

ATILIM UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
ENGLISH CULTURE AND LITERATURE MASTER'S PROGRAMME

**ANGELA CARTER'S TRICKSTERS: DESTROYERS AND RESTORERS OF
THE ORDER**

Master's Thesis

Şeyda Yağmur BALCI

Ankara-2023

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Thesis Advisor

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ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

This is to certify that this thesis titled “Angela Carter’s Tricksters: Destroyers and Restorers of the Order” and prepared by Şeyda Yağmur Balcı meets with the committee’s approval unanimously as Master’s Thesis in the field of English Culture and Literature following the successful defence of the thesis conducted on 09/01/2023.

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I accept and acknowledge that I have prepared this thesis study, prepared in line with the Thesis Writing Guidelines of Atılım University Graduate School of Social Sciences;

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ÖZ

BALCI, Şeyda Yağmur. Angela Carter'ın Düzenbazları: Düzen Bozanlar ve Yeniden Yapanlar. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2023.

Bu tez Angela Carter'ın seçili öykülerinde tekrar eden bir figür olan “düzenbaz” (trickster) karakterinin öykülerdeki düzeni bozmada ya da yeniden kurmada nasıl etkili olduğunu göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Teze konu olan öykülerdeki birbirinden farklı karakterlerin benzer amaçlarla kullanılışı arketipsel edebi eleştiri ışığında incelendiğinde öykülerde tekrar eden bir düzen bozma ya da yeniden kurma modeli olduğu görülmektedir. Kadın ve erkek düzenbaz karakterlerinin ayrı bölümlerde ele alındığı bu tezde, Angela Carter'ın yeniden yazdığı yetişkin masallarındaki bozulan ya da yeniden kurulan düzenler ve düzenbaz karakterlerinin bu düzenler üzerindeki etkileri gözler önüne serilmektedir. Tezde incelenen eserler *Burning Your Boats* isimli koleksiyondan alınmış ve “The Bloody Chamber” öyküsündeki anne, “The Snow Child” öyküsündeki kontes, “The Company of Wolves” öyküsündeki genç kız, “Loves of Lady Purple” öyküsündeki Lady Purple ve “Master” öyküsündeki Friday kadın düzenbaz karakterleri olarak incelenmiştir. Erkek düzenbaz karakterleri ise “The Lady of House of Love” öyküsündeki genç asker, “The Erl-King” öyküsündeki Erl-King, “Puss-in-Boots” öyküsündeki Master ve son olarak “The Executioner's Beautiful Daughter” öyküsündeki cellattır. Teze konu olan öyküler ışığında ve bu öykülerden hareketle, düzenbaz figürünün özellikleri dolayısıyla Angela Carter'a baskın düzeni bozma, mevcut düzeni koruma ve yeni düzen kurma noktalarında yardımcı olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Angela Carter, *Burning Your Boats*, Kısa Hikaye, Masal, Düzenbaz

ABSTRACT

BALCI, Şeyda Yağmur. Angela Carter's Tricksters: Destroyers and Restorers of the Order. Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2023.

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the recurring trickster figures in selected short stories by Angela Carter to show their role in destroying or restoring the orders in the stories. When the recurring characters are analysed with the help of archetypal criticism, it can be stated that there is a destroying or restoring pattern in the selected stories. In this thesis, by concentrating on female and male trickster figures in different chapters, destroyed or restored orders and the effect of the trickster figures on these orders are presented. Tales to be analysed in this thesis are taken from the story collection titled *Burning Your Boats* and the mother in "The Bloody Chamber", the countess from "The Snow Child", the young girl from "The Company of Wolves", Lady Purple from "Loves of Lady Purple" and Friday from "Master" are analysed as female trickster figures. As for the male trickster figures, the young officer from "The Lady of House of Love, Erl-King from "The Erl-King", Master from "Puss-in-Boots" and finally the executioner from "The Executioner's Beautiful Daughter are studied. Under the light and with the help of the tales used in this thesis, it is concluded that the characteristics of the trickster figure enabled Angela Carter to destroy the dominant order in the society, to maintain it or to restore a more preferable one.

Keywords: Angela Carter, *Burning Your Boats*, Short Story, Fairy Tale, Trickster

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to explore the role of trickster figures in selected tales by Angela Carter to show that they have a role in the orders in the stories sometimes by destroying, sometimes by maintaining and sometimes by restoring them. By using archetypal criticism, it is expected to understand the characteristics of trickster figures and their place in literature and specifically in the selected tales from the story collection titled *Burning Your Boats*.

Angela Carter is one of the authors whose works have been analysed and criticised since they were produced. Even though most of the analyses and criticism of her works root from the feminist literary criticism, as labelling and categorizing themselves are not the expectations from the writers, and as she always denied and rejected the labels attributed to her, this study intends to provide a more structural perspective by focusing on an archetypal character, trickster. In order to understand her denial of labels, a thorough understanding of the development of short story as a genre and her position and place in this genre must be attained. For this reason, definitions of short story by different critics and the historical development of the genre will be provided in the rest of this chapter.

According to Adrian Hunter till the last decades of the nineteenth century “the short story had been treated as a condensed novel, and the art of writing it lay in the skill with which the author could squeeze the machinery of plot and character into the reduced frame of a few thousand words” (1). Therefore, in the late nineteenth century, writers could understand that short story writing was not shortening a novel, but more importantly an artful creativity and skill to imply something rather than directly stating and telling it in very detail. What the writer realized was that the shortness, in other words the brevity, of the short story is where its complexity and richness lie. This understanding of shortness is described with three principles by W. J. Dawson as “the short story must be complete in itself, that it is short because it cannot be long, and that it consists of a single incident” (799). This singularity and brevity are also mentioned by James Lawrence Cooper in his article about Edgar Allan Poe and short story, titled “A Theory of the Short Story” while he is explaining Poe’s understanding of the differences between a novel and a tale. He quotes Poe’s opinions about the novel and tale as follows:

The ordinary novel is objectionable from its length, for reasons already stated in substance. As it cannot be read at one sitting, it deprives itself, of course, of the immense force derivable from *totality*. Worldly interests intervening during the pauses of perusal modify, annul, or contract, in a greater or less degree, the impressions of the book. But simply cessation in reading would of itself be sufficient to destroy the true unity. In the brief tale, however, the author is enabled to carry out the fullness of his intention, be it what it may. During the hour of perusal the soul of the reader is at the writer's control. There are no external or extrinsic influences resulting from weariness or interruption. (274)

Therefore, tale is considered a story that can be told and read at one sitting. Jack Fields, in his book *A Study of the Short Story*, defines the story as a literary genre in which the author establishes time and space, creates character, and drags tension to its climax quite “quickly and economically” as compared to the other genres like drama or novel it consists of fewer characters, less details and a less complicated plot structure (1). For Florence Goyet, the story is a “mythical, spiritual intuitive and lyrical” genre in Charles E. May’s words (4). All of these different definitions show that reaching out a final definition based on clear cut rules is not quite possible as it is not also possible to have an identical pattern among all the short story writers. At this point Clare Hanson’s opinion about the story as a genre moving between lyrical poetry and novel and as a result of this movement a genre displaying differences any time it is produced supports the idea that in terms of form a structural definition has not been attained.

Considering the long and detailed history of storytelling, in order to find its roots there is an inevitable need for looking at the myths, romances, fables and folk tales. According to Charles E. May, storytelling is the foundation of the fiction and it has evolved from myths and folk tales (64). The origins of storytelling go back to the periods when there was no writing. Even for this reason the genre is called ‘tale’ rather than ‘short story’ because the former one needs a teller and a listener. Tale-telling, which is an important part of oral literature, has found its place in all cultures. The development of tale telling is explained by Paul March-Russel as follows:

The tale can be traced back to the earliest surviving narrative, The Epic of Gilgamesh, written in the third millennium BCE. [...] The most notable aspect is that, despite its printed versions, the tale is a spoken form that, consequently, implies a speaker and a listener. The context for the tale, however, may vary widely, from a parent talking to a child to a religious speaker instructing a congregation to a teacher addressing a class to a storyteller performing to an audience to friends swapping stories. Not only is the tale oral, it is context-sensitive to a degree that reading is not. The context will affect the type of tale, its purpose,

delivery and reception, nuances of style and presentation that are omitted from a printed account. Furthermore, there is an intimacy of address, which is lost within printed literature. (2)

Hence, tale telling could find both its speakers and listeners very well through the myths as in the example of Creation myths available in many cultures all around the world. As a result of the needs for sharing stories either for didactic or for enjoyment, it is possible to see the versions of the same stories as in case of *Gilgamesh*, *Metamorphoses* or *King James Bible* (March-Russel 5).

The phase storytelling reaches after myths is romances. Romance gained importance in the Middle Ages. Until the Renaissance, many cultures adopted romance storytelling for different purposes. The themes of magic and victory are dominant in the stories seen in this period. Romances are mostly about a knight's adventurous journey to win the heart of a lady. The knight encounters many difficulties throughout this journey and overcomes all of them. They are divided into three main groups in terms of the subjects and characters they deal with: “(a) the matter of Britain, which included Arthurian matter derived from Breton lays; (b) the matter of Rome, which included stories of Alexander, the Trojan wars and Thebes; (c) the matter of France, most of which was about Charlemagne and his knights” (Cuddon 758). While most of these stories are too long to be considered short stories in the modern sense, there are also some distinctly short ones. For example, the stories written by Chretien de Troyes and Marie de France in the 12th century are shorter than the others:

Two of the most-influential contributors of short material to the “Matter of Britain” in the 12th century were Chrétien de Troves and Marie de France. The latter was gifted as a creator of the short narrative poems known as the Breton lays. Only occasionally did a popular short romance like *Aucassin and Nicolette* (13th century) fail to address any of the three Matters. (“Short story”)

When it comes to the end of the Middle Ages, novella, a genre developed (renewed) by Boccaccio enters the stage. The term, now used to mean a short novel, meant, as Clement and Gibaldi pointed out, a story written or told, real or fictional, novel or non-ordinary, until the late 14th century (5). Boccaccio's *The Decameron* is the first example of this genre in which serious and funny events are brought together and stories such as saint legends are parodied. Chaucer is another important writer of this genre. Along with Boccaccio, Chaucer also breathed new life into the genre with his work *The Canterbury*

Tales. March-Russell describes their contribution to the genre through their use of novella as follows:

Boccaccio revolutionised European literature by mixing serious and comic modes, such as the court romance and the fabliau, while also parodying pre-existing forms, such as the saint's legend and the exemplum. At the same time as drawing his readers' attention to certain kinds of writing, Boccaccio brought a new sensitivity to the use of everyday speech: his characters' vernacular is clearly delineated, a success also achieved by Chaucer in his use, for example, of regional accents. The use made of the novella by both Boccaccio and Chaucer is, at once, self-consciously literary (Chaucer's insertion of himself into his tales) and embedded within the oral tradition: the reciprocation between tales, for example those told by the Miller and the Reeve or in Boccaccio and Chaucer's rewriting of the same tale in Petrarch as the source of Patient Griselda. (6,7)

Thus, their revolutionary touches upon the genre paved the way for the new perspectives as the tale telling has continued to exist in different forms till it has reached out today's concept. The influence of Boccaccio and Chaucer was especially great on folktale compilers.

Giovan Francesco Straparola and Giambattista Basile continued the novella genre with the folktale genre with compilations like *Decameron*. According to Steven Swann Jones, there are ordinary protagonists in the folk tales reminding the reader of themselves as their journeys and stories are fairly personal like the ones of the ordinary people. Therefore, it can be stated that through the folk tales the readers are not in the worlds of knights, legends and so on. Hence, "Their concerns about getting married and establishing a home speak directly to our most individual needs. As a result, we regard folk tales as personal entertainment, as engaging fictions reflecting our ability to laugh at ourselves as well as to express our deepest dreams and fears" (Jones 9). Fairy tales also belong to this category of tale telling with their employment of ordinary characters and every day issues. However, they show a big difference as they "*depict magical or marvelous events or phenomena as a valid part of human experience*", and thus, they can be easily identified through the fantasy that can be interpreted in many different ways by different perspectives (Jones 9). This magical aspect that is evident in the name of the genre as well does not have to include fairies all the time. It can be attained through different objects, events, characters and so on. As is offered by Jones, this magical dimension is sometimes achieved through "a talking mirror, a talking horse, a magic cloak or a magic lamp" and the protagonist's contact with this magical or fantastic being through

which also the presence of that being is confirmed (Jones 10). Basile's *II Pentamerone* (1634-6) consists of collections of familiar stories such as "Cindrella", "Sleeping Beauty" and "Rapunzel". March-Russell states that Basile's work, which is the rewriting of the stories he heard and learned during his missions in Italy and other overseas countries, and also for an aristocratic audience in the baroque literary style, includes fifty-five stories, along with a frame story in the opening and closing. This work, like Straparola's work, contains elements of comedy, cruelty and sexuality. In the same period, in the 17th century, in France, Charles Perrault brought together "pre-existing fairy tales" in his work named *Stories and Tales of Times Past* (1697) and adapted them for French aristocratic readers (March-Russell 8). Perrault's stories are softer, more ordered, and more logically explained than those of Straparola and Basile. Considering the definition of fairy tales by Steven Swann Jones as "... narratives that have been shaped over centuries of retelling and that have achieved a basic narrative form that is a distillation of human experience", one can understand that through Perrault's versions of the fairy tales, the genre has gained a new understanding as the audience and the purpose for telling them changed to a great extent (5). Thus with Perrault, these fairy-tales began to be used as a means of conveying moral and social messages to teach children to be more civilized.

With this innovation, it gradually began to separate from the folk culture. This innovation is more striking in the works of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm brothers. The most distinctive feature that distinguishes their tales from others is that the Grimm brothers use their fairy tales to give more solid messages. "Whereas Perrault's Cinderella is kind-hearted, the Grimms' Ashiepattle avenges herself in the form of the doves that peck out the sisters' eyes. Unlike the playfulness of Basile, the violence of the Grimms is directed towards a didactic message based upon punishment and proscription while sexuality is either repressed or denied" (March-Russell 8). Therefore, the development tale has gone through could be explained as a breakthrough for story telling because the reader started to be provided with materials consisting of many different issues and for many different purposes.

