ÜNİVERSİTESİ

SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ

İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI

THE USE OF BAKHTINIAN CARNIVALESQUE IN ANGELA CARTER'S NIGHTS AT THE CIRCUS AND WISE CHILDREN

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

Hazırlayan:

Merih İNAL

Tez Danışmanı:

Prof. Dr. Oya Batum MENTEŞE

Ankara – 2012

GCRIS

ATILIM ÜNİVERSİTESİ

SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜNE

Merih İnal tarafından hazırlanan "The Use of Bakhtinian Carnivalesque in Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* and Wise Children başlıklı bu çalışma 04/06/2012 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda oybirliği/oyçokluğu ile başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından İngiliz Dilli ve Edebiyatı Ana Bilim Dalında yüksek lisans tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

Prof. Dr. Oya Batum Menteşe

Prof. Dr. Ufuk Ege Uygur

Doç. Dr. Lerzan Gültekin

GCRIS

to my family

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deep and sincere gratitude to many people without whose support, guidance and love, this thesis would not have been possible.

I am deeply indebted to my advisor, Prof. Dr. Oya Batum Menteşe for all her excellent guidance and patience and support she gave me throughout the study. I would also like to thank my instructors Prof. Dr. Gülsen Canlı, and Assist. Prof. Dr. Evrim Doğan Adanur for their invaluable encouragement and contribution to my studies through the courses they have given. I am also indebted to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lerzan Gültekin, who introduced me to Mikhail Bakhtin in her lively courses and helped me to decide on the subject of this thesis. I am also grateful to my Committee Member Prof. Dr. Ufuk Ege Uygur for her suggestions and comments.

I would also like to acknowledge my sincere gratitude to my friends Ayşe Nazlı Altaylı and Seçil Kök, Gülay Gülpınar, Ece Eren, Can Özdilek, Ceylan Ertung and Burçin İçdem, Gizem Sarısoy and Gökçen Usman who have comforted and motivated me during the stressful process of writing. I am very much obliged to them for their invaluable friendship.

Lastly, I want to thank my beloved family Özgen İnal, Levent İnal, Cem İnal and Rengin İnal for their endless love, support and encouragement. Thank you for being my family... I will always try to make you proud...

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS ii

1. INTRODUCTION 1

1.1. Angela Carter and Her Art 2

1.2. Postmodernism and Postmodern Literary Techniques.....7

1.2.1 The Definition of Postmodernism and Its History 7

1.2.2 Postmodern Literary Techniques: Fantasy, Parody and Magic Realism 10

1.3. Mikhail Bakhtin and Theory of the Carnivalesque 14

1.3.1 The Life of Mikhail Bakhtin and Its Impacts on His Theories 14

1.3.2 Bakhtinian Theories of Heteroglossia, Dialogism and Chronotope 18

1.3.3 Bakhtinian Carnivalesque 20

2. ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF GROTESQUE REALISM AND CARNIVAL LAUGHTER IN *NIGHTS AT THE CIRCUS* 26

2.1. The Use of Grotesque Realism in *Nights at the Circus* 29

2.2. The Use of Carnival Laughter in *Nights at the Circus* 41

3. ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF GROTESQUE REALISM AND CARNIVAL LAUGHTER IN *WISE CHILDREN* 45

3.1. The Use of Grotesque Realism in Wise Children 48

3.2. The Use of Carnival Laughter in Wise Children 53

4. CONCLUSION 56

5. WORK CITED 61

ÖZET 65

ABSTRACT 67

GCRIS

1. INTRODUCTION

Angela Carter, one of the major British women writers of the late twentieth century, in *Nights at the Circus* (1984) and *Wise Children* (1991) deals with the social limitations imposed on women in a patriarchal world and foregrounds the effects of those limitations by using Mikhail Bakhtin's carnivalesque as part of her postmodern style. In the above-named novels, Carter, as a witness of the unequal conditions of women, questions women's place in society and voices the oppression of patriarchy on women and proposes a new world order in which women as an oppressed group will become liberated. The aim of this study is to show that Carter's use of Bakhtinian carnivalesque helps her to create a new world order in which women are liberated from the shackles of patriarchal society, though only for a limited time.

The concept of the carnivalesque which is developed by Mikhail Bakhtin, the well-known Russian theorist of twentieth century, will be the main focus of this study. Carnivals are the festive times when people from different backgrounds come together freely, and according to Bakhtin, during these festive times, all social boundaries collapse, all the rules and hierarchies in the official culture are transgressed and consequently, all the oppressed groups are liberated (*Rabelais and His World* 10). However, this liberation is a temporary one since it comes to an end with the end of the carnival season. Eventually, the rules of official dominant culture continue to be enforced. Angela Carter applies Bakhtinian carnivalesque in the above-mentioned novels to propose a new world order. Her choice of subject matter with its settings, plot, characters and form therefore, serve as means of subversion and deconstruction of the traditionally established norms, and the reconstruction of new ones. However, at the end of her novels, like the end of carnivals, this new world order is replaced with the world of the dominant culture.

In the first chapter of this study, which is the introductory chapter, biographical information of Angela Carter, her postmodern worldview, her feminist beliefs and their reflection in her works and her art will be dealt with. After a brief explanation of postmodernism, the postmodern techniques Carter used will also be examined. As a part of the theoretical background, some information on Mikhail Bakhtin's biography which had immense effects on the development of his theories will be given. The theories of dialogism, heteroglossia, chronotope will also be provided. This will be followed by a detailed discussion on the concept of the carnivalesque and the related work, Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel* will be mentioned because of its relevance to the theory in question. Two key notions of the theory of the carnivalesque, which are grotesque realism and carnival laughter, will be dealt with as the main focus of the conceptual framework of the theoretical background. In the second chapter of the study, the first novel *Nights at the Circus* will be analyzed in terms of the use of grotesque realism and carnival laughter. In the third chapter, *Wise Children* will be analyzed in the same manner. In the last chapter, a conclusion will be reached for this study which aims to show why Angela Carter used the various technical strategies in the novels that are in question.

1.1. Angela Carter and Her Art

Angela Carter, who is named among the most notable novelists of the second half of the twentieth century in English literature, was born as Angela Olive Stalker into a socialist family in 1940 in Eastbourne, a place associated with music halls and other forms of popular entertainment. When she was born, the Second World War (1939 – 1945) was still continuing, thus in her

early childhood, she and her family had to move to Yorkshire, where she suffered from teenage anorexia for years. During the years of war, the social roles between men and women were not clear cut and were constantly changing. When men were fighting in the battlefield, by necessity, most of the women in the country were working in various jobs and dealing with once called “men’s works”, such as tank driving, engineering, working in factories, and so forth. These changes in women’s social status and lives led women to become more and more powerful in social life and finally to change the notion that dictates “a woman’s place is at home” especially during the post war period when they were expected to go back home, be good housewives and look after their children. Although there were such women in Carter’s own family who worked in various jobs during the war years, Carter was very weak of health and was not allowed to work thus, she grew up free from worries of war and responsibilities. In one of the interviews in Sarah Gamble’s *Angela Carter: Writing from the Front Line*, Carter said for her childhood that “life passed at a languorous pace, everything was gently untidy, and none of the clocks ever told the right time” (27). At the age of twenty, despite all oppositions of her mother, Angela Carter married Paul Carter, moved to Bristol and studied English Literature at University of Bristol between the years 1962-65.

Known as the ‘Swinging Sixties’ or ‘High Sixties’, 1960s was the decade, which had great impact on Carter and her fiction. Those years were highlighted by the activities of the partakers in the counter-culture movement who were born during or immediately after the Second World War. Helen Stoddart in her book titled *Angela Carter’s Nights at the Circus* claims that this generation, to which Angela Carter belonged as well, consisted of people who benefited from many social reforms one of which was the 1944 Education Act; a social reform which enabled higher education to be attainable without distinction of sex and class in England and Wales. Thanks to this act, many young men and women could attend universities and attain

knowledge easily and this laid the ground for the formation of the movement of counter-culture. The effects of this cultural movement, which had developed firstly in the US and the UK, eventually spread to all Europe and then, those, who were part of it, began to lead a bohemian life. They were not only critical for Britain's post- war domestic and foreign policies, but also class structures, cultural and sexual limitations and separations were source of their dissatisfaction and they wanted a new social order with more freedom (Stoddart 10- 11). Needless to say, those bohemian years of Carter's life spent in Bristol were not the only influences on her life and on her fiction. In 1970, having separated from her husband, Carter decided to live in Japan for three years and she also spent some time in Russia. In those different cultures she also had different experiences, traces of which can be seen in her works such as *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* and *Nights at the Circus*. Carter claims that in Japan she "learnt what it is to be a woman and become radicalised" (*Nothing Sacred* 28). After leaving Japan, she continued studying creative writing in many universities such as in University of East Anglia in the UK, the University of Adelaide in Australia, and the Brown University in the US. She married Mark Pearce in 1977 and had one son from this marriage.

During her twenty-five-year writing carrier, Carter wrote many novels, collections of short stories, children's stories, book of verse, plays for radio, film screenplays and television scripts and many journalistic articles which were published in many prestigious newspapers including The Independent, The Guardian, and New Statesman. Her novels include *Shadow Dance* also known as *Honeybuzzard* in the UK (1966), *The Magic Toyshop* (1967), *Several Perceptions* (1968), *Heroes and Villains* (1969), *The Donkey Prince*, *Miss Z* (1970), *Love* (1971), *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* also known as *The War of Dreams* (1972), *The Music People* (1980), *Moonshadow* (1982) , *Nights at the Circus* which was a winner of the James Tait Black Memorial Prize (1984), *Artificial Fire* (1988), *Wise Children* (1992),

and *Sea-Cat and Dragon King* (2000). Her short story collections include *Expletives Deleted* (1974), *The Bloody Chamber* (1979), *The Bridegroom* (1983), *Black Venus* (1985), *American Ghosts and Old World Wonders* (1993), *Burning Your Boats* (1995). She also published works of non-fiction including *The Sadeian Woman & the Ideology of Pornography* (1978), *Nothing Sacred: Selected Writings* (1982), and *Images of Frida Kahlo* (1989), *Expletives Deleted: Selected Writings* (1992), *Shaking a Leg: Collected Journalism and Writing* (1997). Her poetry collections are *Five Quiet Shouters* (1966), and *Unicorn* (1966).

After the publication of her last novel *Wise Children*, Angela Carter died of lung cancer at the age of fifty two in 1992. Lorna Sage, one of the best friends and critics of Carter states in her book *Angela Carter* that , Angela Carter's life was the story of someone walking on a "tightrope", however

> By the end, her life fitted her more or less like a glove, but that's because she'd put it together by trial and error, bricolage, all in the (conventionally) wrong order. Her genius and estrangement came out of a thin-skinned extremity of response to the circumstances of her life and to the signs of the times. (2)

The life Angela Carter led, had affected her style, her choice of themes and the structures of her novels. Lorna Sage again claims in the same book that "Carter was fascinated, in particular, by the idea that writing was an act that took you out of your skin, out of your background, gender, class, nationality..." (2). Although, the act of writing was a way of escaping for Carter from her background, gender, class, nationality, and issues of her time, it can be seen that all these had great impact on her works. For instance, Margaret Thatcher's Britain in 1980s and its political climate were sources of inspiration to her to create a character like Fevvers in *Nights at the Circus* who according to Helen Stoddart has some similar aspects that can be related to Margaret Thatcher, first female prime minister of Britain

between 1979 and 1990. Stoddart, in the book mentioned above states that "like Fevvers, Thatcher combined a thirst for elevation, status and fortune with a powerful populism, given credibility partly from a continual reference to her humble origins as a grocer's daughter" (8). As it can be inferred from the quotation as well, Carter was not able to get away from the affects of the political climate of her time in her works.

In many of her novels, Angela Carter as a committed feminist and socialist author criticizes the social status of women, and draws attention to the inequalities between men and women. However; it is crucial to know that Carter is not only an author, who is writing from a feminist point of view, she is also a postmodernist in terms of her views of life, art and the novelistic techniques. Susan Watkins, in her titled book *Twentieth – Century Women Novelists* states that:

> Carter's writing was preoccupied with sexuality, desire and identity (particularly gender identity)... Carter 'raids' literary history, both popular and canonical, for intertextual allusions, she uses an eclectic mixture of styles, genres and forms, her fiction is non-realist and highly self-conscious, and embraces marginality, perversity and the fantastic. (130)

As it can well be understood from the quotation, Carter in her novels, while criticizing the traditional representation of women, preferred writing by using different postmodern techniques and styles. Instead of representing the realities of society just as in real life by the techniques of classical realism, she used techniques such as fantasy, parody, and magic(al) realism. Through these postmodern techniques she used, she meant to subvert the conventions of realism, in order to be able to demonstrate the existence of women who are not suppressed and silenced. She constructed alternative worlds and enabled women to gain a new voice in this new world. It will be useful to have some brief information on postmodernism and its history and

the postmodern techniques Carter used in order to get a full understanding of the novels which are the subject matters of this study.