However, the hands that short story had found its new form and place are of Conrad and Kipling (Hunter 20). They are the writers who earned the short story its modernist style through "combining the suspenseful intrigue and plot-based intricacy of

the traditional tale with the elliptical austerity of a modern realist narrative technique” (Hunter 23). As time moved on Kipling and Conrad’s short story evolved into a more individual genre, independent from novel. Thus, writers such as Katherine Mansfield, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf are considered to be the pioneers of the modern short story. As mentioned by Elke D’Hooker and Stephanie Eggermont, “Influenced by Chekhov’s short stories, it is argued, these writers have transformed the long, heavily plotted Victorian tale into a condensed, largely plotless, highly polished literary form, well suited to capture the realities of modern life” (292). Therefore, short stories of the modernist cycle are known with their focuses on everyday life, more individual and subjective perspectives, abrupt starts and endings and more popularly epiphanic moments in them.

When the postmodern period starts in literature, the notion of short story goes through a change like many other things as the world has witnessed two world wars and therefore people have changed in many ways, including the writers and their styles. According to Clare Hanson, “The exemplary figures are Beckett, an Irishman writing in French, and Borges, an Argentinian who is most widely known through English translations of his work” (141). Based on the works of this period, the understanding of plot has changed to some extent as it has lost the singularity. What is meant with this loss is that there are either “minimal” or “excessive” plot structures in the short stories of the time. As there are a lot of influences by other art forms and disillusionment, writers of the period shifted their focus from the possibility of one single reality. Thus, the readers are presented infinite possibilities by postmodernism. As is mentioned by Hanson, “the other aspect of ... [postmodernism] is a sense of limitless futility: where we can choose anything, choice and shape may cease to have meaning and value” (142). Considering the infinite possibilities and limitless futilities, it is not surprising to have multivalent content and form in a story. This has been done through employment of certain qualities of human nature that have been considered unusual and acquainted in implausible plots constructed intentionally and profligately (Hanson 160). In *The Politics of Postmodernism*, postmodernism is defined as “rather like saying something whilst at the same time putting inverted commas around what is being said” by Linda Hutcheon (1). According to Hutcheon, “postmodern’s initial concern is to denaturalize some of the dominant features

of our way of life; to point out that those entities that we unthinkingly experience as 'natural' (...) are in fact 'cultural'; made by us, not given to us" (2). Therefore, through using what has been already said and inverting it for a new message or saying, postmodern writers manage to question and challenge everything they stay against. What is more, by deconstructing or even reconstructing especially culturally established norms, roles, codes of behaviour or so on, they can transfer their message more powerfully with the use of postmodernist techniques like intertextuality, parody and pastiche. As a result of all these changes in telling tales or stories, Angela Carter with her fairy tale rewritings and tales performs her role as a postmodern writer who is deeply concerned "not simply to point out what is wrong with conventional representations of gender; she is concerned at once to offer different representations, different models" (Day 134).

Moving from the change in her perception of women, analysing certain characters in her stories within the context of trickster archetype would add up to the existing criticisms of these works because the main figures of the stories will be examined as the tricksters who sometimes destroy the dominant order or restore a more preferable one. Thus, Chapter One, in order to present a clear picture of the theoretical background of the issues to be examined, explains the terms archetypal criticism and trickster. To be more specific about the trickster, first of all a thorough understanding about the archetypal criticism is necessary. The world of myths and archetypes belongs to quite an important name in the field of criticism, Carl Jung. He introduced the term "collective unconscious" and explained that in the unconscious there are inborn patterns and images that cannot be attained through experience. What is more, certain symbols, motifs and characters, which create archetypes, are the contents of unconscious constructed across cultures and they trigger certain feelings in humans all around the world. According to the archetypal critics, the form and function of a literary text is determined by archetypes. That is, the cultural and psychological archetypes shape the meaning of a text. At this point, trickster figure that will be used to understand the meanings of the texts selected for this study must be clearly defined and analysed. Considering Jung to be the father of archetypal criticism, it might not be wrong to define the term and focus on his explanation of "trickster archetype". In his work titled *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, he explains the traits of trickster as follows: "The trickster is a primitive cosmic being of *divine-animal*

nature, on the one hand superior to man because of his superhuman qualities, and on the other hand inferior to him because of his unreason and unconsciousness.” (Jung para.473). In brief, in the rest of Chapter One, the trickster figure will be explained in detail to draw a clear picture about the characters and their actions in the selected stories.

Chapter Two focuses on Angela Carter and specifically her writing style which was influenced by many sources throughout her life. Living in the postmodern era and denying all the labels attributed to her, Angela Carter contributed to the world of fiction through her distinctive imagination and style. Even she had a different understanding categorizing short writings as short story and tale. For her, short story and tale are two distinct concepts and she explains this in the Afterword to her collection titled *Fireworks* as follows:

Though it took me a long time to realize why I liked them, I'd always been fond of Poe, and Hoffman – Gothic tales, cruel tales, tales of wonder, tales of terror, fabulous narratives that deal directly with the imagery of the unconscious – mirrors the externalized self; forsaken castles; haunted forests; forbidden sexual objects. Formally the tale differs from the short story in that it makes few pretences at the imitation of life. The tale does not log everyday experience, as the short story does; it interprets everyday experience through a system of imagery derived from subterranean areas behind everyday experience, and therefore the tale cannot betray its readers into a false knowledge of everyday experience. (459)

Thus, Chapter Two explains how Angela Carter differs from other short fiction writers with her different understanding and style of writing.

In Chapter Three, female trickster figures in the tales selected from the collection titled *Burning Your Boats* will be presented by focusing on the details making them tricksters and especially their role in the selected tales as destroyers or restorers of the order. In this chapter, the tales to be analysed are “The Bloody Chamber”, “The Snow Child”, “The Company of Wolves”, “The Loves of Lady Purple” and “Master”. In each of the stories another quality of the trickster figure is focused and used to explain how this quality enables Carter to change the course of actions either to destroy the existing order or to restore a destroyed one.

Chapter Four, which is the final chapter of the main body of this thesis, investigates male trickster figures from the same collection with the same aim. The tales to be analysed are “The House of Lady of Love”, “The Erl-King”, “Puss-in-Boots” and “The

Executioner's Beautiful Daughter". The male characters selected to be examined as tricksters embody the same qualities determined by critics and work as the destroyers or restorers of the orders in the tales.

The conclusion of this thesis finalizes with the idea that Carter's adult tales make the readers question the gender roles in their present times through presenting trickster figures as female and male characters in order to destroy the prevailing orders and create their own desired ones. All in all, Angela Carter manages to create new world orders out of the conventional ones through rewriting the well-known fairy tales, legends and myths of all times and puts them in the hands of the readers and critics to be interpreted from many different angles.

CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 Archetypal Criticism

The concept of archetype and the idea of archetypal criticism which belong to Swiss psychologist Carl Gustav Jung and Canadian literary theorist Northrop Frye contributed highly to the 21st century literary criticism. As is mentioned by Glen Robert Gill “Archetypal criticism (which is central to but does not encompass the field of “myth criticism”) theorizes the existence of discrete and interrelated symbols, including narrative forms and character types, in ancient and traditional myths, and examines their recurrence in and uses them to critically interpret later literatures and cultures” (396). These recurring symbols, forms and character types are called archetypes and the origin of this criticism dates back to the ancient/mythic times. According to M. H. Abrams, “effective embodiment [of these symbols, forms and character types] in a literary work evokes a profound response from the attentive reader, because he or she shares the archetypes expressed by the author” (12). The reason behind this evocation could be attributed to existence of these archetypes in myths, dreams, social ceremonials and of course literary texts. As for the definition of the word archetype, Gill states that “The term *archetype*, compounding the Greek *arche* (“first” or “original”) and *typos* (“form” or “model”), is itself ancient, descending from the Heraclitean concept of a transcendent *logos* or word and the Platonic concept of *eidos*, idea or ideal form” (396). Thus, it can be asserted that the term archetype refers to the first model of something which enables later recurrences to be more meaningful for the people. Considering the concept of archetypal criticism, Walter K. Gordon states that “The basic contention of archetypal criticism is that literary expression is an unconscious product of the collective experience of the entire species. As such, literature is therefore integrally related with man's cultural past” (499). Therefore, through this connection of people with their past, certain recurring symbols, forms and models find their places in the contemporary reading of the readers.

In order to understand the starting point for the archetypal criticism dating back to Carl Jung and Northrop Frye, it is necessary to look at James Frazer and his work *The Golden Bough*. It is “a worldwide survey of fertility myths which argued convincingly for the existence of at least one vast multivalent archetype: the figure of the dying-rising god

and its annual resurrection”, had a great influence both on Jung and Frye (Gill 397). Through this, both names adopted the comparative method which asks to analyse comparable texts, symbols, or characters. According to Frazer, this recurring god figure is “the effect of similar causes acting alike on the similar constitution of the human mind” (448). Through this understanding, Jung developed his theory asserting that these archetypes rise from a different level of psyche: collective unconscious. He explains why he calls this layer of unconscious in this way as follows:

I have chosen the term “collective” because this part of the unconscious is not individual but universal; in contrast to the personal psyche, it has contents and modes of behaviour that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals. It is, in other words, identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us. (Jung, *Four Archetypes: Mother, Rebirth, Spirit, Trickster* 2)

Therefore, for Jung, this level of unconscious is universal and can cover up all the individual characteristics, which brings out the idea that mythology can also be accepted as a projection of this level of unconscious through its universality, timelessness and identicalness. It can be stated that this quality of myths and symbols make them archetypes and, these “inherited possibilities of ideas” in Jung’s words can be given in six categories (Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* 66). The most recurring archetypes offered by Jung are “shadow”, “trickster”, “wise old man or mother”, “anima-animus”, “kore” and “the self” (qtd. in Gill 398). Jung uses these archetypes in order to explain different aspects of human psyche, and thus, to reach out a mature individual which develops as a result of integrating all these aspects in the conscious of a person. What is more, considering their roles in literature and culture, “the relation of these archetypes to the gods, devils and saviours of religion, and the heroes, villains, tricky slaves, mentors, and monsters of romance” makes them inevitably beneficial while interpreting the psychological aspects of the relevant works (Gill 398).

Yet, for Northrop Frye, the nature of archetype is directly rooted from the works of literature in contrast to the psychological approach of Jung. With the undeniable influence of *The Golden Bough*, Frye devoted himself to decoding William Blake’s poetry and recurring literary symbols which find their origins in his poetry. While he is describing the term, archetype, he considers it more a literary symbol recurring and a human-made

concept. Therefore, archetypes in the literary works “play an essential role in refashioning the material universe into an alternative verbal universe that is humanly intelligible and viable, because it is adapted to essential human needs and concerns” (Abrams 13-14). In contrast to Jung’s understanding of archetypes as a universal construct lying in the collective unconscious, Frye asserts a “self-contained literary universe”, by which he explains the incorporation of nature into the archetypal forms in order to satisfy human needs and desires through human imagination. In this totality of literary works, the natural cycle of seasons finds its equivalence in the literary genres: comedy – spring, romance – summer, tragedy – autumn and satire – winter (104-105). Frye’s concept of archetypal theory continues to evolve both in social practices and in the world of literary criticism dealing with the works ranging from the Bible to the most contemporary texts.

In addition to Jung and Frye, archetypal criticism has become a matter of discussion for many other critics, who has gained different dimensions to it. Including structuralists, feminist critics and even poststructuralists, later theorists developed other forms of archetypal criticism focusing on forms of texts rather than their contexts, male centres and prejudices of the Jungian criticism and desisting from structure as asserted by Derrida. Therefore, it would not be wrong to claim that “ ... archetypal criticism should not be seen as a closed chapter in the history of literary criticism, but a participant in its revisionary enterprise” (Gill 405).

1.2 Trickster Figure

And there's a very special property in the trickster: he always breaks in, just as the unconscious does, to trip up the rational situation. He's both a fool and someone who's beyond the system. And the trickster hero represents all those possibilities of life that your mind hasn't decided it wants to deal with. The mind structures a lifestyle, and the fool or trickster represents another whole range of possibilities. He doesn't respect the values that you've set up for yourself, and smashes them. (Campbell 39)

Trickster figure has been in the literary life since the beginning of the story telling tradition which dates back to the myths and folktales of oral literature. It has appeared sometimes to arouse laughter, sometimes to teach a lesson with a didactic purpose or sometimes to show an alternative life which has not even been thought of. As it is accepted to be an archetype consisting of certain traits and common explanations, trickster is

believed to be existing in each of us, in many belief systems and cultures. However, despite this universality, generally it is recommended to hold an ethnic or local approach for explaining it as in different cultures it can be associated with different roles from clowns and animals to gods. Considering his contributions to the existence of archetypal criticism, the starting point for the definition of the trickster archetype belongs to Carl Jung. In his work titled *Four Archetypes: Mother, Rebirth, Spirit, Trickster*, by referring to Mercurius, he explains the traits of trickster through “his fondness for sly jokes and malicious pranks, his powers as a shapeshifter, his dual nature, half animal, half divine, his exposure to all kinds of tortures, and – last but not least – his approximation to the figure of a saviour” (Jung 160). What he focuses on is the trickster’s ability of shapeshifting as it enables him to solve all his problems and also to be saved as a result of his demonic wit. As is added by Jung, “these qualities make Mercurius seem like a daemonic being resurrected from primitive times, older even than the Greek Hermes” (*Four Archetypes: Mother, Rebirth, Spirit, Trickster* 160). Remembering Jung’s concept of archetypes as a universal construct belonging to the collective unconscious, Mercurius’s struggle for survival and his “dual nature” reminds of the qualities of archetypes as related to the gods, saviours, villains, heroes and so on. It can be stated that even this dual nature can be accepted as a reference to the “collective unconscious” as it reminds of the fact that even these dualities are as old as human history. Another important point to be explained through Jung’s perspective is the general negative connotation of the trickster, which is a result of its association with the damage and the malevolence. Considering the psychoanalytical explanation of repressed dark desires in the human psyche, which find their places in the shadow, that malignant appearance of the trickster could be accepted as a sign of the return of these repressed feelings.

As it appears generally in the myths and folkloric texts belonging to various times and cultures ranging from Greek gods such as Hermes to Native American tale figures like Coyote, there is a need for understanding the concept of trickster in cultural sphere as well. Paul Radin, the American anthropologist and folklorist, defines this archetypal figure as follows:

Trickster is at one and the same time creator and destroyer, giver and negator, he who dupes others and who is always duped himself. He wills nothing consciously. At all times he is constrained to behave as he does from impulses over which he has no control. He knows neither good nor evil yet he is responsible for both. He

possesses no values, moral or social, is at the mercy of his passions and appetites, yet through his actions all values come into being. But not only he, so our myth tells us, possesses these traits. So, likewise, do the other figures of the plot connected with him: the animals, the various supernatural beings and monsters, and man. (ix)

All these twofold qualities embodied by the trickster show that s/he can be the symbol of almost all the binary oppositions through his/her simultaneously good and evil character. However, it must be noted that despite his immorality at first sight, s/he turns out to be a moral character and even a reverser for the undesirable situations or unexpected circumstances. As the trickster does not only have cunning or chaotic actions; s/he also shows heroic – saviour like – qualities as well. With this quality, the trickster can destroy the order in the social environment portrayed in the story or sometimes restore it. At this point what Grottanelli highlights about the trickster is that “when he is an animal, the trickster is a crafty, rather than a powerful, beast [...]; when a human being, he never ranks high, and his power lies in his witty brain or in some strange gift of nature” (120). As is understood, the trickster is not always a character upholding negative qualities but sometimes a hero who can turn his or her environment into a better one.

As a hero that can reverse his/her environment, Michael P. Carroll argues that “the trickster appears as a type of culture-hero, specifically as a transformer who makes the world habitable for humans by ridding it of monsters or who provides those things (such as fire or various ways of capturing animals) that make human society possible” (305). Therefore, it is reasonable to expect the trickster to destroy the present undesirable order and to restore a more preferable and liveable one. While achieving his/her objectives, it is quite normal that the trickster breaks the rules for establishing his/her own world generally by arousing horror, disruption or shock. Considering him/her a being that can be sacred even a god, an animal or a man in disguise, it is rather possible for him/her to break the rules in his/her own way without hesitating.

Based on the idea that the trickster is a rule breaker, this makes it difficult to attain specific qualities and look for all of them in a character to call him or her a trickster. However, William J. Hynes provides the reader with six characteristics that are more or less common to many trickster myths. These characteristics are as follows:

1. Ambiguous and anomalous

2. Deceiver/trick – player
3. Shape-shifter
4. Situation-invertor
5. Messenger/imitator of the Gods
6. Sacred/lewd bricoluer (33-34)

These qualities do not have to be embodied in one trickster all at once, yet a specific trickster will display many of these similarities. For many critics, using these shared characteristics is a good idea to examine trickster figures to reach out a conclusion about their “tricksterness”; however, they recommend the researchers to be careful not to impose this communality when it is not available. It must be remembered that its border breaking quality prevents it being bordered or limited through certain or strict definitions. Nevertheless, it is necessary to explain these qualities in order to be able to keep an open eye while analysing certain characters in the literary texts.

To start with, the first trait of the trickster is being *ambiguous and anomalous* as is offered by Hynes. This quality of the trickster reminds that the trickster is an embodiment of binary oppositions, but also neither of them. It is on the edges of all the categories or groupings or even beyond them. Bearing in mind its swift moves between those edges, it is expected from it to be ambiguous and anomalous. As is mentioned by Hynes, “Visitor everywhere, especially to those places that are off limits, the trickster seems to dwell in no single place but to be in continual transit through all realms marginal and liminal” (34-35). Secondly, as a *deceiver and trick-player*, the trickster is known by the plays and deceits it performs. Even it is called the primary cause for “disorders, misfortunes and improprieties” in many beliefs and cultures (Hynes 35). With the use of its incomparable wit, it can blur the border between the truth and falsity, and even, it can trick itself through its overreaching tricks. Being a *shape-shifter* is one of the most well-known traits of the trickster. In order to achieve its goal, it can change its shape, and thus, it can deceive everybody around. “Not even the boundaries of species or sexuality are safe, for they can be readily dissolved by the trickster’s disguises and transmorphisms” (Hynes 36). This transformation may involve minor changes such as changing clothes or major ones like changing physical form of the body totally. As *situation-invertor*, the trickster can reverse any place, any belief or any situation because there are no limits for it. Therefore, when the trickster appears, it might be expected to turn top to bottom, inside

to outside, safe to dangerous and so on. The next trait to attributed to the trickster while identifying it is being a *messenger and the imitator of the gods*. Considering its culturally transformative qualities, the trickster moves between the borders of the sacred and profane, death and life or godly and humanly. “He may bring something across this line from the gods to humans – be it a message, punishment, an essential cultural power, or even life itself” (Hynes 40). In different cultures, there are different examples for this such as Hermes from the Greek mythology, Eshu/Elegba from Nigeria or Anansi of Ghana. However, it must be noted that the trickster generally breaks a taboo while bringing gifts to humans, which ends up with all the cosmic orders to be preserved as there is no human-being to be punished by the gods. Finally, the last quality not to be overlooked is being *sacred and lewd bricoleur*. Hynes mentions that he uses the term “bricoleur” as in the sense it was used by Claude Levi-Strauss, which is “someone who works with his hands and uses devious means compared to those of a craftsman” (16-17). Thus, the trickster can be known as a character using everything it has for finding a creative solution. Moreover, its transformative aspect can transform every lewd act into an act of blessing, or vice versa. As asserted by Hynes, “The trickster manifests a distinctive transformative ability: he can find the lewd in the sacred and the sacred in the lewd, and new life from both” (42). Thus, in different cultures and myths it is possible to come across with a trickster that transforms the boundaries in sexuality, gastronomy or profanity.

Considering all these six aspects, it is possible to claim that the trickster is almost a liquid character that can be anywhere anytime to do anything. Yet, it must be remembered that as many trickster figures might have most of these aspects, they may also have only one of them as well. Moreover, there are other characteristics or similarities that the trickster figures from different cultures or myths share. As in the case offered by William G. Doty, another 6-item list that consists of certain recurring characteristics can be presented moving from the ancient Greek figure of Hermes. It must be noted that Hermes, the ancient Greek figure embodying many different characteristics available for trickster in many different cultures, is such a complex figure to be catalogued in clear-cut categories. However, explaining and describing the qualities that make Hermes a trickster might better help identify any possible trickster or tricksterish character in literary texts. Therefore, the characteristics offered by Doty, which are “(1) his marginality and

paradoxical qualities; (2) his erotic and relational aspects; (3) his functions as a creator and a restorer; (4) his deceitful thievery; (5) his comedy and wit; and (6) the role ascribed to him in hermeneutics, the art of interpretation whose name is said to be derived from his” can be listed as Hermes’s tricksterish qualities (46). Moving from the qualities attributed to Hermes, it is not wrong to remind that trying to identify the essence of the trickster figure may not be appropriate. As it may combine many of the qualities, it is possible to embody just one of them. At this point, Hermes’s marginality can be defined through his appearance which includes ithyphallic icons “located at entrances to homes, public buildings, and sleeping chambers, and at crossroads” (Doty 48). For his paradoxical qualities, identifying him as both an old man and a baby, the god of thieves and the protector against them and more strikingly as “the patron of luck in both commercial gain and accidental loss” is not accidental (Doty 48). Therefore, he is a combination of binary oppositions which results with his liquidity between both sides. Considering the taboo breaking and border blurring qualities of the trickster, Hermes acts like both the embodiment and the absence of many divine and human traits. His marginal look which carries the erect phallus is also associated with his erotic and relational aspects. Seeing the word erotic not only in sexual terms but also as the matter of attraction in general, Hermes’ role as a connector cannot be ignored. As mentioned by Doty, “Hermes is sighted as a peacemaker, as the patron of youths, flocks and the luck find, and as the original sacrifice or cook – in every case emphasis is upon *connections* between humans, or between humans and deities” (51). Therefore, his phallic representations do not limit Hermes with just genital sexuality, but his role among humans and deities clarify his position and more importantly the idea of connectedness which is caused by peaceful interactions not by sexuality. Moving from his erotic and relational aspects, Hermes is a creator and restorer as well. Positioning him between humans and deities, his creativity could be attributed to his godly qualities, nevertheless, his tricksterish qualities that could be his creating and restoring actions in order to make the earth more liveable for humans. Therefore, Hermes’s acts like creating interconnections among people, nations and more strikingly peace through use of military and political rearrangements work for making the cosmos more habitable (Doty 56). As for the fourth tricksterish quality of Hermes, his shamelessness must be addressed. Considering the qualities such as deception, trickery

and thievery, as opposed to the other tricksters Hermes does not get tricked in return even though he tricks. However, he punishes the characters who act as tricksters around him. As exemplified by Doty, Hermes turns the chatterbox into stone when he finds out that he gives Hermes away to Apollon even though he promised not to (57). Based on his acts as a trickster, it could be stated that his trickery and thievery, just as offered for the nature of the trickster, are beneficial because he either saves somebody or something from a dangerous position, or helps someone do it. Even the name of the character, trickster, arouses humour and laughter in the mind. Moving from the mythical or cultural trickster figures, almost every story includes a comic character. At this point, it is Hermes, himself.

Hermes almost always appears *unexpectedly* and in an unforeseen manner (*aproides*); *ingeniously*: resolving a tiff among the gods with a joke about his being bested by Leto (*Illiad* 21: 498); *self-effacingly*: he complains in Aristophanes' *Peace*: "I have to watch the little things [gods leave behind], / Pipkins and panikins and trencherlets"; and *impatiently*: "Mercury wastes no time," but speaks and then vanishes in midair (Virgil, *Aeneid* 4: 96). (Doty 60)

Therefore, Hermes, through his humour, presents his wit as well as his comedy, which is a crafty one rather than a simple childhood play that could arouse laughter. Even his own laughter is more than a simple laughter as it can provoke a later relation or gain. And finally his role as a messenger. Hermes, as his name implies, which is derived from hermeneutics – the art of interpretation, carries messages between people and gods; sometimes originates those messages, sometimes adapts them or even sometimes decides when to present them. Doty asserts that his interpretation is quite open to new meanings that could find places in different contexts, that could be adapted to different occasions or that could be flexible at any time (63). In brief, these six qualities thought to be making Hermes a trickster are quite easy to identify in trickster figures in literature. The magical elements, frisky clown-like qualities, mediating between human beings and gods, cunningness and deceitfulness, eroticism, liquidity in terms of age and gender and more importantly limitlessness in creating and living in limits are the qualities that could be found common in Hermes and tricksters in many different cultures and stories.

As the trickster is very well known for breaking taboos, this characteristic of him/her needs to be explained as well. In many cultures, it is possible to come across with characters that twist the course of the action in the stories they find place in by simply breaking a taboo in that society. While breaking any taboo, religious, cultural or ethical,

certain similarities might be identified in different tricksters that could belong to a different society, Western, African or North American. In order to point out those similarities, Barbara Babcock-Abrahams presents the list below through which a trickster figure can be identified:

1. exhibit an independence from and an ignoring of temporal and spatial boundaries;
2. tend to inhabit crossroads, open public places (especially the marketplace), doorways, and thresholds. In one way or another they are usually situated between the social cosmos and the other world or chaos;
3. are frequently involved in scatological and coprophagous episodes which may be creative, destructive, or simply amusing;
4. may, similarly, in their deeds and character, partake of the attributes of Trickster-Transformer-Culture Hero;
5. frequently exhibit some mental and/or physical abnormality, especially exaggerated sexual characteristics;
6. have an enormous libido without procreative outcome;
7. have an ability to disperse and to disguise themselves and a tendency to be multiform and ambiguous, single or multiple;
8. often have a two-fold physical nature and/or a "double" and are associated with mirrors. Most noticeably, the trickster tends to be of uncertain sexual status;
9. follow the "principle of motley" in dress;
10. are often indeterminate (in physical stature) and may be portrayed as both young and old, as perpetually young or perpetually age;
11. exhibit an *[sic]* human/animal dualism and may appear as a human with animal characteristics or vice versa; (even in those tales where the trickster is explicitly identified as an animal, he is anthropomorphically described and referred to in personal pronouns);
12. are generally amoral and asocial - aggressive, vindictive, vain defiant of authority, etc.;
13. despite their endless propensity to copulate, find their most abiding form of relationship with the feminine in a mother grandmother bond;
14. in keeping with their creative/destructive dualism, tricksters tend to be ambiguously situated between life and death, and good and evil, as is summed up in the combined black and white symbolism frequently associated with them;
15. are often ascribed to roles (i.e., other than tricky behavior) which an individual normally has privileged freedom from some of the demands of the social code;
16. in all their behavior, tend to express a concomitant breakdown the distinction between reality and reflection. (159-60)

Considering all these sixteen qualities attributed to the trickster, it could be expected from it to cross all the boundaries physically or mentally, destroy the dominant order either for a positive purpose or just to make fun of it, or create or exploit authority. No matter which culture it belongs to, it finds a way to transgress or violate taboos as "he incarnates lack of discipline, disobedience, and rebellion, while defying simultaneously the rules of the society and those of the Superior Beings" (Makarius 82). Therefore, the role of the trickster in the myths, folk tales or legends can be different in each time, yet, still it helps the story to reach

out its target through its consistent tricks, deceits, plays and so on.