1.2. Postmodernism and Postmodern Literary Techniques

1.2.1 The Definition of Postmodernism and Its History

The term, postmodernism, which is used in many areas of contemporary life such as art, literature, architecture, television-shows and so forth has always been a controversial term when it comes to definition. In fact behind the difficulty in finding a brief, simple and an uncontroversial definition lies the essence of the movement which is its unclarity and ambiguity. As Simon Malpas points out in the introduction of his book titled *The Postmodern*,

> In our day-to-day lives, we expect commonsense and accessibility. From the perspectives of scientific reason or philosophical logic, clarity and precision should be the sole aim of thought. But postmodernism, in contrast, often seeks to grasp what escapes these processes of definition and celebrates what resists or disrupts them. (4)

When the difficulty in definition is taken into consideration, it would be useful to give some brief information about the historical background of postmodernism and the reasons behind its emergence in order to have a full understanding of the movement and its aims.

Post-modernism, which is claimed to have developed around 1950s firstly in architecture and then in other branches of art has come into existence with the end of the Second World War. The Cold War, which led to a polarized world between the two world powers, USSR and the USA, had great influences on the emergence of the movement. Due to the developments in sciences and technologies and changes in the world orders and cultural trends during the Cold War period, distrust of and reaction against the pre-accepted and established norms grew. The belief that the traditions, knowledge and beliefs of pre-war world order would not comply with the changing society, in other words, a post-modern world view which questions the existing traditional norms, definitions and meta-narratives was developed In this post-modern world view, there was no absolute truth, instead there were truths which were culturally constructed. Therefore, as Linda Hutcheon states in *The Politics of Postmodernism*,

> the postmodern's initial concern is to de-naturalize some of the dominant features of our way of life; to point out that those entities that we unthinkingly experience as 'natural' (they might even include capitalism, patriarchy, liberal humanism) are in fact 'cultural'; made by us, not given to us. (Hutcheon 2)

As it can also be understood from Hutcheon's quotation, the postmodernists reject explanations which are based on the absoluteness and universality of truth. They believe that truth can change in accordance with the individual interpretations and from culture to culture and from time to time. Therefore, literature of postmodern movement rejects all traditional norms, styles and techniques and this rejection brought self-reflexivity and fragmentation to the literary works of postmodern writers. Postmodern writers are also against any kind of resolutions, truths or endings both structurally and semantically, they use different styles and techniques such as fantasy, parody, pastiche, irony,

magic realism and the like. As Jean Françoise Lyotard claims in *the Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*:

> A postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher: the text he writes, the work he produces are not in principle governed by pre-established rules, and they cannot be judged according to a determining judgement, by applying familiar categories to the text or to the work. (81)

As a postmodernist writer, Carter as well was against the established norms and rules. Greatly affected by the theories of Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida, she rejected the fixedness in meaning. She subverted and deconstructed the dominant ideas and values of the dominant patriarchal culture. Related to this, it would be useful to touch briefly upon the theories of these postmodern theoreticians.

Roland Barthes, who studied semiotics in the late 1960s, takes Ferdinand de Saussure's theory on signification one step further. In addition to what Saussure says, which is basically about the formulation of language and meaning claiming that a signifier and a signified compose the sign, Barthes argues that there is a second level of signification forming the myth in the end. He gives the example of a photograph as a sign on the cover of Paris Match which shows a young, black, French boy, who is the signifier and the French flag saluted by the boy, which is the signified. However, as Steven Ungar states in his book *Roland Barthes: the Professor of Desire*, "through the immediate message he perceives a second system of connoted messages emitting values of patriotism, French-ness (francité), and militarism" (26). Therefore, the photo with its connotative message serves as a myth "which tends to formalize denotation to the point of subverting ("alienating") its normal function" (Ungar 27). Affected by Barthes' idea of subverting the meaning, Jacques Derrida, who is a post-structuralist theoretician, developed the theory of deconstruction. As Julian Wolfreys

states in his book *Deconstruction - Derrida*, Derrida discussed in his essay 'Deconstruction and the Other' that subversion or deconstruction could be used as a literary method for reading texts without embedding into their imposed meanings which leads "a significant change in meaning" (Wolfreys 44). In order to have a clear understanding, it would be appropriate to give a brief definition of the term. Christopher Norris in the essay titled "Deconstruction, Post-Modernism, and the Visual Arts" in *What Is Deconstruction?* explains the term as such: "To 'deconstruct' a text is to draw out conflicting logics of sense and implication, with the object of showing that the text never exactly means what it says or says what it means" (7). In other words, deconstruction aims to point out other meanings, which are different from the intended one. Moreover, Derrida claims that deconstruction was against all kinds of hierarchical power relations of binary oppositions in which the first word is always privileged (Wolfreys 42). While deconstructing the rules of dominant culture in her novels in question, Carter benefited from some postmodern literary techniques, such as fantasy, parody and magic realism. These techniques and how she used them will be analyzed below.

1.2.2 Postmodern Literary Techniques: Fantasy, Parody and Magic Realism

Rosemary Jackson, the author of the book *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* begins describing fantasy with the word fantastic which derives from the Greek word "phantasticus", and means "to make visible or manifest" (13). According to her, all imaginary acts and works such as myths, fairy tales, utopias, dystopias which have fantastic elements and do not have realistic representations are called fantasy. Since a work of fantasy has no

connection with reality and possibilities and instead subverts the conventional rules, she calls this sub-genre as “the literature of subversion” (Jackson 13). Although, there are many definitions of fantasy, it is important to mention that Jackson was moved by the ideas of another important critic named Tzvetan Todorov, who defines the three conditions of fantastic in his book titled *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* as such:

> First, the text must oblige the reader to consider the world of the characters as a world of living persons and to hesitate between a natural and a supernatural explanation of the events described. Second, this hesitation may also be experienced by a character; thus the reader's role is so to speak entrusted to a character, and at the same time the hesitation is represented, it becomes one of the themes of the work -- in the case of naive reading, the actual reader identifies himself with the character. Third, the reader must adopt a certain attitude with regard to the text: he will reject allegorical as well as "poetic" interpretations. (33)

Despite the fact that Rosemary Jackson is inspired by these three conditions of the fantastic which are the roots of fantasy, she is not satisfied with them. Therefore, she adds that fantasy as a genre may also have “social and political implications” since it subverts the rules and conventions as it can be seen in Carter’s novels (Jackson 6). Carter, whose use of fantasy is quite closer to the explanations made by Jackson rather than that of Todorov for she aims to subvert the rules of patriarchy in her novels which are the subject matter of this study. From the very beginning of *Nights at the Circus*, Carter depicts the character of Fevvers as a naturally “hatched”, winged-woman, whose father is a swan (*Nights at the Circus* 3). Therefore, the reader does not “hesitate between natural and supernatural” nor does s/he “rejects the allegorical interpretations” (Jackson 33). On the contrary, s/he being aware of her intention reads the novel by knowing that it has social implications.

Jackson also claims that: “Structurally and semantically, the fantastic aims at dissolution of an order experienced as oppressive and insufficient” (180). Keeping this statement in mind, one can claim that Carter’s use of fantasy in her novels refers to the role of oppressed women in society and with her feminist aims Carter breaks away from the traditional norms and beliefs in the patriarchal system. She also clarifies her aim to use fantasy in one of her interviews by saying that “I’m a socialist, damn it! How can you expect me to be interested in fairies?” which indicates that fantasy serves for a social purpose and therefore is a tool for achieving her feminist aim of subverting the position of oppressed woman (Day 11).

Another postmodern technique used by many feminist writers including Angela Carter is parody. Linda Hutcheon in her book titled *A Theory of Parody: the Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* explains the term as “a form of repetition with ironic critical distance, marking difference rather than similarity” (xii). According to Hutcheon, this form which is engaged in a dialogue with the past is not only “deconstructively critical”, but also “constructively creative” (98). In this connection, it both “legitimizes and subverts which it parodies” (101). Therefore, as Hutcheon asserts, parody, by ironically subverting the original meaning, disrupts what is culturally constructed, thus it is used as a strategy by many postmodernist feminist writers. Judith Butler too, a postmodernist, feminist theoretician, in the conclusion part of her book titled *Gender Trouble*, “From Parody to Politics” asserts the role of parody which is to disrupt and subvert the traditional gender roles of women as such:

> Practices of parody can serve to reengage and reconsolidate the very distinction between a privileged and naturalized gender configuration and one that appears as derived, phantasmatic and mimetic—a failed copy, as it were. (146)

As it can be inferred from Butler's suggestion, parody, which intentionally imitates and ridicules culturally shaped realities, helps to subvert them with a constructive aim. Angela Carter, as a feminist author in her novels and stories through the help of parody denaturalizes the patriarchal representations of women, rejects and subverts all the conventions, and helps women to gain a new voice and a new life in this world where men are no longer in subject and women in object positions.

The other technique used by Carter in her works as a part of her postmodern style is magic (al) realism. As it can be understood from its name as well, the technique as a term consists of two words which are opposite to each other; consequently, it combines magical and fantastic elements with ordinary and realistic elements. According to Helen Stoddart, there is a double action in this kind of works since "ordinary events are treated as if they were fantastic (in a revision of what is 'normal' or 'real') and extraordinary events are treated as if they are entirely 'ordinary'" (35). Magic realism was used as a term in 1925 firstly by the German art critic Franz Roh in an article "Magic Realism: Post- Expressionism" to describe a new trend in the visual arts. However; when this trend was practiced in literature, the term 'magic' turned into 'magical' and thus the title of the technique was finalized as 'magical realism' (Stoddart 35). Latin American novelists are generally associated with the development of this narrative genre. This technique was firstly used and developed in literature by the Latin American novelists such as the Colombian author Gabriel Garcia Marquez, with his *One Hundred Years of Solitude,* which is among the most influential examples of the genre (Stoddart 35). Wendy B. Farris, in her article titled "Scheherazade's Children: Magical Realism and Postmodern Fiction" asserts the five characteristics of magic realist works as such:

> 1) The text contains an "irreducible element" of magic, something we cannot explain according to the laws of universe as we know

> them. 2) The descriptions in magical realism detail a strong presence of the phenomenal world. 3) The reader may hesitate (at one point or another) between two contradictory understandings of events – and hence experience some unsettling doubts. 4) We experience the closeness or near- merging of two realms, two worlds. 5) These fictions question received ideas about time, space and identity. (167- 173)

As also stated by S. Erin Denney in *Crossing the Borders: Marginalization and Magic Realism in Contemporary British Fiction* magical realism renders visible those groups of people who are marginalized and suppressed by the dominant ones. Thus; these texts blur the socio- cultural borders, question the notions of hierarchy and dominance and subvert all kinds of binary oppositions (25- 26). After mentioning these characteristics of magical realist fiction, it is appropriate to say that Carter's use of magical realism helps her to make observations and criticisms about society and gender relations and to question all sorts of binary oppositions and to subvert them as it can be seen in *Nights at the Circus* and *Wise Children*.

1.3. Mikhail Bakhtin and the Concept of Carnivalesque

1.3.1 The Life of Mikhail Bakhtin and Its Impact on His Theories

Mikhail Bakhtin, whose biography and authorship were not much known in his native land, Russia until recently too, began to be known in the West only after the publication of his first book in English, *Rabelais and His*

World in 1968. Tzvetan Todorov, an important critic who has studies on Bakhtin, pinpoints the difficulty in achieving accurate knowledge about the biography of Mikhail Bakhtin. In his book, *Mikhail Bakhtin: the Dialogical Principle,* Todorov says that he mainly depends on the notes of Bakhtin in the memorial publication edited by V. V Kozhinov and S. Konkin (3). Therefore, under the light of recent research, it is proper to say that the period in which Bakhtin lived and its socio-political conditions resulted in the late discovery of his works. For a full understanding of the theories and works, it would be appropriate to have some knowledge about the era together with his biography.

Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, who is an internationally acclaimed Russian theorist and intellectual, was born in Orel, Russia in 1895 as the son of a bank manager father. He spent his early childhood in Orel and adolescence in Vilnius and then Odessa which was "an appropriate setting for a man who was to become the philosopher of heteroglossia and carnival" as stated by Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist in their book *Mikhail Bakhtin* (1). He studied classics and philology at the University of Petrograd and in 1918 after gaining his degree; he began to work as a school teacher for two years in western Russia, Nevel and Vitebsk and got married in 1921. In Vitebsk, he met with Valerian Nikolaevich Voloshinov, a poet and musicologist; Pavel Nikolaevich Medvedev, a musicologist; and Matvei Isaevich Kagan, a philosopher; and shaped his early ideas. With the group named as "Kantian Seminar", they organized meetings, public and formal debates and shared their ideas in the local paper *Molot* which means hammer (Todorov 3). After studying philosophy in Berlin for some years, in 1924 he moved back to Leningrad where he met with his friends again and continued the activities of "Kantian Seminar". In 1929, when Stalin, one of the greatest totalitarian leaders of the 20th century came to power, Bakhtin published the early version of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art*, which was his first major work introducing the concepts of dialogism. It was the same year

when Bakhtin was arrested and sentenced to internal exile in Kazakhstan for five years probably because of participating in the Russian Orthodox Church's underground movement which was a reactionary movement arranged by many bishops and philosophers against the sanctions applied to the church by Stalin. As Philip Boobbyer states in *The Stalin Era*, when he was in power, Stalin regarded the church as an institution which was difficult to argue against and as a threat to the state. Therefore, he aimed to keep it under control. By emphasizing the corruption of the church he founded an institution named Council for the Affairs of Russian Orthodox Church headed by G. G. Karpov. The duty of this council was to keep the church under state control; he also closed down many churches and arrested many bishops (Boobbyer 179-181). Boobbyer, who is influenced by the ideas in political philosopher Hannah Arendt's book *the Origins of Totalitarianism* states that "totalitarian regimes aim to break down class loyalties and civil society in order to create lonely, atomised individuals with no private space of their own, who can thus be easily used to serve the state's interests" (Boobbyer 2). Therefore like many totalitarian regimes, Stalinist regime, aiming at creating a homogeneous society carried out oppressive practices, restrictions and had no tolerance towards any oppositional ideas. Bakhtin, who is called as "a philosopher of freedom" by Clark and Holquist did not yield to the sanctions of the Soviet Union and he continued his studies in Kazakhstan in exile (11). In 1937, he moved to Kimr, where he taught Russian and German at the local schools and then in 1945 he moved to Moscow and worked at Saransk Teacher's College until his retirement in 1961. Bakhtin died in a retirement home near Moscow in March 1975 and was buried according to the Orthodox rituals (Todorov 5). However he was able to publish his major works before his death, one is the enlarged version of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art* which was published in 1963 again, another is *Rabelais and His World*, which was a thesis on Rabelais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel* written in 1940 and defended in 1946 but could not be published until 1965.

Lastly, the other is *the Dialogic Imagination* which is compilation of four essays introducing the terms chronotope and heteroglossia. As is stated before, the socio-political conditions of the period in which Bakhtin lived had great effects on him and his works. However, it is crucial to add that one of those oppressive and restrictive policies of the totalitarian Soviet state used in order to eliminate the oppositional ideas is censorship which had the greatest impact on the suggestion of theory of the carnivalesque. For this reason, it would be appropriate to touch the issue of censorship on literature before continuing with the theory.

Throughout the history of Soviet State, whose aim was to create a total and homogeneous society, art and literature were used as means of reaching masses and spreading the ideology of the state. In the late 1920s, the party founded Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (RAPP) aiming to improve education and cultural level of the masses and created a new, revolutionary literary trend written mostly by workers and peasants thus addressing the working class. However; in April 1932 after declaring that the working class literature trend became too fixed in the sense of its plot and readers, the Central Committee replaced RAPP with Union of Soviet Writers to attract as well the attention of those who were not members of the party (Boobbyer 187). This new organization expected authors to write in the narrative form supported by the state that is socialist realism, which indicates a conservative artistic trend presenting a conventional view of reality in narrative form, and at the same time reflecting the viewpoint of the state. In most of these novels, there was an archetypal hero who emerged among the people and acted for the benefit of party and socialism (189-190). The organization with its strict controls also worked for the state to censor those artists and writers who opposed the expectations of party and became the targets as in the case of Bakhtin's friend Medvedev who was killed in an attack. In this dark period when many artists and writers were censored, arrested or executed, Bakhtin interpreted Rabelais' *Gargantua and*

Pantagruel and developed the theory of the carnivalesque in *Rabelais and His World* which was an allegorical criticism of Stalinist policy and appreciation of folk culture. Thus, the life of Mikhail Bakhtin had crucial impacts on the development of his theories. Although this study deals with Bakhtinian theory of the carnivalesque, it will be appropriate to touch upon his other theories on dialogism, heteroglossia and chronotope briefly.

1.3.2 Bakhtinian Theories of Heteroglossia, Dialogism and Chronotope

The term "heteroglossia" which means multiplicity of voices, multi-languagedness or diversity in speech is used by Mikhail Bakhtin in his article titled "Discourse in the Novel" when he defines novel. As Pam Morris explains in *the Bakhtin Reader*, according to Bakhtin, the novel can be defined as diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized (114). The term heteroglossia emphasizes the importance of "the speech aspect of the language" or in another word "utterance" (Holquist xxi). Bakhtin states that heteroglossia "was parodic and aimed sharply and polemically against the official languages of its given time (Morris 115). Therefore, he asserts that there is no fixed meaning in novel, on the contrary, it changes according to the utterances and conditions of the given time and place. This multi-voicedness serves as a means to represent the official and unofficial discourses.

Another term, "dialogism" which is derived from the word, dialogue, was introduced by Bakhtin in his work *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art*. According to Bakhtin, texts and words gain their meaning in accordance with

the current concern or utterance of people and therefore they may indicate different meanings in different contexts for the readers coming from different backgrounds. Michael Holquist summarizes Bakhtin's concept of dialogism as "the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia" (426). As it can be understood from this complex statement, the concept is related to language, epistemology and human beings. Bakhtin, as a philosopher, who suffered from totalitarian restrictions under Stalin's totalitarianism, uses dialogism in a positive sense since the term moves beyond the monological, authoritarian expressions and thoughts and allows diversity in interpretations, descriptions and opposing alternatives. For Bakhtin, dialogism can be used best in the novel genre because of its multivocality and extendibility into other meanings.

As for the last Bakhtinian term to be handled, chronotope which is adapted by Bakhtin from Einstein's Theory of Relativity and explained as "time-space". According to Holquist, chronotope is "an optic" for reading texts considering the time in which they were written (425). However, it is crucial to mention that chronotope is not a literary device; instead, for Bakhtin; it is the inevitable characteristic of a literary work since it is certain that writers are affected by the time and space in which they live. Therefore, In *Dialogic Imagination*, he states that "the chronotope is the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied" (250). Holquist adds that Bakhtin's time and space relation is different from most of the other uses of time-space in that neither time nor space is privileged instead they are independent from one another.

Out of all these brief definitions of Bakhtin's key terms, it can be said that Bakhtin developed these theories in a chronotopic sense under the oppression of Stalinist regime. At this point it will be appropriate to pass on to the Bakhtinian carnivalesque which is the subject matter of this study.

1.3.3 Bakhtinian Carnivalesque

Mikhail Bakhtin was greatly affected by Rabelais, the French Renaissance writer and his work *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. In his book, Bakhtin summarizes his opinions about Rabelais by giving a quotation from Jules Michelet, the French historian:

> Rabelais collected wisdom from the popular elemental forces of the ancient Provençal idioms, sayings, proverbs, school farces, from the mouth of fools and clowns. But refracted by this foolery, the genius of the age and its prophetic power are revealed in all their majesty. If he does not discover, he foresees, he promises, he directs. (Bakhtin 2)

Rabelais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel* is an allegorical work like Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World* and as stated by Jerome Schwartz, the author of the book *Irony and Ideology in Rabelais: Structures of Subversion*, through his ludicrous but rude heroes, Gargantua and Pantagruel, Rabelais "reflects his ideology as a humanist person opposing to the obsessive practices of Sorbonne, Parliament and Catholic orthodoxy" and with parody, satire and humour, he mocked oppressive religious and political forces by emphasizing the physical joys of life (4). As for Bakhtin's allegorical attitude in *Rabelais and His World*, one can say that the oppressive practices of Soviet state and censorship were criticized. As it is mentioned above, during the Stalinist era, writers were expected to write in the socialist realist mode, without using any kinds of styles producing laughter such as satire and irony and those writers who did not obey this were censored. In their works, both Bakhtin and Rabelais rejected these prohibitions and used refined laughter.

In *Rabelais and His World* (hereafter *Rabelais)*, Bakhtin considers the carnivalesque as a style. Because of the vastness of the subject, this study

only deals with the concept of carnival, and its key notions which are carnival laughter and grotesque realism. Thus, it would be appropriate to start with the explanation of carnival. In the prologue of Bakhtin's *Rabelais*, Michael Holquist warns the reader that Bakhtin's concept of carnival must not be confused with those carnivals and festive times which are organized for the sake of an official institution or organization such as government, state or church (xviii). On the contrary, Bakhtin's carnival appreciates the carnivals of the folk culture which are unofficial. Therefore, he considers carnival as a "socio-cultural phenomenon" and states that it was very important in the life of medieval people, since this kind of social gathering rejected the "serious tone of medieval ecclesiastical and feudal culture", and deconstructed the ideology of dominant culture (4-5). While explaining carnival and its importance Bakhtin claims that:

> As opposed to the official feast, one might say that carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions. Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalized and completed. (10)

As it can be understood from the quotation, Bakhtin's carnival was against all kinds of binary oppositions and socially fixed roles, norms and traditions, thus, the laws of the official culture were deconstructed and replaced by the rules of carnival which were arranged by the popular culture. According to him, in carnival the ideology of the dominant official culture and all kinds of divisions were turned upside down temporarily. Therefore, in the carnival scene, all people, "divided by the barriers of caste, property, profession and age" began to be considered equal (Bakhtin 10). Bakhtin also adds that:

> Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the

> people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. During carnival time, life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom. It has a universal spirit; it is a special condition of the entire world, of the world's revival and renewal, in which all take part. (7)

To continue with one of the key notions of the carnival that is carnival laughter, in other words, folk culture of humour, it can be said that it reflects the humorous side of carnival. According to Bakhtin, there are certain characteristics of carnival laughter: Firstly, as "a festive laughter" it is not an individual act and the reactions of all people are included. Secondly, "it is universal in scope" any person from any class and any background can join in it, since all people are equal during the carnival period. Thirdly, "this laughter is ambivalent", in other words, it is both happy, victorious yet mocking (Bakhtin 11). When these characteristics of carnival are considered, it is appropriate to say that the importance of carnival laughter lies in its power of unification and equalization.

In *Rabelais*, Bakhtin asserts that the laughter in carnivals was created through different forms and techniques such as "folk festivities of the carnival type, the comic rites and cults, the clowns and fools, giants, dwarfs and jugglers the vast and manifold literature of parody" (Bakhtin 4). Besides these forms and techniques, he divides the manifestations of folk culture which reflect the carnival spirit into three forms that are:

> **1.** Ritual spectacles: carnival pageants, comic shows of the market place.
>
> **2.** Comic verbal compositions: parodies both oral and written, in Latin and in the vernacular.
>
> **3.** Various genres of billingsgate: curses, oaths, popular blazons. (*Rabelais* 4-5)

Each type which is mentioned above, was very important for the medieval people, since the production of laughter in these carnivalistic forms and rituals opposed to the serious side of official culture, and built “a second world and a second life outside officialdom” (Bakhtin 6). Suffice it to say that, carnival laughter with its relation to freedom serves as a means of deconstructive force for the seriousness of the ruling class and dominant official culture and reconstruction of the nonofficial popular culture. As Bakhtin says with its laughing side, it makes a man reject his official position even if he is a monk, cleric and scholar (13).

The grotesque realism and material body are the other important aspects of carnival which are going to be dealt with in this study. As Bakhtin mentions, in *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Rabelais presented the human body and human beings in an exaggerated form with its images of “food, drink, defecation and sexual life” with the themes of “fertility, growth and a brimming-over abundance” (18-19). In Rabelais’ five book series, which he wrote with the aim of criticizing medieval period and its traditions, the main characters father Gargantua and his son Pantagruel, though they are giants, show characteristics of human beings. Although they have these characteristics, they are depicted in exaggerated manners such as eating and drinking excessively, burping and farting recklessly. For Bakhtin, these exaggerated images of human beings and bodies serve a positive purpose that is to reflect the “collective ancestral body” of all people who are in a constant development and renovation instead of “the isolated biological individual” or “private, egotistic, economic man” (19). Therefore; he claims that these exaggerated, fertile material bodily elements are universal since they are not individualized. They are the characteristics of everybody and embrace all people without exception. By giving a Russian statement used in old tales as an example he asserts that “the material bodily principle is a triumphant, festive principle, it is a ‘banquet for all the world’” (Bakhtin 19).

Bakhtin claims that the essential principle of the grotesque realism is degradation which means lowering or downwarding the high and ideal to the bodily, material level. According to Bakhtin when degradation is the subject, the words “downward” and “upward” become “topographically” important. “Downward” is associated with earth and upwards is associated with heaven. He defines Earth as “an element that devours, swallows up (the grave, the womb) and at the same time an element of birth, of renascence (the maternal breasts)” (Bakhtin 21). Therefore, to degrade comes to the meaning that coming down to earth which “swallows up and gives birth” simultaneously (Bakhtin 21). To degrade is also associated with the reproductive organs and the lower stratum of the body. Since, the lower stratum of the body is related to the acts such as “defecation and copulation, conception, pregnancy and birth” this body is not only destructive but productive as well (Bakhtin 21). The grotesque images are also important when the grotesque realism is the subject. Bakhtin claims that grotesque images “remain ambivalent and contradictory; they are ugly, monstrous, hideous from the point of view of “classic” aesthetics, that is, the aesthetics of the ready-made and the completed” (Bakhtin 25). Therefore, the grotesque images, and the grotesque body are far from being what is known as ideal. As Bakhtin puts forward “the unfinished and open body (dying, bringing forth and being born) is not separated from the world by clearly defined boundaries; it is blended with the world, with animals with objects” (27). For this reason, grotesque images are often deformed and incomplete bodies which are open to change.