As this text will focus on certain female and male trickster figures that can be identified in Angela Carter's tales, it will discuss how Angela Carter made use of this interestingly rich character while she was retelling the famous fairy tales, myths, legends or folk tales in her own way and how she benefited from it in order to show misconceptions of dominant order intentionally or unintentionally people, especially women have been suffering from since the beginning of the humankind. While doing this, it will make use of the six qualities identified by Hynes as a starting point to call a character a trickster and benefit from the other critics in order to support how those trickster figures destroy, maintain or restore the orders in the selected tales.

CHAPTER 2: ANGELA CARTER: HER LIFE AND STYLE

To be the *object* of desire is to be defined in the passive case.

To exist in the passive case is to die in the passive case – that is to be killed.

This is the moral of the fairy tale about the perfect woman.

– Angela Carter *The Sadeian Woman*

Angela Carter, who began writing in the 1960s, was one of the best known British writers of the twentieth century when she died of cancer in 1992. Through her novels, short stories, reviews and journal articles, she was both appreciated and criticised for controversy. According to Linden Peach, “The many connections between Carter’s novels, short stories, children’s fiction and even non-fiction are testimony to her interest in blurring the boundaries between them, challenging our perceptions of what we mean, for example, by a ‘novel’ or a ‘short story’” (5). As is understood from Peach’s words, the critical acclaim that Carter won mainly depends on her own understanding of genres and issues. In an interview when John Haffenden says “I think it’s true that you embrace opportunities for overwriting”, she explains this unique understanding of her as, “Embrace them? I would say that I half-suffocate them with which I wrap my arms and legs around them” (Haffenden 91). Through this suffocation of opportunities for overwriting, it can be asserted that Angela Carter manages to transform well-known fairy tales of Perrault, The Grimm Brothers, and so on into short stories or in her own words tales, which have unexpected and untraditional endings with the help of extraordinary characters, which have also been transformed in Carter’s hands. Angela Carter subverts the traditional representations of masculinity and femininity by rewriting the traditional fairy tales, myths and legends based on the superiority of male characters in all aspects.

As a result of many travels around the world, she gained this different understanding of femininity in which women are not passive and oppressed stereotypes in the house, but sly, wicked and self-determined characters. As Gerrard points out, Carter herself believed: “In Japan, I learned what it was to be a woman, and became radicalised” (23). However, this was not her first attempt to rebel against the concept of being a woman as she had already been through an oppressed childhood in which she had not even been

allowed to get dressed or wash herself. As Joan Acocella asserted in her article titled “Angela Carter’s Feminist Mythology”, “Finally, she rebelled, went on a diet, and changed from a fat, obliging girl to a skinny, rude girl. She slouched around in short skirts and fishnet stockings, smoking and saying offensive things to her mother” (4). Despite all the bigoted actions of her mother, she managed to create herself as she would create her adult tales in future. Nevertheless, even this self-made girl saw marriage as an escape from her parents when they offered to move to Oxford to be close to Angela while she was studying there. After she met her husband Paul Carter, with whom she shared a taste for folk music, according to Acocella, she was presented with a group of feelings that she would make use of constructing her tales (5). Based on the idea that her career started as a journalist, her curiosity for knowing more and her desire to go the extra mile directed her to study at a university. Thus, her road took her to Bristol University, where she studied English. She had to do something for herself, and as Alison Easton quoted, “my life has been most significantly shaped by my gender. . . . I spent a good many years being told what I ought to think, and how I ought to behave, and how I ought to write, even, because I was a woman and men thought they had the right to tell me how to feel, but then I stopped listening and tried to figure it out for myself” (2). Of course, this figuring out was not painless; however, it was worth it. Throughout her studies in Bristol, she was introduced to the medieval literature, Freud, Surrealism, and so on. Therefore, it was expected that she could come up with her own as a result of this combination of past, present, future and even timelessness of art. Considering her concern for justice, especially for women, in her world of imagination, there was no place for powerless, slave-like women who are also freed from their sexuality.

In 1966, Carter’s first novel *Shadow Dance* was published. In this novel she wrote about the story of a man, Honeybuzzard and a girl, Ghislaine. The man cuts the face of Ghislaine in slices and finishes his job when she is out of the hospital by strangling her and putting her naked body in the attic. After this, *The Magic Toyshop* appeared and that was the story of an orphaned girl who is sent to live with her sadistic puppeteer uncle. In 1966, all her efforts started to pay back when she received a Somerset Maugham Award, which funded young writers to travel (Acocella 7). With this award she decided to go to Japan. This was a big step for her as she did this without Paul, her husband and put their crawling

marriage aside. Edmund Gordon quoted how she felt when she arrived in Tokyo in *Invention of Angela Carter* as follows:

When night descended over the ocean, many unfamiliar stars sprang out in the sky; as we approached land, there began to blossom below me such an irregular confusion of small lights it was difficult to be certain if the starry sky lay above or below me. So the aeroplane ascended or descended into an electric city where nothing was what it seemed at first and I was absolutely confused. I was seized with vertigo. (137)

Thus, a new page on Carter's personal and literary life was opened with the help of this award and travel consecutively. Her time in Japan was full of love affairs, literary and cultural feeding and flourishing. As Gordon asserts, upon meeting a new lover, Araki in Tokyo, she decided to end up her marriage and even put her wedding ring in an ashtray at the airport. However, this was also not as easy as that could be imagined. Even more than Paul, her mother, Olive showed reaction to this idea. Remembering how straitlaced she was, she did not even look at her daughter's face when she visited her in the hospital considering divorce something inappropriate. Still, nothing could stop her to live her life and to create herself; therefore, she continued pursuing her life in Japan that enabled her to write her masterpieces. In 1974 she published the collection of tales *Fireworks* after she ended up two love affairs in Japan that had effects on her; thus, it is possible to come across with certain instances in the tales that could be attributed to Carter's time in Japan. After getting back to England, she dealt with the translation of Charles Perrault's tales, which lighted the way for her version of Perrault and Grimm Brothers' tales. *The Bloody Chamber* appeared at that moment in 1979 and that was time for showing her power for short fiction once more. Salman Rushdie explained this power in the Introduction to *Burning Your Boats* with the following words:

...the best of her, I think, is in her stories. Sometimes, at novel length, the distinctive Carter voice, those smoky, opium-eater's cadences interrupted by harsh or comic discords, that moonstone-and-rhinestone mix of opulence and flim-flam, can be exhausting. In her stories, she can dazzle and swoop, and quit while she's ahead. (ix – x)

Therefore, her short fiction, or her adult tales in her own words became the matter of attraction for many through the worlds, characters and ideas proposed by them. Lorna Sage defines 1979 as "Angela Carter's annus mirabilis" because it was the time when she was invented and identified by her readers and herself as a re-writer (52). With the

appearance of both *The Bloody Chamber* and *The Sadeian Woman* in the same year, she could open her real self and her mastery to be read, re-read and idolised. Moreover, Carter herself describing her own writing says that “Reading is just as creative as an activity as writing and most intellectual development depends upon new readings of old texts. I am all for putting new wine in old bottles, especially if the pressure of the new wine makes the old bottles explode” (“Notes from the Front Line” 37). So, her world of fiction which is full of postmodern elements such as parody and pastiche was rooted from her clear understanding of intertextuality, which was a good result of being a good reader as she understood the importance of new readings of old texts, which constituted and normalized the dominant patriarchal order. As Aytül Özüm puts it, Carter’s putting new wine in old bottles “fabricate[s] new cultural and literary realities in which sexuality and free will in women replace the patriarchal traits of innocence and morality in traditional fairy tales” (154). Based on her re-readings of the fairy tales and Sade, she was “bleakly contemplating the fate of good, powerless girls, the Red Riding Hoods and Sleeping Beauties of the world” (Sage 54). The reason why she made so much use of these fairy tales and the female figures in them could be understood through the idea that these women could be found everywhere. “You could find this woman in conduct books, novels, psychoanalysis, and suburbia as well as in pornography. And the fairy tale too has come to serve this post romantic agony culture that is modern and masochistic at once” (Sage 55). Hence, Carter wanted to vindicate women’s power for creating, destroying and restoring through the voices she gave to the characters to whom she gave rebirth. Her success in the fairy tale business is not only related to her depiction of female characters, but also to her deconstruction and more popularly demythologizing. As in her own words, “I’m in the demythologizing business. I’m interested in myths [...] just because they are extraordinary lies designed to make people unfree” (“Notes from the Front Line” 38). Therefore, by demythologizing, Carter manages to create female figures sexually active, freed from their victimized roles and more importantly standing against the misogynistic ideology offered and taught by the earlier versions of the tales Carter rewrote. The new women introduced by Carter in her tales are quite the opposites of the ones told so far in the case of their subverted construction which is completely the opposite of “good, decent, innocent and naïve” with their transgression “to have perverted sexual practices or to be

violently harmful for the opposite sex” (Özüm 154). Eventually, she deconstructs the traditional conception of women and disrupts the codes of conventions through non-traditional representations of women.

One of the biggest events of Carter’s life took place in 1983 when she gave birth to her only child, Alexander. After this she started to age more quickly and Acocella quotes from her dairy the following words about her aging; “I catch myself in the mirror looking like my father” (13). However, this aging did not turn her into an infertile, passive and powerless woman. On the contrary, she wrote *Wise Children* in 1991, in which Dora Chance, a 75-year-old woman, tells the life story of her and her twin sister. The anti-pessimistic look towards aging provided with the aging twins, in a way, works like a claim for Carter’s positive understanding or acceptance of her aging rather than a regretful one.

Unfortunately, just before she published *Wise Children*, she was diagnosed with lung cancer that even spread to her lymph, and thus it was impossible to operate. In the rest of her life, a year only, she worked on her nonfiction, married her son’s father Mark and lived the final days of her life until she died in February 1992. However, her contributions to the literary world did not end with her death as in 1995 a collection of her short stories was published posthumously including her previously published collections together with her uncollected works. The collection opens up with the Introduction written by Salman Rushdie in which he talks about his visit to Carter a few weeks before her death and his comments on her stories in the collection. After that her early works written between 1962 and 1966 were given which is followed by *Fireworks: Nine Profane Pieces*. *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* is the next section in the collection and *Black Venus* follows it with its six stories. The last two sections are *American Ghosts and Old World Wonders* and her uncollected stories written between 1970 and 1981. The collection is closed with an appendix including Carter’s “Afterword” to *Fireworks* and details about her first publications. As the collection provides the reader with a great source of Carter’s work at once, it will be used throughout this thesis while referring to the tales and stories written by Angela Carter.

CHAPTER 3: FEMALE TRICKSTER FIGURES IN *BURNING YOUR BOATS*

Carter's strength is precisely in exploding the stereotypes of women
as passive, demure cyphers.

That she therefore evokes the gamut violence and
perversity is certainly troubling,
but to deny their existence is surely to incarcerate women back
within a partial, sanitised image
only slightly less constricted than the Victorian angel in the house.

– Alison Easton *Angela Carter: New Casebooks*

Angela Carter's *Burning Your Boats* is a great source to investigate the trickster archetype considering the above mentioned qualities as Carter enables her readers to fall into the world of tales. With her own words, "I wrote one anti-mythic novel in 1977, *The Passion of New Eve* ... and relaxed into folklore with a book of stories about fairy stories, *The Bloody Chamber*" (Carter, *Shaking a Leg* 38). With the word "about", it is made clear that Carter is making her own tales moving from the fairy tales of the folklore, myth, legends and previously told stories, so it could be asserted that she is concerned with the wrongs of conventional representations of gender. Therefore, the trickster figure, which has origins and roots in the myths and American folk tales, helps Carter to subvert the passive and oppressed stereotypical women in the house and, thus, create a new order either through destroying the existing one or restoring a favourable one.

3.1 The Mother as a Situation –inventor Trickster in "The Bloody Chamber"

The first tale from the collection to be analysed is "The Bloody Chamber", the story giving the first collection its title. In this "Bluebeard" rewriting, Carter reconstructs the Bluebeard figure by adding him pornographer qualities and changes the end of the story by replacing the rescuer brothers with an avenging mother who works as a situation-inventor trickster. In this first-person narrated story, the heroine starts remembering her train travel with her husband, the Marquis. While she is explaining how they got decided to get married, the words she uses to describe him show that the Marquis was a monster-like man, about whom terrible truths would be exposed. The wedding gift, the ring, the

castle and other details the Marquis provided the heroine with show his total power over her not only financially but also in terms of experience in life and age. When they reach out their castle, the Marquis leads his wife to their bedroom, which is surrounded by mirrors that reflect them twelve times. The Marquis undresses his wife and then leaves her out in the room alone, which presents his pornographic tendencies first. As mentioned by Aidan Day, “The multitude of mirrors and hence of girls emphasises her objectification: she loses individuality and becomes an item in a series of multiply reproduced items, a specimen of female sex in the Marquis’ harem” (154). Before the trickster figure of the story, the mother, appears, Carter elaborately entwines the plot so that her arrival is to become more and more heroic. When she starts walking around the house, she explores her husband’s library, in which she finds a collection of sadistic pornography and encounters with an interesting reaction: “‘My little nun has found the prayerbooks [*sic*], has she?’ he demanded, with a curious mixture of mockery and relish; then, seeing my painful, furious bewilderment, he laughed at me aloud, snatched the book from my hands and put it down on the sofa” (Carter, *Burning Your Boats* 120).

After a while, just like in the Bluebeard tale, the Marquis leaves the castle handing his wife a ring of keys and warning her not to use the one opening the dull little room. This leave saddens the girl who is amazed and enchanted by her husband’s physical and financial power. She tries to resist the motivation for seeing the room through playing the piano and talking to the piano-tuner, who is just the opposite of the Marquis as a blind, poor and powerless man. The boredom she falls in as a result of loneliness attracts her into the forbidden room where her enlightenment takes place when she sees the dead ex-wives of the Marquis. After he gets back to the castle, he finds out that his wife had been to the room and orders her to prepare for the ritualistic murder. When she is prepared, she is asked to come to the yard. Even though she knows that she is to be killed and even though she sees her mother on a horse approaching the castle, she goes to the yard with the piano-tuner, who is humiliated by the Marquis. However, when the mother arrives to the gate, the Marquis hesitates; and thus, the girl manages to open the gate for her mother. Yet she describes the moment and the Marquis as follows: “The puppet master, open-mouthed, wide-eyed, impotent at the last, saw his dolls break free of their strings, abandon the rituals he had ordained for them since time began and start to live for themselves; the king,

aghast, witnesses the revolt of his pawns” (Carter, *Burning Your Boats* 142). The self-realised girl, this time, realizes the power of her mother, who is the saviour figure.

From this moment on, it is the mother’s rules. As Hynes mentions while describing the trickster, for the trickster, there is nothing sacred, no order, no good or no profanity that could not be inverted (37). When the trickster appears at a place, it turns a place of safety into a place of danger and back again. It plays with the situations so well that “bad becomes good, good becomes worse, worse becomes better, and so on” (Hynes 37). Therefore, the mother figure in the story, who has been drawn just as the opposite of her daughter inverts the story and the situation completely. Even though in the Bluebeard version, the girl is rescued by her brothers, the avenging mother saves her daughter and is described by her as follows:

You never saw such a wild thing as my mother, her hat seized by the winds and blown out to sea so that her hair was her white mane, her black lisle legs exposed to the thigh, her skirts tucked round her waist, one hand on the reins of the rearing horse while the other clasped my father's service revolver and, behind her, the breakers of the savage, indifferent sea, like the witnesses of a furious justice. And my husband stood stock-still, as if she had been Medusa, the sword still raised over his head as in those clockwork tableaux of Bluebeard that you see in glass cases at fairs. (Carter, *Burning Your Boats* 142)

At this point the trickster mother inverts the situation and saves her daughter, and thus, transforms the end of the tale into a better one through her appearance. As Aktari mentions, “Thus, this marginal mother figure reverses power mechanisms functioning in a Gothic text through killing the patriarchal figure represented by the marquis and she promises a new future which transgresses the boundaries and overcomes the binaries” (47). Thus, the mother, who has appeared all of a sudden and who has been instinctively called to rescue her daughter, stays like a miracle that has inverted the situation and embodied the trickster. The girl while describing her mother underlines more of the qualities that make her a trickster with the following words: “On her eighteenth birthday, my mother had disposed of a man-eating tiger that had ravaged the villages in the hills north of Hanoi. Now, without a moment's hesitation, she raised my father's gun, took aim and put a single, irreproachable bullet through my husband's head” (Carter, *Burning Your Boats* 142). And the end of the story is glorified by the union of the girl and the piano-tuner as a couple and the castle as a school where the bloody chamber of the Marquis has

been sealed and buried.

As detected, the trickster mother enables Carter to transform “the Bluebeard” tale into her kind of an adult tale as a situation-invertor and destroy the order of the Marquis that has been prevailing for a long time. The new order in the story could be created when the maternal telepathy of the mother calls her and enables her to rescue her daughter. Aktari explains this ending and the role of the mother as follows:

This rewritten end subverts the conventional Gothic plot which expels the mother figure. Through Carter’s adoption of the “good” mother as a power to destroy the symbolic order, the end symbolizes the victory of the maternal courage over the patriarchal Gothic plot chasing women in the dark corridors of the maternal space whether to imprison or to kill them. (47)

Thus, through the situation-inverting trickster mother Carter puts an end to the prevalent order of the Marquis and creates a happily-ever-after order for the mother, daughter and the piano tuner.

3.2 The Countess as a Trick Player Trickster in “The Snow Child”

The next tale in the collection that embodies a female trickster figure is “The Snow Child”. This one is a Carterian tale in which the father creates his daughter out of his desire and his wife works as a trick player trickster in order to restore the order destroyed by the product of her husband’s desire. As mentioned by Jacques Barchilon, this is a “succinct (seven paragraphs, barely one or two pages of print) version of a widespread folkloric tale type, ‘The Three Oranges’” (27). In this very short tale, it is winter and the Count and the Countess are on the way through the snow in the white wilderness. Amazed by this, the Count wishes to have “a girl as white as snow” (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 193). As they move on, they see a hole filled with blood and the Count wishes to have “a girl as red as blood” (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 193). The final desire of the Count is expressed when they see a raven with the words “I wish I had a girl as black as that bird’s feathers” (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 193).

As soon as the wishes are uttered, “a white skin, red mouth, black hair and stark naked” girl of the desires of the Count appears and triggers the jealousy of the Countess, who embodies trickster qualities, at the moment of her appearance. The Countess tries her best to get rid of this snow child who is the ultimate object of her husband’s desire. She

needs to get rid of her not only because she is jealous but also she can lose the financial power provided by him. Just like most of the female characters portrayed victimized in the fairy tales, in Carter's tales also they are portrayed as financially dependent and inexperienced or even without reason and sense (Abbasoğlu 9). Thus, the countess is a perfect symbol of conventional woman dependent on her husband. While she is trying to get rid of the snow child, she plays her tricks. As Hynes mentions, the trickster is a continuous trick player and deceiver (35). In Carter's tale, the Countess drops her glove and asks the girl to look for it planning to leave her there; yet, her husband fails her plan by offering a new one. Then, throws her diamond brooch in a frozen pond so that the girl would dive and drown. Considering the quality of a trickster a trick player and deceiver, it is seen and accepted as the main cause of all disruptions, disorders, misfortunes and so on. Lying, cheating and deceiving are main qualities of it and they can be derived from its being a fool and a spoiler. Therefore, Hynes asserts that it is not surprising that its tricks can sometimes exceed any control and even get back to it somehow (35). In this story the Countess as a trickster tries so hard to trick the snow child that she is herself trickster-tricked as all her attempts get back to her even leaving her bare foot. However, she does not give up on her tricks and plays her final trick asking the girl to pick her a rose from the bush they see. All her wish is to restore the order in their marriage which has been disrupted by the appearance of the snow child resulting in the loss of her husband's affection of her. She manages to get rid of the snow child with her final trick. Barchilon says that "The child, obeying her 'stepmother's' command to pick up a rose, pricks herself, falls, and begins to bleed to death" (27). However, this death is not the ending that restores The Countess's destroyed order because her husband cries a lot and has sex with the dead girl, after which the girl melts and transforms back into a bloodstain, a raven's feather, and the rose she has been created from.

The ending of the story perfectly justifies the means that the Countess has adopted as the order is restored when "she had all her clothes again. With her long hand, she stroked her furs. The Count picked up the rose, bowed and handed it to his wife." (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 193). Finally, the Countess manages to attain her husband's affection back even though the finale of the story is open to discussion especially in terms of feminist criticism as she does nothing while a woman is dying or being raped though dead.

According to Elaine Jordan the death of the virgin girl symbolizes “killing of masculine representations” not “a killing of women” (41). Carter is deconstructing the idea of masculine evil by restoring the order of the Countess who is the symbol of female evil by using it as a support rather than a challenge for the masculine one. Based on the idea that the Countess works as a trickster, all she is expected to do is playing her tricks in order to assure her place in her relationship with the Count, but not rescuing another woman from being the object of her husband’s desire. Therefore, when she is bitten by the rose, she does not understand the “bite” of supporting her violent, oppressing and objectifying husband as all she cares about is restoring the order that has been destroyed by her husband’s desire.

3.3 The Young Girl as an Ambiguous and Anomalous Trickster in “The Company of Wolves”

Another character from the collection to be called a trickster is the girl in “The Company of Wolves” which is a Little Red Riding Hood tale and she is an ambiguous and anomalous trickster through her liquidity between being a virgin and inexperienced girl and a sexually waken woman. In this tale, the narrator starts telling a cold Northern country with its famous wolves and werewolves and its people who are always prepared to be attacked by them. The wild winter in the country makes the wolves and the werewolves wild. While describing the extraordinary happenings in the country, the narrator tells the stories of a man who killed a wolf that has turned into a man, of a witch who “turned an entire wedding party into wolves” because of her jealousy and of a young woman whose husband disappeared on their wedding night and came back years after when his wife was married to another man (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 213). When he came back and saw the second husband and the children at home, he transformed into a wolf out of rage and attacked them. However, after they managed to kill him, he transformed back into the man in his wedding night. Seeing his sorrowful wife after the death of her first husband, the second one beat her. Through these two husbands, Carter presents the image of men violent inside and outside. After listing a few more details about the werewolves, the narrator moves on to the real story where the reader meets the Little Red Riding Hood-like girl and the hunter she meets in the forest despite the warnings of

her mother.

Just as in the original story, the girl is on her way to her grandmother's house with a basket of gifts for her and additionally a knife to protect herself in the dangerous forest. Carter shifts from the original story to a great extent from the very beginning by making the huntsman she meets in the forest a werewolf even though he is the saviour in the original story. According to Bruhl and Gamer, "In making the huntsman a werewolf, she takes the stories dyad of male virtue and vice and places them within the changeable body of a single character" (150). Therefore, Carter manages to show her readers that the danger is not explicitly crying out, but sometimes it is in the safest places.

Just before meeting the werewolf, Carter draws the picture of a conventional young girl who is expected to protect her virginity as the traditional fairy tales were also used like conduct books for teaching morals, especially to the young girls by pointing out to the importance of keeping their chastity. However, as the young girl is now in a Carterian fairy tale, this idea of virginity is to be parodied or made fun of. In order to help the female characters gain their voices, power and more importantly their freedom, Carter gifts them with authentic sexual identities. While describing the little girl's virginity, she makes use of the following words in a parodic way:

She stands and moves within the invisible pentacle of her own virginity. She is an unbroken egg; she is a sealed vessel; she has inside her a magic space the entrance to which is shut tight with a plug of membrane; she is a closed system; she does not know how to shiver. She has her knife and she is afraid of nothing. (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 216).

Therefore, when the handsome huntsman approaches the girl, she never gets afraid of him and takes off her guards trusting him to guide her to her grandmother's house. Then they bet on who would make to the house earlier by announcing the trophy as a kiss. At this point Carter transforms the inexperienced child into a woman who is aware of her sexuality, and therefore, into the trickster figure of the story who is known for being ambiguous and anomalous. Hynes claims that this figure can be the living embodiment of a fifteenth century philosophical principle called "coincidence of opposites". Or, as Levi Strauss mentions the trickster is a collection of binary oppositions. In its creation, there is the set of extremes such as "sacred and profane, life and death, culture and nature, order and chaos, fertility and impotence" (Hynes 34). Considering all of these oppositions, it

can be said that the trickster stands on the edges or even sometimes beyond the borders or classifications. As naturally the trickster is a border breaker, it moves quickly back and forth across all the borders defined. It is the young girl who moves between childhood and femininity. As soon as the huntsman arrives the grandmother's house, he gets rid of her and cleans out everything and pretends to be the grandmother sitting by the fire, which disappoints the girl thinking that the huntsman could not make it there before her. However, when she realizes the truth that the huntsman is a werewolf whose brothers are also outside, she starts playing her tricks as a trickster.

The final dialogue makes it more clear for the readers about how a trickster can invert the situation for her own sake. After she undresses herself in front of the wolf, she unbuttons the collar of his shirt. Then the famous dialogue about the wolf's arms, eyes and teeth takes place. However, with a difference.

She saw how his jaw began to slaver and the room was full of the clamour of the forest's Liebestod but the wise child never flinched, even as he answered: All the better to eat you with. The girl burst out laughing; she knew she was nobody's meat. She laughed at him full in the face, she ripped off his shirt for him and flung it into the fire, in the fiery wake of her own discarded clothing. The flames danced like dead souls on Walpurgisnacht and the old bones under the bed set up a terrible clattering but she did not pay them any heed. (Carter, *Burning Your Boats* 219)

In order to create her own order, the girl, now the woman, plays her tricks glorified by Carter's powerful words: "she knew she was nobody's meat". As hers is not somebody else's meat, it is her own decision to be with someone. Therefore, it is her who would accept a man to touch her flesh. As Merja Makinen mentions, "In all her tales, not only is femininity constructed as active, sensual, desiring and unruly – but successful sexual transactions are founded on an equality and the transforming powers of recognising the reciprocal claims of the other" (qtd. in Day 151). For this kind of a transaction to take place in "The Company of Wolves", there is a need for the girl to be transformed into a self-realised woman rather than an inexperienced girl, which is made possible through embodying trickster qualities such as being ambiguous and anomalous. Since these qualities enable the girl to be on the edges of the boundaries and extremes, she can be in transition through many classifications. Thus, she can disorder and disassemble as expected from a trickster. More importantly as offered by Sarah Sceats, this new Little Red Riding Hood "needs no rescue by woodcutter or father; that the ideal solution is [...]"

to get into bed with the wolf, [...]” (145). Since in this newly constructed world order there is no need for a male hero, Carter’s female hero can save herself by being herself and by challenging conventional social behaviours of women. As can be expected from Carter and her heroines, the little girl manages to construct both herself and her order by standing against the domestic roles given to women because Carter’s women “become woman, doomed to identify with stereotypes of ideologically – prescribed Femininity, embodying Virgins, Witches, Whores, Mothers, Pregnant Women, Monsters or Enigmas. Yet, they also challenge these compulsory clichés of Womanhood” as is asserted by Anna Kérchy (60). Considering the end of the story that underlines the power of the trickster girl that has turned the wild animal in to “the tender wolf”, one can understand how a trickster can go beyond the limits, rules, borders and extremes in order to reach out her desires and create her own order.

3.4 Lady Purple as a Shapeshifter and Lewd Bricoleur Trickster in “The Loves of Lady Purple”

In the story titled “The Loves of Lady Purple”, the reader is in the world of puppetry with an Asian puppet master who produces a marionette, Lady Purple, which is a shapeshifter and lewd bricoleur trickster, and puts her on the stage for pleasing the audience. In addition to these two characters, there are also the deaf nephew of the master and a little silly girl. Considering Lady Purple the master’s construction, it is him who has given the role of a woman to the puppet; and thus, who has designed even every single detail in her appearance. Lady Purple is described in so much detail that one can easily imagine her as a living woman.