After explaining the carnival and its key notions that are carnival laughter/ humor of folk culture and grotesque realism/ grotesque body, it is now appropriate to deal with the technique of carnivalized writing, or carnivalization in Bakhtin’s words. This technique is explained by Simon Dentith in his book *the Bakhtinian Thought* as such:

> Carnivalized writing, that is writing which has taken the carnival spirit into itself and thus reproduces, within its own structures and by its own practice, the characteristic inversions, parodies and discrownings of carnival proper. (65)

Like Bakhtin's concept of carnival, in carnivalized writing as well, the author deconstructs all the hierarchies and all the people become equal regardless of their age, sex, socio-political background. The official culture is parodied and power structures are turned upside down in the novels since it is a heteroglossic genre because of its multivocality, the meaning is always open and can be extended into other meanings. In Angela Carter's novels which are the subject matters of this study, all the social boundaries collapse, become destabilized especially through the women characters whose aim is to subvert the oppression of patriarchy. Therefore it would be appropriate to say that established roles of women are disrupted in the carnival sphere and "new woman" is constructed in a world with which the reader is not familiar.

GCRIS

2. ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF GROTESQUE REALISM AND CARNIVAL LAUGHTER IN *NIGHTS AT THE CIRCUS*

Nights at the Circus consists of three parts, settings of which are geographically different from one another. It tells the story and adventures of Fevvers, the winged trapeze artist in both first person and third person narrator. In the first section of the novel, which is set in London in 1899, Fevvers with her foster mother gives an interview to American journalist Jack Walser. Throughout the interview, he, whose actual aim is to learn whether Fevvers' wings are fake or not tries to incarcerate Fevvers with his questions. However; Fevvers interrupts his attempts and takes control on her hand. As Carter states in the novel, "it was as if Walser had become a prisoner of her voice, her cavernous, sombre voice, a voice made for shouting about the tempest, her voice of a celestial fishwife" (*Nights at the Circus* 47). Magali Cornier Michael, in her article "Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus*: An Engaged Feminism via Subversive Postmodern Strategies" emphasizes the importance of this attitude of Fevvers that is representing the women's voice by not allowing to those who try to silence her and other women. She asserts that:

> By having Fevvers read her own life and write, or rather tell, her own story – history as she chooses, the novel challenges the traditional appropriation of women's lives and histories endemic in Western, male-centered culture. Furthermore, Fevvers deliberately flirts with the boundary between truth and non-truth. Her story is both an autobiography and a tall tale and, as such destabilizes both male definitions of women and notions of identity, truth and reality. (209)

During the interview, it is revealed that Fevvers, who was left on the doorstep of Ma Nelson's brothel by her own ambiguous family, was brought up by a group of prostitutes which had an undeniable effect on shaping her identity and on her point of view about men and women. Linden Peach, in "Illegitimate Power, Carnival and Theatre: *Nights at the Circus* (1984) and *Wise Children* (1991)" points out the other significant side of brothel by asserting that this brothel is a "feminist centre" except for the working hours since the women during these hours become "active subjects" instead of "sexual objects" (133). Throughout the time she lived there, Fevvers' wings led her to be called by different nicknames; firstly due to her "baby winglets" the women began to call her as "Cupid" and after her menstruation, she began to be called as the "Winged Victory" representing the women of "the New Age" in which "no women will be bound down to the ground" (*Nights at the Circus* 22-25). When the brothel was to be closed because of a fire which broke out suddenly, Fevvers began working at Lizzie's and her sister's ice cream parlour. However, when their work collapsed, Fevvers had to quit the business and started working in Madame Schereck's "museum of woman monsters" which was a brothel as well (*Nights at the Circus* 61). After working there for a short period of time as the "tombstone angel" or "Angel of Death", Madame Schereck decided to sell Fevvers to one of her clients called Christian Rosencreutz who believes that sacrificing Fevvers would help him to gain immortality (*Nights at the Circus* 79). However, Fevvers, who managed to escape, went back to Lizzie's home and sooner, they joined the circus of Colonel Kearney who is a stereotypical, pragmatist American character from Kentucky with "his 'trademark' costume – a pair of tightly tailored trousers striped in red and white and a blue waistcoat ornamented with stars" (*Nights at the Circus* 114). In the end of this section, Walser, who has not still been able to get the answers he wants to hear, calls his chief in the paper and tells his decision to join the imperial tour of the circus to learn more about the famous aerialiste.

The second section of the novel, “Petersburg” is probably the most eventful and “carnivalistic” section of the novel in which the reader witnesses the many aspects of circus life. Besides Walser’s introduction to the circus, some new characters are also introduced to the reader such as Mignon, Princess of Abyssinia, Samson the Strong Man, Buffo the Great, The Charivaris, etc. This middle section begins with Walser’s acceptance to the circus as a part of the clown group “First-of-May” with the approval of Colonel Kearney and Sybil which is a pig yet serves as a consultant with its instincts (*Nights at the Circus* 117). In many of the episodes of this section, the reader witnesses the chaotic atmosphere of the circus as it can be seen in the circus shows or in the incidents such as Buffo the Great’s attack to Walser, or the attempt of the Charivaris to kill Fevvers out of jealousy, or the attack of one of the tigers of Princess of Abyssinia to Mignon which results in shooting the tiger. It is also crucial to mention that in this section Walser begins to undergo some transformation and to develop some affection to Fevvers. At the end of the chapter Fevvers who is the victim of her own unsatisfied appetite for wealth is attacked again by a male named Grand Duke, who invites Fevvers to dinner at his home. However, she manages to escape again and catches the train which will take the circus to Japan via Siberia.

In the third and the last section of the novel, “Siberia”, the train, on its way to Japan, is blown up by a group of convicts who killed some government officials for having violated their women. The convicts, who believe Colonel Kearney’s false rumour about Fevvers’ engagement with the Prince of Wales want her help to ask forgiveness from Tsar in order to be able to turn to their own villages. Therefore, all the characters except Walser, who is left under the wreckage, are captured and taken away by those savages. Walser, completely losing his mind due to the crash is saved by two women in a lesbian group, Olga Alexandrovna and Vera Andreyevna, while they were running away from the prison of Countess P., a woman who killed her husband and then founded a panoptic prison to punish those committing

the same crime in order to relieve herself. After Olga and Vera leave Walser on his own in order not to be arrested again, he runs into the jungle and comes across a Shaman who thinks that he is a spiritual and religious figure sent by Gods. He teaches Walser their tribe's rituals and begins to shape Walser's identity. After for a while, the other members of the circus including Fevvers and Lizzie manage to escape from the hands of the convicts and by following the noises, they reach the tribe in which Walser lives. Finally, Walser who has become a "fitting mate for the New Woman" meets Fevvers again at the dawn of a new century (*Nights at the Circus* 334). The novel ends with the famous, ambiguous laughter of Fevvers which problematizes the meaning of the novel since it confuses the mind of reader whether it was a victorious laughter or a happy laughter like in the fairy tales.

2.1. The Use of Grotesque Realism in *Nights at the Circus*

Angela Carter adapts Bakhtin's theory of grotesque realism in *Nights at the Circus* and creates grotesque images and characters through which she aims to emphasize the secondary position of women who have been relegated to in society. Carter's depiction of her marginal, grotesque female characters clashes with the traditional depiction of women, and through such kind of depiction, Carter reverses the social status of them, which is a feminist attempt. Magali Cornier Michael claims in her above-named article that Carter, in *Nights at the Circus* "challenges the traditional association of femaleness with femininity [...] through the depiction of characters who confound accepted gender norms and polarity" (211). Thus in this part of this study, the grotesque characters in each part of *Nights at the Circus* will be analyzed according to the key features of grotesque realism that are mentioned in the theoretical background of this study.

It will be appropriate to begin with the first section “London” and the main character of the novel. In line with the definition of grotesque body, which is a material and monstrous body with its “power of re generation” having a “regenerative power” (*Rabelais and His World* 35), Fevvers can be said to embrace the characteristics of the grotesque body. Hatched from an egg since her assumed father was a swan, Fevvers is pictured in the poster of the circus with her “pinions large enough, powerful enough to bear up such a big girl as she” (*Nights at the Circus* 4). Besides her large and powerful wings, Carter portrays other grotesque physical characteristics of her in the novel as such:

> At close quarters, it must be said that she looked more like a dray mare than an angel. At six feet two in her stockings, she would have to give Walser a couple of inches in order to match him and, though they said she was ‘divinely tall’, there was, off-stage, not much of the divine about her unless there were gin places in heaven where she might preside behind the bar. Her face, broad and oval as a meat dish, had been thrown on a common wheel out of coarse clay; nothing subtle about her appeal, which was just as well if she were to function as the democratically elected divinity of the imminent century of the Common Man. (*Nights at the Circus* 9)

Fevvers’ physical appearance corresponds with Bakhtin’s description of grotesque body which is described in *Rabelais* as “ugly, monstrous, hideous from the point of view of classic aesthetics” (*Rabelais* 25). However this grotesque depiction of Fevvers does not appeal to Western patriarchal world since she contradicts with the ideal woman figure in terms of her physical appearance and actions. Thus, it is appropriate to say that Fevvers with her grotesque body represents female empowerment at the turn of the century for she does not let patriarchal culture put her into object position, exploit her sexually and use violence on her. Helga Valborg Steinarsdóttir in her study

Grotesque Physicality: Female Excess in Angela Carter's "Nights at the Circus" writes that:

> Fevvers is a perfect role model for the empowered freak because she is never victimized to the extent where she cannot regain her strength, and furthermore she exemplifies how remaining certain about one's own self-worth is a necessary premise for self-preservation and personal gain. (19)

Besides her grotesque physicality, Fevvers is also depicted in the novel as the "Queen of ambiguities" and "goddess of in-between states" (*Nights at the Circus* 92). The difficulty in naming or classifying Fevvers puts her in an ambivalent position. Mr. Rosencreutz, who is aware of this difficulty in describing Fevvers' prefers to describe her by creating binary oppositions as such:

> Lady of the hub of the celestial wheel, creature half of earth and half of air, virgin and whore, reconciler of fundament and firmament, reconciler of opposing states through the mediation of your ambivalent body, reconciler of the grand opposites of death and life... (*Nights at the Circus* 93)

Thus it is possible to claim that, the ambiguous depiction of Fevvers is another element which makes her a grotesque figure. Magali Cornier Michael believes as well that Fevvers is an ambivalent character who is disrupting the traditionally established norms and definitions and she asserts that:

> Not only are her identity – and origins nebulous, but her reputation as "Virgin Whore" (*Nights at the Circus* 55) defies the highly charged opposition between virgin and whore used by Western culture to name, objectify, categorize and marginalize women. (216)

Carter's ambivalent, grotesque depiction of Fevvers challenges the traditional attributions of Western patriarchal world. As a woman living in the Victorian Period (1837-1901), Fevvers is expected to be classically beautiful, fragile, stereotypical Victorian woman; yet it is obvious that Fevvers cannot meet the expectations with both her physical and character qualities. Another woman writer who criticizes stereotypical Victorian women is Virginia Woolf. In her essay titled "Professions for Women" written in 1931 Woolf reacts against the notion of "Angel in the House", which comes from the title of the poem that Coventry Patmore wrote for his wife who is reflected as a self sacrificing, domestic woman. In the essay, Woolf not only criticizes the ideology which defines the ideal woman as charming, pure, unselfish and nurturing, whose only duty is to care for her family but also reacts against the classification of women as either in the figure of innocent mother or as in the detested monstrous image. Therefore, in "Professions for Women", Woolf suggests other female writers to kill the "Angel in the House" in their works like herself. Despite the fact that, too many years have passed since the time Woolf wrote the essay, the Western perception of women survived until the contemporary world. Thus, like Woolf, yet in a different manner, Carter also rejects the concept of ideal woman. She reverses the social status of women through her grotesque characters and with their gay, affirmative and militantly anti-authoritarian attitude to life and destroys the social hierarchy.

Besides these physical and characteristic ambivalences of Fevvers, her appetite for food, wealth and sexuality make her a grotesque character since they emphasize her physicality and materiality. Carter by reflecting her in such a way degrades Fevvers from a high and an ideal level into a material level which is the essential principle of grotesque realism. However, degradation is also associated with the lower stratum of the body and thus reproductive organs. Therefore, the body of Fevvers can be considered as a productive one. Supporting this idea, Helen Stoddart says that "as a woman Fevvers could give birth to a new era of femaleness that rejects

subordination and marginalization (30). Hence, Carter through creating such a character revolts against the traditionally accepted norms and produces new alternatives.