She was the Queen of Night. There were glass rubies in her head and her ferocious teeth, carved out of mother o’ pearl, were always on show for she has a permanent smile. Her face was as white as chalk because it was covered with the skin of supple white leather which also clothed her torso, joined limbs and complication of extremities. Her beautiful hand seemed more like weapons because her nails were so long, five inches of pointed tin enamelled scarlet and she wore a wig of black hair arranged in a chignon more heavily elaborate than any human neck could have endured. This monumental *chevelure* was stuck through with many brilliant pins tipped with pieces of broken mirror so that, every time she moved, she cast a multitude of scintillating reflections which danced about the theatre like mice of light. Her clothes were all of deep, dark, slumberous colours – profound pinks, crimson and vibrating purple with which was synonymous, a purple the colour of blood in a love suicide. (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 43)

Remembering the myth of Pygmalion, who is a sculptor falling in love with the ivory statue he created and whose story ends up with a happy marriage with the help of Aphrodite who turns the statue into a real woman, Lady Purple presents quite an opposite image compared to the innocence and naiveté of the statue. In this way Carter from the very beginning not only deconstructs the appearance of the statue in the original story but also offers a vamp female puppet which represents the opposite of the oppressed female sexuality. While deconstructing and demythologizing the myth, Carter also attributes many tricksterish qualities to Lady Purple who is a direct embodiment of a grotesque taboo breaker that can be expected to transgress the social or even physical boundaries. Even through the expression of her appearance, the reader prepares himself/herself to see how she is going to change the course of action and become her own saviour in this show.

Lady Purple was created as a pleasure toy for the male gaze as she is performing sexual performances in her drama titled “The Notorious Amours of Lady Purple, The Shameless Oriental Venus” (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 45). Even the title of the performance clearly implies that she has been the object of desire and considering she is a puppet controlled and directed through her master, she is one of the most passive, victimized and powerless female figures one can come across. Throughout the performance, Lady Purple’s so-called talents and success stories are told, through which another touch upon to the representation of conventional social woman can be directly made:

Lady Purple’s talents verged on the unspeakable. Booted, in leather, she became a mistress of the whip before her fifteenth birthday. Subsequently, she graduated in the mysteries of the torture chamber, where she thoroughly researched all manner of ingenious mechanical devices. She utilised a baroque apparatus of funnel, humiliation, syringe, thumbscrew, contempt and spiritual anguish; to her lovers, such severe usage was both bread and wine and a kiss from her cruel mouth was the sacrament of suffering. (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 46)

As can be understood, even the representation of a female puppet summarizes the representation of women as the other in the society when they are in the hands of male creation. Even these qualities she got through her master could be counted as tools to transgress boundaries of dominant order based on the idea that a trickster is embodiment of abnormalities and extremities. Because the trickster is a “coincidence of opposite processes and notions in a single representation [that] characterizes the peculiar unity of

the liminal: that which is neither this nor that, and yet is both” as offered by Victor W. Turner, Lady Purple is a perfect combination of both excessively beautiful qualities, which are completely physical as a result of her master’s mastery in puppetry, and also the embodiment of evil femininity that is also called femme fatale, which is a product of her master’s imagination as well. However, the master, named Professor in the tale, constructs her story so interestingly that the reader learns that she was a real person who committed crimes and who lost her way by ending up in prostitution, and in the end who was turned into a puppet as a result of her never ending evilness and immorality. Considering the Professor’s aim for this construction of the femme fatale image in order to attract more and more audiences to show, it would not be incorrect to assert that the Professor’s acts also give hints about the society’s code of behaviour and the results if that code has been broken. As Lady Purple was not a decent, innocent and moral female when she was alive, the order she distorted through her actions was restored by her being turned into wood, in other words her being punished through passivity.

However, her passivity which is represented by even being cared and valued by her master through being put into a wooden box right after her performances is glorified when she gains the power of reshaping herself as a real woman, which is a very basic trickster quality: shapeshifting, and when she kills her master rather than marrying him. Lady Purple becomes the symbol of Carter’s idea of woman who is not in need of a man for being saved or reaching out self-actualisation. Considering the relationship of a puppet and a puppet master, there are certain points reminding the reader of the fact that she was also made for the master’s pleasure as well because “he could not sleep unless she lay beside him” (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 43). Thus, sleeping with the puppet he made shows that Lady Purple has become the object of desire of her master in a different sense as he is even able to touch and give a goodnight kiss to her just like a little child does with his/her own toy knowing that this kiss cannot wake the toy or give life to it. Nevertheless, this act of murder cannot be seen as an action triggered by simple vengeance since this monstrous murder, killing the Professor by draining all her blood, is actually the result of the role that the Professor himself casted for her, therefore, is also of his own creation.

As in Babcock-Abrahams’ list, tricksters are “generally amoral and asocial - aggressive, vindictive, vain defiant of authority”, so Lady Purple is not expected to be the

embodiment of morality, purity or the victim of patriarchal order. On the contrary, as is offered by Hynes before, the trickster, as a lewd bricoleur, can make use of every possibility she can because she is in need of escaping from a dangerous situation. And the combination of shapeshifting and being a lewd bricoleur ends up with a powerful and independent woman freed from her ties both literally and literary. The liquidity of the trickster between the destroyer and the creator helps Lady Purple not to regret when she turns the theatre into ashes at the end and walks into the town on her own. Therefore, her role as a destroyer does not affect her negatively, but liberates her as she is a woman creating herself. According to Merja Makinen, “Carter’s work has consistently dealt with representations of physical abuse of women in phallogentric cultures, of women alienated from themselves within the male gaze, and conversely of women who grab their sexuality and fight back, of women troubled by and even powered by their own violence” (21). Hence, Lady Purple, as a construct of patriarchal order completely and a construct for male gaze only, is empowered by her own violence as soon as she discovers it. Even though the end of the story does not meet the expectations of especially the feminist critics and eyes, Lady Purple is now an independent woman who can make her own choices. “She walked [...] making her way like a homing pigeon, out of logical necessity, to the single brothel it contained” (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 51). In other words, Carter, rather than focusing on the qualities of femme fatale, or moral codes and so on, provides the reader with an end in which Lady Purple, freed from the enslavement of male dominated order and patriarchal bondage, destroys the order created by the Professor in order to restore her own no matter how undesired it would be for many women.

3.5 Friday as a Shapeshifter Trickster in “Master”

In the final tale to be examined in this chapter of this thesis, the reader is presented a twisted Robinson Crusoe story, in which self-named Master buys a slave for himself that he named Friday, who is the shapeshifter trickster of the tale. Throughout the tale, the cruelty and relentlessness of Master, who is a white hunter travelling in the Amazon rainforests, is provided. After buying Friday, even having “bartered, for the spare tyre of his jeep”, which is the starting point for Friday’s order to be distorted, he continuously rapes and tortures her physically and uses her as a guide in the forest (Carter *Burning Your*

Boats 77). As in most of the stories of Carter, Friday does not also have an individual name but even named by her victimizer. According to Abbasoğlu, “Her purpose is to make these heroines represent women with common features in general, to encourage and support the female identity” (15). Therefore, by presenting a female character without a name, Carter does not only universalize her sufferings but also manages to construct the girl herself completely since a name is given not chosen by a person.

This exorbitantly victimised girl who is doomed to be abused in the dominant patriarchal society as a result of lack of experience and knowledge that would be her guardians plays the role of a trickster perfectly who turns into a jaguar in the end and kills her abuser upon attaining necessary qualities to be an independent individual. In Carter’s words, “as she grew more like him, so she began to resent him” (Carter *Burning Your Boats 79*). Therefore, as soon as she starts to create herself through the knowledge she has got from her so-called master, her transformation both literally and literary starts. Remembering Hermes as a crafty trickster one of whose tricksterish qualities was laughter, Friday also shows one of the important qualities of a trickster, arousing laughter. Just like Hermes’ laughter, Friday’s is also not a simple one as it provokes a later gain. After watching the master and learning how to use a rifle and shooting a bird in intention of shooting the moon, she cannot stand laughing at the corpse which is described by Carter as “she laughed delightedly at the corpse of the sleeping bird her bullet had knocked down from the tree and the moonlight glimmered on her curiously pointed teeth. She believed the bird she shot down had been the moon and now, in the night sky, she saw only the ghost of the moon” (Carter *Burning Your Boats 79*). Through this laughter at an innocent animal, Friday starts her transformation to a malicious or brutal woman who was an innocent and inexperienced girl in the beginning.

Later descriptions till Friday completes her transformation enable the reader to understand the culture she has been a part of. As it is forbidden in her troop, she has never eaten meat but only the roots of the plants in the forest; yet, entering the world of Master, she starts eating meat, cooked. This is also a very important attempt for her because after she completes her transformation into a jaguar, which is the symbol of her clan, she eats even raw meat. Through the middle of the story where she starts to realise herself as an individual, some fantastic or magical instances are involved in the course of action as she

starts to see ghosts that only she can see, which adds up to her trickster character more because she starts to invert the events to her side as a situation inverter.

Becoming the markswoman for her master, she continues helping him kill animals and more interestingly seeing the ghosts of those newly killed animals by the fire every night as a company for her. Even though she cannot kill the jaguar, the emblem of their clan, she could complete every task ordered by her master who continues to abuse her more and more brutally every time.

The descent of the banana spirit in the gourd marked the passage of time and they left a gross trail of carnage behind them. The spectacle of her massacres moved him and he mounted her in a frenzy, forcing apart her genital lips so roughly the crimson skin on the inside bruised and festered while the bites on her throat and shoulders oozed diseased pearls of pus that brought the blowflies buzzing about her in a cloud. Her screams were a universal language; even the monkeys understood she suffered when Master took his pleasure, yet he did not. (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 79)

The suffering she has been through is marked by even the animals in the forest, but not even perceived by her master. However, this victimisation starts to come to an end because she gains certain qualities at one of the nights she has suffered a lot. The first change appears on her hands which grow “long, curved, hard and sharp” fingernails and continues with her intolerance with water and it is glorified when she cannot speak the only word she used, “master” and grows whiskers (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 80). Therefore, Friday is now a full trickster with two marked qualities: situation inverter and shapeshifter. Considering her starting point “a pubescent girl as virgin as the forest that had borne her”, Friday gets transformed into a jaguar completing the course of her individuation (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 77). As is mentioned by Abbasoğlu, “It is also a hint at the individuation process of the heroines and their immature state before their struggles, when they lack sexual experience” (15). What is meant by Abbasoğlu is that, because Friday starts her journey as a virgin who lacks sexual experience, right after realizing her sexual identity, she is depicted more powerful and ready for creating herself.

At the end of the tale, when Friday completes her individuation by turning into a jaguar, now it is time for revenge: “His prey had shot the hunter, but now she could no longer hold the gun. Her brown and amber dappled sides rippled like water as she trotted across the clearing to worry the clothing of the corpse with her teeth. But soon she grew

bored and bounded away” (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 80). Friday manages to restore her order which was destroyed with the entrance of Master to her forest. However, now it is her own order not her Master’s or not her father’s, either. Not going back to her family but bounding away is a sign for her transformation’s harshness as “having become a wild beast, the jaguar/girl is incapable of adopting any moral standpoint, and does not show any sign of interest in returning to her family, whose father had after all traded her for trivial commodities” (Di Maio 353). As turning back to her family, especially her father might mean he would be hindrance for her independence, she is portrayed in the end as a liberated jaguar from any tie belonging to her past, which also reminds one of the qualities attributed to the trickster by Babcock- Adams, which is a trickster is expected to “exhibit an independence from and an ignoring of temporal and spatial boundaries” (159).

CHAPTER 4: MALE TRICKSTER FIGURES IN *BURNING YOUR BOATS*

All archetypes are spurious but some are more spurious than others.

There is the unarguable fact of sexual differentiation; but, separate from it and only partially derived from it, are the behavioural modes of masculine and feminine, which are culturally defined variables translated in the language of common usage to the status of universals.

– Angela Carter *The Sadeian Woman*

Angela Carter did not design her female characters just to exist in some imaginary world where nothing external forces them to subvert and transgress certain boundaries. She made use of extraordinarily ornamented male characters who made Carter's women resist, act against or transform either to destroy the order imposed on them or to restore a safer one. In some of the stories, male characters also try to destroy or restore the order by embodying certain qualities attributed to the trickster. In this chapter of this thesis, five male trickster figures from five tales in *Burning Your Boats* will be analysed.

4.1 The Young Officer as a Situation-invertor Trickster in “The Lady of House of Love”

In this rewriting of Perrault's “Sleeping Beauty” and somehow a parody of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, the reader is in the world of a female villain maintaining the order created by her ancestors and an innocent officer, who is a situation-invertor trickster, visiting the land where the Countess's mansion is located. The dualities between victim – saviour and villain – victim are very evident throughout the story. Even though the Countess could sound more like a trickster as a vampire, actually it is the officer who works more powerfully as a trickster because of his resistance against the dominant patriarchal order, especially represented by his colonel who advises him to visit a brothel that he remembers as follows:

His colonel, an old goat with jaded appetites, had given him the visiting card of a brothel in Paris where, the satyr assured him, ten louis would buy just such a lugubrious bedroom, with a naked girl upon a coffin; offstage, the brothel pianist played the Dies Irae on a harmonium and, amidst all the perfumes of the embalming parlour, the customer took his necrophiliac pleasure of a pretend corpse. (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 207)

His response to this recommendation is very unexpected for the male characters presented by Carter as he refuses it by thinking that it would be criminal because the girl is disordered. Moreover, based on the idea that Carter's victimised characters are deprived of knowledge, experience and especially sexual awareness, the officer is appropriate enough to be the victim of this tale.