Another grotesque character introduced in this section of the novel who also replicates Bakhtin's ideas on grotesque is Lizzie who is the mother figure for Fevvers, working in Ma Nelson's brothel. Carter depicts her as:

> [...] a tiny, wizened, gnome-like apparition who might have been any age between thirty and fifty; snapping, black eyes, sallow skin, an incipient moustache on the upper lip and a close-cropped frizzle of tri-coloured hair – bright grey at the roots, stark grey in between, burnt with henna at the tips. The shoulders of her skimpy, decent, black dress were with dandruff. She had a brisk air of bristle, like a terrier bitch. (*Nights at the Circus* 10)

Besides her physical appearance, Lizzie's grotesqueness as a figure lays in her ambivalent situation which is her being a prostitute and a mother figure at the same time. Walser, with his perspective imposed by the society that the prostitutes are the "women of the worst class and defiled" points at this ambivalence he says "And I myself have known some pretty decent whores, some damn' fine women, indeed, whom any man might have been proud to marry" (*Nights at the Circus* 20). However, Lizzie's answer to this statement that is "Marriage? Pah! [...] What is marriage but prostitution to one man instead of many? No different! D'you think a decent whore'd be proud to marry you, young man? Eh?" shows the reader that she is beyond her time and she does not care about the role that is imposed upon her by society (*Nights at the Circus* 21). Lizzie's being pious and her habit of praying which is assumed as "an inconvenient habit" for a whore can be analyzed as the degradation of the ideal which shows the reader her being a grotesque character from another perspective (*Nights at the Circus* 27). Carter transforms the word "whore" in a positive meaning with the help of the

characters like Lizzie and she disrupts the traditional, accepted norms as Michael states “the novel’s use of extraordinary and fantastic characters and situations and its creation of actual and surrogate carnivals begin to destabilize the existing norms as well as the binary logic which undergird Western culture” (215).

The prostitutes in Madame Schereck’s “museum of woman monsters” are the other grotesque figures in the section serving for Carter’s feminist purposes (*Nights at the Circus* 61). Although Carter depicts all these grotesque prostitutes such as Sleeping Beauty, Fanny Four-Eyes, Cobwebs, Albert/Albertina and Wilthshire Wonder as freaks who serve for the fantasies and pleasures of men which put them into an object position, actually she reverses the patriarchal representation of women and re-locates them in the subject position. When Walser wants to learn more about them, Fevvers describes those grotesque figures as such: Albert/Albertina is “bipartite, that is to say, half and half and neither of either” (*Nights at the Circus* 66), despite her physical ungainliness s/he is “a droll one and always full of fun” (*Nights at the Circus* 79). Wilthshire Wonder is “not three foot high” (*Nights at the Circus* 66). Fanny is “another kettle of fish, big, raw boned, plain-spoken hearty lass from Yorkshire” (*Nights at the Circus* 78). Cobwebs’ face is covered with webs “from eyebrows to cheekbones” with “a unique quality of vision” (*Nights at the Circus* 78). Sleeping Beauty is “a country curate’s daughter and bright and merry as a grig, until, one morning in her fourteenth year, the very day her menses started, she never wakened” for long and fell asleep again and thus she lays “naked on a marble slab” on which Fevvers stands as the “tombstone angel” or in other words as “the Angel of Death” (*Nights at the Circus* 79). Although Carter’s depiction seems to degrade the position of these marginalized and deformed women in society, actually it reverses the social condition of them and celebrates the female body by exaggerating it. As Michael claims:

> By constructing the whorehouse, the museum for women monsters, the circus and Siberia as versions of carnival, the novel disrupts and challenges traditional Western notions of reality and provides an aesthetic vocabulary for delineating possibilities of change. (216)

That is to say, through the depiction of Fevvers, Lizzie and the prostitutes of Madame Schereck, Carter creates grotesque characters. As an author affected by Barthes and Derrida, she deconstructs the traditional images of women and attributes a positive connotation on the image of “whore”.

To continue, the second section of the novel “Petersburg” of which setting is mostly Colonel Kearney’s circus also contains many grotesque characters such as Buffo the Great, Walser, The Princess of Abyssinia, Samson the Strong Man, The Ape Man, Mignon etc. However, before analyzing each character, it is appropriate to say that, the circus itself is a grotesque image as Linden Peach states:

> On the one hand, with its hierarchy of male performers, pursuit of profit and oppression of subordinates it is a symbol of patriarchal capitalist society. [...] However it is also the focus for an alternative carnivalesque worldview, which, like the popular fairs to which Brecht and Bakhtin allude, demystifies and debunks the established social hierarchy. (141)

Colonel Kearney’s circus is one of the grotesque images of the novel because of its ambivalent atmosphere. The main reason of this ambivalence is that it represents both the patriarchal dominant culture and creates a new world order with its own rules. After mentioning this, it would be appropriate to analyze the grotesque characters of the section.

One of the most important grotesque characters of this section is the head of First-of-May, George Buffins, who is also known as “Buffo the Great”

and “the Master Clown” (*Nights at the Circus* 134). There is a close relation between Buffo’s profession and his being a grotesque character. Those who chose this profession are grotesque because of their absurd physical appearance and excessive behaviours. Buffo emphasizes this, by explaining the origin of the word “clown”, he asserts that the word derives from “klunni” in the alphabet of Old Norse which means “loutish” and “kluntet” which is its cognitive in Danish, meaning “clumsy, maladroit” and in “Yorkshire dialect “gormless” (*Nights at the Circus* 139). As Buffo states, those who work as clowns “lose [their] wits” (*Nights at the Circus* 139). Carter’s depiction of Buffo also highlights his grotesqueness. She describes him as such:

> Buffo with his round, white face and the inch-wide rings of rouge round his eyes, and his four-cornered mouth, like a bow tie, and mockery of mockeries, under his roguishly cocked, white, conical cap, he wears a wig that does not simulate hair. It is, in fact, a bladder. Think of that. He wears his insides on his outside, and a portion of his most obscene and intimate insides, at that; so that you might think he is bald, he stores his brains in the organ which, conventionally, stores piss. [...] He is a big man, seven feet high and broad to suit, so that he makes you laugh when he trips over little things. [...] This giant is the victim of material objects. Things are against him. They wage war on him. (*Nights at the Circus* 134-35)

Buffo due to his physical appearance and his depiction as a mad, foolish person with the inability to fit into the rules of official life is a grotesque figure. However, William Willeford states in his book *The Fool and His Scepter* that this inability is a “triumph” and a “defeat” at the same time for all the fools and clowns, since this inability not only helps them to transgress the boundaries and makes them freer but also it puts them in a ridiculous position (27). This ambivalent situation which is the result of his in-between status in life is one

of the reasons of his being a grotesque character. Buffo, like other clowns, not only violates the traditionally accepted norms with his mask, physical appearance, dresses, and excessive attitudes towards life, but he also expresses the problems of other people with these features. Therefore, Willeford asserts that "the fool is often a 'private person' who gives symbolic expression to the problems of human individuality in its relation both to rational norms and to what exceeds them" (13). Another characteristic of Buffo which makes him a grotesque character is his exaggerated appetite for food and sexuality which actually has become his habits. Carter describes Buffo's appetite in the novel as such:

> His personal habits were dominated by his tremendous and perpetual thirst. His pockets always bulged with bottles; his drinking was prodigious yet always seemed somehow unsatisfactory to himself, as if alcohol were an inadequate substitute for some headier or more substantial intoxicant, as though he would have liked, if he could, to bottle the whole world, tip it down to his throat, then piss it against the wall. (*Nights at the Circus* 137)

The unsatisfied appetite of Buffo degrades him into a material level and makes him equal with his reader who are also physical creatures living in a material level though they are in an upper social level than Buffo. As it was mentioned above, the sexual appetite of Buffo is also full of excessiveness. These excessive behaviours can be seen in a show of clowns. Carter draws the picture of this show as such:

> A joey thrust the vodka bottle up the arsehole of an august; the august, in response, promptly dropped his tramp's trousers to reveal a virile member of priapic size, bright purple in colour and spotted whit yellow stars, dangling two cerise balloons from the fly.

> At that, a second august, with an evil leer, took a great thing off but as soon as he was brandishing it in triumph above his head another lurid phallus appeared in the place of the first, this one bright blue with scarlet polkadots and cerise testicles, and so on, until the clown with shears was juggling with a dozen of the things. (*Nights at the Circus* 144)

Since, this show with the images of castration and the emphasis on excessive sexuality can be related to lower stratum of the body and reproductive organs, it emphasizes the importance of fertility, rebirth and regeneration. As it was already mentioned in the theoretical background of this study, the spirit of carnival has always been against any kind of finalizations. The shows of "The Clown's Funeral" and "Tumultuous Resurrection of the Clown" can be given as examples to this, since there is a continuous process of reproduction indicating the continuity of life (*Nights at the Circus* 137). Thus, Buffo's attitudes which deconstruct the norms of patriarchal society and reconstruct new orders in his own constructed world reflect the free carnival spirit.

The other characters in the section "Petersburg" such as Mignon, The Princess of Abyssinia, and Samson the Strong Man can also be considered as grotesque images due to their ambivalent social status and background. One of these characters is Mignon, who had a miserable childhood and adolescence as the daughter of a man who killed his wife. The times she spent at orphanage after her father's arrest and the days she worked as an impersonator of dead people for a cheater photographer called Herr M. have been influential in her becoming a grotesque character. Also her marriage to the Ape Man which was full of physical and psychological violence and her relationship with Samson the Strong Man, based on the fulfilment of Samson's sexual needs are the reasons that led to her grotesqueness. Those social pressures and injustices she experienced and the love of

Princess Abyssinia leads her to undergo a transformation. While she was symbolizing the women who were regarded as sexual objects by patriarchal culture, she becomes a strong woman who reverses the social roles which clash with the traditionally accepted norms. She becomes a lesbian and rejects the patriarchal domination on her. Another one of these grotesque characters is Princess Abyssinia. Besides her lesbian relationship, the great ability of Princess as a speech handicapped woman with communicating animals puts her into an ambivalent position. The other grotesque character Samson the Strong Man, as it can also be deduced from his name is also physically grotesque. At the beginning of the section, Samson with his abusive language and approach to women represents the subculture and the dominant patriarchal ideology. However, when Mignon rejects him and chooses Princess instead he totally changes and begins to challenge the established social order which creates ambivalence.

In the third and final section of the novel which is “Siberia”, Countess P. and her inmates and Walser, who becomes fully grotesque at the end of this section, will be analyzed as grotesque characters. Although Countess P., is also a grotesque woman character like other women in the novel, there is a quite difference between their grotesqueness. Countess P., destabilized the socially established norms by poisoning her husband before founding a prison. However, later she begins to serve for the benefit of patriarchal dominant ideology. The adaptation of her into traditionally imposed norms puts her in an ambivalent status and makes her a grotesque character. The convicts and guardians of Countess, who were under the gaze in a panoptic prison all day revolted against her with the temptation of Olga Alexandrovna who believed that she did nothing to be punished. The lesbian community which is founded by them after their liberation also challenges the established rules since “the new sisterhood of women sets out to forge a new social order that excludes men and rejects the Notion of “fathers” and “the use of the patronymic” (Michael 221). Therefore, the efforts of these women

to make a fresh start disrupt the established social conventions and also make them the subject of their own life, which makes them ambivalent, grotesque characters.

The last character which will be analyzed in this novel is Walser. Although he was introduced to the reader as a journalist at the beginning of the novel, it will be appropriate to analyze him at this final section since he completes the transformation he underwent. Walser, who has not physical excessive features, is grotesque due to his ambivalent character. At the "London" part of the novel, Walser, who had fixed interpretations and point of view about women, reflects dominant patriarchal ideology. However, in the "Petersburg" part of the novel starting with the affection he felt for Fevvers, he begins to change. It is certain to say that his profession and the life of the circus had an undeniable affect on his transformation. In the "Siberia", Walser, who loses his mind due to the train crash, meets with a Shaman. As a naturalist and mystic person, the Shaman shapes the identity of Walser and turns him into a man who acts with his insights and is independent of established rules. Finally, he becomes a "New Man" and contradicts with the rules of the society which makes him a grotesque character (*Nights at the Circus* 334).

When all the analysis of characters is taken into account, Carter who is affected by Bakhtin's carnivalesque creates carnivalistic, grotesque characters in *Nights at the Circus* in order to create a new order. In this new order, as a feminist, she criticizes the socially established norms, oppressive ideology of patriarchy and challenges the traditional depiction of women and men yet temporarily. Judith Mayne states in *Framed: Lesbians, Feminists and Media Culture* that "such enthusiastic celebration of the carnival obscures the extent to which the carnival may exist as a safety valve, as a controlled eruption that guarantees the maintenance of the existing order"

(17). Carter believed as well that, this liberation is just a temporary one as she explains in an interview with Lorna Sage:

> It is interesting that Bakhtin became very fashionable in the 1980s, during the demise of the particular kind of theory that would have put all kinds of questions around the whole idea of the carnivalesque. The carnival has to stop. The whole point of the feast of fools is that things went on as they did before, after it stopped. (188)

Carter, in a pessimistic way, emphasizes the difficulty of deconstruction of the dominant culture and reconstruction of a new order. However in her novel, as a feminist author, she creates a temporary liberation via her marginalised, grotesque characters and shows the reader the injustices of patriarchal, hierarchical, official culture.