On the contrary, the Countess who dreams to be human but does not know how, despite her captivity in her mansion as a result of her vampire qualities which prevent her from going out or even opening the curtains in the daylight, is a perfect victimizer who is blood-thirsty but forced to meet this need with the help of her keeper. Her keeper is the source provider of her hunger. Even though it was enough to feed on animals like rabbits or mice when she was younger, she is in need of young males in order to fulfil her hunger in any way as she is waiting for her meal in her late mother's wedding gown. According to Fernanda Sousa Carvalho, her representation as a men-eater female is also a stereotypical representation of "female transgressive sexuality" and it also includes the codes of society concerning female sexuality as she is permanently observed by the portraits of her ancestors during her rituals (4). However, the trickster officer is on the stage in order to invert the situation. Considering Hynes's point about the trickster's presence at a place, "No order is rooted, no taboo too sacred, no god too high, no profanity too scatological that it cannot be broached or inverted" (37). Therefore, it is the officer who is going to destroy the order prevailing in the Countess's life through his unexpected innocence, beauty and virginity.

As soon as they meet, the Countess shows extraordinary reactions since she is amazed by his handsomeness. Remembering his reaction towards his colonel's advice, he also pities the girl he comes across because of the fragility in her appearance. Even he thinks about how to make her better by taking her with him.

We shall take her to Zurich, to a clinic; she will be treated for nervous hysteria. Then to an eye specialist, for her photophobia, and to a dentist, to put her teeth into better shape. Any competent manicurist will deal with her claws. We shall turn her into the lovely girl she is; I shall cure her of all these nightmares. (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 208)

In other words, he continues to keep his innocence and goodness despite all the distractors, including sexuality. However, he manages to change the course of action through his

trickster qualities existing in him. When he is invited to the chamber of the Countess for fulfilling her sexual desires, everything changes. As the Countess cannot see in the light, she wears a pair of glasses enabling her move around; however, she drops them while getting undressed and they are broken into pieces that cut her finger. Dazzled by seeing her own blood for the first time, she cannot move and stop the officer kissing his finger, which brings her end by turning her into human. In Carter's words, "The end of exile is the end of being", therefore, she is doomed to die as there is not a way back for her (*Burning Your Boats* 207). As Özümlü mentions, Carter's female characters are destined to disappear if they transform to be decent, devoted and obedient. Hence, the positivity and innocence the trickster officer brings to the mansion destroys the order of the Nosferatu family that has been prevailing for a long time in the abandoned village. In contrast to the previous female tricksters analysed in the previous chapter, the officer does not perform a role for changing the course of action or destroying the dominant order to free a female character from the bondages of patriarchal codes of behaviour; therefore, does not have a saviour-like quality for an oppressed woman; but he becomes his own saviour in his story by unintentionally killing the Countess and restoring his own distorted order by his visit.

To conclude, in the world of the Countess which was pre-designed for her by her ancestors imposing the patriarchal control on her femininity, there is no place to realise herself. As asserted by Luce Irigaray, "'femininity' is a role, an image, a value, imposed upon women by male systems of representation. In this masquerade of femininity, the woman loses herself, and loses herself by playing on her femininity" (84). Thus, this artificially constructed role for the Countess imprisons her in her sexuality as she cannot find a way out from it. Remembering that women do not need men to save them from the tortures of the patriarchal order that has been created by them already, when she cannot create herself by abandoning her familial ties and becoming her own saviour, she is not saved by the kiss of the 'prince' from her lifelong sleep, but just the opposite, she is sent to her final sleep that one cannot be brought back from. Yet, she leaves a token for her handsome officer in his pocket, a rose, symbolizing vagina, that continues to live even though a long time has passed since he went back to his duty. The rose is described as a "glowing, velvet, monstrous flower whose petals had regained all their former bloom and elasticity, their corrupt, brilliant, baleful splendour" implying that the female sexuality

and independence that the Countess could not gain could be found in different lands if the right circumstances are provided (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 209).

4.2 Erl-King as a Trick Player Trickster in “The Erl-King”

The Erl-King - Poem by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Who’s riding so late, in the night and wind?
It is the father with his child.
He grasps the boy in his arm.
He holds him securely; he keeps him warm.

My son, why do you hide your face so fearfully?
“Father, don’t you see the Erl-King there?
The Erl-King with his crown and train?”
My son, it’s a streak of mist.

‘You delightful child, come with me!
I’ll play wonderful games with you.
Colourful flowers grow on the shore.
My mother has many fine things.’

“My father, my father, don’t you hear
What the Erl-King said to me?”
Be calm, stay calm, my son;
The wind is stirring the dry leaves.

‘Fine boy, will you come with me?
My daughters will wait on you nicely.
My daughters will lead the evening dancing
And rock and dance and sing to you.’

“My father, my father, don’t you see
The Erl-King’s daughters in that gloomy place?”
My son, my son, I see it indeed:
The old willow gleaming so gray.

‘I love you, I delight in your beautiful shape;
And if you are not willing, I shall use force.’
“My father, my father, he has seized me!
Erl-King is injuring me!”

The father blanched; he rode swiftly.
He held the moaning child in his arms.
With great trouble, he reached the courtyard.
In his arms, the child was dead.

(“Erlkönig”)

As could be understood from the above mentioned poem, the tale titled “The Erl-King” is a tale based on the poem written by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, which is also based on

a Scandinavian folktale. In the poem, the poet tells the story of a father and his son who is frightened by the Erl-King that only he can see and hear and the conversation between them. Throughout the poem the child tries to persuade his father that the Erl-King is there and wants to take him his home where his daughters are waiting, but the father assures his son that this is the bad weather that makes him think and hear those things and continues riding. However, when they reach out their home and the father sees that his son is dead.

Moving from the poem, in Carter's tale, there is the story of the Erl-King, a trick player trickster, who follows women in the forest and makes them fall in love with him and in the end who turns them into birds caged in his home in the forest. The narrator starts the story by describing the time, weather and conditions in the forest and continues with the entrance of the young girl into it. As she walks through the forest, she hears the birds and feels the mist. Even though she is not aware, all these incidents actually are the products of the Erl-King as "Erl-King will do you grievous harm" (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 187). In order to demythologize the traditional woman figure who is oppressed and controlled by the dominant male order in the society, Carter changes the boy in the original story into a young girl who is expected to gain her independence through resisting against all the oppressively imposed ideologies and to take control of her own identity which includes her sexuality as well.

At this point the Erl-King character who embodies very powerful trickster qualities helps Carter construct the character of the young girl as she is going to be tricked by the Erl-King, but then reverse these tricks towards him back who will end up by being tricked by his own tricks eventually. Remembering six qualities offered by Hynes, a trickster is a deceiver and a trick player, who can play with the limits between truth and falseness and therefore who can be tricked by his own tricks creating bigger effects than expected. In Carter's tale, the Erl-King uses music in order to attract his prey, which is described by the narrator as, "The two notes of the song of a bird rose on the still air, as if my girlish and delicious loneliness had been made into a sound" and "I found the Erl-King sitting on an ivy-covered stump winding all the birds in the wood to him on a diatonic spool of sound, one rising note, one falling note; such a sweet piercing call that down there came a soft, chirruping jostle of birds" (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 187, 189). After being tricked by the music she hears, she is ready to be the victim of the story as she portrays all

the submissive female qualities imposed on her by the society she is part of and that she is expected to show. She describes the joy she takes from their sexual intercourse so much in detail and with beautiful words that it is clear that for a very long time she never considers the risks she has been taking:

He strips me to my last nakedness, that underskin of mauve, pearlised satin, like a skinned rabbit; then dresses me again in an embrace so lucid and encompassing it might be made of water. And shakes over me dead leaves as if into the stream I have become.

Sometimes the birds, at random, all singing, strike a chord.

His skin covers me entirely; we are like two halves of a seed, enclosed in the same integument. I should like to grow enormously small, so that you could swallow me, like those queens in fairy tales who conceive when they swallow a grain of corn or a sesame seed. Then I could lodge inside your body and you could bear me. (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 190)

She does not understand the dangers waiting for her as she is so blessed in the relationship they have created, but there is a price for all these beautiful days because he is the trickster Erl-King. He does not do all these things just to please a young girl sexually or just because he respects her sexual identity. Her realization starts when the season changes. As soon as she understands that her freedom is about to be lost by being caged just like the birds in his house, she starts questioning her love and repeats the sentence she had when she entered the forest, “[...] although I knew the first moment I saw him how Erl-King would do me grievous harm” (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 192). After this point, the Erl-King’s tricks start to turn back to him as the young girl’s realisation of the danger towards her freedom will wake her up from the trance she has been entrapped in.

This self-realisation is very important on side of the young girl as she does not take any external help for this either from her father, a huntsman or any other men that might be in the forest during these events. Yet, she will strangle him with her own hair, which she explains as “I shall take two huge handfuls of his rustling hair as he lies half dreaming, half waking, and wind them into ropes, very softly, so he will not wake up, and softly, with hands as gentle as rain, I will strangle him with them” (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 192). Moreover, her plan is not over after killing the Erl-King because she decides to free all the birds in the cages, which will mean a finale for the order maintained by the Erl-King for a very long time. All in all, even though the trickster Erl-King manages to create an order for himself and preserve it without any external touch with the help of his tricks

and deceits, the tricked young girl is able to reverse the course of action by using the tricks of the Erl-King and ending him up being trickster-tricked by himself. Thus, she manages not only to save herself but also to kill the oppressor, which reminds of Brooke's words about creating "a feminist subjectivity defined as active rather than passive" (68). Hence, what she succeeds goes beyond an individual achievement to a voice against the stereotypical gender roles through destroying the violent and oppressive order of the Erl-King and creating her own in which even previously caged birds/women are set free.

4.3 Master as a Shapeshifter and Trick Player Trickster in "Puss-in-Boots"

The tale rewritten by Carter is now a cat story that most of the reading circles are familiar from their childhood either read or watched with the same name, "Puss in Boots". The main characters in the story are the master, the shapeshifter and tricks player trickster of the tale, Puss and the woman the master falls in love. Even though the title of the tale implies that this is a cat's story, Carter reverses things so well that it turns into a tale of a revenging woman. "Carter, in "Puss-in-Boots" combines evil with lechery and proposes the idea that women have this potential and it is not less strong than the evil in men" (Özüm 158). In the original story the cat, Puss is a devoted helper of its master playing every trick in order to enable his master marry the daughter of the king and eventually managing it. However, in Carter's version Puss is trying to help its love-seeking master to achieve a married woman he has fallen in love with. The situation is not so simple as the woman is already married to an old man named Signor Panteleone even though she is still a virgin. Because of her husband's unstoppable jealousy, the woman is trapped in their home guarded by his people. Signor Panteleone is such a terrible representation of oppressive patriarchy that he sees his wife as a commodity belonging to him, thus, he is free to decide everything she can or cannot do. For example, she is not allowed to go out of the house if she is not visiting the Church or to look out of the window more than an hour. He has created such a terrible order at the household that it must be destroyed by making use of a trickster who can change the course of action by implementing his tricks, deceits, by shapeshifting or even more simply by his wit.

Even though Puss would make a more powerful trickster that can make big changes in the life of the woman who is in desperate need of her own liberation, its master

also works for this end well by embodying certain tricksterish qualities. The very first quality he attains is shapeshifting. As Hynes mentions, this does not have to be a complete change from human to animal, man to woman or so on. A simple change of clothes, a mask or even a hat can help the trickster to shift his shape. Therefore, when the master and Puss decide to go to the house of Signor Panteleone, they pretend like rat-catchers and thus are allowed to enter the house. Their plan works well as the master sleeps with the woman. Reminding of the Tibetan trickster Agu Tompa who disguises as a nun in order to sleep with all the nuns, the master also achieves his goal through simply putting on the clothes of a rat-catcher (Hynes 36). However, despite the success of this simple trick played by the trickster master and Puss and the pride over it, it is not enough for them because the master wants more. Here, a bigger trick must be played, a dangerous one. As Özüm mentions “Since this lechery is hand in hand with greed, the last plan is based on murdering the rich old man whose wealth is” big enough for all them to live happily ever after (157). With the help of Tabby, the cat of the woman, they make a plan for killing the husband that would look like an accident. Here, again shapeshifting and deceit are on the stage as the master pretends to be a doctor who is asked to check Signor after the accident he has had.

My master puts his ear to the old man’s chest and shakes his head dolefully; then takes the mirror from his pocket and puts it to the old man’s mouth. Not a breath clouds it. Oh, sad! Oh, sorrowful!
‘Dead, is he?’ sobs the hag. ‘Broke his neck, has he?’
And she slyly makes a little grab for the keys, in spite of her well-orchestrated distress; but Missus slaps her hand and she gives over.
‘Let’s get him to a softer bed,’ says Master. (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 183)

At this point it is easy to understand that the woman right after discovering her own sexual identity and taking control of it turns into an evil as she does not hesitate to kill her husband. Rather than portraying a simple, innocent and docile woman who cannot do anything for escaping from the suppressive dominant order in her household, she turns into a real human who can embody both good and evil at the same time. What Özüm asserts for this issue is that “Carter puts forward an elucidation of equality through attaching evil qualities to women” as evil also cannot belong to a group performing oppression in every way (158).