2.2 The Use of Carnival Laughter in *Nights at the Circus*

It was already mentioned in the theoretical background that carnival laughter inherently deconstructs the “seriousness of ruling class” and with its power of unification serves as a means of reconstructive force. Carter uses this ambivalent, victorious and mocking side of carnival laughter in *Nights at the Circus* to destruct the dominant official culture. Therefore, in this part of the study, the creators of laughter who are Clown Alley and the famous laughter of Fevvers will be discussed.

Bakhtin states that, one of the ways of creating laughter in carnivals is the clowns, fools and the jugglers. In the novel, Carter uses The Clown Alley

in order to create new possibilities against the established rules of official life. Therefore, The Clown Alley with their chaotic shows, such as “Clowns’ Christmas Dinner” (*Nights at the Circus* 135), which subverts the Jesus Christ’s “the Last Supper” create laughter and deconstruct the established norms. Carter pictures Buffo’s deconstruction of himself at the climax of the show as such:

> At the climax of his turn, everything having collapsed about him as if a grenade exploded it, he starts to deconstruct himself. His face becomes contorted by the most hideous grimaces, as if he were trying to shake off the very wet white with which it is coated: shake! shake! shake out his teeth, shake off his nose, shake away his eyeballs, let all go flying off in a convulsive self-dismemberment. (*Nights at the Circus* 135)

The disrupting power of Buffo’s show not only abolishes the rules of official culture, but also it creates a sense of liberation and equalization in a new order. However like Carter, Buffo is also aware of the decisiveness and temporality of this new order in which laughter is the subject. He asserts that:

> “Yes, young lad, young Jack, young First-of-May we subject ourselves to laughter from choice. We are the whores of mirth, for, like a whore, we know what we are; we know we are mere hirelings hard at work and yet those who hire us see us as beings perpetually at play. Our work is their pleasure and so they think our work must be our pleasure, too, so there is always an abyss between their notion of our work as play, and ours, of their leisure as our labour.” (*Nights at the Circus* 138)

Therefore, Buffo, whose work is to entertain people, sadly knows that the new world which is created by The Clown Alley provides a temporary sense of equality and liberation as he claims “Beauty of the clowning is nothing ever

changes" (*Nights at the Circus* 135). While Carter, in her novel creates a new order by using laughter as a device, she also emphasizes the difficulty of the deconstruction of the dominant culture.

The other important laughter which is going to be analyzed in this part of the study is the laughter of Fevvers. As carnival laughter with its being happy, victorious and mocking sides, Fevvers' laughter, has been the subject of many controversial debates. Many critics argued that whether her laughter creates a new order in a "New Age" or not (*Nights at the Circus* 334). Therefore, when analyzing Fevvers' laughter it will be helpful to keep Carter's ideas in mind that carnival is a temporary process and everything turns back to its old position after it ends.

Fevvers' famous laughter can be witnessed at the end of the last section of the novel which is "Siberia". She begins to laugh while replying to Walser's question in which he asks "why did you go to such lengths, once upon a time, to convince me you were the 'only fully-feathered intecta in the history of the world?'" (*Nights at the Circus* 349). Her answer in which she confesses that she has fooled him creates a question mark in the reader's mind whether she fooled him since she was not "a fully-feathered intecta" or she fooled him by taking him with her so far. However this ambivalent laughter of carnival spirit at the same time creates a revitalizing and liberating effect as Magali Cornier Michael states:

> Fevvers' loud, uncontrollable laughter problematizes the meaning of the novel's ending at the same time that it releases a liberating energy. It is an ambivalent form of laughter in that it exceeds its context and its meaning is plural and dynamic. (Michael 223)

Furthermore, the laughter of Fevvers becomes problematic also for the patriarchal dominant culture. With the resolution part, the questions in Walser's mind are solved, though he turns into an image of "deceived

husband" (*Nights at the Circus* 350) which is against the norms of patriarchal society. Michael again asserts that:

> Her laughter thus disrupts the male-centered established order; it is a manifestation of release from the status quo that is directed toward and as yet undelineated feminist version of a new and better world. (224)

Fevvers' laughter is depicted by Carter as a "spiralling tornado" that will turn all around the world "until everything that lived and breathed, everywhere, was laughing" (*Nights at the Circus* 350). As it can be understood from this depiction, Carter through Fevvers' laughter aims to create a new order in which "the New Man", in other words, "the fitting mate for the New Woman" in "the New Century" is created (*Nights at the Circus* 334). However, as it has already been mentioned, Carter believed that this new order was not a permanent one. Thus she creates an ambivalent situation which is the fairy tale ending of the novel. Fevvers who was once a woman contradicting the rules of official culture and has potential to destroy the conventional lines, marries Walser. As Linden Peach states:

> Even though Carter reverses gender roles, the potential ending is now the same as in the fairy tales where a prince rescues a maiden who falls in love with him. In fact Fevvers begins to lose the control she won over her own life – and begins to look like "only a poor freak down on her luck." (157)

Thus, Carter, in *Nights at the Circus* by transforming Fevvers into a woman, who will be accepted by the dominant official culture, shows that just for a limited, temporary period, the socially fixed norms, roles and traditions can be deconstructed.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF GROTESQUE REALISM AND CARNIVAL LAUGHTER IN *WISE CHILDREN*

Angela Carter wrote her last work, *Wise Children* with a desire to create a novel including comic and patriarchal elements and referring to Shakespeare as well (*Women in the House of Fiction: Post-War Novelists* 45). The novel in question consists of five parts which is a reference to Shakespeare's plays. In the novel, narrator Dora Chance tells the incidents happening in the centenary birthday of her illegitimate father, Melchior Hazard, while presenting the historical background of the family. The birthday of Melchior and his twin brother, which is on the twenty-third of April "by a bizarre coincidence" is the same with Shakespeare's and with his daughters Nora and Dora's birthdays (*Wise Children* 5). Dora begins the first part of the novel describing the neighbourhood in which she lives together with her twin sister Nora and Lady Atalanta Lynde known also as Wheelchair. While Dora and Nora are preparing for the birthday celebration, Tristram, who is their half-brother comes with the news that Tiffany has disappeared. Tiffany, who is Dora's and Nora's neighbour's daughter and god-daughter as well presents a television-show with Tristram and expects a baby from him. Tiffany, being confused runs away and leaves the studio. At this point, Dora "freeze[s] frame[s]" and begins to talk about her complicated family relations (*Wise Children* 11). Ranulph and Estella Hazard, who are parents of Melchior and Peregrine met while they were playing *King Lear* in the roles of King and his daughter Cordellia. Ranulph, who is thirty-years older than Estella, murdered his wife and her lover Cassius Booth in a hotel room due to jealousy and then commited suicide. Orphaned in a small age, Melchior decided to become an artist like his father and Peregrine built his own life and travelled all around the world without anyone knowing what he exactly did. Meanwhile, Melchior slept with Pretty Kitty, Dora and Nora's mother, for

a single night. Not having been able to see their mother since she died while giving birth, Dora and Nora were raised by Grandma Chance, with whom they really do not have blood ties. Besides Grandma Chance, Peregrine as well, took the responsibility of the children and supported them both materially and morally in order to fulfil their father Melchior's position. After this brief information on the family history, Dora goes back to the day, in which the running away incident occurs. Meanwhile, she gets the information that an unidentified female body which is assumed to be Tiffany's is found in the river Thames. Despite this saddening news, Dora with her sister Nora, who claims that "Life must go on" keep on preparing for the birthday-night (*Wise Children* 52).

In the second part of the novel, Dora goes back to old days and continues to tell her memories and family history. The reader witnesses that Dora and Nora, not being part of the high class due to their illegitimacy, play in vaudeville shows instead of staging Shakespearean plays. In the meantime, Melchior and his first wife Lady Atalanta Lynde have twins named Saskia and Imogen. Dora falls in love with Nora's boyfriend and sleeps with him for a night with the permission of Nora. Again, in this part of the novel, Dora and Nora are invited to Melchior's house in order to perform Shakespeare's comedy, *Twelfth Night or What You Will,* which would be performed as a revue. However, after the performance a fire breaks out which leds to a carnivalesque scene. After that, Genghis Khan, a Hollywood film producer, proposes to a make a film with the people who were there during the fire. Since Melchior has the self-acclaimed objective to spread Shakespearean theatre all around the world accepts the offer, soon to be followed by the others.

The third part of the novel, takes place in the set of the movie *Dream* which is a kitsch production of *Midsummer Night's Dream*. At the movie set, Melchior and Genghis Khan's second wife Delia Delaney also known as

Daisy Duck become intimate. After Daisy's divorce, Melchior and she get married. Genghis Khan proposes to Dora in order to take revenge. Peregrine, dressed as a Texas sheriff comes up to perform the marriage. However, Grandma Chance comes and saves her and takes back the twins to Britain again.

In the fourth part of the novel, Dora still continues to tell her memories. When she and Nora turn back to Britain, they begin to perform at shows again; in the meantime, the Second World War ends. However, the reader is informed that Grandma Chance was killed due to a bomb, during the war. In this part, Peregrine announces that Melchior has married one of the friends of Saskia known as My Lady Margarine. Overreacting to this, Saskia disputes with her mother Lady Atalanta, who tries to calm her down. During the disputation, Lady Atalanta falls down the stairs as Saskia pushes her. Confined to a wheelchair, Dora and Nora adopt Lady Atalanta and they begin to live together.

The final part of *Wise Children*, takes place in Melchior's house on his birthday. In this part, Melchior finally accepts that Dora and Nora are his legitimate daughters. Meanwhile, Tiffany, who was assumed to have drowned in the river Thames, appears again, and Tristram declares his love to her. Peregrine, who has been absent for a long time shows up magically as well, among "dozens and dozens of butterflies" (*Wise Children* 207). After that, Peregrine confesses that Saskia and Imogen are actually his daughters. Rejecting this, Saskia causes a big quarrel. Among all these troubles, Dora and her uncle Peregrine go upstairs to have a sexual intercourse. Afterwards, Peregrine takes off Gareth's three-month-old twins from his pocket and gives them to Dora and Nora. Thus at the age of seventy-five, they become mothers. The novel ends with a reconciliation as in the plays of Shakespeare.

3.1. The Use of Grotesque Realism in *Wise Children*

Angela Carter's *Wise Children,* just like *Nights at the Circus,* consists of many grotesque characters. Among these grotesque characters, who challenge the norms of patriarchy and subvert these norms, Dora and Nora Chance, Grandma Chance, Saskia Hazard and Peregrine Hazard can be mentioned. Unlike those in *Nights at the Circus*, the female grotesque characters in *Wise Children* do not have monstrous grotesque physical features. However, it is possible to claim that physically grotesque qualities are not always necessary and sufficient to call a character grotesque. Carter, in *Sadeian Woman* states that "a free woman in an unfree society will be a monster" (27). In this sense, it is possible to claim that above-named female characters are monstrously grotesque due to their attitudes towards patriarchy and norms of the patriarchal society. As for Uncle Peregrine, he has grotesque physical qualities besides his grotesque attitudes.

Dora and Nora Chance, seventy-five-year-old, ex-singing and dancing girls are the monstrous, grotesque main characters of the novel. However, Michael Hardin in his article "The Other Other: Self-Definition outside Patriarchal Institutions in Angela Carter's *Wise Children*" states that

> [...] Nora and Dora are not monsters in the physical sense, but they are outside the culture and are known by it and thus in that sense are monsters; societies tend to label as monstrous that which they cannot know. (80)

Dora and Nora who live in the "the left-hand side, the side tourists rarely sees, the *bastard* side of Old Father Thames" (*Wise Children* 1) belong to the sub-culture and they are grotesque characters. The neighbourhood in which Dora and Nora live and their professions show the reader their lower social level. Being rejected by their father Melchior Hazard, who is a Shakespearian

artist and a member of high-class society, Nora and Dora are once more removed from the system of patriarchy. Hardin claims that:

> [...] Carter has removed Nora and Dora from the traditional bond of the father's identity, she has had to locate the means of identification elsewhere: she has chosen to place their identity not in their individual selves nor in some other person but in another. (78)

In addition to what Harper says, not only Dora's and Nora's illegitimacy but also their lack of a mother led them to have an identity crisis in a patriarchal order. Due to this crisis, Dora and Nora form their selves on one another's identity. From a binary-oppositional perspective, Dora depicts herself and her sister as follows:

> All the same, identical we may be, but symmetrical – never. [...] Nora is fluxy; me, constipated. She was always free with her money, squandered it on the fellers, poor thing, whereas I tried to put a bit by. Her menstrual flow was copious to a fault; mine, meagre. She said: 'Yes!' to life and I said, 'Maybe...'. (*Wise Children* 5)

While forming their identities in one another's bodies, Dora and Nora do not see any harm in cross-dressing. Dora, who fell in love with one of Nora's boyfriends, wants to sleep with him for a night. After having the permission from Nora, she wears her perfume, acts like Nora and sleeps with the boy. When Dora wears Nora's perfume, she changes her identity as it can be inferred from the quotation as well:

> I smelled the unfamiliar perfume on my skin and felt voluptuous. As soon as they started to call me Nora, I found that I could kiss the boys and hug the principals with gay abandon because all this came quite naturally to her. (*Wise Children* 84-5)

However, this cross-dressing is not the only one in the novel. Dora cross-dresses again at her sister Nora's wedding and becomes the bride instead of Nora to save her from the bounds of marriage which symbolizes patriarchy. Their cross-dressing challenges the ideals of Western society since they exploit and deceive men who are the representatives of patriarchy, which turn them into grotesque characters. Their sexual behaviours, which contradict with the norms of patriarchy, make them grotesque characters as well. Nora's first sexual relationship was with a married man and Dora had her first sexual intimacy at the age of thirteen with her uncle Peregrine which is an incestuous relationship. These anti-authoritarian behaviours of Dora and Nora remove them from being the members of official culture. Furthermore, these boundaryless sexual behaviours degrade Dora and Nora into a material level and make them grotesque since they do not fit the concept of ideal woman as they were neither mothers nor wives. They challenge the stereotypical, ideal woman of Western patriarchal ideology, which makes them monstrous grotesque characters. However, as it has been said before, their being monstrous figures is not related to their physicality.

Grandma Chance is another grotesque character introduced by Carter in *Wise Children*. Despite the fact that they do not have any blood ties, she cared for Dora and Nora when their mother Pretty Kitty died giving birth to the twins. As a woman who had not been married before, Grandma was unaware of "what men were for" until the time she saw the twins and the "penny dropped" (*Wise Children* 28). Grandma, who believed that men were not necessary for forming a family, created a family on her own. As Dora states:

> Grandma invented this family. She put it together out of whatever came to hand _ a story pair of orphaned babes, a ragamuffin in a flat cap. She created it by sheer force of personality. (*Wise Children* 35)

However, it is possible to claim that, this family Grandma Chance created challenges the norms of patriarchal society since she undermines men. Her marginal attitude towards men puts her in an ambivalent position thus makes her a grotesque character. While she meets the expectations of patriarchal culture by having a family, she also challenges these expectations since she does not allow any men to be in this family. Thus, Grandma rejects the norms of patriarchy through the family she constructed. As a grotesque figure, she challenges the wars which are the products of patriarchy. According to her, wars are pretences that are made up by old men to kill the young ones in order to protect their woman. She claims that:

> Every twenty years, it's bound to happen. It is to do with generations. The old men get so they can't stand the competition and they kill off all the young men they can lay their hands on. They daren't be seen to do it themselves, that would give the game away, the mothers wouldn't stand for it, so all the men all over the world get together and make a deal: you kill of our boys and we'll kill off yours. So that's that. Soon done. Then the old men can sleep easy in their beds, again. (Wise Children 29)

Thus when the Second World War and bombardments were continuing, she used to go outside after each bomb and would "shake her fist at the old men in the sky" (*Wise Children* 29). Grandma neither looks like a physically monstrous woman nor does she have sexual engagements. What makes her grotesque is her attitudes towards patriarchal figures and wars.

Another grotesque female character in the novel is Saskia Hazard. Saskia whose father was assumed to be Melchior is actually the daughter of Peregrine. She is in love with her step-brother Tristram, who is the son of Melchior from his last marriage. Though she is much more older than him, she tries to separate him from Tiffany and seduce him. While doing this, she makes use of her food recipes. Like a witch who is making magic potions,

Saskia uses her recipes for her benefit: As Sarah Sceats states in “The Infernal Appetites of Angela Carter”

> Saskia, by contrast with Grandma, is the negative epitome of woman as cook/carer/creator. Her power is not much maternal as professional, and vindictive. When the occasion serves her interests, she liberally adulterates the food she offers [...] (105)

With the ingredients she adds to foods, she tries to madden Tiffany and strives to make Tristram fall in love with her. Furthermore, she tries to poison her father since she is not comfortable with his last marriage. Saskia, who has no motives but revenge and self-interest” attempts to obtain power on men and thus patriarchy which makes her a grotesque character.

The last character which is going to be analyzed in this part of this study is Uncle Peregrine. Unlike his twin brother Melchior who “was all for art”, Peregrine represents the grotesque carnivalesque figure who “was out for fun” (*Wise Children* 22). As it can be understood from his depiction he has physical grotesque qualities as well. Carter depicts Perry as “the size of a polar bear” with red hairs and stevedore shoulders and big, fat smile (*Wise Children* 62)”. Besides his grotesque physicality, Perry also with his attitudes towards life can be called as a grotesque character. Linden Peach describes him as “the proverbial American sugar daddy, but also the wicked uncle who seduces Dora when she is thirteen” (Peach 143). He also sleeps with his niece at Melchior’s centenary birthday. As it can be inferred from this incestuous relationship between him and his niece, Perry deconstructs the norms of patriarchal society, and this is one of the very factors that makes him a grotesque character.

3.2. The Use of Carnival Laughter in *Wise Children*

Angela Carter in her last novel *Wise Children* handles carnival laughter in a quite different way than in *Nights at the Circus*. In this novel, laughter comes out neither as in the case of Buffo's shows nor as in Fevvers' famous laughter. As it can be interpreted from their motto, "What a joy it is to dance and sing!", Dora and Nora, who cannot take roles in Shakespeare's tragedies unlike their father celebrate carnival laughter through their vaudeville shows classified as a branch of comedy (*Wise Children* 5). Thus it would be appropriate to analyze comedy and its competitive relationship with tragedy in *Wise Children*. In "'The Red Dawn Breaking over Clapham': Carter and the Limits of Artifice", Clare Hanson claims that comedy in *Wise Children* is linked with "the improper art" and "degraded femininity" (68). On the other hand, tragedy, with a binary oppositional thinking, can be related to the proper art and elevated masculinity or in Hanson's words with "legitimacy and masculinity" (68). Thus, Dora and Nora, who are illegitimate female characters representing sub-culture are suspended from playing tragedy which is "the mainstay of legitimate theatre" (Hanson 68). Instead, they sing and dance in vaudevilles, which also affect their approach towards life and its problems. For instance, finding a dead body which is assumed to be Tiffany's does not withhold them to go to their father's centenary birthday party claiming that they "wouldn't miss it for a hundred million pounds" (*Wise Children* 52). Through this kind of carnivalesque and carefree attitudes towards life, the twins not only swerve from the patterns of patriarchy but also, achieve to subvert and deconstruct the rules and norms of patriarchy. Thus, they construct a carnivalesque world order in which joy is at the for front.

In *Wise Children*, tragedy is also associated with wars. The main character Dora, who does not want to talk much about war says "Suffice to

say it was no carnival, not the hostilities. No carnival" (*Wise Children* 163). However, this attitude of Dora does not claim that she undermines war and its effects. Instead, for her, wars, "are facts we cannot fuck away [...]" (*Wise Children* 221). Since they challenge the spirit of the carnival, Dora relates wars with patriarchy and tragedy. However, in this sense, Dora's and Peregrine's ideas about war contradict one another's. Peregrine, who does not seem to care about the destructive effects of wars believes that "Life's a carnival" (*Wise Children* 222). When Dora's and Peregrine's approach to war is analyzed, it is possible to claim that Peregrine has developed a patriarchal point of view. Though he is a grotesque character and subverts the rules of patriarchy in some ways, which are mentioned in the former part, now he does not seem to care whether people die in wars or not. However, Dora is already acknowledged by the bitterness of the fact thus, she states that "The carnival's got to stop, some time [...] (*Wise Children* 222). In the novel, Grandma is the other character, who is against wars since she believes they are the products of patriarchy. Dora tells Grandma's reactions to bombardments during the Second World War as such:

> When the bombardments began Grandma would go outside and shake her fist at the old men in the sky. She knew they hated women and children worst of all. She'd come back in and cuddle us. She lullabyed us, she fed us. She was our air—raid shelter [...] (*Wise Children* 29)

However, she was killed due to a flying bomb, a product of patriarchy, during the Second World War and with her tragic end became the victim of patriarchal system. Related to this incident and tragedy Dora states that:

> A broken heart is never a tragedy. Only untimely death is a tragedy. And war, which before we knew it, would be upon us; replace the comic mask with the one whose mouth turns down and

> close the theatre, because I refuse point-blank in a tragedy. (*Wise Children* 153-4)

As this incident shows, when the carnival ends the patriarchal order is provided again. Thus it is possible to claim that as a carnivalesque character, Grandma Chance lost the war between her and patriarch and failed to subvert the norms of patriarchy. Grandma is not the only character who failed against patriarchy; Dora and Nora Chance are also among these characters. However, what makes them fail in their attempt of deconstructing patriarchal order is not the war instead it is Gareth's babies. When Peregrine puts Gareth's three-months-year-old babies out of his pocket at the end of the novel, Dora and Nora begin to celebrate their being mothers. Although this end seems to be a hopeful one, actually it is not. During the carnivalistic period of the novel, Dora and Nora were removed from the stereotypical definitions of Western society. They were neither in the position of wives nor mothers. However, at the end of the novel, they become seventy-five-year-old mothers and turned into a figure which is accepted by the Western patriarchal society. Along with this, representative of the patriarchal society, Melchior Hazard accepts the legitimacy of Dora and Nora on his centenary birthday. Jeffrey Roessner claims that Dora's Nora's adopting the illegitimate children of their half-brother Gareth put them into Grandma Chance's position (117). If Grandma's end is taken as foreshadowing, it is possible to claim that the novel ends in a very pessimistic way.

4. CONCLUSION

Along with the analysis of Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* and *Wise Children*, it is observed that Carter, as a postmodern feminist novelist deals with the women who are oppressed in the patriarchal system. As Paulina Parker, states in "From 'Coded Mannequin' to Bird Woman: Angela Carter's Magic Flight" Carter uses Bakhtin's carnivalesque and carnivalistic techniques for "an analysis of patriarchal culture and representation of female community" (197). While doing this, she makes use of two crucial notions of Bakhtinian carnivalesque which are grotesque realism and carnival laughter. In the novels mentioned above, she creates grotesque characters and worlds which challenge the norms of Western patriarchal society. In the worlds she constructed, Carter helps female characters to become liberated. However, she believes that patriarchal order is very rooted in the history and culture and this liberation would be a temporary one. Thus at the end of both novels, patriarchal system continues to rule again.

Angela Carter, in *Nights at the Circus*, creates many female and male grotesque characters who subvert the rules and norms of patriarchy. Among the female grotesque characters Fevvers, Lizzie, the prostitutes who work in Madame Schereck's brothel, Mignon, Princess Abyssinia, Countess P. and her inmates can be named. All these female characters emphasize the secondary position of women in the patriarchal Western society and reverse their social status. Besides her physical grotesqueness with wings and a huge, monstrous body, Fevvers is also a grotesque character due to the attitudes she assumed towards patriarchy. She does not let her to be exploited, and to be put in object position by patriarchy. Thus, in the novel, she challenges the depiction of ideal woman figure of Western patriarchal culture with her physical appearance, appetite for food and sexuality and wealth. Instead, she represents the "New Woman" of a new age in which

women will become more liberated (*Nights at the Circus* 281). Lizzie, though she does not have any grotesque physical features, is another grotesque character in the novel due to her ambivalent social status. While she works in a brothel, she is also in the figure of a nurturing mother. Furthermore, Lizzie's ideas on marriage make her a grotesque character since she thinks that marriage is a kind of prostitution yet in a different manner. Thus she, disrupts the norms and definitions of patriarchy and becomes a threat for patriarchal culture. The prostitutes in Madame Schereck's brothel are physically grotesque figures and they all challenge the ideal female depiction of Western culture. Carter in the novel, celebrates the femininity and female body through Lizzie and the prostitutes in Madame Schereck's brothel. She reverses their social status and puts them in subject position. Mignon, Princess Abyssinia, and Countess P.'s inmates are also analyzed in this study as grotesque characters. Though these characters do not have physically grotesque features, they have been violated, exploited and put into object position by patriarchy once. However, Carter reverses their social status, puts them outside the norms of patriarchy. They become lesbians, deny the order of patriarchy and try to put males into object position. They deny the established social order and construct their worlds in which they operate their own rules. Buffo, Samson the Strong Man and Walser are the male grotesque characters in the novel. Apart from Samson and Walser, Buffo is a grotesque figure due to his profession of clowning. His exaggerated shows, full of excessive sexuality, degrades him into a material level and thus violates traditionally accepted norms. However, they also help him to transgress the boundaries and make him freer. Samson and Walser are the representatives of patriarchal culture turn into object positions during the carnival period. Samson, who has violative and oppressive attitudes towards Mignon, turns into an attendant for her and Princess Abyssinia in the novel. This object position of Samson disrupts the established social conventions in a patriarchal society and makes him grotesque. Walser, as

well, is another grotesque character, who turns into an object position during the carnival period. When he was a representative of the dominant, patriarchal ideology at the beginning of the novel, he turns into a grotesque character with his love for Fevvers. Besides his love for Fevvers, his meeting with Shaman also has crucial importance in his being a grotesque character. Shaman, as a mystic person helps him to pass the boundaries of socially established rules by making him to realize his insights.