Considering the end of the story, they manage to kill Signor successfully and create a new order for themselves with everything they have got from the murdered husband. However, the change in the behaviour and the character of the woman right after she has got the power of her household reminds of the idea that she has had that power in herself most probably somewhere that she has not been even aware of. The first words she makes when she realizes her power definitely support this:

‘Now, no more of your nonsense!’ she snaps to hag. ‘If I hereby give you the sack, you’ll get a handsome gift to go along with you for now’ - flourishing the keys - ‘I am a rich widow and here’ - indicating to all my bare yet blissful master - ‘is the young man who’ll be my second husband.’ (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 184)

Her words simply show that the economic over-dependence on their husbands creates women that are not familiar with their own selves and identities. Thus, by changing the problems offered in the original tales and putting the emphasis on the condition of women that this financially dominant order forces, Carter manages to help women gain their own empowerment when freed from the restraining forces on them. In Carter’s version, through the shapeshifting and trick playing Master, the order of Signor Pantelone is destroyed quite violently as he is killed by his wife and her lover and a more preferable one is created by empowering the woman through her husband’s remainder. Despite all the messages about women’s roles in the society that need to be revised, the last words of the tale still leave a question mark in the minds even though they also belong to a male cat:

So may all your wives, if you need them, be rich and pretty; and all your husbands, if you want them, be young and virile; and all your cats as wily, perspicacious and resourceful as:

PUSS-IN-BOOTS. (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 184)

4.4 The Executioner as a Shapeshifter Trickster in “The Executioner’s Beautiful Daughter”

In this tale taking place in a village where nobody talks, no mothers mentioned and no names are provided except for Gretchen, Carter tells the story of a father and a daughter. More than just a simple father-daughter story, the reader is in the world of hypocritical patriarchy that can control and redesign even the rules of the order for the benefit of the oppressive group. Through the descriptions provided by the narrator the

reader understands that there is a society where incest is accepted as the utmost biggest crime that is punished with being beheaded as they are in the village where “the punishment for incest is decapitation” by the only executioner in the society whose face has never been seen by anybody in the village (Carter *Burning Your Boats* 40).

This shapeshifting trickster, the executioner is a perfect portrayal for the trickster figures for whom there is nothing moral, sacred or taboo. As is offered by Babcock-Adams, they have a great libido though it does not end with creative outcomes. Moreover, they are ambiguous in terms of their position in good and evil, social and asocial, relaxed and aggressive and so on. Therefore, the executioner represents almost all of these qualities as he beheads his own son for committing incest with his sister at the beginning of the tale, the executioner’s beautiful daughter Gretchen, who is buried in the courtyard. He is such a hypocritical character that he himself also rapes his own daughter in the courtyard where he beheaded his son because for a trickster “No borders are sacrosanct, be they religious, cultural, linguistic, epistemological, or metaphysical” (Hynes 34). Considering this decapitation is almost accepted as an act of entertainment, Carter describes it as follows:

The axe falls. The flesh severs. The head rolls.
The cleft flesh spouts its fountains. The spectators shudder, groan and gasp. And now the string band starts to bow and saw again whilst a choir of stunted virgins, in the screeching wail that passes for singing in these regions, intones a barbaric requiem entitled: awful warning of the SPECTACLE OF A DECAPITATION.
(Carter *Burning Your Boats* 36,37)

Based on this ceremonial act of decapitation, how the public internalizes the event as they also perform like a choir reminding of the Greek tragedies can be understood. However, describing the trickster executioner, it must be noted that all the qualities he embodied help him protect the order he has both created and maintained so far. As pointing out the qualities of the trickster, he also has a destructive power especially for the social norms and taboos; therefore, it can be stated that through the act of execution he maintains the order in the society on the one hand; on the other hand, with the mask he has never taken out, through which his face has been seen by nobody, he is able to perform his destruction by raping his own daughter and committing the crime for what he works as the only punisher. As is offered by Hynes, “Not even the boundaries of species or sexuality are safe, for they can be readily dissolved by the trickster’s disguises and transmorphisms”

(36). Thus, for the executioner, abusing her own daughter sexually does not mean a crime as he does not know his own face with the help of his mask, and therefore, he does not know who to punish.

According to Shadi S. Neimneh, “In an environment of disease and freezing weather, Gretchen is remarkably beautiful yet sexually objectified, as suggested by the narrator’s description of her doing domestic tasks for her father against an environment of depravity and filth” (45). Therefore, she is in such a corrupted society despite all the beauties she embodies, and thus she is a perfect victim for the hypocritical order prevailing its powerful oppression even in her family. As she does not show any individual identity, voice or awareness of her sexuality, she is depicted as doubly victimized first by the patriarchal society her father represents and second by her father himself. Considering her father a trickster, it is expected from him to invert anything sacred, valuable or ethical as it is a taboo breaker. According to Hynes, “... the trickster is often the official ritual profaner of beliefs. Profaning or inverting social beliefs bring into sharp relief just how much a society values these beliefs. These profanations seem to exhibit a clear pattern of proportionality: the more sacred a belief, the more likely is the trickster to be found profaning it” (Hynes 37). Hence, the executioner is a perfect trickster as he is expected to profane the only biggest crime of his society even though he is also the only punisher of that crime, which can be even considered a reason for him to commit it as well.

Even though the end of the story does not provide a relaxation on the side of the story as Gretchen is not saved from the oppressive patriarchal order perfectly symbolized by her father, it still presents the message quite powerfully as she is abused by her father and brother who are expected to be the saviours in the world of tales. Rather than waiting for a male hero, every woman can be the heroine of their own tales in order to subvert dominantly imposed rules and codes of the patriarchal society. Therefore, as is offered by Ekmekçi, “Carter attacks traditional views which depict women sexually lifeless in her rewritten intertextual stories because Carter’s subversive female characteristics perform charmingly authentic, but alarmingly freakish sexuality”; however, Gretchen does not belong to these female characters who have managed to create themselves; and thus she is doomed to live that life till she finds out herself (27). Thus, the shapeshifting trickster,

the executioner maintains his order as there is nothing to challenge either him or the order he represents very well through his hypocritical role as a punisher of the fault he himself also commits. His mask enables him both to work as a shapeshifting trickster in the tale and to represent the order he is part of. Through that mask the executioner does not only hide his identity from the society he lives in but also maintains the order despite the corruption prevailing in it.



CONCLUSION

On the whole, morality as regards woman has nothing to do with ethics;
it means sexual morality and nothing but sexual morality.

To be a wayward girl usually has something to do with pre-marital sex;
to be a wicked woman has something to do with adultery.

This means it is far easier for a woman to lead a blameless life than it is for a man;
all she has to do is to avoid sexual intercourse like the plague.

What hypocrisy!

– Angela Carter *Wayward Girls and Wicked Women*

This thesis examined some of Angela Carter's adult tales which are the rewritings of popular fairy tales, legends and myths of all times to show how trickster figures destroy the prevailing orders of the oppressive male characters, restore the ones distorted by external forces, or create desired ones. All the trickster figures presented in this thesis fit in some ways to the characteristics offered by Hynes in his article. However, it should not be forgotten that sometimes it is possible for a trickster to embody more than one quality, whereas sometimes it can represent just one. Carter deconstructs and demythologizes the short story genre through contributing to it by exploring and subverting the roles and codes of female sexuality imposed by the Western society. By calling her stories tales rather than short stories, she manages to transfer her message to her readers that can be hindered through the traditional representations the myths, legends and fairy tales offered. Thus, the power relations, equality of genders and especially the condition of women can be better addressed by focusing on the victimized female characters of the tales she chose to tell. One character from each tale was analysed with reference to the concept of trickster to identify how Carter managed to reverse the course of actions by giving voice to her female characters, by showing how their actions are controlled by the male dominant society around them and by employing male characters who do not represent the traditional male qualities expected from them. In order to destroy the prevailing order, to maintain or to restore it, the trickster qualities offered by the critics are used, which in return help Carter to deliver her message in a stronger way.

The female trickster figures addressed in this thesis are the mother in "The

Bloody Chamber”, the Countess in “The Snow Child”, the young girl in “The Company of Wolves”, Lady Purple in “The Loves of Lady Purple” and Friday in “Master”. They all serve well for their intentions to come true and to destroy the present order or to create a new one in the tales by embodying extraordinary or unfamiliar qualities that are not expected from them. The mother figure in “The Bloody Chamber” saves her daughter whose life is in danger by using situation inverter quality of the trickster in the “Bluebeard” rewriting. In order to save her daughter from ending up in the Marquis’s chamber where he is keeping the dead bodies of his previous wives, she turns the course of actions upside down through her existence which is expected from fathers or brothers in the traditional tales. By this existence in the end she is able to destroy the oppressive order represented by the Marquis. In the next story, “Snow Child”, Carter presents a rewriting of famous “Snow White”, the Countess works as a trickster who performs continuous tricks as a trick-player in order to get rid of the girl who is the product of her husband’s imagination. Even though she is tricked by her own tricks because of excessive trials, she manages to get rid of the girl and successfully restores the order she has destroyed. When it comes to one of the most popular Carter tales, “The Bloody Chamber”, the reader is now in the world of the Little Red Riding Hood. In her version; however, Carter does not provide a story of a young, innocent and docile girl to be saved by a huntsman. On the contrary, by ornamenting the young girl with trickster qualities such as being the combination of binary oppositions like childhood and femininity, and being a situation inverter, Carter enables the young girl to protect herself without needing a male saviour and making her own decisions concerning her body and her sexual identity. As a result, she can create the order that has been destroyed with the entrance of the werewolf in her world. Moving from these three innocent trickster stories, “The Loves of Lady Purple” presents a more violent one in its Pygmalion- Pinocchio combination rewriting. As a result of the oppression and humiliation that has been created by her creator, the Professor, Lady Purple, the marionette, becomes alive; moreover, she gains vampire qualities. The shapeshifting quality of the trickster which is represented by Lady Purple enables her to take revenge from her master by murdering him and the liquidity that is attributed to the trickster especially for its position in-between morality and immorality helps her fight against the oppressive patriarchal order which has located her even as a

marionette in an undesired position created for only male gaze and sexual pleasure. Therefore, she is quite right when she looks for revenge as soon as she attains human qualities for creating her own order by deciding on her own action. As for the final trickster figure of this chapter, Friday from “Master” can be accepted as a female character who completes her development as a woman by understanding her femininity and thus even transformation as she ends up becoming a jaguar. All the sufferings she has been through caused by her master trading her for a spare tyre from her father bring her to her self-revelation which is glorified by transforming to a jaguar and eventually killing the source of her sufferings. As a direct shapeshifter who also looks for untying herself from any bounds, she ends up her story in the excessively oppressive and abusive social order as Friday and starts it back by creating a new one in which she will take part as a jaguar.

The male trickster figures addressed in this thesis also contribute both to destroying the patriarchal order forcing certain codes and regulations on the women and to maintaining it when they become a powerful representative of it. The young officer from “The Lady of House of Love, as a situation inverter becomes the saviour of his own story as his existence in the story completely changes the course of action in the world of vampire Countess, Nosferatu, who is feeding on young virgin males in order to survive. Despite the fact that the officer saves himself, he also manages to save the Countess from the oppressive family ties she has inherited following her physically in every single place in the mansion with the help of the pictures of her ancestors. Even though she is accustomed to getting undressed and performing sexual intercourse with her preys, the young officer’s presence affects her in such a way that she drops her glasses and cuts her finger. When the young man kisses her hand, it is the time to say goodbye to this world as she turns into a human being. Therefore, through his innocence, virginity and presence in the wrong place at the wrong time, the young officer inverts the situation ending the prevailing order of the Nosferatu family and restoring his own by getting back to his responsibilities. As for the Erl-King from “The Erl-King”, the reader is in the world of a fantastic forest where some fantastic creatures live including the Erl-King himself. As a magical being in the forest who is stalking women and making them fall in love with him, it is understood that he captivates the women he has enchanted with his love by turning them into birds to be caged. When the young girl in the tale meets and falls in love with

this trickster, who continuously plays tricks and deceit reminding of the Countess in the “Snow Child” ends up being tricked as a result of his overreaching actions. When the young girl understands that she is about to lose her freedom by being caged like all the previous women the Erl-King captivates, she makes a plan to get rid of him by strangling him with her own hair. The ending of the tale is glorified with the young girl’s adopting the Erl-King’s household for freeing all the other women turned into the birds in the cages. In the next tale analysed the story of Master from “Puss-in-Boots” whose trickster personality is actually strengthened with the help of his trickster cat, Puss, is presented. When falling in love with a married woman who has been abused in her marriage by her old husband Signor Panteleone, he plays all the tricks he can by changing clothes and pretending to be a rat-catcher and a doctor in order to destroy the abusive order created and maintained by Signor, and ends up even murdering him accompanied by Signor’s wife. This murderous couple manages to create their own order with the help of the financial power the widow gets turning her into an independent woman who is aware of her individual identity and sexuality. The executioner from “The Executioner’s Beautiful Daughter” completes the story of the trickster analysed in this thesis. With a different touch upon the idea of patriarchal order that is to be destroyed for the sake of female characters in the tales, in this tale Carter presents a trickster, the executioner, who is the embodiment of the patriarchal order from top to bottom with his hypocritical existence. He is responsible for maintaining the order in the society he is part of with his daughter, in which incest is considered the biggest crime and therefore punished with decapitation. He is the only executioner in this society whose face has never been seen by anybody as a result of the mask he has been wearing, which is a trickster quality as well because it is used for shapeshifting simply. Even though this masked executioner kills his own son because of his sexual intercourse with his sister, the executioner’s beautiful daughter, by hiding behind his mask he also rapes his own daughter though it is not known by anybody. Therefore, by providing such a character, Carter shows that women must have their voices in order to make changes in their world that has been created and more importantly forced by the patriarchy. Passivity and suppression cannot bring them to the world order that they deserve.

All in all, Angela Carter manages to challenge the dominant order by her tales

that seem like innocent rewritings of certain famous fairy tales, legends, myths or even previous stories by enriching them with trickster figures helping her deliver her message especially to women in order to create themselves rather than passively waiting for some male heroes to save them from the constraints forced upon them and puts them in hands of the readers and critics to be interpreted from many different angles. In conclusion, she resists against the hypocritical patriarchal order that puts and even forces certain social codes of behaviour on women.

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RESUME

Name and Surname: Şeyda Yağmur Balcı

Education:

Degree	Field	University	Year
Bachelor Degree	English Language and Literature	Atılım University	2010
Master Degree			

Work experience:

Place	Position	Year
Atılım University	English Instructor	2012 - present
Turkish – American Association	English Teacher & Academic Coordinator	2010 - 2012

Foreign Languages: English (Proficiency), French (Basic), Russian (Basic)

Date: 09/01/2023

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