In *Wise Children*, the grotesque characters can be listed as Dora and Nora Chance, Grandma Chance, Saskia Hazard and Peregrine Hazard. As it was mentioned before, unlike the characters in *Nights at the Circus*, these characters do not have physically grotesque features. However, all these characters manage to deconstruct established norms of patriarchy. Dora and Nora, seventy-five-year-old illegitimate twin daughters of Melchior Hazard, used to dance and sing in vaudeville shows. Their illegitimacy and the vaudeville shows degrade their social level in the patriarchal society. However, not regarding this as a problem, with their motto “What a joy it is to dance and sing”, they oppose the rules of patriarchy. They cross-dress, sleep with one another’s boyfriends and have incestuous relationships. Not complying with the definition of ideal woman, they represent grotesque characters, who are a threat for the patriarchy. Grandma Chance, though she is in the figure of nurturing mother, is another grotesque character in the novel. She adopts Dora and Nora after their mother dies and constructs a female-centred family. She does not require any men, she even later realizes what men are for after Dora and Nora were born. Her ideas on wars are also other point for her being a grotesque character since she believes that wars are the products of patriarchal system. Thus, challenging the norms of patriarchy, Grandma serves as a grotesque character. Saskia Hazard is the other female grotesque character who does not comply with the definition of ideal women. She tries to seduce her younger nephew Tristram with the foods she cooks. She also tries to poison her father and tries to madden

Tiffany, the lover of Tristram. As a powerful monstrous figure, she challenges the norms of patriarchy and becomes a grotesque figure. Peregrine is the only male character, who is analyzed as a grotesque character in this study. Peregrine, though he seems to stand for the nurturing father for Dora and Nora at the beginning of the novel, turns into an incestuous man who sleeps with his niece and his brother's wife. As a carnivalesque figure, he does not care about any official ties and deconstructs the norms of patriarchy. His subversion of the socially accepted norms makes him a grotesque figure. As it can be inferred from the grotesque depictions of the characters in *Nights at the Circus* and *Wise Children*, Carter constructs a carnivalesque, new order in which patriarchal norms are subverted. In this order, contrary to the dominant ideology, female characters are empowered figures disrupting the established social conventions.

When it comes to the other crucial notion of carnivalesque that is carnival laughter, Buffo and his shows and laughter of Fevvers' laughter are analyzed in the part related to *Nights at the Circus*. Since carnival laughter is against any kind of officialism and seriousness it constructs a new order. Buffo with his shows and their laughing aspects deconstructs the social norms. In the same manner, Fevvers' laughter which is an ambivalent and victorious also deconstructs the patriarchal norms since she thinks she has power over Walser, thus patriarchy. Laughter of these characters with their deconstructing and liberating become a problem for the order of patriarchy. Similarly in *Wise Children,* the vaudeville shows as a source of joy for Nora and Dora helps to deconstruct the officialdom of patriarchy. They disregard the seriousness of dominant culture at any time, and celebrate the carnival.

With her use of grotesque realism and carnival laughter, Angela Carter creates a carnival sphere in the novels mentioned above and deconstructs the order of patriarchy, instead she constructs a new world order in which the characters are liberated and can go beyond the boundaries of official culture.

However, as it was mentioned before, Carter believes that carnivals last for a temporary period, thus this liberation is a temporary one too. In one of the short stories of her titled “In Pantoland”, Carter states that:

> An everlasting carnival does not work. You can’t keep it up, you know; nobody ever could. The essence of the carnival, the festival, The Feast of Fools, is transience. It is here today and gone tomorrow, a release of tension not a reconstitution of order, a refreshment... after which everything can go again exactly as if nothing had happened. Things don’t change because a girl puts on trousers or a chap slips on a frock, you know. Masters were masters again the day after Saturnalia ended; after the holiday from gender, it was back to the old grind. (*Burning Your Boots* 389)

Thus, believing that the carnivals are festivals which lead to temporary liberations, Carter ends the novels that are in question in a pessimistic way emphasizing this temporality. *Nights at the Circus* ends like a fairy tale, since the lovers met and implies that they are going to live happily ever after as in the tales in which dominant ideology is patriarchal. *Wise Children* ends in the same manner since Dora and Nora become mother figures and thus acceptable by the patriarchal society. Carter believes that patriarchy is rooted in the culture and system deeply for ages, thus carnivals can only bring temporary liberation.

6. WORK CITED

Primary Sources:

Carter, Angela. *Nights at the Circus*. London: Vintage, 1994. Print.

Carter, Angela. *Wise Children*. London: Vintage, 2006. Print.

Secondary Sources:

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984. Print.

Boobbyer, Philip. *The Stalin Era*. London: Routledge, 2000. Print.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge, 1999. Print.

Carter, Angela. *Burning Your Boots: The Collected Short Stories*. New York: Penguin Books, 1995. Print.

Carter, Angela. *Nothing Sacred: Selected Writings*. London: Virago Press, 1992. Print.

Carter, Angela. *Sadeian Woman and the Ideology Pornography*. New York: Penguin Books, 2001. Print.

Clark, Katerina and Michael Holquist. *Mikhail Bakhtin*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984. Print

Day, Aidan. Angela Carter: The Rational Glass. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998. Print.

Denney, S., Erin. *Crossing the Borders: Marginalization and Magic Realism in Contemporary British Fiction.* Dissertation, University of Wisconsin. Madison. 1999. Print.

Dentith, Simon. *The Bakhtinian Thought: An Introductory Reader*. London: Routledge, 1995. Print.

Farris, Wendy, B. "Scheherazade's Children: Magical Realism and Postmodern Fiction". *Magic Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Eds. Lois Parkinson Zamora, Wendy B. Farris. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005. Print.

Gamble, Sarah. *Angela Carter: Writing from the Front Line*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997. Print.

Hardin, Michael. "The Other Other: Self-Definition outside Patriarchal Institutions in Angela Carter's *Wise Children".* Review of Contemporary Fiction" Ebsco.host. *Review of Contemporary Fiction* Vol.14, Issue 3. 1994. 18 Jan. 2012.

Holquist, Michael, Ed. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays of M. M. Bakhtin*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982. Print.

Hutcheon, Linda. *The Politics of Postmodernism*. Abingdon: Routledge, 1989. Print.

Hutcheon, Linda. *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms*. New York: Methuen, 1985. Print

Jackson, Rosemary. *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1981. Print.

Lyotard, Jean Françoise. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge.* Minnesota: the University of Minnesota Press, 1984. Print.

Malpas, Simon. *The Postmodern*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2005. Print.

Mayne, Judith. *Framed: Lesbians, Feminists and Media Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000. Print.

Michael, Magali Cornier. *Feminism and the Postmodern Impulse: Post-World War II Fiction*. Albany: State University of New York, 1996. Print.

Morris, Pam, Ed. *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, Voloshinov*. London: Edward Arnold, 1994. Print.

Norris, Christopher. "Deconstruction, Post-Modernism, and the Visual Arts". *What Is Deconstruction?* Christopher Norris, Andrew Benjamin. London: Academy Editions, 1988. Print.

Peach, Linden. *Macmillan Modern Novelists: Angela Carter*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998. Print.

Roessner, Jeffrey. "Writing A History of Difference: Jeanette Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry* and Angela Carter's *Wise Children*" Ebsco.host. College Literature, Winter 2002, Vol.29 Issue 1. 2002. Web. 25.Dec.2011.

Sage, Lorna. *Angela Carter*. Plymouth: Northcote House Publishers Ltd., 1994. Print.

Sage, Lorna. *Women in the House of Fiction: Post-War Women Novelists*. London: Routledge, 1992. Print.

Sceats, Sarah. "The Infernal Appetites of Angela Carter". *The Infernal Desires of Angela Carter: Fiction, Femininity and Feminism* Eds. Dr. Joseph Bristow and Dr. Trev Lynn Broughton. London: Longman, 1997. Print.

Schwartz, Jerome. *Irony and Ideology in Rabelais: Structures of Subversion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990. Print.

Steinarsdóttir, Helga Valborg. *Grotesque Physiciality: Female Excess in Angela Carter's "Nights at the Circus"*. Dissertation, University of Iceland. 2009.

Stoddart, Helen. *Angela Carter's Nights at the Circus*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2007. Print.

Todorov, Tzevetan. *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984. Print.

Todorov, Tzevetan. *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1975. Print.

Ungar, Steven. *Roland Barthes: The Professor of Desire.* Nebraska: the University of Nebraska Press, 1983. Print

Watkins, Susan. *Twentieth-Century Women Novelists: Feminist Theory into Practice*. London: Palgrave, 2001. Print.

Willeford, Williams. *The Fool and His Scepter: A Study of Clowns and Jesters and Their Reader*. Evanston: North Western University Press, 1969. Print.

Wolfreys, Julian. *Deconstruction, Derrida.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. Print.

GCRIS

ÖZET

ANGELA CARTER'IN *SİRK GECELERİ* VE *BİLGE ÇOCUKLAR* ADLI ROMANLARINDA BAKHTIN'İN KARNAVALESK KAVRAMININ KULLANIMI

İnal, Merih

Yüksek Lisans, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı

Danışman: Prof. Dr. Oya Batum Menteşe

Ankara, 2012

Bu tezin amacı, post-modern yazar Angela Carter'ın *Sirk Geceleri* ve *Bilge Çocuklar* romanlarında Mikhail Bakhtin'in karnavalesk kavramı kullanımını incelemektir. Çalışma, söz konusu yazarın karnavaleski ataerkil değerleri çarpıtmak için kullandığını göstermeyi amaçlar. Giriş bölümünde, Angela Carter'ın edebi biyografisi ve eserleri hakkında bilgi verildikten sonra, post-modern feminist bir yazar olarak kullandığı fantezi, parodi ve büyülü gerçekçilik teknikleri kısa bir post-modernizm önbilgisi ile açıklanır. Bu bölümde ayrıca Mikhail Bakhtin'in edebi biyografisi ve bunun kuramlarının oluşumuna etkisi üzerine bilgi verilir. Bakhtin'in çok-dillilik, diyalojizm ve kronotopi kuramlarının açıklanmasının ardından karnavalesk kavramı incelenmektedir. Gelişme bölümünde, Angela Carter'ın adı geçen romanlarında, karnavaleskin iki önemli özelliği olan grotesk gerçekçiliği ve karnaval kahkahasını kullanımı irdelenmekte ve Carter'ın bunları kullanma nedeni olarak ataerkil düzeni çarpıtmak, yıkmak ve geçici de olsa yeni bir düzen kurmayı amaçladığı savunulmaktadır. Sonuç bölümünde, Carter'ın ataerkil düzeni yıkarak kurduğu yeni düzenin, kadınlar için daha özgür bir ortam sağladığı fakat bu durumun karnavallar gibi sadece geçici bir süre devam ettiği ve arkasından baskın kültürün kurallarının hüküm sürmeye devam edeceği kanıtlanmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Angela Carter, Mikhail Bakhtin, Postmodern roman, Karnavalesk, Ataerkillik.

GCRIS

ABSTRACT

THE USE OF BAKHTINIAN CARNIVALESQUE IN ANGELA CARTER'S *NIGHTS AT THE CIRCUS* AND *WISE CHILDREN*

İnal, Merih

M.A., Department of English Language and Literature

Advisor: Prof. Dr. Oya Batum Menteşe

Ankara, 2012

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* and *Wise Children* in terms of Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque. This study demonstrates that the writer mentioned above uses the carnivalesque as means of subverting traditional patriarchal value structures. In the introduction chapter, information concerning the literary biography and works of Angela Carter is given. The techniques Carter used such as fantasy, parody and magic realism are analyzed after a brief explanation of post-modernism. Furthermore, in this chapter Mikhail Bakhtin's literary biography and its effects on the developments of his theories will be investigated. The theories of heteroglossia, dialogism and chronotope will be explained and this will be followed by a detailed discussion on the concept of the carnivalesque and its two key notions grotesque realism and carnival laughter. In the body chapters, the novels mentioned above will be analyzed in terms of grotesque realism and carnival laughter aiming to show that Carter subverts and deconstructs patriarchal culture in order to construct a new order in which women will become liberated. In the conclusion chapter, it is argued that the new world order which Carter constructed in the novels will last only temporarily—just like carnivals—after which patriarchy will be the dominant ideology again .

Key Words: Angela Carter, Mikhail Bakhtin, Carnivalesque, Patriarchy.

GCRIS